confluencenter for Creative Inquiry

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015



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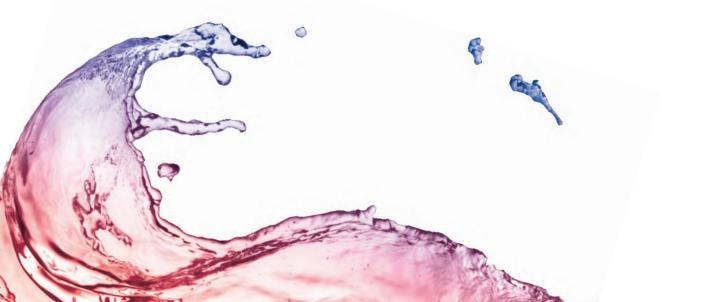
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Confluencenter is a proud member of the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes



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LETTER

Dear Friends,

Thank you for taking the time to read the Confluencenter for Creative Inquiry's fourth annual report. I am pleased to share with you our achievements and their impacts, not only from this past year, but in the five exciting years since our establishment.

It's incredible to reflect on the progress that we've made in these five short years.

We have supported over 250 creative and adventurous projects with over \$2.2 million in grants and fellowships.

These projects have played a significant role in defining The University of Arizona's innovative research atmosphere and shaping our identity as a center that embraces creative risk-taking as a critical step in exploring solutions to the world's grand challenges.

In this breakthrough year, we have drawn ever larger crowds to our public events and reviewed an increasing number of grant and fellowship applications as news of our work spreads across campus and the community.

Some of these projects have already gained national and global media attention. Dr. Bryan Carter's "Virtual Harlem" project was recognized by *The Atlantic* as "a transcendent educational experience."

Others offer solutions to persistent social problems, like language loss. Our graduate fellow Edward Polanco created an app for teaching Nahuatl, an indigenous language of Mexico. The Nahuatl Naman app is widely accessible and is the result of direct collaboration with Nahua communities.

We also hosted our first international visiting scholar, Dr. Benjamin Muller. He conducted border and security-related research in our region and shared a sample of his fascinating work on drones with the Tucson community at our January Show & Tell event.





These projects are a microcosm of the kind of innovative work nurtured by the Confluencenter and they represent how we have been sharpening our focus on research over the years.

This research focus is complemented by our investment in community engagement. Our hosting of George Mumford, meditation coach to National Champions LA Lakers and Chicago Bulls, was inspired by research from our Contemplative Traditions working group. Mumford visited El Pueblo High School and the El Pueblo Community Center to share his experiences with meditation. Our dedication to balancing research and community has been a significant factor in our early success, and it continues to solidify our role in the state of Arizona's only land grant university.

All of this great work would not be possible without our generous donors, especially JoAnna and Bill Westcott, and our enthusiastic staff. Because of them, the Confluencenter is poised for an exciting future. I want to express our sincere thanks to UA President Dr. Ann Weaver Hart, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Dr. Andrew C. Comrie and Senior Vice President for Research Dr. Kimberly Andrews Espy for their support, and to the members of campus and city media for their coverage of our events and projects.

We will continue to make the UA a better place. As we anticipate another five years of being *confluential* in supporting transformative research on campus, I encourage you to explore ways to join our efforts as a donor, researcher, or friend of the Confluencenter.

Sincerely,

Javier Duran



Taken on the island of Enoshima in Japan's Kanagawa Prefecture, this photograph is among a sample set of landscape photographs and paintings that are being used to investigate the role of the golden mean ratio and its connection to the illusion of depth in the "Space and Place: Perceiving Depth in Contemporary Landscape Art" Faculty Collaboration Grant project. Photo by Martina Shenal

IMAGINATION & ACADEMIC RIGOR

CONVERGE

We invest in adventurous, interdisciplinary research. It's our driving focus and our **Faculty Collaboration Grants** prove it. For the 2015-2016 academic year, we awarded \$75,000 to support five projects involving 18 researchers in 17 different departments.

INTERGENERATIONAL TELEPHONE CALLS

Associate Professor of Spanish and Portuguese Ana Carvalho and Senior Research Scientist Malcah Yaeger-Dror, along with a team of communication and linguistics experts, record telephone conversations between monolingual and bilingual students and their grandparents to investigate how these groups communicate. Their collection will be used to determine what strategies improve grandchild-grandparent relationships and to fine-tune software that tracks communication patterns among these intergenerational groups.

VIRTUAL HARLEM

Africana Studies Assistant Professor Bryan Carter and Kelland Thomas, Professor of Music and Associate Director of the School of Information, are pushing technological boundaries to bring the past into the present. By building a geographically accurate virtual reality environment of New York City's 125th Street as it stood in the 1920s, the golden age of the Harlem Renaissance, the project's immersive setting allows participants to better understand the social, cultural, political and economic relations that shaped the era.

BARRIO STORIES PROJECT

Mexican American Studies Professor Lydia Otero and Theatre, Film & Television Assistant Professor Elaine Romero – in collaboration with Borderlands Theater – work alongside youth, anthropologists, historians and playwrights to collect oral stories from the Barrio Libre neighborhood, which was demolished in the late 1960s to build the Tucson Convention Center complex. In March 2016, the team will transform those stories into a play that dramatizes the neighborhood's rich history and gives voice to its displaced community members.

BORDER COWBOYS

Associate Research Historian at the Southwest Center J.C. Mutchler and Art Professor Jackson Boelts are creating a cross-disciplinary examination of ranches and ranchers along the U.S.-Mexico border that can lead to a better understanding of the cultural complexity and rich history of the borderlands. Through collecting and analyzing oral histories, photography and public history, the team will create and document cultural narratives of our unique borderlands communities.

SPACE AND PLACE

Regents' Professor of Linguistics, Psychology, and Neuroscience Thomas Bever, School of Art Associate Professor Martina Shenal, and Regents' Emeritus Professor of Philosophy Kevin Lehrer seek to answer the questions: How is depth perceived in contemporary landscape art? How do behavior and neurological processes differ as a function of artistic experience? This study of the aesthetic experience integrates art and science in ways that show how and why audiences gravitate to certain works of art.

BOLD OPPORTUNITIES

ADVANCE NEW SCHOLARS

We provide tangible research experience by funding diverse, innovative projects that examine our world and strive to make it a better place. For 2015-2016, Confluencenter's nine **Graduate Fellows** – hailing from the colleges of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences – received \$45,000 for their investigations. They are the next generation of thinkers, and we are honored to play a role in advancing their careers.

MAPPING YAQUI HISTORY

History Ph.D. student Anabel Galindo is charting historical patterns of Yaqui settlement from the last decades of Spanish rule into the mid-20th century in order to examine the roles of mobility and labor on Yaqui identity.

DROUGHT, LIVELIHOODS AND THE FOOD SYSTEM

Christina Greene, Ph.D. student in Geography and Development, explores the physical and social dimensions of drought through the words and images of Californians in order to develop more nuanced perspectives of the drought's effects and impact.

UA/HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SYMPOSIUM ON ETHNIC STUDIES

Gabriel Higuera, Ph.D. student in Mexican American Studies, is organizing a symposium where local high schoolers hone college-level presentation skills and share their research on ethnic studies in Tucson schools.

COMO 8 HORAS

MFA student Carolina Maki Kitagawa composes a live, time-based performance art piece that features the underrepresented voices of immigrants in Tucson and Los Angeles and brings art to life for audiences in both cities.

AMULETOS THROUGH THE FRONTERA

Manuel Martín Barros and Joaquin Perez-Blanes, Ph.D. students in Spanish and Portuguese, visually and textually narrate the experiences of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border through an exhibit that examines amulets and the role they play in migrants' journeys.

DOCUMENTING STRUGGLES FOR WATER, SANITATION AND ELECTRICITY

Anthropology Ph.D. student Angela Storey traces how residents of informal settlements in Cape Town, South Africa narrate their struggles to secure access to basic services and presents possibilities for equitable resource management.

ARCHAEOLOGY AT THE CONFLUENCE OF RACE

William White, Ph.D. student in Anthropology, explores the remains of a working-class, interracial neighborhood in Boise, Idaho, collects information about its previous residents and shares findings that illustrate the complex intersections of race and class in America.

GEOGRAPHY AND THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

Geography and Development Ph.D. student Jeffrey Wilson creates a graphic novel that explores the experiences of Detroit residents battling Type 2 diabetes and housing insecurity.

IMPROVING INFORMATION ACCESS IN URBAN SLUMS

Christopher Yutzy, Ph.D. student in Anthropology, creates a communication nexus — comprised of a magazine called Revista PROVOZ, a website for digital content, social media and WhatsApp groups — to examine how residents of the Grande Bom Jardim slum in Fortaleza, Brazil establish avenues for free speech and democratic action.

From left to right, bottom row: Martin Barros, Angela Storey, Anabel Galindo, Carolina Maki Kitagawa; Top row: Joaquin Perez-Blanes, William White, Christina Greene, Gabriel Higuera, Jeffrey Wilson; Not pictured: Christopher Yutzy. Photo by Jamie Manser



ELEVATE RESEARCH

In less than five years, the Confluencenter for Creative Inquiry has become a force in bringing people and ideas together. The creative research, interdisciplinary inquiry and community engagement projects that Confluencenter supports are changing the academic landscape at The University of Arizona.

CONFLUENCENTER TIMELINE

2010

The Provost's Strategic Advisory Council on Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) hosts a one-day workshop with over 100 faculty and forms the Confluencenter for Creative Inquiry. **Javier Duran** is named director in December. In its first year, eight grants are awarded to faculty working in collaborative teams.

2011

The official kick-off for Confluencenter is held at the UA Poetry Center. The *Arizona Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, an undergraduate-run publication, is founded. Faculty Collaboration grants go to 14 faculty members. The Director's Fund for Excellence awards 15 grants.

2012

Distinguished public intellectuals **Gayatri Spivak** and **Noam Chomsky** speak at the UA campus. Confluencer creates two public education series, Creative Collaborations and Show & Tell, are established. Grants are awarded to nine faculty.

2013

Confluencenter partners with the Arizona State Museum to present "A World Separated by Borders," a photography exhibit by Alejandra Platt-Torres. The inaugural **Graduate Fellowships** program awards \$95,000 to 19 students, and six faculty teams receive awards. The Director's Fund supports 15 projects.



Journalism faculty Jeannine Relly talks about "The Documented Border: An Open Access Digital Archive" at the inaugural Research Showcase on April 21, 2015. The project's other faculty researchers include Associate Librarian Verónica Reyes-Escudero, Journalism professor Celeste González de Bustamante, and Lawrence Gipe, associate professor of Art. Photo by John Nofs

RESEARCH SHOWCASE

On April 21, 2015, Confluencenter held its inaugural showcase, an event that will be celebrated annually. It featured on-stage presentations by previous Faculty Collaboration Grant winners, exhibits by both Faculty Collaboration grantees and current Graduate Fellows, and it concluded with a reception. The showcase also announced the 2015-2016 academic year's Faculty Collaboration Grant awardees and Graduate Fellows, and it presented the 2015 Arizona Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies.

Jane Zavisca, a 2012-2013 grant winner, parlayed her research on "The Culture of Mortgage-Based Homeownership in Crisis" into a multi-institutional \$3.4 million Department of Defense Minerva Grant.

After receiving seed funding from the Confluencenter in 2010, Diana Archangeli's project "The Arizona Articulatory, Acoustic, and Visual Speech Database" won two National Science Foundation grants that provided speech-analysis software, totaling \$350,000.

Jeffrey Banister and Stacie Widdifield, 2011-2012 grant winners, received \$88,000 from the American Council of Learned Societies for "The Visual Culture of Modern Water in Mexico."



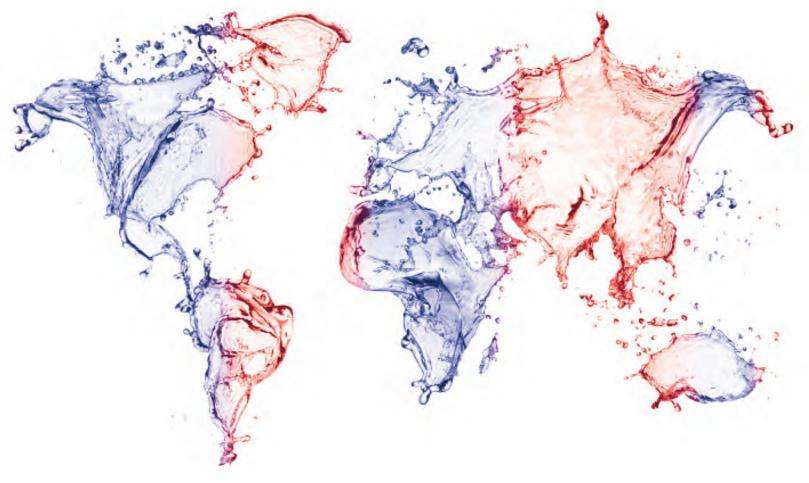
Graduate Fellow Joy Liu points out her research outcomes to Professor and Confluencenter board member Ken McAllister. Liu's project is "Collective Action for Sustainable Restoration in China's Arid Lands." Photo by John Nofs

2014

Confluencenter has cumulatively awarded more than **\$2.2 million** in funding. Javier Duran and the Confluencenter staff are honored by President Ann Weaver Hart with Inclusive Excellence teams and fourteen receive grants.

2015

More than **250** projects supported by the Confluencenter have resulted in prestigious awards for our faculty, national press attention and tenure-track teaching positions for our Graduate Fellows. CONFLUENCENTER FOR CREATIVE INQUIRY



EXPANDS IDEAS

Our **Innovation Farm** working groups grow from initial seed grants for interdisciplinary ideas that promise long-term sustainability. This year, groups made progress with attracting new members, receiving external grant funding and establishing new areas of study on campus.

CENTER FOR DOCUMENTARY

Organized by Beverly Seckinger, Professor in the School of Theatre, Film & Television, the newly-formed center served students from a broad range of disciplines and hosted workshops, launched a regular film series and presented public screening events, and it will soon establish an interdisciplinary graduate minor in documentary film. In February 2015, the center brought in filmmaker Richard Ray Perez, a senior staff member of the Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program. Using his 2014 film "Cesar's Last Fast" as a case study, Perez conducted a workshop that focused on collaborating with historians and working with archival footage.

GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECT

Within their first year, GHRD members used video-conferencing technology in their classrooms and designed a website that connects human rights activists from around the world. Students in lead organizer Bill Simmons' course virtually interacted with activists from South Sudan, Mauritius, Eastern Congo, Israel, South Africa, Turkey, Sweden, Washington D.C. and Iowa. They also listened to the stories of torture survivors, members of the Lost Boys of Sudan, a UN Special Rapporteur, filmmakers and a U.S. Federal Judge. In the fall of 2015, GHRD is launching its website, which will enable users to get involved in the fight for human rights around the globe.

CONTEMPLATIVE TRADITIONS

Established in 2014 by a donor interested in Buddhism, this group's membership includes 25 scholars from a variety of fields, such as Medicine, Psychology and Literature. Along with organizing a series of workshops and lectures on Buddhist Studies and a Graduate Student Wellness Conference, this working group launched a new Buddhist Studies Minor in the East Asian Studies department. The group was awarded \$5,000 from the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society to host a spring 2016 conference (April 1-2) that will explore how contemplative practices can be used in classrooms, online settings and course assessment.

OPENING NEW

PATHWAYS TO PARTNERSHIPS

We partner with departments and organizations that share our passion for innovative thinking. By providing financial backing to conferences, symposia, public engagement events, visiting researchers and speakers, we are proudly embracing our mission to serve as a campus-wide research institute dedicated to creative inquiry across all disciplines.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2014-2015 INCLUDE:

From Repression to Regulation: Drug Policies in Latin America, with the Department of Latin American Studies (Oct. 2, 2014)	Oceans and Deserts: Charting Transdisciplinary Currents in Environment and Culture within the Arts and Sciences, with the Department of German Studies (March 6-7, 2015)
Community Plática with Ana Tijoux – rapper, mother, activist – with Gender and Women's Studies, UA Graduate Association of Spanish and Portuguese (Oct. 16, 2014)	Tucson Festival of Books, with Pima County Public Library's Nuestras Raices (March 14-15, 2015)
Sacred Geography Symposium, with Mexican American Studies (Dec. 1, 2014)	Alien Citizen, An Earth Odyssey, with the UA Libraries and Cultural Centers (April 22, 2015)
Black Life Matters, with Gender and Women's Studies (Jan. 15-17, 2015)	Buddhist Studies Lecture Series, with the Department of East Asian Studies (spring 2015)
Open Embodiments: Somatechnics in Tucson, with the Institute for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies (April 15-18, 2015)	Tree Mortality through the Lens of Art and Science, with the School of Art's Ellen McMahon (spring 2015)



Detail of Ellen McMahon's "Change Over Time," an 8'x8' installation at the UA Bryant Bannister Tree-Ring Research building, which is part of the "Marking Time to a Changing Climate" exhibit. The piece is comprised of hemispheric research photos taken in the field by Patrick Royer, 2010. McMahon's work was created from Confluencenter's support of her "Tree Mortality through the Lens of Art and Science" project.

ARIZONA JOURNAL FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

The Arizona Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies (AZJIS) is an interdisciplinary research journal written and edited for and by undergraduates, published by the Confluencenter with support from the UA's Office of Student Affairs. Its origins date back to the Confluencenter's early days, when undergraduate students Emma Kleiner and Lauren Johnston pitched the idea to Director Javier Duran in 2011. A year later, the first issue of AZJIS was released, featuring innovative work by undergraduate researchers. Confluencenter proudly published the fourth issue of AZJIS in April 2015. This edition includes articles that explore topics ranging from immigration and mental health, to American sports, racial prejudice, and literary theory. As a student-led research initiative, AZJIS embodies the UA's 100% Student Engagement initiative by highlighting creative undergraduate projects and providing real-world publishing experience. Because AZJIS is a first-time publication for many of its contributors, it cultivates the potential of emerging scholars to increase knowledge in an array of disciplines.



Africana Studies Assistant Professor Bryan Carter presenting "Walking the Spirit: Augmenting the Paris Experience" at Show & Tell on Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2015. Photo by Jamie Manser

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We bridge the gap between the classroom and community with fun and enlightening events both on and off campus. The 2014-2015 academic year included **Show & Tell @ Playground** and **Creative Collaborations,** monthly programs that feature diverse presenters covering a wide range of compelling topics.

Show & Tell @ Playground: Confluencenter's Multimedia Learning Experience brought an eclectic selection of UA professors' projects and research to the Downtown scene. Over the last three years, Show & Tell has showcased topics as diverse and expansive as the subjects offered at the university, including: "Global Revolution: From Harlem to Havana" and "Documenting the Border in Unprecedented Times" to "iBorders: Drones & Designs" and "Focusing the Universe." Paula Fan, Regents' Professor, Confluencenter Senior Fellow, pianist and host of **Creative Collaborations**, engaged and informed over 300 people at the Saturday morning events during the fall and spring semesters. Attendees enjoyed both musical performances – with Dr. Fan playing her 1901 Steinway grand piano – and captivating dialogue between Dr. Fan and an academic or professional colleague. Themes varied from "The Bard's Birthday Bash" and "Changing the Face of Death" to the science, psychology and songs of love and Women's History Month.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Beyond our monthly programs, we also host special events that include an array of enriching opportunities, such as world renowned speakers and distinct, one-time only events. Examples from this year include **Full Circle: Confluencenter Explores the Sounds, Tastes and Sights of Death; Playground Games;** and sports psychologist, meditation coach and mindfulness speaker George Mumford.

Full Circle was a three-part event that took place on Nov. 1, 2014 and reflected on death through the cultural lens of music, food and art at the College of Fine Arts complex.

Changing the Face of Death was a Creative Collaborations special presentation with Hospice Chaplain Greg Griffey and Paula Fan;

Death: Customs and Cuisine, presented by Southwest Folklife Alliance's Executive Program Director Maribel Alvarez, Ph.D. and special guests, explained food traditions associated with death rituals and ceremonial family gatherings;

Picking Up the Pieces: Artifacts From the Migrants' Journey displayed evocative installations created by artist Deborah McCullough with the artifacts migrants left behind as they crossed the desert borderlands. On April 8, 2015 the Confluencenter was honored to bring mindfulness speaker **George Mumford** to Tucson for several wellattended public lectures, which took place on campus, at Pueblo High School and at the El Pueblo Neighborhood Center, where he was introduced by Ward I Council Member Regina Romero and Mayor Jonathan Rothschild.

Mumford's talk included elements of cognitive science, sports medicine, and Eastern philosophy. His talk represents the innovative and interdisciplinary work that we invest in.



In collaboration with UA's Institute of the Environment, Confluencenter produced **Playground Games** — a live game show-like event (think speed-dating meets Shark Tank, but with an academic spin) — on Dec. 10, 2014 on the roof of Downtown's Playground Bar & Lounge. Four teams competed to win one of two grants designed to facilitate interdisciplinary research among professors in the arts, humanities, and sciences.

A winning interdisciplinary team of faculty pitches a project dreamt up on the spot at the Playground Games event. Photo by John Nofs



KNOWLEDGE

We endeavor to cultivate interdisciplinarity among the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and to promote the development of a dynamic intellectual environment. A significant factor in this process is hosting scholars who defy convention and navigate uncharted academic territories.

Benjamin Muller was invited to the UA as Confluencenter's inaugural **Visiting Scholar** due to his distinguished multidisciplinary research on borderlands, security and identity, and biometric technology. While his investigations are serious, Ben is a friendly, down-to-earth, married father of two who enjoys the outdoors, listening to music, and watching *Downton Abbey* and *Game of Thrones*.

His appointment ran from September 2014 to March 2015, and during those six months, Dr. Muller not only conducted his own research, but he also participated regularly in Confluencenter events, guest lectured, consulted with graduate students, and participated in a research trip to the border with the Southwest Center.

Muller's Jan. 14, 2015 Show & Tell presentation "iBorders: Drones & Designs" proved to be a hot topic, garnering media attention from Arizona Daily Star, Tucson Weekly, Zócalo Magazine, KXCI 91.3 FM and Arizona Public Media.



Photo by John Nofs

Dr. Muller's stay in Tucson, and his work with Confluencenter, left a lasting impression on the scholar, who is an associate professor at King's College Western University in London, Canada.

"The Confluencenter is a truly unique gem among post-secondary institutions," he said, "fostering diverse intellectual collaborations coupled with community outreach in ways that are rewarding, innovative and very uncommon among peer research institutions.

"Both Confluencenter Director Dr. Duran and The University of Arizona deserve much praise for nurturing such a unique and innovative research environment at a time when truly interdisciplinary collaboration rarely moves beyond lip service on many campuses throughout North America."

Dr. Muller shared a sample of his work on drones with the Tucson community at the January Show & Tell. Pictured: Unmanned Aircraft System MQ-9 Predator B. Photo by Gerald L. Nino





GIVE • •

As a campus-wide research institute dedicated to creative inquiry across all disciplines, our mission is to provide unique opportunities for scholars to come together and conduct research in unexpected and unusual ways. Our funding nurtures the innovative thinking necessary for addressing local, national and global issues.

Be a part of the evolution. Support the Confluencenter with a tax-deductible donation today. Your contribution helps fund our Graduate Fellows, events, visiting professors, lectures and symposia.

JOIN THE CONFLUENCE CIRCLE

Confluence Circle members support our initiatives through donations of \$1,000 or more. Contributions enable donors to receive preferred seating at many of our events, invitations to special events and a special thanks included on our website and other marketing materials.

- Visit Confluencenter.arizona.edu/donate to give online.
- Mail a check made payable to Confluencenter/UA Foundation, P.O. Box 210302, Tucson, AZ 85721-0302.

Give us a call at (520) 621-5137 for more information or to offer your ideas on ways we can help address society's grand challenges.



K. confluencenter for Creative Inquiry

Office for Research & Discovery College of Fine Arts College of Humanities College of Social & Behaviorial Sciences

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