



Annual Report 2019-2020

Director Cindy Gendrich
Submitted June 26, 2020

This abbreviated report will be followed by a ten-year, summative report, to be submitted sometime in July or early August. The full archives of the past ten years will be appended to that report.

As requested, this year's report focuses on highlights, as well as strengths and weaknesses. We were also asked to talk about plans for the future, but as those are still being worked out, I will end with an overview, a reflection, and a little bit of what we know about IPLACe 2.0. In the meantime, many thanks for the support over the past ten years. It has been one of the great joys of my professional life to have a hand in creating and directing IPLACe.

PART 1: HIGHLIGHTS of 2019-2020

From the Ground Up: September/October 2019 and February 2020.

Collaborating units: Facilities/Dance/Theatre/Music/Journalism/Humanities and Forklift Danceworks.
Key WFU collaborators: John Shenette, Christina Soriano, Cindy Gendrich, Stephanie Poskin

Funded by the NEA, NEFA, the Provost's Office, including the TAP or Wake the Arts Fund, and IPLACe.

This three-year long collaboration came to a climax in early October of 2019. Forklift Danceworks was on campus from September 4th through the final performance and party on October 6. Concurrently, Gendrich and Soriano taught a cross-listed Community Arts Practice course that included a substantial engagement with the production, and students acted as stage managers, sound designers, job shadowers, assistants to the choreographers, and more. Wrought Iron Productions collected more interviews and footage for the documentary film on the process, and came up with a draft of the film in January. It was far off the mark, so we scrambled to reconceive and rework the film, and managed to bring it in in time for Forklift's sixth, final visit to Wake Forest in February 2020. Soriano and Gendrich made plans to participate in an August 2020 Facilities Conference with John Shenette and Stephanie Poskin, and our START Gallery exhibition with Kaylah Amador was on track to happen. However, both were canceled due to COVID-19.

The production itself was a rousing success with our community, our administrators, and the Facilities collaborators with whom we worked. The contributions of designer Stephen Pruitt, composer Graham Reynolds, and faculty musicians, including Jacqui Carrasco, Ali Sakal, and Elizabeth Clendinning's gamelan ensemble, were integral to the quality of the work. The facilities staff performers stepped up and did a strong job, as did our students working backstage. And it was fabulous to see so many community members enjoying a night out with family and friends, celebrating workers and jobs we often ignore. Truly a family show and one that students, faculty, staff, and community members all seemed to enjoy and understand the significance of.

Wake Forest Magazine did a huge story on the project, and we saw the work recognized in numerous ways. President Hatch focused on the importance of the arts in our community, and got the point of the production: to recognize and celebrate our Facilities colleagues' commitment and talent. Both the Dean and the Provost also made very positive mention of us in their newsletters and in public forums, and we garnered supportive articles from several national news sources.

Though the scramble for WIP to get the film done in time for a February visit by Allison Orr and Gretchen LaMotte was nerve wracking, the visit itself was excellent. Allison and Gretchen met with many members of the Facilities team and got very positive feedback. The screening of the film went well, too, with Facilities staff participating in a post-film talk-back, and conversations spilling into Brendle's lobby well after the screening was over. We were scheduled to screen it again with Board members in the Spring, but that was canceled due to COVID-19.

It is rare that a project does pretty much everything you wanted it to do, but this did. Our collaborators felt seen and appreciated. Audiences loved the production. The performing arts got to be the center of attention for an innovative, original set of performances, classes, and more. Our students got to be a part of a community art-making practice that has changed some of them forever. We got to support Forklift Danceworks, which continues to do important work with diverse communities all over the country. We might even be able to see the destruction of Wake's stupid toilet paper tradition, and know we played a part. And we are certainly going out on the big bang we had hoped to go out on. This work will even live on in the film we made, and hopefully impact another decade of Wake Foresters to be more humane and more connected to the people who make this campus work. **Attendance/participants: 3590.**

**Triadic Memories by Morton Feldman – February 4, 2020 and
“Motherwell: product. placement.” January 20 - March 29,
2020**

Collaborating Units: Music/Hanes Gallery.
Key WFU collaborators: Louis Goldstein, Paul Bright.

We include this as one of our highlights both because it was a fabulous concert, but also because of the way it bookends IPLACe. In our original proposal for the center, we used an anecdote Louie Goldstein gave about an earlier Morton Feldman concert:



A month after I performed Morton Feldman's concert-length composition Triadic Memories, the Art Department hosted guest artist James Rosen, whose work was unknown to me. It turned out that his work on display in the Hanes Gallery was profoundly influenced by Morton Feldman's work, and this was something that Mr. Rosen spoke about in his public talk. How easy it would have been to schedule my faculty recital one month later, and how much better both events would have been if they could have supported each other in close proximity.

So in creating this collaboration with another modernist artist with similar influences, we were able to celebrate this original rationale. Paul Bright noted, “The Hanes Gallery’s Motherwell show itself was not funded by this IPLACe grant, but it was the inspiration for planning a concert of music by Morton Feldman in the Hanes Gallery during that show. The conjunction of art from the “New York School of Art” and music from the “New York School of Composition” created an exciting synergy. The performance of *Triadic Memories* benefitted from the venue. The expenses involved in putting on a concert in that location were provided by IPLACe, with an assist from the Department of Music. Although not part of the original proposal, the talk in M208 of the Music Wing on “Morton Feldman and *Triadic Memories*” the Friday preceding the concert, became a prominent unit in the undertaking. **The attendance at the talk (about 30 people) increased interest in the concert (72 people).** The audience consisted of Wake Forest University students, faculty, and people from beyond our borders, including attendees from Greensboro and Asheville.



Post COVID-19 collaborations: Our final set of highlights show the resilience of our collaborators. After the COVID-19 shutdown, a lot of things had to be canceled, but two major projects soldiered on.

Counseling: mental health interventions and acting

Collaborating units: Counseling and Theatre.

Key collaborators: Sharon Andrews and Nikki Elston (project originated in 2011 by Sharon Andrews, Phil Clarke, and Cindy Gendrich)

In our ninth year of working with Counseling by creating a troupe of actors who portray troubled clients for Masters Counseling students, we had a successful pivot to online work. Counseling professor Nikki Elston thanked Sharon Andrews for her work with the students, and our actors for their flexibility in the turn to on-line sessions. She also noted the difficulty of this work: “The actors come into class when students are working on some of our harder topics and skills. Through this semester the actors helped our counselors practice goal setting, domestic violence, suicide, grief and loss scenarios. Without the actors it would be impossible to do this work.”

Professor Elston provided the photo we have included, “Below is the only photo I snapped when we moved



online. I'm still so impressed at how well this worked. It allowed our students to get a taste of what telemental health is like, something they wouldn't have been able to do if it were not for this pandemic. I guess that's a silver lining.” Before COVID-19, there were a number of in-class sessions. After they went on-line, actors worked individually. There were **47 individual counseling sessions**, but since a number of them happened in the same class period, we are comfortable breaking it down by the dates on which these happen: 7 actors February 4; 1 actor February

18; 8 actors February 25; 1 actor March 3; 8 actors April 14 (virtual acting); 8 actors April 21 (virtual acting).

Wayang, Shadow Puppets, and Gamelan

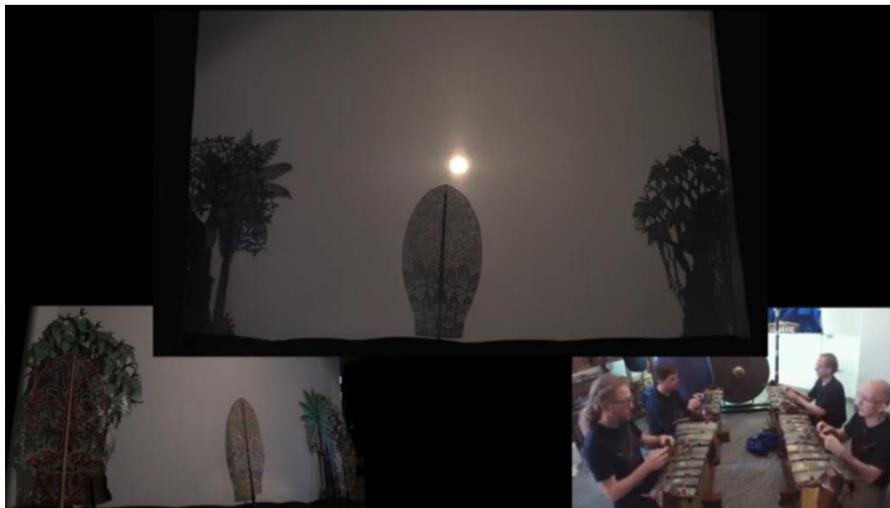
Collaborating WFU units: Music, Anthropology, Theatre.

Guests and colleagues from Indonesia and Richmond, VA.

Elizabeth Clendinning

In the Spring of 2019, Elizabeth Clendinning proposed a shadow puppet collaboration drawing on the work of colleagues from the University of Richmond. Her colleague Andy McGraw brought I Gusti Sudarta—professor of puppetry, ISI-Denpasar (a Balinese arts conservatory) for a semester-long residency in gamelan music, dance, and puppetry. Elizabeth wrote, “We hosted McGraw, Sudarta, and members of Gamelan Raga

Kusuma in Spring 2016, and this project was designed to have them return and present further workshops on shadow puppetry and gender wayang (the style of music accompanying shadow puppetry), and potentially dance (Sudarta is a fine dancer too).”



The culmination of the visit was to be a daytime or early evening shadow puppetry performance, scheduled so

that children involved in the service learning component of the project could see it. The Museum of Anthropology (Andrew Gurstelle) and Theatre (Kevin Frazier) were drawn into the project as well, and Elizabeth arranged for a performance at Speas Elementary. The project was well underway, and we had already paid for part of it when COVID-19 hit. Undeterred, Elizabeth worked with everyone to create a very cool Zoom performance. Above is a screen shot from the performance, but you can actually see the whole thing here, on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSRHp0yrCZs>

PART 2: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES:

Strengths:

1. Collaboration. This is a big complex of skills and behaviors, but this is what we do as artists, and we have done it well.
2. Inclusivity, both in terms of the work we have supported, but also the collaborators and audiences we have deliberately engaged, locally, nationally, and internationally.
3. Nimbleness. We have been responsive to ideas, quick in our turnaround of proposals, able to adapt and correct for unusual circumstances, and helpful in our attention to quickly solving problems.
4. Planning and execution: high quality projects delivered on time and on budget.
5. Flexibility and responsiveness to the goals of each project, to each collaborator, and to the circumstances of the moment.
6. Imagination.

Weaknesses:

1. Difficulty paring down, which leads to overload and burnout.
2. Up until *From the Ground Up*, trouble with marketing. Though our reach has always been good, our name recognition has not.
3. Personnel needs: I touch on this more at the end of this report, but taking care of our assistant, our collaborators, and ourselves is something we could do better.

PART 3: OVERVIEW, REFLECTION, PLANS, AND THANKS

The past ten years have been important ones for the arts at Wake Forest. In 2010 we were granted a two-year planning grant from the Provost's office to develop an idea for an interdisciplinary arts center. We spent two years doing research, traveling, meeting with people in other arts and humanities organizations, examining best practices, defining who and what we wanted to be, and figuring out what we wanted this center to accomplish.

As we said in our original proposal, our central goal was “to improve the cultural, intellectual, and imaginative life of the people at Wake Forest and in the Winston-Salem community.” We wanted to help generate and support quality art and quality conversation, and give artists, scholars, and students the time, place, and stimulus for such conversation. We hoped to “unsilo” our community by using the inherent interdisciplinarity of performance work to draw people together. We wanted to infuse a diverse variety of high quality performance work into as many places and conversations as we could, drawing on the great work of our campus artists and scholars, as well as high quality guests. By doing this, we wanted to raise the profile of the performing arts at Wake Forest, and thereby to improve Wake's reputation as a place for innovative Arts programs. And in terms of practical application, we wanted to create clear guidelines and elegant structures that made collaboration as easy as possible. Artists are not always respected for their practicality, though we spend most of our lives doing a lot without much money. So we also wanted to demonstrate how responsibly, resourcefully, and ably we could use resources, if entrusted with them.

At the end of eight years at \$125K/year, we have met all of these goals and more. IPLACe has been the most prolific arts organization Wake Forest has ever seen, and is a remarkably well-integrated model of creative collaboration that should last for decades. I should note that one subtextual goal—and one that we did not

achieve—was to gain enough donor interest to make a Scales renovation a reality. But perhaps we have taken some steps in the right direction.

The road has been surprisingly smooth, and we have been exceptionally proud of the quality of IPLACe's offerings. Yes, we've had a few projects that didn't live up to expectations, but the vast majority have been extremely well-planned and appropriately-attended. Students have varied in their interest in creating new projects, but they have been integral to our work throughout our existence. In some years they have done extraordinary things, exemplified by Jay Buchanan and Anne Peyton Brothers's beautiful production of *Lean*, which in 2018 brought British playwright Isley Lynn to campus and connected to over 30 campus constituents. This year, Monet Beatty's inspiring dance work in conjunction with Earth Day provided yet another model for student activism and collaboration, as she linked Wake Downtown, Scales, and a half dozen Reynolda Campus departments and organizations. Though COVID-19 came along and destroyed its ability to connect people in person, Monet nevertheless put out a beautiful video and she will undoubtedly continue in this important work. It felt great to support student imagination and initiative in these and many other collaborations.

IPLACe has worked with most academic units on campus, and we have extended our reach to include the LGBTQ center, the Intercultural Center, the Thrive office, and more. We've also worked with other centers and institutes, with UNCG, WSSU, and our own WF staff. The latter have included Facilities staff (*From the Ground Up*) and Arts staff—especially our own assistants at IPLACe, who have consistently created their own IPLACe projects. Chris Yon's latest *Interstitial* work with SECCA has been inspiring and wide-reaching, drawing in dance artists and community members from outside the usual Wake Forest community. In short, our arms have been open wide, welcoming in any member of our community (broadly conceived) who has a great idea for interdisciplinary performance work. Graphs and data on that will be in the summative report.

We have done a lot with the generous support of the Provost's office, and we are especially grateful for the way Rogan Kersh has kept us top of mind, has supported our initiatives, and has come up with new ways to stretch our work. The hiring of Christina Soriano into the Provost's office was certainly a vote of confidence in her, but we also see it as a vote of confidence for IPLACe, which through Christina became the backbone of the Transformative Arts Project (2018-2020), and now of the Wake the Arts initiative. Christina has been a fierce advocate, and her hiring of Steve Morrison, strong work with Development—especially our new friend Beth McIlheny, and general communication and encouragement have been crucial. Huge thanks to all of you.

I leave my directorship with a full heart, a bit overwhelmed by all we have been able to do in the past decade. The letters we received as we were planning to apply to the RAC for another five years of funding occasionally brought tears to my eyes. They reminded me that there are brilliant, creative faculty members whose entire time here has been positively affected by their work with IPLACe. Multiple new plays and play translations staged by us. Magic shows and neuroscience. Gamelan ensembles and puppeteers. Work toward diversity and inclusion that has been consistent and varied. Glorious guest artists from Holland and LA, Spain and Chicago, Texas and West Africa. Years-long collaborations with counseling faculty, doing work that has probably saved lives. Support for numerous projects for aging members of our society, including people with neurodegenerative disease and the military. I could go on and on, but you'll have the archives and can see these details.

None of this would have happened without our happy little band of IPLACers, meeting every other week to keep the wheels turning. Stacy Wolf, one of our external board members, and a professor at Princeton, said she was "in awe" of what we have accomplished. But she also said that we needed to pay attention to human

capital, and to faculty time. As I leave my post, I want to suggest we focus more on that last bit. I took a lot on because I believed in what I was doing. However, it wasn't without cost, and I don't think anyone else should give up their research, creative work, family time, or sleep to keep this thing going. I hope that as donors keep adding money to our coffers, we will make sure that:

- 1) Our assistant is properly paid and gets benefits;
- 2) Faculty directors get release time and/or pay for the diffuse ways that their time is required to keep this work going;
- 3) We attend to needs for space as new plans are devised to improve Scales Fine Arts Center. One way to make sure that people know what this center is and what it does is to locate our office within the arts.
- 4) We keep an eye on the extra work and WFU programming saturation we are contributing to. As I will talk about in my ten-year report, we have been a part of that problem—with good intentions of course, but still part of the problem. How to solve that while still honoring the creativity and energy of our faculty and our students is something I hope we can wrap our minds around.
- 5) We figure out how the departments, Dean, and Provost can give faculty in- and outside the arts positive encouragement for reaching outside of their disciplinary boundaries. For all of Wake's professed love of interdisciplinarity, we still do not seem to know how to credit it for promotion or tenure. Some kind of incentive needs to be in place, or as the standards for tenure and promotion become continually more stringent, our work will continue to be seen as "extra" or worse, a waste of time.
- 6) We keep the ball rolling with donations. Thanks to Christina Soriano, Rogan Kersh, and Beth McIlheny, we have \$1M in donations (exactly what we started with!) to develop the new IPLACe. Some will be put in an endowment, and some we will be allowed to spend down. To do anything anywhere near the scale of *From the Ground Up*—roughly a quarter-million dollar project—the new IPLACe will need more. With Studio Art and Art History joining the team, this is especially crucial. COVID-19 has complicated things for everyone, but I also see this as a time to reassess our values as an institution, realizing that the live, human experience of being on a campus is actually the big reason people want to come to a college like Wake. The Arts arise from this same impulse for human connection and communion. So perhaps this is the perfect time to assert our centrality. I have enormous faith in Elizabeth Clendinning, Leah Roy, and Christina Soriano to brilliantly lead this charge.

Finally, I just want to say how cool it is that this even happened at all. I'm not sure IPLACe could have been born anyplace but at Wake, with its trust in faculty, its financial resources, its small-ish campus, its world-class faculty, its smart, creative students, and its encouraging and open leaders. Michele Gillespie and Mark Welker's early support was crucial. And the fact that art-loving Rogan Kersh assumed his Provostial duties mere days before I gave the presentation to ask for funding was a wonderful little miracle all its own. I have, from the day I arrived at Wake, felt encouraged to make my own path and to trust my ability to lead. I know I'm not alone in that, and that freedom to forge ahead has made all the difference, not just to me but to all the people who have come to IPLACe with their wild, wonderful, ambitious, and creative ideas. To anyone who is reading this, thank you for anything you have done to make this all possible. I will always be grateful.