Program History

Please join us on our 40th anniversary as we celebrate becoming an academic department!

40 years ago, the Comparative History of Ideas Program was founded in order to “provide new approaches to the humanities” through a student-directed, interdisciplinary liberal arts experience. As the newly established CHID Department looks forward to 40 more years of transforming undergraduate learning, it is essential that we continue to cultivate the intentional, intersectional, and aspirational elements that have given the program its vitality—namely, the interplay of faculty collaboration, staff commitment, and student leadership that remain the heart of the CHID community. #40MOREYEARS

40th Anniversary Events:

Keynote & Reception (RSVP here) on Thursday, May 23, 2019 from 5:00pm – 9:00pm in HUB 145

*Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*

Keynote by Dr. Kathleen Belew (CHID ’05), Assistant Professor of US History and the College at the University of Chicago and New York Times bestselling author.

Celebratory reception with refreshments to follow. The reception will be hosted in partnership with the CHID Alumni Advisory Board as they launch their new mentorship program for current students and recent graduates.

Lunch & Learn (RSVP here) on Friday, May 24, 2019 from 12:30pm – 2:00pm in HUB 145

“CHID and the Future of Higher Education”

Facilitated discussion bringing students, faculty, and alumni together to envision how the humanities can respond to and thrive in the Trump Era, cosponsored by the CHID Alumni Advisory Board.

For more information about CHID’s 40th Anniversary events, please visit our [events page](https://chid.washington.edu).

Program History

CHID was founded to “provide new approaches to the humanities.”

In the 1978-1979 academic year, the first course in what would become the Comparative History of Ideas Program (CHID) was taught at the University of Washington. Two years prior, a National Endowment for the Humanities grant was awarded to a group of UW Humanities and Social Sciences faculty with the goal of producing “comparative and interdisciplinary courses and degree programs.”
In 1979, John Toews was hired by the History Department as a modern European Intellectual historian. He served as CHID's Director from the time of his promotion in 1981 until 2010. During the 1980s, CHID grew in size and visibility under the academic umbrella of the Comparative Literature Program. Many of the foundational courses were developed during this period, including the CHID 390 Junior Colloquium, which remains a graduation requirement today. Under the leadership of James Clowes, a charismatic teaching assistant and lecturer who became CHID's Associate Director in 1994, the program developed and consolidated its characteristic institutional shape as an exemplary, collaborative, student-centered “learning community.” The program rapidly became a leader in the development of innovative and transformative study abroad programs for undergraduates. In 1998, CHID became an independent program in the Humanities Division of the College of Arts and Sciences.

In the 40 years since that first course, CHID has helped to “provide new approaches to the humanities” by refining and delivering a student-directed, interdisciplinary liberal arts experience. The interplay of faculty collaboration, staff commitment, and student involvement is at the core of the program.

As the CHID community looks forward to 40 more years of transforming undergraduate learning, it is essential that we continue to cultivate the intentional, intersectional, and inspiring elements that have given the program its vitality.

Timeline

1978  NEH Grant to create CHID Program awarded to a group of UW faculty members, including Leroy Searle (English), Hal Opperman (Art History), Eugene Webb (Comparative Religion), Hazard Adams (English), and Tom Hankins (History).

1981  John Toews named Director of the CHID Program.

1984  John Toews receives MacArthur Fellowship.

1989  Jim Clowes hired as CHID's first teaching assistant. He also acted as the CHID curriculum reviewer, adviser, and student organizer.

1991  Jim Clowes hired as CHID's Associate Director.

1992  CHID's interdisciplinary undergraduate journal *interSections* is first published. Organized and edited by undergraduate volunteers from the CHID Program, *interSections* showcases poetry, prose, and scholarly work as well as original artwork produced by undergraduates at the University of Washington. The journal is committed to providing a forum for the free expression of intellectual ideas and inquiry that promotes the continued growth of interdisciplinary scholarship on campus.

1995  CHID's first study abroad program is run; the location is Rome.

1995  CHID 496: “Focus Group” is added to the CHID curriculum

1995  CHID 497: “Peer Facilitation” is added to the CHID curriculum

1996  CHID runs first Prague study abroad program.

1998-99  A senior thesis is made a requirement for the major.

1998  Phillip Thurtle is hired as CHID program manager. Duties include undergraduate advising and managing study abroad
1999  CHID’s first study abroad program in Cape Town, South Africa.

2000  CHID offers one of the first disability studies courses at the University of Washington.

2000  CHID receives the University of Washington Brotman Award for instructional excellence. The award recognizes collaboration within and among departments, programs and groups to improve the quality of undergraduate education.

2000-01  A CHID focus group in 2000 published “Rethinking the University: Final Report” after a sustained examination of a university education as seen through an undergraduate lens. This report was presented to the UW President Richard McCormick, and some of its recommendations ultimately made their way into the standard speeches delivered by university administrators about the enhancement of undergraduate education. The process of self-reflection on the nature of the university was given more permanent, institutional form a year later in the course CHID 210: “The University and Ways of Knowing,” which is now offered on an annual basis by Jim Anthony at the School of Education.

2001  CHID’s first study abroad program to Belfast, Northern Ireland.

2002  CHID’s first study abroad program to the Republic of Cyprus.

2002  The DIALOGUE Project, an organization of CHID students and alumni dedicated to fostering a culture of international awareness on campus and within the community, is established under the direction of Jim Clowes. Its aim was to create a sustainable network of students, community leaders, and organizations dedicated to facilitating dialogue across difference.

2002-03  Jim Clowes develops the idea for Exploration Seminars. CHID runs the first five of these programs in Summer 2003.

2003  Tyler Fox (CHID ’99) leaves CHID; Theron Stevenson (CHID ’02) is hired to take over the management of CHID international programs.

2003  The DIALOGUE Project hosted an international conference: “Shifting Borders, Changing Spaces.” It featured an international panel including Professor Christine Crumrine of American University in Beirut, Lebanon, Heba Morayef from American University in Beirut, and presentations by a group of students from Hazelwood Integrated College in Belfast, Northern Ireland. UW faculty led sessions on issues of international conflict and modes of dialogue with Professor Clark Speed presenting on “Dialogue Within the Dialogue: The War in Sierra Leon” and Professor Frederick Lorenz presenting on “Kosovo: The United Nations Missions and Prospect for Peace.” Intiman Theater also led an interactive presentation for high school students. Approximately 120 people attended this event with a variety of participants, including students and faculty from UW, Roosevelt High School, and Brewster High School, as well as members of the surrounding Seattle community.

2003  CHID students publish the first issue of The Anthology Project, a journal that records both the struggles and joys of the personal transformation that can occur with reflective travel. Its first volume—Letters Home—appeared in Spring 2003.

2003  CHID students organized a benefit show at the Crocodile Cafe to raise money for the CHID discretionary fund and to reconnect with local alumni. The Long Winters, a successful local band headed by CHID alumnus John Roderick, donated all proceeds from the event.

2003  The James D. Clowes Award for the Advancement of Learning Communities is established in honor of CHID Associate
Director Jim Clowes. It recognizes a faculty or staff member who transforms undergraduate learning at the UW by creating or sustaining learning communities among students.

2004 Jim Clowes passed away on March 1, 2004, after a 7-month struggle with late-stage pancreatic cancer.

2004 May 15, 2004, The DIALOGUE Project organized its second annual conference: “Rethinking ‘American’” Three focused sessions encouraged students, educators, and community members to question what it means to be “American” and explore dominant national narratives on the American experience. In opening up a space to discuss the changing significance of American identities, the DIALOGUE Project hoped to create a forum through which to explore how national identity is interpreted and reconstituted by government structures, grassroots movement, and international perspectives.

2004 In recognition of its efforts to promote international understanding the DIALOGUE Project was awarded the 2004 Frank Shigemura Prize from the Foundation for International Understanding (FIUTS).

2004 CHID alumnus Kevin Philbin worked with current students and other recent alumni on another fundraising event, “Swarming the Beehive,” a multi-media showcase of work by current students and friends of CHID. A dazzling display of creative student work, including 8 films, 2 plays, acrobatic dance, poetry reading, and many musical numbers raised more than $6000.

2004 The University awarded the S. Sterling Munro Public Service Award to James Clowes. This award is presented annually to the UW faculty member who most demonstrates exemplary leadership in promoting service learning and community partnership projects.

2004 CHID Administrator Faith Hines and CHID Lecturer Kari Tupper leave the University. Amy Peloff becomes Assistant Director of CHID.

2004 Phillip Thurtle returns to CHID as a Visiting Assistant Professor.

2005 CHID hires our first full-time advisor, Kanna Hudson (CHID ’05).

2005 Phillip Thurtle is hired as our first full-time faculty member.

2005-06 CHID 260: “(Re)Thinking Diversity” was developed and taught by Jeanette Bushnell and a group of undergraduate and graduate students.

2006 Cynthia Anderson (CHID ’06) replaces Kanna as our undergraduate advisor. Laura Marquez (CHID ’05) becomes CHID’s first fiscal specialist.

2007 Sylvia Kurinsky leaves CHID and Tim Cahill takes over as the CHID international programs assistant.

2007 Phillip Thurtle receives tenure and is promoted to Associate Professor.

2008 María Elena García joins the CHID faculty as Assistant Professor.

2010 John Toews steps down as Director of CHID; Phillip Thurtle is named the new Director.

2011 CHID 250: “Race, Education, and Poverty: The Wire” was developed and taught by Max Hunter.
2013 María Elena García takes over as the Director of CHID.

2014 CHID hosts Return to the Beehive, an evening of mingling, drinks, music, stories, performances, and connecting with Chiddies.

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