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BACKGROUND

The U’s new INterdisciplinary EXchange for Utah Science (NEXUS) is an interdisciplinary research institute at the University of Utah. NEXUS welcomes researchers across the University of Utah who desire to collaborate on research projects concerning society's grand challenges, including: (1) social disparities & physical/mental health, (2) climate change, the environment and well-being, (3) communicating science to the community, (4) suicide/violence, (5) families and health and (6) opioids.
STAFF & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ken Smith, PhD – Director of Utah Population Database, Distinguished Professor of Family and Consumer Studies and Director of NEXUS

STAFF

Austin Westley, MPA
Administrative Coordinator

Mahima Reginathan
Graduate Assistant

Daniel Mendoza
Research Associate

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Keith Bartholomew, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs | Architecture and Planning

Andrea Rorrer, Associate Dean for Faculty Research | Education

Brenda Bowen, Director | Global Change and Sustainability Center

Jakob Jensen, Associate Dean for Research | Humanities

Cynthia Berg, Dean | Social and Behavioral Science

Rick Forster, Associate Dean | Social and Behavioral Science
NEXUS Members conduct interdisciplinary research and engage with local communities to find solutions to society’s grand challenges.

With 112 members, and counting, representing 16 colleges and 49 departments and programs across campus, NEXUS is the University of Utah’s incubator for ideas.
The John H. Short “Nexus Core” is located in suite 3380, on the third floor of the Kem and Carolyn Gardner commons building in the heart of the University of Utah academic campus. The space includes open study areas, research conference rooms with teleconference capability, and lab space.

**NEXUS Core**
This core space includes collaborative open workspace, and three research conference rooms with audio and visual projection.

**Behavioral Economics Lab**
This lab is used to conduct economic and political science research. The room has 30 terminals with the ability to partition the room. Attached observation rooms are also available for use.

**Focus Group Room**
The room has a projection screen for small groups, has the ability to record audio/video in the attached observation room. It opens new avenues of research with individuals of diverse groups.
PILOT GRANT PROGRAM

NEXUS announced its inaugural research pilot grant program in 2019, focused on interdisciplinary research that will seed the creation of knowledge and solutions to society’s grand challenges. There were six proposals funded.

Initial funds for this program were provided by the Larry H. & Gail Miller Family Foundation and Sorensen Legacy Foundation.

Proposals are sought from all colleges/departments at the University of Utah where research teams must comprise of two or more regular, full-time faculty members from different departments and different disciplines that clearly articulate an interdisciplinary perspective.

**Expedition Proposals** are designed to encourage teams to explore a new topic and determine if it has potential for a larger proposal, book project, or other product. **Research Proposals** address society’s grand challenges and topics in the domain of the University's Transformative Excellence Program.

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**Subjects**

Proposals draw on many disciplines, from Family & Consumer studies to Atmospheric Science, from Mathematics to Pulmonary Medicine. Investigators include other local universities to accomplish team goals.

**2019 Grants Awarded**

Total grant monies awarded to date has been $75,835. Total projects funded: Six

2020 Pilot Grant Process Underway
“Leveraging the Zoo, Arts, and Parks Summer Passport Program to Promote Physical Activity and Human Development”  
Family and Consumer Studies  
Health, Kinesiology, and Recreation

“Assessing and Addressing Disparate Exposures to Air Pollution in SL County”  
Atmospheric Science  
Parks, Recreation and Tourism  
Sociology  
Geography  
Anthropology  
Mathematics  
Pulmonary Medicine

“The Influence of Web-Based Hate on Bias-Motivated Criminal Behavior”  
Geography  
Environmental and Sustainability Studies

“Exploring Utah’s High-Elevation Caves: Fossil Archives of Ecosystem Change”  
Anthropology  
Geology & Geophysics  
Natural History Museum of Utah

“Uncovering the Framework for Spring Sustainability in Complex Socio-hydrological Systems in the Remote Arid Highland of Baja California Sur, Mexico”  
Geology & Geophysics  
Anthropology  
Global Change & Sustainability Center

“Crossing the Policy Divide: Translating Health and Behavioral Drivers of Utah Air Quality into Public Policy Solutions”  
Political Science  
Atmospheric Science  
Pulmonary Medicine  
Department of Public Health – Brigham Young University
The Wasatch Front Research Data Center (WFRDC) is a member of the national network of Federal Statistical Research Data Centers (FSRDC), and serves the urban core of Utah, often called the Wasatch Front, as well as the state and the Intermountain region.

The WFRDC is a secure research environment to be used by qualified researchers with approved projects where they can analyze restricted data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau and other federal statistical agencies.

Major research institutions along the Wasatch Front, including the University of Utah, Utah State University, Brigham Young University and departments within the Utah state government are invited to propose RDC studies in demography, population health, economics, and geographic and spatial analysis.

The WFRDC will also support approved projects that link selected data from the Utah-specific health data housed in the Utah Population Database to the restricted data in the FSRDC network.
Sponsored Lectures, Workshops & Research Roundtables

Research Roundtables bring together researchers from across campus to collaborate on similar research interests. From Diabetes Research to Carbon Capture. There have been nine Roundtables.

Three SWC lectures were held, with over 100 attendees.

SOCIETY, WATER & CLIMATE

Partnering with the Department of Sociology in The College of Social and Behavioral Science, NEXUS sponsored two lectures, given by guest speakers, attended by multiple University groups.

Population and Health Seminar Series

WORKSHOPS

Over the course of two to three days, Grant Writing workshops (in cooperation with the College of Humanities and the College of Social and Behavioral Science) were held facilitating developing, writing, and submission of faculty-sponsored proposals.
“MAKE THE CONNECTION PODCAST”

Make the Connection is the University of Utah, Interdisciplinary Exchange for Utah Science Podcast. We aim to bring collaborators together from across campus and disciplines. Our conversations vary widely, and we are always looking for ways to communicate research to the community at large.
Research meetings are vital to team building and the development of interdisciplinary scholarship, and grant development on the University of Utah campus. We host and facilitate interdisciplinary groups within NEXUS.

Enabling Researchers – Natural Hazards Group

Consortium of Environmental Determinants of Health

The lab space enables economic, political science, business and other studies to take place all under one roof.
OTHER GROUPS

NEXUS has also participated in the administration of the Consortium for Families and Health Research, a group involving some 115 faculty and 48 graduate students from across the main and health sciences campuses.

Coordinating ICPSR workshops, pilot grants, and research symposia, NEXUS has enabled C-FAHR to develop training opportunities for graduate students and grant opportunities for faculty.
**FUTURE GOALS**

- Expedition Scholar Program: Training the next generation of new faculty for success in federal funding.
- NEXUS Seminar Series.
- Rounds of Pilot Grant Funding.
- Wasatch Front Research Data Center Collaboration and Projects.
- Hosting the Utah Center for Data Science Seminar Series.
- Supporting the University of Utah “1U4U” Research Projects.