

From the International Institute for Reminiscence and Life Review to the International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice (ICLIP)

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The International Institute for Reminiscence and Life Review (IIRLR) has been operating as a program of the University of Wisconsin—Superior (UWS) Center for Continuing Education (CCE) since 1997. John Kunz, a program manager in the CCE, founded the Institute. The goal of the Institute was to promote the field of reminiscence and life review. To this end, he organized the Institute as a membership organization with a voluntary Advisory Board elected from the membership every two years. In addition, he established and directed biennial conferences held in conjunction with the Gerontological Society of America's Annual Scientific Conferences. Sadly, Mr. Kunz passed away in 2011. At the time of his death, he endowed a fund to support the activities of the Institute. Despite this loss, the Institute has continued to function under the leadership of various Presidents and Advisory Board members with the strong support of the UWS-CCE. Esther Gieschen has taken over the lead after John Kunz passed away and served efficiently as the linking pin to the University of Wisconsin Superior. Donna Sislo has run the Institute over the past years in her own very kind and amiable way. The Institute had a membership of approximately 70 individuals from across the world and operated a website and registry, quarterly newsletters, biennial conferences, several awards as well as the current online International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review.

As of June 30, 2019, the University of Wisconsin CCE could no longer support the Institute due to a lack of dedicated faculty to run the program. In the meantime, the IIRLR commissioned a 'transition board' to develop an alternative strategy for embedding the Institute. This board consisted of Juliette Shellman as President, Philippe Cappeliez, Carol Keegan, Mary O'Brien Tyrell, Tom Pierce, Paulette Stevens, Cheryl Svensson, Brian de Vries, Gerben Westerhof and Sarah White. After the discussion of several proposals in the transition board, it was decided that the most practical and logical proposal was the development of a Center at the University of Connecticut

School of Nursing. This proposal was approved by the Institute's Advisory Board and its membership at the biennial meeting in Boston on November 13th, 2018 and approved by the University of Connecticut in the spring of 2019.

International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice (ICLIP)

There are several reasons why the new Center is best located at the University of Connecticut (UConn). UConn already hosts research and education that focuses on life stories and their application in practice, although this is rather scattered across different disciplines and schools. The establishment of the Center will provide an important impetus for bringing these current initiatives together. The Center has a strong focus on innovation in research, education, and practice and is intended to operate worldwide, which matches nicely with the UConn's culture of innovation in a dynamic global society.

Together with the transition to UConn, the Advisory Board and Transition Board worked on a revision of the name, mission, goals, and structure to provide opportunities for the future as well as to fit the requirements for the establishment of a research center at UConn. The name was changed to the *International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice (ICLIP)* to show the increasing and broadening interest from reminiscence and life review to the field of life stories.

The name reflects the unique international nature of the Center as well as the field it addresses. Several centers with a similar name exist elsewhere, but they lack the international orientation of the newly proposed Center: e.g., Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Narrative at St. Thomas University (Fredericton, NB, Canada), Life Story Lab (University of Florida), Story Lab (University of Twente, the Netherlands). There is intensive collaboration with these centers through the advisory board and membership.

Vision, Mission, and Goals

The *vision* of the International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice (ICLIP) is to be the national and international catalyst and clearinghouse for life story research, innovation, and practice.

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The *mission* of the Center is to bring together researchers, educators, students, practitioners, and artists from around the world to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities through written and oral narratives, personal histories, reminiscence, life review, autobiographical memory, and guided autobiographies. With the overarching goal of generating new knowledge in this emerging field, ICLIP provides a collaborative infrastructure to establish programs of research, implement educational programs, develop innovative applications in practice, and disseminate life story best practices.

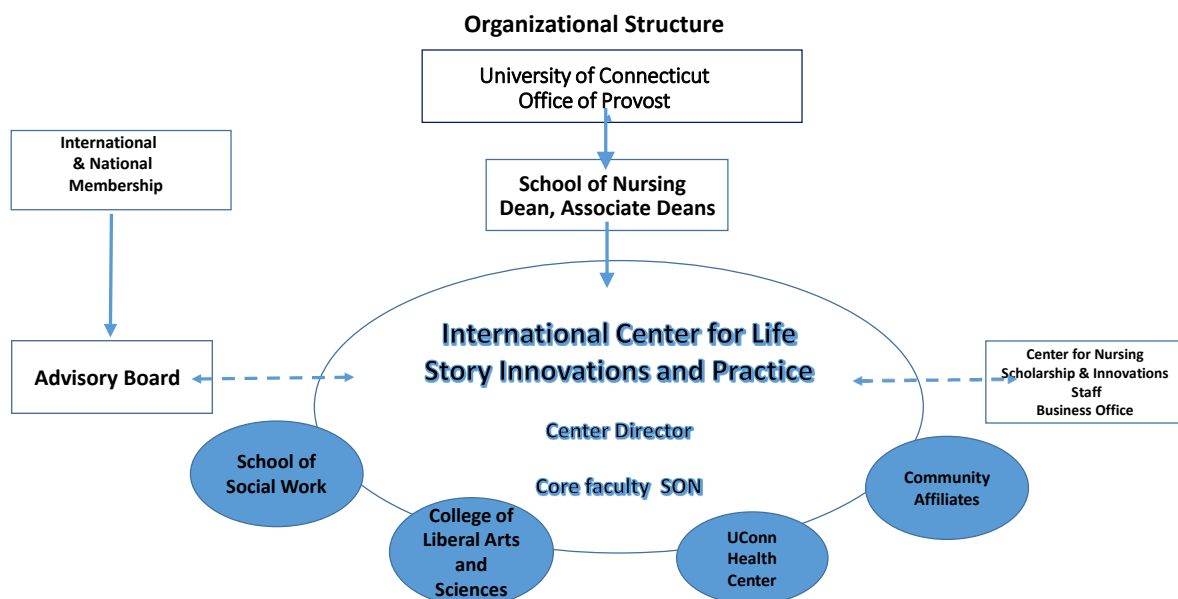
Building on Its Vision and Mission, the Center Has the Following Goals:

1. Develop a platform to facilitate interdisciplinary life story research programs and methods.
2. Implement educational programs for faculty, researchers, students, and practitioners in the field.
3. Develop curricular models that include life story content and practice.
4. Disseminate life story research findings, innovations, and best practices.
5. Create links with community agencies and points of care around the world to promote the use of life story approaches in the care of individuals, families, and communities.
6. Recognize outstanding contributions to the field.

Organization

The Center is run by a Director, Juliette Shellman who works together with an advisory board. The Advisory Board currently consists of Cheryl Brohard, Alison Kris, Britta Nielsen, Tom Pierce, Bill Randall, Myra Sabir, Gerben Westerhof, and Lori Yancura. The Director and the Advisory Board meet about every three months through Zoom/Skype as well as face-to-face at the biennial conference. The Director reports to the Dean of the School of Nursing in a direct line following UConn’s regulation on annual reports and five-year reviews. The Center works closely together with the *International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review* that is hosted at Radford University; as the Editor, Tom Pierce is also on the Advisory Board of ICLIP.

Membership of the Center is open to all those adhering to its mission and goals. The Center reaches out to all those involved in variations of life story work and life review. This may include academics and researchers working in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, linguistics, technology, health sciences, nursing, and gerontology and who are studying phenomena such as narratives, personal histories, reminiscence, life review, life writing, autobiographical memory, guided autobiographies, etc. It may also include professionals working in the fields of social work, mental health care, youth work, elderly care, business, etc. who may use methodologies based in reminiscence and life review, personal histories, life story work, guided autobiography, and more. Members elect the Advisory Board for a 2-year term. International members of the Center as well as core and affiliated faculty at the University of Connecticut are encouraged to participate in the organization of activities, like the biennial conference or the awards committee.



Membership Benefits

- Profit by attending ICLIP biennial meetings at a discount after two consecutive years of membership.
- Attend and/or participate in the University of Connecticut's annual ICLIP symposiums.
- Opportunity to list one's contact information and areas of interest and expertise on the Center's Registry, which is accessible by anyone who visits the ICLIP website.
- Exclusive access to educational webinars.
- Provide your expertise through consultation and participation in student dissertation committees and faculty research.
- Receive advance announcement of publication of our online quarterly newsletter that furthers networking opportunities and reviews the latest research, books, and other developments in the field.
- Participate in the election of Advisory Board members and officers and take part in the General Assembly meeting at the biennial conference.
- Take a leadership role in the administration of the Center's mission and goals through participation in the Advisory Board.
- Participate in the nomination of candidates for ICLIP Awards.
- Receive advance announcement of publication of the most recent issue of the on-line International Journal for Reminiscence and Life Review, containing peer-reviewed articles related to all aspects of reminiscence and life review.
- Identify oneself as a leader in the field who is dedicated to the Center's mission.

Summary

The International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice (ICLIP) will continue many of the activities of the International Institute of Reminiscence and Life Review (IIRLR) such as publishing a quarterly newsletter and journal, promoting the work of our members, and holding conferences. Efforts this spring will be focused on further developing the ICLIP website, growing the membership, and exploring potential research and education collaborations across disciplines. One exciting activity undertaken through the Center is the development of the Graduate Certificate Program in Life Story Practice and Research. The goal of this 12-credit online program is to prepare graduate students and professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to conduct life story interventions and/or programs with individuals, families, and groups. Thus far, the program has been approved by the School of Nursing faculty and the Curriculum and Courses Committee. We are awaiting approval at the University level which should occur by the end of May, 2020. Once approved, the courses will be developed through the UConn Center for Education, Teaching, and Learning, in collaboration with experts from our membership.

This article describes a three-year transition process that brings together researchers, faculty, students, and practitioners from around the world to further advance life story innovations, research and practice. The transition of the IIRLR to ICLIP shows the hard work and commitment of the leadership and membership of the IIRLR and the faculty and students of the University of Connecticut. As a result of these efforts, the International Center for Life Story Innovations and Practice represents the best of the past and the promise of the future. Additional information about the Center can be found through this link: <https://iclip.nursing.uconn.edu/>