

Nwando Achebe, Ph.D.

Jack and Margaret Sweet Endowed Professor of History
Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
(Pronunciation: [Wan-do Ah-chě-bě](#))
Pronunciation key: ě as in pet)

Contact Information

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EDUCATION

2000 Ph.D., History—University of California, Los Angeles.
1998 C. Phil., History—University of California, Los Angeles.
1994 M.A., African Area Studies—University of California, Los Angeles.
1991 B.A., Theater Arts (Cum Laude)—University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2017- Jack and Margaret Sweet Endowed Professor of History, Department of History, Michigan State University.
2010- Professor (tenured), Department of History, Michigan State University.
2005-10 Associate Professor (tenured), Department of History, Michigan State University.
2002-05 Assistant Professor (tenure-track), Department of History, The College of William & Mary.
2000-02 Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of California, Los Angeles.

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

2020- Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, College of Social Science, Michigan State University.
2016-21 Faculty Excellence Advocate, College of Social Science, Michigan State University.
2019 Responsible Administrator, School of Human Resources and Labor Relations, College of Social Science, Michigan State University. July 22-September 22.
2002-05 Chair, African Studies Program, The College of William & Mary.

SUMMARY OF OTHER LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

- 2020- Co-CEO, Achebe Masterworks LLC.
- 2016-19 Board of Directors, African Studies Association.
- 2013-15 Co-Convener, African Studies Association Women’s Caucus.
- 2012- Founding Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of West African History*.
- 2008- Co-Director, Chinua Achebe, now Christie and Chinua Achebe Foundation.

SUMMARY PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- 2022-23 American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow. Host: Rutgers University.
- 2023 Scenario Planning Workshop, Society for College and University Planning.
- 2022 HERS (Higher Education Resource Services) Leadership Institute.
- 2021 National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE), DEI Strategic Planning Workshop.
- 2020 HERS (Higher Education Resource Services) Next Stages, Next Steps.
- 2020 National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE), New Chief Diversity Officers Workshop.
- 2019 Advancing Inclusive Excellence in Times of Change and Uncertainty, Council of Colleges of Arts & Sciences (CCAS).
- 2019 Academic Impressions’ Recruitment, Onboarding and Retaining Underrepresented Faculty.
- 2018 National Research Mentoring Network-CIC Academic Network (NRMN-CAN) Facilitating Mentor Training Workshop, University of Chicago.
- 2017-18 Academic Leadership Program (ALP) Fellow, Big Ten Academic Alliance.

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

- 2022-23 **American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow.**

The ACE Fellows Program offers participants a personalized and unparalleled learning opportunity to fully immerse oneself in the study and application of academic leadership. Participants learn about another institution's culture, policies, and decision-making procedures and apply what they learn back on their home campus. This program compresses years of on-the-job training and skill development into a single year, resulting in one of the most effective, comprehensive leadership development programs in American higher education. More than 80% of ACE Fellows have gone on to hold positions as deans, chief academic officers, chief executive officers, and other cabinet-level positions.

Placement Experience, Rutgers University: mentored by “system” President Jonathan Holloway; Chancellor Provost Francine Conway (New Brunswick); and Chancellor Antonio Tillis (Camden). Learning in three competency areas: (1) innovative leadership and change management; (2) budget and financial management; (3) student success that will provide the

infrastructure necessary to lead as a chief academic and administrative officer of a university. Learning consists of shadowing mentors, attending cabinet and executive level meetings, as well as subcommittee meetings on topics as varied as risk assessment, strategic priorities/resource allocation, climate action, data governance, enrollment management, budget management, alumni engagement and fundraising, faculty, staff, and medical residents' negotiation. Also attend Senate, Board of Trustees, and Board of Governors meetings. Five deep dive learning areas: academic affairs, labor relations, foundation/development/advancement, budget/financial management, and strategic affairs.

Campus Visits: Brown University, University of North Carolina Charlotte, Johnson C. Smith University, College of Charleston, University of Arizona, Tucson, University of California, Riverside, University of California, San Diego, William Patterson University, Howard University, and CETYS University, Baja California, Mexico. Met with presidents and their cabinets to learn about their institutions, innovative initiatives, and deepen comprehension of what makes an effective leader in higher education.

Michigan State University

Founded in 1855, Michigan State University (MSU) is the nation's premier land-grant university, and one of the top research universities in the world. MSU is a top 100 global university and is the 34th top public US university. MSU has a student population of almost 50,000 who come from 50 US states and 138 foreign countries. 21.5% of its students are minoritized and 11.4% are international. MSU has 1900 tenure-stream faculty from seventeen degree granting colleges.

2020- **Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**, Executive Leadership, Dean's Office, College of Social Science, Michigan State University.

College of Social Science

With 14 degree-granting programs, 5 Research Centers and Institutes, 4,900+ undergraduate students, 1,400+ graduate students, 450+ faculty members, the College of Social Science is the largest college at Michigan State University.

Scope of Responsibilities

The Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is responsible for College activities designed to enhance and maintain a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture for faculty, students, and staff. She leads Chairs and Directors and others in the implementation of DEI section of the College's Strategic Plan; represents the College in meetings on issues involving diversity, equity, and inclusion; functions as the College liaison to the Office

for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion (IDI) and the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE); provides required briefings for search committees and manage approval processes of candidates, short-lists, and offers with IDI; oversees processes to elect representatives to College and University Committees, in compliance with College and unit bylaws; works with the Dean regarding active OIE investigations, recommending interim actions as needed; collaborates with the Dean and the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs on disciplinary actions; leads the process of approval and implementation of the College's policies on civility, professionalism, and community norms; chairs the Dean's Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (DACDI), which provides guidance, makes recommendations to the Dean about diversity-related concerns, and sponsors initiatives that support efforts to understand and celebrate the differences among us; pursues development activities with individuals, corporations and foundations, as well as lead an external component of the Dean's Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion; serves as a member of the Dean's Senior Staff, which works as a team on College planning and management; works with the other Associate Deans and College leaders to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion in each of their functional areas; serves as the College Faculty Excellence Advocate; performs other duties as assigned by the Dean of Social Science.

Major Accomplishments

Academic Initiatives

- Created and implemented the SSC [Dean's Distinguished Senior Scholar Program](#)—aimed at recruiting and retaining senior high performing minoritized scholars, who, through their research, teaching, and service, contribute to diversity, and equal opportunity. Hired 2 senior high-profile African American scholars (Human Development and Family Studies and History) in 2020-21 and 2022-23. Searching for 2 senior hires for 2023-24.
- Created and implemented an SSC [Dean's Research Associate \(Postdoc\) Program](#)—aimed at recruiting and retaining minoritized postdocs who, through their research, teaching, and service, contribute to diversity and equal opportunity. At the conclusion of their two-year program, each Research Associate is transitioned into the tenure stream at Michigan State University. Transitioned 2 cohorts of 7 minoritized Research Associates in Anthropology (Native American male), History (African American female), Sociology (African American and Arab American females), Human Development and Family Studies (African American female), School of Social Work (African American female), Political Science (African American female) to the tenure system at Michigan State. A third cohort of 4 Research Associates was hired in Anthropology (African American male), School of Social Work (African American female), Political Science (Hispanic male), and Economics (Hispanic male). Each will be transitioned into the tenure stream in August 2024.

- Created and lead the SSC Dean's Research Associate Development Institute (DRADI). The two-year learning institute is structured, comprehensive, and holistic, and combines research training with pedagogical training and academic professional development opportunities to aid in preparing the research associates for the responsibilities of a tenure-stream position at MSU.
- Created a pilot mentoring program at the College level, which will serve the needs of all faculty.
- Created and lead the Dean's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion small grants program for faculty, staff, and graduate students whose research or innovations advance DEI in SSC.

Professional Development

- Created the Dean's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Leadership Program which provides DEI leadership training and professional development.

Major Accomplishments:

- Fixed term assistant professor appointed Assistant Dean for DEI in James Madison College, 2022-.
- 1 tenured associate professor appointed Acting Associate Dean for DEI in College of Social Science, 2022-23.
- DEI small grants program for faculty, staff, and graduate students.
- Created two DEI minors (1 domestic minor and 1 global minor).
- Created 3 new courses (1 introduction to critical DEI studies; and 2 capstone exit courses).
- Created a DEI Office Structure document
- Published 3 peer-reviewed articles on DEI leadership.

Honorifics

- Monthly Diversity Champion (SSC faculty and staff), Diversity Torch (SSC students), and Diversity Spotlight (SSC alumni) recognitions. See <https://socialscience.msu.edu/diversity/archive/index.html>.
- Dean's DEI Inclusive Excellence Awards for Faculty/Staff (\$1K), Undergraduate students (\$250), Graduate students (\$500), and Staff (\$1K).

2016-21 **Faculty Excellence Advocate**, Executive Leadership, Dean's Office, College of Social Science, Michigan State University.

Scope of Responsibilities

Faculty Excellence Advocates are key “drivers” of faculty quality and diversity in each college. Reporting simultaneously to the University Provost and Deans of their colleges, they build close working relationships with faculty, department chairs and deans, working to create a climate that promotes quality, inclusiveness, alignment, objectivity, consistency and transparency of all academic human resource policies and practices.

Major Accomplishments

- Created and chair an internal [Dean’s Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion \(DACDI\)](#), whose primary function is to provide guidance, and make recommendations to the Dean, in addressing diversity-related concerns, and sponsoring initiatives that support efforts to understand and celebrate the differences among us. Presently working to create an external alumni giving DACDI board.
- Restructured the faculty search process by replacing passive search techniques with active recruiting strategies for qualified candidates. Innovations include: developing and administering mandatory faculty/administrative search/hiring workshops in best practices and implicit bias; working with search committees on, and approving, job advertisements before posting; having job postings foregrounded with language that demonstrates MSU’s commitment to inclusive excellence; making mandatory, diversity statements, for all SSC searches; introducing best practices for being proactive in attracting diverse candidate pools; performing diversity checks on candidate pools with Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion (IDI). Of 21 hires made in three years, 14 or 67% were minoritized.

2019

Responsible Administrator (Interim Chair equivalent), School of Human Resources and Labor Relations (HRLR), College of Social Science, Michigan State University, July 22-September 22.

Scope of Responsibilities

Interim chief academic and administrative officer of the school.

Major Accomplishments

- Successful management of crisis around HRLR Director search.
- Maintained efficiency and mission achievement in school until a new director was selected.
- Supported and helped 3 candidates put together tenure and promotion files and identify external evaluators.
- Prepared and got sabbatical requests approved for 1 faculty member.
- Signatory on all academic human resource issues in school, including appointments, raises, pay slips, time sheets, approval of travel etc.

College of William and Mary

The College of William and Mary is a public research university located in Williamsburg, Virginia. Founded in 1693, it is the second oldest institution of higher education in the United States, after Harvard. One of eight “Public-Ivy” institutions, William and Mary offers a world class education at exceptional value. Its students come from all 50 US states, DC, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands and more than 60 foreign countries. It has 656 full-time faculty; and a student population of 8,773, of which 30% identify as students of color.

2002-05 **Chair, African Studies Program**, The College of William & Mary.

Scope of Responsibilities

Build and restructure the African Studies Program from the ground up.

Major Accomplishments

- Formalized curriculum—including core and capstone seminars and adding new courses in African Music, African Art, and African Literature.
- Set up two African Study Aboard Programs in Ghana and South Africa.
- Established a Hampton Roads Consortium (William and Mary, Old Dominion University, Hampton University, and Norfolk State University) for African Studies.
- Recruited 3 Africanist tenure stream faculty in Religion, Government and Black Studies.
- Procured funds for visiting Africanist scholars.
- Recruited and graduated several African Studies majors and minors.
- Worked with the African Students Association to sponsor an “African minoritized students at William and Mary.

OTHER LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

2020- **Co-CEO, Achebe Masterworks LLC.**

In 1958, Chinua Achebe’s first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, established African literature on the world stage. More than 60 years later, it remains the most widely read African novel. [Achebe Masterworks](#), LLC, was established to bring Chinua Achebe’s oeuvre to the world in different media.

Scope of Responsibilities

- Lead executive decision-making on the translation of Chinua Achebe’s *African Trilogy* (*Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease*, and *Arrow of God*) into film, television, and other audio-visual properties.
- Participate in executive decisions on contracts and financing for *African Trilogy*.

2016-19 **Board of Directors, African Studies Association (ASA).**

Founded in 1957, ASA is the largest and most important organization of African Studies in North America. Its membership is made up of scholars and professionals in the United States, Africa, Europe, and Canada who have an interest in Africa. Chair, Publishing Committee, 2017-2019; Member, Executive Committee, 2017-2019; Member, Publishing Committee, 2016-2017; Member, Finance and Investment Committee, 2016-2017; Member, Nominations Committee, 2018-2019.

Scope of Responsibilities

Chair, Publishing Committee, 2017-2019; Member, Executive Committee, 2017-2019; Member, Publishing Committee, 2016-2017; Member, Finance and Investment Committee, 2016-2017; Member, Nominations Committee, 2018-2019.

Major Achievements

- Led search and hire of team of editors for ASA flagship journal, *History in Africa*.
- Led creation and adoption of “ASA/ASAUK Statement of Guiding Principles for the Sale of Rights in African Territories,” to make scholarly books on Africa published by US and UK presses affordable, and readily available in Africa.

2013-15 **Co-Convener, African Studies Association (ASA) Women’s Caucus.**

African Studies Women’s Caucus (WC) was established in 1970 to promote the study of women and gender in African studies, promote the greater inclusion of African women in scholarship and in the ASA, to ensure an active and representative role for women within the ASA at all levels of leadership and engagement, and to develop scholarly and activist links with women in Africa.

Scope of Responsibilities

- Lead WC as co-presidents.
- Organize WC events at ASA and WC activities during the year.
- Maintain oversight over all WC activities.
- Secure and make arrangements for ASA WC luncheon speaker.
- Organize WC committees.
- Signing authority on all WC bank accounts.
- File required annual financial report for Coordinate Organizations with ASA.

Major Accomplishments

- Totally revamped the 40-year-old association.

- Created by-laws for the association.
- Created by-laws for association's book prize.
- Established graduate student faction of the WC.
- Instituted a mentorship program that pairs graduate students and junior faculty with volunteer senior faculty members of the association for guidance and mentorship.

2012- **Founding Editor-in-Chief, Journal of West African History (JWAH).**

Published by Michigan State University Press, JWAH is a bi-lingual interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal that publishes the highest quality articles on West African history.

Scope of Responsibilities

- Carry out primary editorial functions for the journal.
- Grant, assign, and transfer to the Press all rights to publish and distribute the journal in all countries.
- Supervise timely preparation and submission of essays written by various contributors.
- Prepare, or have prepared, abstracts of each essay in English and French.
- Deliver to Press Journals Division complete, fully edited manuscripts and corresponding electronic files of all content for each issue, including signed author agreements, images, permissions, etc., in accordance with production schedules.
- Ensure that all scholarship published in the journal is subjected to peer review, in accordance with general guidelines established by the Association of American University Presses.

Major Accomplishments

Class A journal (highest ranked journals), Italy; all volumes and issues (from volume 1, issue 1) available on JSTOR and Project MUSE; all volumes and issues (from volume 1, issue 1) available on JSTOR and Project MUSE; instituted mentorship program for African born scholars living on the African continent, whereby members of JWAH's Advisory and Executive Boards mentor these scholars to ready their articles for submission to JWAH, and its double-blind review process. This initiative strives to redress the systemic inequities experienced by Global South African scholars and support their work.

2008- **Co-Director, Chinua Achebe, now Christie and Chinua Achebe Foundation.**

Established by Professors Chinua and Christie Achebe and chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in the early 1990s, the foundation has worked

tirelessly to promote peace through the arts, showcase Africa's complex cultural heritage to the world, while recapturing the lost components of African fine art, literature, and languages.

Scope of Responsibilities

- Lead executive decision-making on composition of panels, themes, and speakers.
- Lead executive decision-making on establishment of the Christie and Chinua Achebe scholarship endowment at University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMASS).
- Manage communication and negotiation with prospective grantee institutions.

Major Accomplishments

The Chinua Achebe Colloquium on Africa: variously convened at Bard College, and Brown University, it brings together international scholars, officials from African governments, the United Nations, the European Union, and other organizations for intense deliberation and exchange of ideas on strengthening democracy and peace on the African continent.

The Chinua Achebe Leadership Forum: a high-profile international platform which brings together international leaders and thinkers to discuss Africa's challenges, in keeping with the life and work of Professor Chinua Achebe. The Forum has hosted two Ghanaian Presidents—John Dramani Mahama (2013) and Nana Akufo-Addo (2019); and South African President Kgalema Petrus Motlanthe (2018).

The Christie and Chinua Achebe Scholarship (UMASS): aimed at promoting a scholarly environment in which outstanding undergraduate students support the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

SCHOLARSHIP

Summary of scholarship (publications, presentations, creative works)

I am the multiple-award-winning author of six books and forty-two journal articles, book chapters, and essays. I am a public intellectual who has given over one hundred invited talks and keynotes. I served as expert consultant for The History Channel/A&E Network Corporation, Disney Channel, Nutopia/Netflix; and expert witness for court cases. I have also been interviewed and featured in documentaries and news programming on three continents. My scholarship has been supported by prestigious grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Wenner Gren Foundation, Woodrow Wilson, Fulbright-Hays, Ford Foundation, the World Health Organization, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Books Written

- 2020 *Female Monarchs and Merchant Queens in Africa.* (Ohio University Press).
2019 *Holding the World Together: African Women in Changing Perspective.* co-

- edited with Claire Robertson, (University of Wisconsin Press).
- 2019 *A Companion to African History*. co-edited with William Worger and Charles Ambler, (John Wiley-Blackwell Press).
- 2018 *History of West Africa E-Course Book*. co-authored with Samuel Adu-Gyamfi, Joe Alie, Hassoum Ceesay, Toby Green, Vincent Hiribarren, Ben Kye-Ampadu, (British Arts and Humanities Research Council).
- 2011 *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe*. (Indiana University Press).
- 2005 *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings: Female Power and Authority in Northern Igboland, 1900-1960*. (Heinemann 2005).

Select Leadership Articles

- 2023 “Constructing College-Level Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Minors—Moving from Performative to Transformative DEI,” with Carole Gibbs, Brian Johnson, Daniel Velez-Ortiz, and Chioma Nwaiche, *Radical Teacher* (forthcoming).
- 2022 “Creating Sustainable University Structures for Offices of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI),” with Carole Gibbs, Brian Johnson, Daniel Velez-Ortiz, and Chioma Nwaiche, *Journal of Higher Education Management* no 2 (2022): 4-21.
- 2022 “The Dean’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fellows Pilot Program at Michigan State University,” with Carole Gibbs, Brian Johnson, Daniel Velez-Ortiz, and Chioma Nwaiche, *Journal of Higher Education Management* 37, no 1 (2022): 60-73.

TEACHING

Summary of Teaching and Student Mentoring

I am a Beal Outstanding Faculty award winner, award-winning teacher, mentor, and advisor. A dedicated and conscientious teacher, I am the winner of the 2011 and 2019 Fintz Award for teaching excellence in the Arts and the Humanities. I teach classes at the undergraduate and graduate levels. My undergraduate classes include: “Africa Since 1800,” “Women and Gender in African History,” and topical sophomore and senior capstone seminars, “Women in the First Person: African Autobiography and Personal Narratives,” and “Comparative Slave Systems.” I also teach the award-winning “Africa and the World” Class. At the graduate level, I teach the following seminars: “Introduction to African Studies,” “Biography as History,” “Women in Africa,” and “Women, Gender, and Sexuality in Africa.” I have graduated nine PhDs, three of whom are tenured associate professors in Research 1 institutions in the US.

SERVICE

Service to the college/university, profession, or community

- Rich and varied service to college, university, profession, and community. Various served on important committees in History, African American and African Studies, GenCen, and African Studies Center.
- Served profession as: Founding editor-in-chief, Journal of West African History; Member, editorial/advisory boards of several journals and professional associations; Reviewer of journal and book manuscripts; Routinely evaluate faculty for promotion to associate and full professors; Established two faculty partnership with universities in Nigeria; Visiting Professor, Sichuan University Chendgu, China.
- Served community as: Member, Board of Directors, African Integrated Development Enterprise.

INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY

Summary of international visibility

- Given over one hundred invited keynote lectures and talks on four continents, in universities in the US, UK, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Germany, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and China.
- Served as expert consultant for The History Channel/A&E Network Corporation's "[Roots](#)," the miniseries remake, Disney Channel's "African Princess Project"; and has been interviewed and featured in documentaries and news programming on three different continents.
- Featured in The History Channel documentaries, "[Roots: A History Revealed](#)," and "[Roots: A New Vision](#);" South Africa Broadcasting Corporation's news program, "[MorningLive](#)," Nigerian Television Authority's "[Weekend Deal 15 Minutes Studio](#)," and British Broadcasting Corporation's "[Professor Chinua Achebe: A Hero Returns 2](#)," [Witness: Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart](#), [The History Hour](#) and [The Novels that Shaped Our World—Things Fall Apart](#).
- Interviewed and featured in BBC Radio 4's "[Nsukka is Burning](#)," and in two Australian documentaries—"The Invisible Hand," by true crime podcast company Casefile Presents, and Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Radio National documentary on Benin Bronzes, "[Stuff the British Stole](#)."
- Featured speaker at the 2019 Körber History Forum debate in Berlin, "[A Stolen Past: Europe and the Compensation of Colonial Injustice](#)." You can listen to me speak to [New Books Network](#) and [Africa Past and Present podcast](#) about my critical biography, *The Female King*.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Summary of honors and awards received

- 2021 Distinguished Administrator Award, Michigan State University Black Alumni Inc., October 3.
- 2021 Leading Ladies Africa, "Nigeria's 100 Most Inspiring Women For 2021," March 8.
- 2021 William J. Beal Outstanding Faculty Award, Office of Provost, February.

- 2021 *Female Monarchs and Merchant Queens in Africa*. *Library Journal's* Academic Bestselling Book in African history, September.
- 2021 *Female Monarchs and Merchant Queens in Africa*. Selected for *Washington Post's* "Monkey Cage, 7th Annual TMC Africa Politics Summer Reading."
- 2020 Inspirational Woman of the Year Award (Professional Achievement Category) Center for Gender in Global Context, Michigan State University, March 18.
- 2019 Fintz Award for Teaching Excellence in Arts and Humanities," Center for Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities (CISAH), Michigan State University.
- 2019 Ms. Magazine Blog, Holding the World Together: African Women in Changing Perspectives, "2019 Reads for the Rest of Us," February 13.
- 2016 *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe* named one of "100 Must-Read Titles about Women," by BOOKRIOT, July 11.
- 2016 *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe* named one of Nigerian *Daily Trust's* "Five Books for the 2016 Journey."
- 2011 Fintz Award for Teaching Excellence in Arts and Humanities," Center for Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities (CISAH), Michigan State University.