

Association for Institutional Thought (AFIT) 2016 Call for Papers

The 37th Annual Meeting of AFIT is scheduled to take place on **April 13-16, 2016 in Reno, Nevada**, at the Grand Sierra Resort in conjunction with the Western Social Science Association (WSSA) 58th Annual Conference.

Conference Theme:

Social Innovation & Social Impact: From Institutional Theory to Policy and Practice

The 2016 AFIT conference invites you to submit papers and/or propose full sessions that address the application of institutionalist theory to policy and practice, with special emphasis on social innovation and social impact. Social, cultural, political, and economic institutions of all types shape economic behavior and outcomes. These institutions are not indigenous; exhibiting agency as actors, people create and re-create households, government bodies, non-governmental organizations, social enterprises, small businesses, corporations, non-profit organizations, schools, places of worship, cooperatives, novel forms of money, community-based organizations, laws, public-private partnerships, as well as numerous other institutions. People can therefore lead and further efforts toward progressive social change by reforming existing institutions or creating new ones to bolster desirable social impact. Our conference theme encourages work on social innovation: the development and implementation of new or improved solutions to a social problem which are more effectual, sustainable, and fair than the status quo.

Social innovation prioritizes benefits for the many rather than the few. Social innovation is driven by the interchange of ideas, sharing of values, and changes in roles and relationships.¹ The process of generating social impact is as important as the outcome itself. Considerations of community diversity—including gender, race, and ethnicity; class; health; generation or treatment of waste; depletion or preservation of natural resources; civic engagement; human rights; decent work; and learning opportunities—prove key.

The theme of *Social Innovation & Social Impact: From Institutional Theory to Policy and Practice* promotes the continuing development of institutional economics—theoretically, analytically, and empirically—while also creating synergies with related traditions. AFIT values pluralism in economic thought. Sessions are open to economists and non-economists, and papers linking institutionalism to other heterodox economic traditions are encouraged. For example, the organizer is interested in sessions linking feminist economics, social economics, and ecological economics to institutionalism.

¹ As discussed by the [Stanford Center for Social Innovation](#).

Examples of possible topics include (but are not limited to) the following:

- What are examples of social innovation addressing natural disasters, disempowerment, corruption, crime, inequality, poverty, climate change, unemployment, malnutrition, hunger, and civil unrest? What can we learn from past successes and failures?
- What is the relationship between social innovation and social provisioning?
- How does social innovation relate to the Social & Solidarity Economy (SSE)?
- How is social innovation conceptualized and implemented differently by different types of organizations? How can related fields (nonprofit management, social work, community development) inform institutional theory and practice in this area?
- What is the relationship of social entrepreneurship to institutional theory and practice?
- How can social innovation effectively build on local culture and institutions?
- How can organizational tradeoffs between financial sustainability, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion be minimized or eliminated?
- What are ways that institutionalist thought can be employed to improve business activity for social change?
- What methods exist to democratize financing for social innovation?
- What role do alternative (community-based) currency systems play in transforming the institution of money?
- In which ways do state/governmental practices contribute to or detract from social innovation? How can institutionalist thought be applied to changing practices in this area?
- How can laws and regulations contribute to social innovation?
- How can institutions work to reduce invidious distinction in the community?
- How can organizational partnerships support processes of social innovation? What are best practices for and limitations of such partnerships?
- How does human agency impact institutional transformation for social innovation?
- Which economic education practices can improve student capabilities for enacting positive social change?

The conference is receptive to proposals for panels that review and discuss books recently published, especially by AFIT members. All proposals for papers and sessions reflecting the traditional and analytical perspectives represented by the Association for Institutional Thought will be given serious consideration. However, preference will be given to proposals that address the theme of ***“Social Innovation & Social Impact: From Institutional Theory to Policy and Practice.”***

In addition, AFIT encourages proposals from **undergraduate and graduate students**, and AFIT sponsors prizes for outstanding student papers. Check our [website](#) for announcement of the **student competition**.

The format of the 2016 conference panels does not include discussants. However, if you organize a panel, and you find it necessary to have discussants, you are welcome to do so. Proposals for complete sessions are encouraged.

All papers and proposals for the AFIT sessions must now be submitted via the WSSA website: <http://wssaweb.com>. Please limit your abstracts to 200 words.

If you have general queries, feel free to contact the conference organizer and Vice President of AFIT, Tonia Warnecke at twarnecke@rollins.edu.

The submission deadline is November 10, 2015.

For more information about AFIT, please visit our website at www.associationforinstitutionalthought.org