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Founding Declaration

for the interfaculty

Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies

according to Section 19 Organizational Plan

Rectorate decision of January 1, 2025

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Founding Declaration
for the interfaculty

***GRAZ SCHOOL OF
INTERDISCIPLINARY TRANSNATIONAL STUDIES***

according to Section 19 Organizational Plan



I. Introduction

The Rectorate establishes the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies (GITS)* as a university-wide and interfaculty research area in accordance with Section 19 of the University of Graz's organizational plan. This is not a new foundation, but rather a renaming of the *Center for Southeast European Studies (CSEES)* and a corresponding revision of its founding declaration.

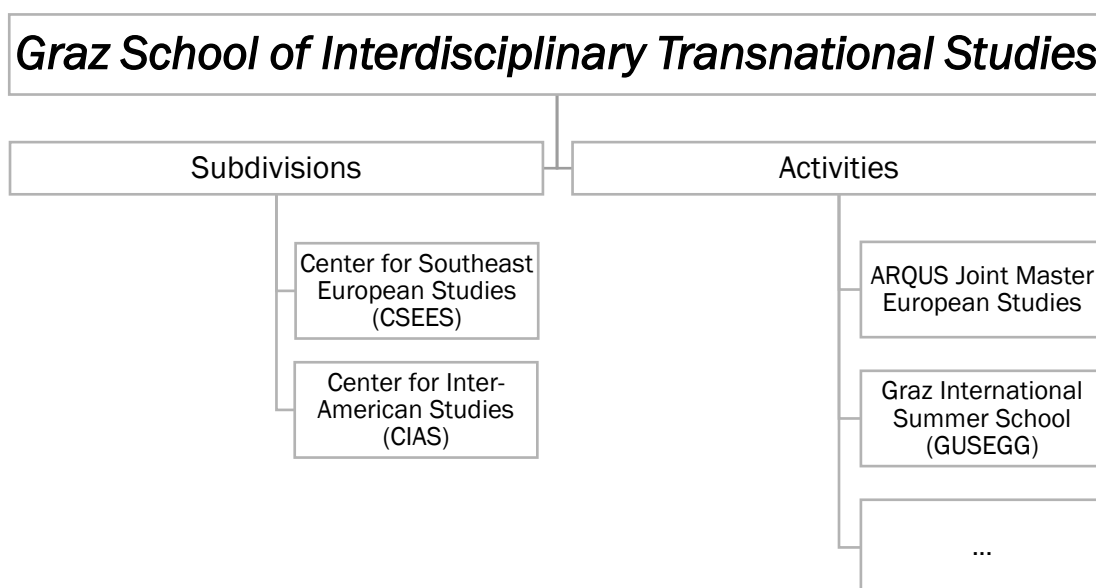
Section 1 Founding Context

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is an interfaculty institution dedicated to promoting interdisciplinary academic research, teaching, and collaborations with a focus on transnational processes.

It thus sees itself as a university-based opportunity to address expertise in European topics both from a region-specific perspective – for example, through the *Center for Southeast European Studies (CSEES)* – and from a European perspective on other continents – for example, through the *Center for Inter-American Studies (CIAS)* – academically.

Section 2 Structure

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* acts as a communication interface for all faculties and is structured as follows:



The external presentation can be both as the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* and – depending on the purpose and necessity – independently as a respective subdivision.



II. Aims

Section 3 General

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* examines transnational developments from interdisciplinary perspectives in the social sciences and humanities, paying particular attention to sustainable connections and relationships across national borders, as well as socio-political, historical, legal, economic, and cultural asymmetries. Current global, transnational, and regional events are analyzed from both theoretical-methodological and applied-analytical perspectives and subjected to political, cultural, legal, and historical contextualization, with interdisciplinary and transnational approaches playing a key role.

The subdivision *Center for Southeast European Studies (CSEES)* is an interdisciplinary institution focusing on contemporary Southeast European research and teaching. In particular, it critically examines the politics, law, history, and culture of the countries and societies of Southeast Europe. It collaborates closely with institutes and scholars at the university who focus on Southeast Europe and maintains close partnerships with universities in Southeast Europe.

The subdivision *Center for Inter-American Studies (CIAS)* focuses on the cultural regions of North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean, providing a platform for academic and public discourse on European-American relations. Building on the research and teaching profile of the University of Graz, it brings together transnational, transcultural, inter- and multidisciplinary approaches. Regional cultural representations are subjected to interdisciplinary and intercultural analysis. The historical, economic, and socio-cultural contexts of the regions are examined from a transregional European perspective, considering the evolving role of the Americas in a globalized world. Particularly in Europe, where the negotiation of a European identity (alongside national and regional identities) shapes numerous discourses, the resulting issues necessitate a reorientation of academic perspectives. For European researchers in the field of Inter-American Studies, the “Americanness” of the Americas and the evolving conceptions of self and other are therefore of particular interest.



Section 4 Research

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* actively participates in the research priorities and profile areas of the University of Graz, particularly the profile area “Dimensions of Europe.” Regarding its publication strategy, the School focuses on publications in high-quality, peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes. The publication of monographs with renowned publishers is also important. Due to the transnational and transregional research orientation of the Center, the internationalization of research plays a central role. Intensive exchange with institutions and networks is regularly fostered through lecture series, workshops, and conferences, which also form the basis for joint publications. Short- and long-term research stays also serve academic exchange, knowledge transfer, project preparation, and the development of new research collaborations. At the same time, these research networks enable engagement with and strengthening of the two focus regions of Southeast Europe and the Americas, both within and outside the university. Third-party funding is acquired to carry out projects and research tasks.

The *Center for Southeast European Studies (CSEES)* collaborates with regional and international institutions whose primary goal is to critically examine past and present processes in Southeast Europe. The Center's research focuses on integration processes in the Balkans, democratization processes and social movements, minorities and human rights in Southeast Europe, as well as borders and nationalism. Its interdisciplinary research approaches encompass political science, history, law, sociology, and other perspectives from the humanities and social sciences. In addition to basic research, the Center also engages in applied research.

The *Center for Inter-American Studies (CIAS)* has three main research areas: “Inter-American Cultures, Histories, and Literatures,” “Inter-American and Inter-Sectional Approaches: Gender and Generations,” and “Inter-American and Interdisciplinary Research: Media, Digitalization, and Society.” These areas of focus reflect the interdisciplinary and interregional orientation of the subdivision, with research areas being addressed from humanities and social science perspectives. In this context, theoretical and methodological innovations are being developed within the cultural studies approach to help shape the emerging research discipline of Inter-American Studies. The primary



objective is to examine representations of the Americas from an interdisciplinary perspective while simultaneously establishing a European academic position within the field.

Section 5 Teaching

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* and its constituent departments offer Master's and PhD programs, as well as a certificate in Inter-American Studies with courses taught primarily in English. The curriculum emphasizes interdisciplinarity, regional and international collaboration, and high standards in research-led teaching. Internationalization plays a central role in teaching, just as it does in research. This internationalization strategy is implemented through joint study programs, mobility agreements for (mandatory) study abroad periods as part of the Master's program, the involvement of second supervisors from foreign institutions in the PhD program, the invitation of international guest lecturers, and an international student body.

The *ARQUS Joint Master's Programme European Studies* is an interdisciplinary, English-language Master's program offered by universities within the ARQUS network, focusing on a critical and multidimensional examination of Europe as a global actor. The focus of the Master's program is on the relationship between Europeanization and globalization, the impact of global developments on Europe, and the continent's evolving role in the new world order.

The *Graz International Summer School Seggau (GUSEGG)* is aimed at internationally oriented, highly motivated students from all disciplines who wish to deepen their understanding of current European and international affairs by examining and addressing global developments and challenges in the context of transformation processes and demographic change, taking into account aspects of individual, social, political, religious, cultural, literary, regional, economic, and national identities.

The joint *Master's program in Southeast European Studies* is an interdisciplinary, English-language Master's program offered jointly by the CSEES and the Department of Southeast European History and Anthropology at the Department of History. The Master's program provides participating students with an understanding of the interrelationships between



law, politics, economics, culture, and history, with a focus on Southeast Europe. It offers the opportunity to specialize in either “History” or “Law and Politics.”

The English-language PhD program in Law and Politics offers a doctoral program with interdisciplinary approaches to political science and law, specifically designed for international doctoral candidates.

The doctoral program “Europeanization Processes in Southeast Europe” is an interdisciplinary consortium for doctoral candidates pursuing their dissertations on Southeast Europe at various institutes and faculties.

The certified elective specialization “Inter-American Cultural Studies” is offered by the *Center for Inter-American Studies (CIAS)*, is open to students from all disciplines at the University of Graz, and provides an overview of relevant topics within the field of Inter-American Studies. Students are expected to develop reflective skills, deepen their knowledge of the Americas, acquire analytical skills regarding cultural representations of the Americas, and gain insights into fundamental questions of transatlantic relations. The CIAS also provides advisory support to the Joint Master's Program “English and American Studies.”

Section 6 Promotion of Early Career Researchers

The stated goal of the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is to integrate early career researchers into all research activities. This includes doctoral programs and colloquia for networking within the university, support in developing a publication strategy and international networking through conference presentations, participation in academic symposia and conferences, as well as involvement in the application and execution of research proposals and projects. Furthermore, the School supports early career researchers through a Visiting Fellows program and other activities.

Section 7 Societal Objectives

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* actively engages with society through science-to-public events. The relevance of interdisciplinary, transnational research becomes particularly clear in the context of current global developments such as



transnational migration, demographic change, and the climate crisis. These developments significantly shape the construction and transformation of cultural identities and challenge conventional conceptualizations of “self” and “other.” It is essential to communicate this within a broader public and societal context. Within the European context, the negotiation of a “European identity” (alongside national and regional identities) is also shifting points of reference, necessitating a re-evaluation of socio-cultural, political, economic, and individual perspectives. Research findings concerning the evolving European roles in a globalized world are made accessible to a wider audience through public events.

Section 8 Cooperation

Recognizing the importance of interregional and transatlantic cooperation in research and teaching, the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is committed to active research and teaching exchange at the international level. Cooperation takes place both within the university and externally. The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* maintains partnerships with other universities (local, regional, national, and international) and external institutions and networks.

Section 9 Administration/Service/Support

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is integrated into the academic self-governance of the University of Graz.

The subdivision *Center for Southeast European Studies (CSEES)* is responsible for organizing the Master's program in Southeast European Studies, the PhD program in Law and Politics, and the doctoral program in Europeanization Processes in Southeast Europe. The *Center for Inter-American Studies (CIAS)* is responsible for the organization and content coordination of the certificate program “Inter-American Cultural Studies” at the University of Graz.

The additional activities of the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* are managed by the subdivisions. The ARQUS Joint Master's Programme European Studies is managed by the *Center for Southeast European Studies (CSEES)*, and the Graz International Summer School (GUSEGG) is managed by the *Center for Inter-American Studies (CIAS)*.



III. Legal & Organizational Framework

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is fully subject to all university-internal regulations and guidelines.

Section 10 Legal Form and Institutional Affiliation

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is an interdisciplinary center according to Section 19 of the Organizational Plan. The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* reports to a designated member of the Rectorate. The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is represented by an authorized director.

Section 11 Management and Deputy Management

The Rectorate appoints a Director, who will represent the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* externally, and at least one Deputy Director. The Director is responsible for concluding target agreements with the Rectorate, in coordination with the Academic Director of the respective department, within six months of the publication of this founding declaration in the University Bulletin. The Director is also responsible for the supervision of the staff assigned to the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies*. The Rector grants the Director and, if applicable, the Deputy Director power of attorney pursuant to Section 28 of the University Act in conjunction with the University of Graz's Power of Attorney Guidelines, to conclude legal transactions in the name and on behalf of the University of Graz.

Section 12 Management of the Subdivisions

The Rectorate appoints an Academic Director and a Deputy Director for each subdivision. They are responsible for the scientific management of their respective sub-areas and for representing them externally. Each subdivision Director is responsible for the professional supervision of their staff, the development of projects and collaborations, the organization and coordination of activities both within centrally funded regular operations and within the framework of projects, as well as the acquisition of funds from projects in accordance with Sections 26-28 of the Universities Act.



Section 13 Assignment of Personnel

Employees of the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* who belong to cooperating units within the University of Graz remain assigned to their respective academic units of the University of Graz within the scope of their duties in research, teaching, and administration, and are subject to the instructions of the respective heads of the academic units or organizational units. The provision of services by employees from cooperating units at the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* requires an agreement between the supervisor at the academic unit, the Director of the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies*, and the employee in question. This agreement must specify the percentage of working time dedicated to activities at the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies*. A regulation for the organizational allocation of services must also be established.

Section 14 Scientific Board

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is supported by an Advisory Board. This Advisory Board consists of at least six members, of whom at least one and at most three are affiliated with the University of Graz. In addition, other individuals whose academic work is connected to the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* may be appointed to the advisory board. All members are appointed by the Rector of the University of Graz upon the recommendation of the Head of the Advisory Board.

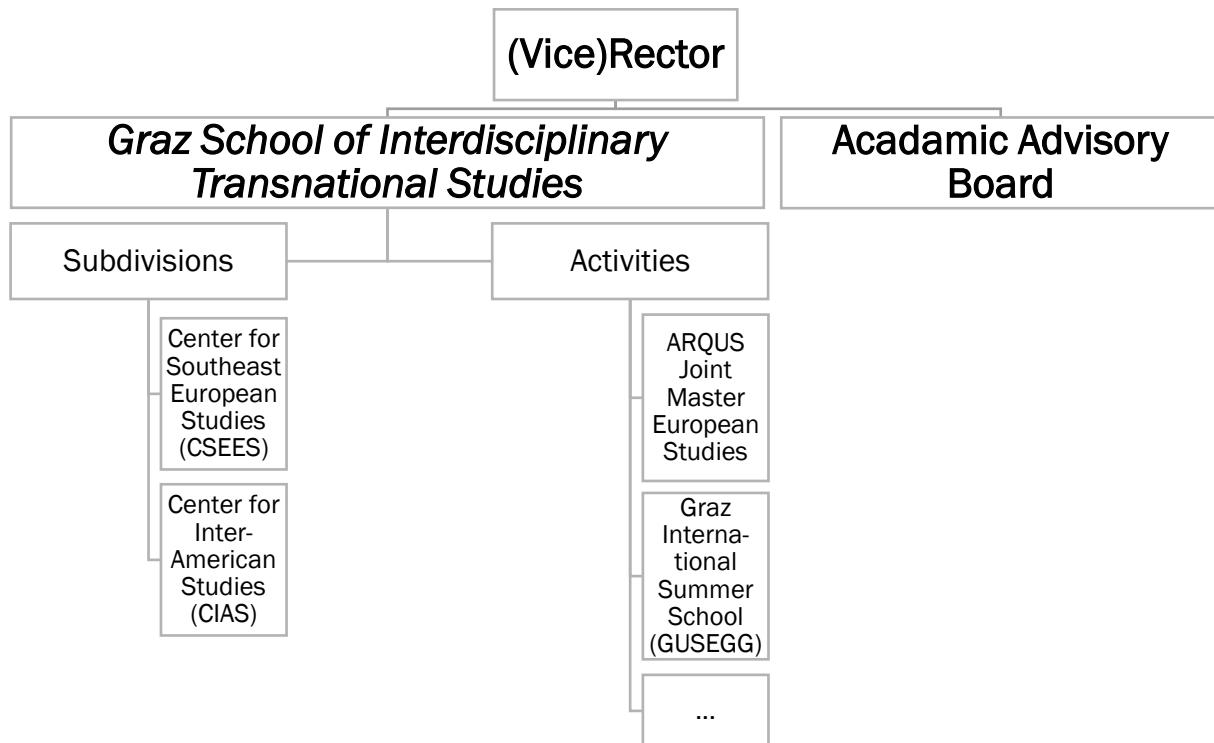
The Advisory Board's role is to advise the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* in fulfilling its goals and objectives. To this end, the Advisory Board meets at least once a year, and in advance of this meeting, the Board must be informed about the activities of the previous year. Beyond this, the Head of the Advisory Board may convene further meetings as often as necessary or conduct consultations through other suitable channels.

Section 15 Organizational Structure

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* pursues its objectives through projects and activities. Staff members are assigned to one or more of these projects and activities and perform their duties according to the respective project plan.



Section 16 Organizational Chart



Section 17 Establishment, Equipment, and Adaptations

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is entitled and obligated to use the university infrastructure, such as Human Resources, Accounting, the University Library system, and general administrative departments (e.g., Facility Management, uniIT). Accommodation will be provided in accordance with the room allocation regulations. Further support will be stipulated in the performance agreement with the Rectorate.

Section 18 Budgetary Coverage

Financial support and the provision of resources will be agreed upon separately within the framework of the performance agreement between the respective Director of the School, in consultation with the Academic Director of the subdivisions, and the Rectorate, and will be limited to the term of the performance agreement.

In the event of an impending budget shortfall, the head of the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* must immediately submit a restructuring plan to the Rectorate outlining the method and timeframe for covering the shortfall.



Section 19 Reporting

The Director of the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is required to submit an annual report to the responsible member of the Rectorate in accordance with the reporting specifications outlined in the performance agreements.

Section 20 Quality Management / Evaluation

The *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is fully subject to the quality management system of the University of Graz.

Section 21 Entry into Force

This founding declaration, renaming the *Center for Southeast European Studies (CSEES)* to *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies (GITS)*, enters into force on March 1, 2025, and the *Graz School of Interdisciplinary Transnational Studies* is established for an indefinite period.

The Rector:
Riedler