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## **Brian Friel's Beginnings in Radio**

### **1) Rationale and intended results**

A CELTSS travel grant would allow me to present a paper on my current research project at the national meeting of the American Conference for Irish Studies (ACIS) in Kansas City, March 29 – April 2, 2017.

My work on this project, "Brian Friel's Beginnings in Radio," will benefit me directly as a faculty member as I continue to develop my research in the field of Irish studies. It will indirectly benefit FSU in that I will be able to share my knowledge of Brian Friel's work with students in my Irish literature classes. I am currently teaching a Seminar in Literature (ENGL 422) that introduces students to "Irish Modernism" through the work of W.B. Yeats and James Joyce, and I plan to lead a second group of Honors students to Ireland in the summer of 2017. Moreover, I am in the process of developing an interdisciplinary minor in Irish studies, which will be proposed to my departmental curriculum committee and, if approved, to the University Curriculum Council in Fall 2016.

My participation in the ACIS conference will give me the opportunity to connect with Irish Studies scholars from around the country and to learn about new developments in the field. ACIS is a multidisciplinary scholarly organization with approximately 800 members in the United States, Ireland, Canada, and other countries around the world. Its national meeting will include plenary speakers, academic sessions in all fields of Irish Studies, poetry and fiction readings, films, and performances of Irish music and plays.

As the chair of the organizing committee for the international ACIS conference in 2019, I will attend the organization's business meeting to be held during this year's conference. This will be an important opportunity to network with leaders of the primary scholarly organization for Irish studies in the United States, and to plan for a successful conference in Boston in two years' time.

Presenting a paper at the ACIS conference will allow me to gain feedback on my research from knowledgeable scholars in the field of Irish studies, and will help me to hone my approach to my primary research material as I develop my book project on Irish playwright Brian Friel. Attending the ACIS conference will bring me into contact with numerous other scholars in this field, whose research and ideas can help me to develop and improve my teaching and scholarship.

My paper proposal is as follows:

### **Brian Friel's Beginnings in Radio**

Brian Friel's *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* was his breakthrough play, and the first that brought him to the attention of American theatre audiences. As is well known, he wrote the play after spending several months observing Sir Tyrone Guthrie directing rehearsals of Shakespeare and Chekhov at his new repertory theatre in Minneapolis, Minnesota—Friel's first experience of life in the United States.

But the pre-stage production history of the play is less well known. Recently uncovered letters and documents reveal that *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* transferred from the Dublin Theatre Festival to Broadway only after Friel failed to find a West End producer for it in London, and that he settled on a BBC radio adaptation after much debate about its technical and linguistic suitability for broadcast. My presentation will discuss letters between Friel, BBC Belfast producer Ronald Mason, and BBC executives in London as to who was the ideal audience for *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*

### **2) URL for ACIS 2017**

<http://acisweb.org/cfp-acis-2017/>

### **3) Dates and timeline**

The conference will be held March 29 – April 2, 2017.