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ABSTRACT

This monograph documents the work of 41 participating community colleges in Exploring America's Communities (EAC): In Quest of Common Ground, a project stimulating a national conversation about American pluralism and identity, addressing such issues as what it means to be American, what brings us together and what divides us. Developed by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in 1995 and coordinated by the American Association of Community Colleges, the two-year project consisted of: (1) a teleconference introducing EAC telecast to 500 communities; (2) two regional conferences attended by representatives from 41 community colleges; (3) mentoring services to help these colleges implement and refine their projects; (4) resources, including NEH's Conversation Kit and newsletter; and (5) a national conference reconvening the 41 participating colleges to share results of the project's implementation. This document provides reports from each of the 41 participating community colleges on their experience with the EAC project, including a background description of the college, a plan for achieving EAC goals, and accomplishments in meeting those goals. The majority of the colleges named one or more of the following as barriers to American relations: race, ethnicity, religion (which can unite as well as divide), socioeconomic status, prejudices, neighborhoods, failure to communicate effectively, language, age, gender, and individualism. Paradoxically, and almost without exception, the participating colleges found that the ties that bind Americans together are our beliefs in and commitments to freedom and individualism, as well as common holidays, laws, government, sports, pop culture, political parties, concern for children, and food. Appendices include lists of participating colleges and project mentors, and six selected resources. (AS)

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON
AMERICAN PLURALISM AND IDENTITY PROJECT

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American Association of Community Colleges
and developed with support from the
National Endowment for the Humanities

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES IN QUEST OF COMMON GROUND

**A National Conversation on
American Pluralism and Identity Project**

**Conducted by the
American Association of Community Colleges**

EDITORS

Diane U. Eisenberg

Nadya Labib

This publication was developed with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

v	Foreword <i>David R. Pierce</i>
vii	Preface <i>Judy Jeffrey Howard</i>
1	Introduction <i>Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground</i> <i>George B. Vaughan and Diane U. Eisenberg</i>
5	Reports from Participating Colleges
57	Appendices
59	Appendix A. Participating Colleges
61	Appendix B. Project Mentors
63	Appendix C. Selected Resources

FOREWORD

David R. Pierce

Community colleges—often called the people’s colleges—have traditionally served as public spaces where community members gather to discuss perplexing issues and share their views. And so, when Sheldon Hack-



David R. Pierce is president and chief executive officer of the American Association of Community Colleges.

ney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, proposed a national conversation in which Americans of all backgrounds could come together to talk and learn about what it means to be an American, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) was quick to respond. We believe that it is particularly fitting, given the community college mission to build community, that our institutions give leadership to this initiative.

For the past two years, AACC’s *Exploring America’s Communities:*

In Quest of Common Ground project has guided the participation of the nation’s community colleges in the National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity. This monograph reports on the accomplishments of 41 community colleges that were competitively selected to address their colleges’ specific needs toward strengthening and enhancing the teaching and learning of American pluralism and identity on their campuses. Their experiences—their challenges and achievements—are presented herein in the hope that they will motivate other colleges to pursue similar courses.

This project could not have happened without the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities—especially that of program officer Judy Jeffrey Howard—and for that AACC is most appreciative. I would also like to recognize the Community College Humanities Association and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, our cosponsors, for their commitment of time, energy, and resources toward the success of this project.

PREFACE

Judy Jeffrey Howard

Three years ago, Sheldon Hackney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), began a bold initiative to engage the American people in a wide-ranging grass-roots endeavor, a National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity.

[The Conversation] invites diverse groups of Americans to come together—by teleconference, on the Internet, through the radio, in face-to-face discussion groups—to talk about what holds us together as a country, about shared values in a heterogeneous society, about common commitments in a society that contains all the divisions of race, ethnicity, nationality, and religion that are the source of sectarian violence in almost every other quarter on the globe, about the unum in our national motto, E Pluribus Unum.

The National Conversation has reached citizens in every state, often through the work of the state humanities councils, and enlisted dozens of community colleges through this project and a separate program of the Community College Humanities Association and Phi Theta Kappa entitled *Community Conversations: Toward Shared Understanding of American Identity*. In the course of hundreds of conversations, in small and large groups, in church basements and schools, it has

become evident that most Americans find the founding documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, to be crucial to our sense of ourselves. In addition, there are values shared across differences of race, ethnicity, gender, and class, including some contradictory values that embrace, for example, both individualism and a genius for large-scale organization. Finally, there is often a desire to claim an American identity, but not to abandon hyphenated identities. American society itself, in the late 20th century, is a hybrid, a prod-

uct of interactions among all the world cultures represented here.

Even this brief description of the National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity indicates the clear, close correspondence between the focus of the Conversation and the mission of America's community colleges. As the nation's two-year institutions draw a broad spectrum of the community at large into the classroom, so the National Conversation sought to engage a wide range of citizens in thoughtful discussion of the American experience. As community college students mirror the diversity of our population, so the community college mission itself provides a "common ground" where first-generation college students, credentialed re-entry adults, retired people, and new high school graduates gather to learn in formal programs and from each other.

It was natural, then, that AACC would design a project to explore varied aspects of human experience—our political ideals, our sense of place, and our artistic work—and the ways in which these areas of expression intersect in America's national life. And it was to be expected that this project would reach a very large audience: the opening teleconference included almost 500 downlink sites; the mentoring project involved 41 participating colleges with enrollments of more than 365,000 students. In each college, faculty have discussed issues of pluralism and identity and explored ways to coordinate and strengthen their teaching about American history and literature, society, and culture. As the project draws to a close, a great many things have been accomplished, and they are described in the following pages.

It is a pleasure to congratulate David Pierce, Jim Mahoney, and the AACC staff, Diane Eisenberg and the project staff, especially Nadya Labib, and all of the presenters, mentors, and participants engaged in this path-breaking project. NEH welcomes inquiries from all of this report's readers concerning our programs and further funding opportunities in the humanities for community colleges.



Judy Jeffrey Howard is program officer in the Education, Development, and Demonstrations Cluster at the National Endowment for the Humanities.

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES

In Quest of Common Ground

George B. Vaughan and Diane U. Eisenberg

"Our economy is measured in numbers and statistics, and it's very important. But the enduring worth of our nation lies in our shared values and our soaring spirit."

William Jefferson Clinton, 1997 State of the Union Address

In the spring of 1994, Sheldon Hackney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), proposed that the nation engage in a national conversation about American pluralism and identity. At the heart of the conversation would be discussions on what it means to be an American today. Hackney asked the following questions:

- What holds our diverse society together?
- What values will we need to share if we are to succeed as a democratic society?

Chairman Hackney clearly sensed a need—a yearning—for our culturally diverse society to come to grips with what divides us as well as what brings us together as a nation.

Chairman Hackney's questions go to the very heart of many of the debates (some civil and some not so civil) that permeate today's society. For example, Miller Williams, in the poem he prepared for President Clinton's second inauguration, cautioned, "Who were many people coming together, cannot become one people falling apart."

At a level below the inaugural platform (but a level no less important to our understanding of what it means to be an American), a young man named Bahaa, who works as a waiter in the cocktail lounge of an upscale Northern Virginia hotel, was asked to comment on what it means to be American. Before answering the question, he noted that his parents were born in Egypt, and he was born in Washington, DC. His answer is revealing:

America is a place where I'm free to be an Egyptian. I can practice my culture and religion and be an Egyptian here more than in Egypt. This goes for other cultures, too.

Certainly Bahaa voices ideas that are key to Chairman Hackney's national conversation.

Sheldon Hackney did more than raise questions about American pluralism and identity, however. With his leadership, NEH funded a number of projects falling under the umbrella of the National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity. The largest of the grants went to a project conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) in cooperation with the Community College Humanities Association and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society for Two-Year Colleges. The title given to the AACC project was *Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground*.

America's community colleges are the ideal organizations to lead the National Conversation, for these colleges function daily at that point where higher education and the larger community intersect. Also, as institutions of higher education serving students of almost all ages and ethnic and racial backgrounds, these colleges place major emphasis on teaching; thus, community college classrooms provide the ideal forum for discussing what it means to be American, what brings us together, what divides us, and what we have in common.

EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES

Exploring America's Communities was a multifaceted project that lasted two years, concluding with a national conference in January 1997. Forty-one community colleges from across the nation were chosen to participate. They were selected through a competitive process in which each college was evaluated on its ability and willingness to contribute to the National Conversation by strengthening the teaching and learning of American history, literature, and culture on their campuses. During the two-year period, faculty and administrative leaders at these community colleges committed their colleges to integrating ideas, readings, and discussions about American pluralism and identity into their colleges' curricula and to assuring that a time for talking, for discussion, for conversation about these ideas would be a central part of their work.

Exploring America's Communities consisted of a set of the following major activities:

1. A teleconference to introduce *Exploring America's Communities* was telecast to 500 communities. Moderated by Charlayne Hunter-Gault of "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer," thousands of faculty, students, and community leaders became engaged in the National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity through scholarly presentations, poetry readings, folk tales, and music.
2. Two regional conferences on American pluralism and identity were held. Each of the 41 colleges sent a team composed of two humanities faculty members and one administrator. The teams were assigned a mentor who worked with them over a 10-month period to develop action plans for integrating the many facets of American pluralism into their colleges' curriculums.
3. Mentoring services were provided throughout the project to help the colleges implement and refine their projects. Mentors were community college faculty and administrators chosen for their exemplary scholarship, their experience in teaching aspects of the American
- experience, and their curriculum development skills.
4. Resources, including NEH's Conversation Kit, were provided to each college team. In addition, all team members and every community college in the nation received copies of the newsletter, *In Quest of Common Ground*, published by the AACC project and featuring stories on the progress of the participating colleges.
5. A national conference was held at which representatives from the 41 participating colleges reconvened to share the actions they had taken to implement the project's goals.
6. This monograph has been published to document the work of the 41 colleges for replication by other community colleges. It has been distributed to all community college presidents, academic deans, team members, and other interested individuals and organizations.

THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON CAMPUS

Each participating college agreed either to develop new interdisciplinary courses (literature, history, and culture were to be the focus) in the humanities or revise existing courses by infusing themes of American pluralism and identity. Incorporating the project's quest for common ground into humanities courses was a major emphasis for all participating colleges. Several colleges, in homogeneous areas, chose to engage their faculty first via faculty development activities. Many formed college task forces to guide their curricular change; some colleges developed new American Studies programs; others explored common ground by linking courses such as *African American Studies* and *Latin American Studies*.

A major part of each college's plan of action was a "conversation component" in which faculty and students discussed what it means to be an American, including the exploration of those things that bring us together and those that pull us apart. The comments from students and faculty that follow are instructive and often inspiring.

SEEKING COMMON GROUND THROUGH CONVERSATION

Faculty members at a college located in a major metropolitan area noted:

Our conversations regarding what it means to be an American have been spirited, honest, and forthright. Individuals have sought fervently to come to grips with their own identity and their acceptance (or lack of acceptance) of diverse groups. Students have made a more careful analysis of their own multiple heritages.

The students and faculty on this campus concluded that Americans are divided by their heritage, race, religion, age, gender, economic status, education level, sexual choices, and “the belief that some human beings are superior to others.”

One student quickly discovered that

Our own little world is not the only game in town; it is important that we don't try to control or inhibit others by our minimal understanding. The tale [a story used in his class to illustrate what happens when one ventures beyond one's environment] demonstrates that our culture is merely a minuscule portion of the world culture. It shows how each culture depends on the other. As much as we are isolated from each other, we are still one.

Another student observed that

As Americans we may know where we are but do not know about so many other different places or persons. We should have multicultural programs in our schools. Instead of staying with 'our kind' we should get to know people of different races.

From another student comes a comment that may well summarize why the nation needs a national conversation on what it means to be an American:

I realize life isn't fair, but if we educate ourselves about each other, perhaps we can diminish the pain.

From a faculty member comes the following:

My students read The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan and saw the movie. They cried, they discussed the story, they related their own feelings about their mothers, and they kept stressing that they never knew how much we have in common with people of different cultures.

A student in the same class wrote,

With the combination of the stories we read and our class discussions, the distance we've come as a human race and how far we have to go has become evident.

A faculty member found that

As we explored the concept of what it means to be American, it became apparent that a certain level of consciousness-raising needed to be done.

One college shares “one young man's impassioned response” to the question of what brings us together as Americans. The response:

There have always been seeds of division in society, and it is extremely unlikely that the scars of more than 200 years will heal overnight. What brings us together? It sometimes takes a catastrophic event. A hurricane. A flood. A wildfire. A disease. A war. A death. It seems that any time an event that touches human emotions occurs, the people of America have the ability to look past the divisions we face and, for a moment, dwell totally on joining together to support a common goal. When the space shuttle exploded seventy-three seconds into flight on the morning of January 28, 1986, it didn't matter to John or Jane Q. Public that one of the astronauts who perished had an Asian background. What mattered was that seven individuals had given their lives for the nation. They set out on a mission of space exploration. What they did was complete a successful mission of uniting citizens of this country in grieving the loss that the families of those astronauts suffered.

WHAT BRINGS US TOGETHER?

The *Exploring America's Communities* project leaves little doubt that to be an American is a unique experience, regardless of one's gender, race, age, ethnic background, religion, socioeconomic status, or any other distinguishing characteristic. Almost without exception, the participating colleges found that the ties that bind us together are our beliefs in and commitments to freedom and individualism. We also have common holidays, laws, government, sporting events, pop culture, political parties, concern for our children, and, yes, foods that unite us. A number of colleges spoke with reverence about our founding documents—the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution—as important to our national identity. Our free enterprise economy is also a major factor in defining what brings us together as Americans, according to the faculty and students at some of the participating colleges.

WHAT DIVIDES US?

The majority of the 41 colleges named one or more of the following as the things that divide us: race; ethnicity; religion (it plays the role of bringing us together as well as dividing us); socioeconomic status; prejudices; neighborhoods; failure to communicate effectively; and language barriers. For some people, age and gender divide Americans. Paradoxically, many things that divide us rest on individual responses to differences; for example, individualism, a cherished right that has traditionally defined us as Americans, often divides us.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AMERICAN?

What does it mean to be an American? While much of the previous text is devoted to this question, the observations of a five-member study group at one of the participating colleges provides an answer that serves as a fitting conclusion to this part of the discussion.

No where else on earth is there such a mingling of race, culture, and heritage. America is called the great "melting pot," but the

country should be likened to a mixer on very low speed. The people of this country do not melt into one homogeneous blend. Americans are more like the ingredients in a stew. They each retain their own individuality and uniqueness. These differences are what give America its flavor. Our differences can be used as either an asset or a liability. Every person has his own inherent weaknesses and strengths. We can focus on the other person's weakness and ignore our own, or we can use each other's strengths to counterbalance our own weaknesses. The ability to do the latter is what makes America strong, and the tendency to do the other is what hurts this country.

KEEPING THE CONVERSATIONS ALIVE

ACC's *Exploring America's Communities* project was in itself an impressive statement on what it means to be American. An assessment of the evaluations from all 41 teams clearly suggests that many important changes have taken place at these colleges and in the communities they serve. The lasting impact of *Exploring America's Communities*, however, will be determined by how well the 41 teams, and thousands of students and community members involved with the project work to continue their conversations—continue their quest for common ground. The impact will also be determined by how many other community colleges join the initiative and spawn more conversations about what it means to be an American, thus making the National Conversation truly national in scope and promise. The seeds have been planted, nurtured, and are growing. They must not be left to die if all Americans are to help define and to share in the American dream.

George B. Vaughan is professor of higher education at North Carolina State University and evaluator for Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground.

Diane U. Eisenberg, project director of Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground, is president of Eisenberg Associates, a Washington, DC, education consulting firm.

**REPORTS FROM
PARTICIPATING COLLEGES**

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ALPENA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Alpena, Michigan

BACKGROUND

Located in the rural, geographically isolated, sparsely populated northeast corner of lower Michigan, Alpena Community College (ACC) is the only institution of higher learning for 100 miles in any direction. The college serves just under 200 full-time equivalent credit students; noncredit courses geared primarily toward business and workforce development register about 2,000 adult learners per year. ACC has been the cultural, educational, and training center for its five-county service district since 1952. The community the college serves is culturally homogeneous, predominantly white, and characterized by high unemployment, poverty, and low educational attainment.

PLAN

The ACC *Exploring America's Communities* team had four primary goals in its Action Plan:

- revise a 200-level news writing course to include readings related to American pluralism and identity;
- revise a children's literature course to include readings from a wide range of cultural perspectives and ethnicities;
- offer three cultural awareness workshops for faculty, staff, and the community; and
- form an advisory committee comprised of key college and community leaders to sustain the initiative after the AACC project period expires.

A component of the revision of the news writing course involved the use of the Internet to establish a conversation with student journalists from other community colleges with more diversity than ACC. The children's literature course included a requirement that students research an ethnic area, prepare a "culture kit" reflecting that area, and then present their findings as an instructional package in local elementary and junior high classrooms.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We have accomplished much of what we set out to do, though a considerable distance still needs to be traveled. *News Writing 253* was revised, and the Internet dialogue initiated. The children's literature course was revised, culture kits were created, and presentations were delivered in area public school classrooms. Two of the three faculty gatherings have been offered. The advisory committee was formed and meets regularly. The readings added to the news writing syllabus contributed significantly to student learning in the course: *The Organizer's Tale* by César Chávez, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Alex Haley, and *Discoveries* by Michael Dorris sparked considerable discussion related to minority access to the American dream, the objectivity of conventional readings of American history, and the current state of cultural understanding in America. Students in the children's literature course benefited from having to learn new material in sufficient depth and detail to instruct others. The connection between ACC and participating public school teachers also contributed to the conversation, as did the involvement of the county librarian, who will store completed culture kits for display and future use in the library resource room.

We intend to carry the project further by 1) developing a film series open to students, faculty, and the community to explore in detail the issues we've dealt with during the project period; and by 2) holding our third faculty gathering, focusing on the African American experience. We want to maintain our creativity and focus to keep this initiative alive, and we will do so with leadership from our advisory committee.

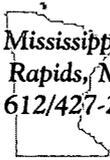
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ANOKA-RAMSEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

BACKGROUND

Anoka-Ramsey Community College (ARCC), overlooking a bend in the Mississippi River, is located 20 miles upstream from the heart of Minneapolis. The college's sense of place is bifurcated: to the north and west are farms and forests; to the south and east, urban areas. Most typically blue-collar and rural in makeup, the counties of Anoka and Ramsey contribute most of the 9,000 students who annually take classes at the college's two campuses. The college's function since its establishment in 1965 has been to provide transfer and general education to more than 800 students receiving associate of arts degrees annually. These students have been predominately white and of northern European descent. Recently, however, the college's minority enrollment has grown from 2 percent (mostly Native American) to over 5 percent (increasing numbers of Asian and African refugees).

PLAN

ARCC's Action Plan specified three areas of focus:

- a series of faculty workshops to accomplish grass-roots level curriculum transformation through the inclusion of concepts of pluralism and identity into day-to-day teaching and activities;
- the development of an interdisciplinary course as an outgrowth of that curricular change; and
- a series of Internet conversations for our students with an ethnically different student body from another college.

Our overarching goal for the project was to infuse teaching and learning in such a way that study and discussions about American pluralism and identity would become fundamental to the course fabric. We hoped to make pluralism as natural an approach as writing across the curriculum and nonsexist language have become. A secondary

goal was to bring the importance of this project to the awareness of all faculty, not just those in literature, history, and the humanities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We believe that the success of our project rested on bringing faculty into the project and that this could be best accomplished by one-on-one interaction. Indeed, dissemination of information was so successful that the term *Pluralism Project* has become a common part of campus vocabulary. Distribution of the project newsletter *Pluralism and Common Ground: Community at Anoka-Ramsey* maintained the presence of the subject for faculty and administrators through five issues. The sixth issue, at press for January, provides faculty members with resource materials as they plan syllabi for winter quarter: books, journal articles, movies and videos, and listings of area concerts, plays, and art exhibits with pluralistic focuses.

A week-long screening of the AACC teleconference video *Exploring America's Communities*, followed by an hour of conversation on subjects of community and identity generated by the video, launched our project activities. More than 70 faculty, students, and staff took part in these discussions that focused on such issues as the nature of the college community and its roots, the various identities that members of the community see, and our own attachments to place. In October, a highly successful day of activities with mentor Max Reichard included two faculty workshops and a brown-bag lunch with the college community. In November, team members led a second workshop on developing an interdisciplinary course, integrating ideas that had come about as a result of Dr. Reichard's visit to ARCC. During the full project period, team members met weekly to strategize for the future and to evaluate past activities. As a result of the Pluralism Project's "institutionalization," the college's cultural diversity committee disbanded, and the *Exploring America's Communities* team took on the role of

leading *Diversity Dialogues* with students and staff which had previously been a function of the diversity committee.

Perhaps the most gratifying response we have received has been the interest with which participants have approached the topic of community: how to define it, how it shapes us, how much we need it. This response has grown out of a consensus that there are more things that bring us together than divide us, that we have more commonalities than

differences. In one conversation, a young white supremacist engaged in dialogue with representatives of that "multiculturalism" he was so contemptuous of, and the result was at least détente, if not agreement. The very fact of the conversation was in itself a very powerful tribute to the efficacy of the Pluralism Project at Anoka-Ramsey Community College.

TEAM

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ATLANTA METROPOLITAN COLLEGE
Atlanta, Georgia

BACKGROUND

Atlanta Metropolitan College (AMC), an urban, two-year, nonresidential unit of the University System of Georgia, began classes in September, 1974. Located in the southwest section of the city, the college seeks to provide "affordable, accessible, and relevant educational programs to a student population diverse in age and in ethnic, racial, social, political, and cultural backgrounds." The college enrolls 2,000 students in three types of degree-granting programs, including 43 transfer programs for students pursuing baccalaureate degrees; nine career programs for students seeking academic preparation for employment; and 13 joint programs with Atlanta Area Technical School to complement vocational/technical certification.

PLAN

To enhance teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity, the AMC team developed an Action Plan to revise and prepare for teaching *Humanities 101* and *History 232*. The plan provided opportunities for the greater college community to seek and find "common ground" as students, faculty, and staff explore the notion of what it means to be an American.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The entire college family has addressed these objectives through a number of activities. Following initial meetings with key administrators of the college, an expanded Plurality and Diversity Task Force was established that included representation from all major campus units. The task force held several discussions regarding how to implement campuswide multiculturalism and diversity. In addition, faculty teams from the divisions of humanities and fine arts, and social science met and discussed course syllabi revisions, possible textbooks, and pertinent materials to be used in targeted courses.

In addition to the revision of *History 232* and *Humanities 101*, *Humanities 102* was revised to include an in-depth look at common ground issues. A faculty-staff forum addressed the theme and worked on basic definitions and terms that are utilized campuswide. Three day and three evening assemblies were held that featured lecture-forums addressing the theme. Thus, the entire campus community, along with visitors from the broader community, had the opportunity to hear lectures by actress and producer Pamela Poitier, novelist Faye McDonald Smith, and attorney Patricia Russell McCloud. These lectures were followed up by open conversation, questions,

"After participating in this project, our teaching will never be the same; and neither will we be the same as Americans. This project has made us broaden the language we use to talk about what it means to be an American. It has created in each of us a respect for and a commitment to finding our common ground."

— Atlanta Metropolitan College

answers, and large group discussions of what it means to be an American, what divides us, what brings us together, and what we have in common.

Humanities 101, entitled *Exploring Selected American Cultures: African American, Hispanic American and Asian American*, and *Humanities 102, African American Culture II*, were very successful as revised courses. In each of the classes, the students and the teacher sat in a circle to encourage a conversation format. They employed "read arounds" where everyone read and was heard; then discussion followed.

Students in *Humanities 101* visited a Latin American club to experience Latin music and the Crosby Museum to view the African American Women's Art Exhibition. Students in *Humanities 102* took field trips to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change; the Carter Presidential Center; and Gullah Country, an island near Beaufort, SC. Students from both classes visited the African American Heritage Library to

view a photographic display featuring scenes from various African American communities across the nation.

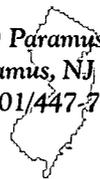
Brown-bag lunch conversations were held in the student snack bar where the international students club members and humanities class members informally discussed the need for various American subcultures to actively seek common ground. As the quarter progressed, these group chats became larger, with students from throughout the campus joining the conversations.

Conversations regarding "American Plurality and Identity" have been spirited, honest, and forthright. Individuals have sought fervently to come to grips with their own identity, their acceptance, or lack of acceptance of diverse groups within the academic community and the greater community. Many myths about multiculturalism have been examined. Individuals and groups have begun to seriously probe the meaning of Americanism. Students have made a more careful analysis of their own multiple heritages.

TEAM

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BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 Paramus, New Jersey

BACKGROUND

Bergen Community College (BCC), a comprehensive, publicly supported two-year college, opened in September 1968. The college is committed to equal educational opportunities for all, regardless of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, or handicap. Located 20 minutes north of New York City, BCC enrolls over 12,000 full- and part-time students of all ages in its degree and certificate programs covering more than 70 fields of study and an additional 10,000 students in its division of continuing education. The student body

reflects the diversity of the county, and this diversity is celebrated on campus. In fall 1996, there were 2,973 foreign-born students representing 98 countries.

PLAN

The primary goals of BCC's Action Plan to enhance teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity follow:

- infuse material into existing courses in American literature and American history;

- create new courses, one in American ethnic literature and a history course in diversity and unity;
- conduct a speakers' series during the fall 1996 semester;
- set up a discussion group comprised of faculty in literature and history to address infusion issues; and
- address that part of the college mission statement that calls upon the college community "to develop in students an understanding and appreciation . . . of the diversity of our pluralistic society."

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Upon returning to campus after the AACC conference in Washington, DC., the resulting English and history faculty committee met during spring and fall 1996. We arranged a speakers' series through our faculty development program and held three lectures at the college.

In his *American Literature I* course, Dr. Alan Kaufman revised his syllabus to make it more inclusive. Much of the course now centers on questions of what divides and brings Americans together, and what do we have in common. The course includes considerable material by early African American and Native American authors such as Phillis Wheatley, Harriet Jacobs, F. E. W. Harper, Frederick Douglass, George Copway, and William Apess. Dr. Kaufman prepared a bibliography of secondary materials on American pluralism and identity that was distributed to members of the diversity committee and faculty members in American literature and history. He also developed a new course in American ethnic literature.

In the fall of 1996, Matthew Panczyk infused a pluralism and identity module into a contemporary issues and problems history course. The purpose of the module was, first, to elicit student self-description of his/her ethnic identity with a questionnaire; second, to present a brief overview of immigration and focus on the four project questions (What does it mean to be an American? What divides us? What brings us together? What do we have in common?); and third, to ascertain in a short, open-ended essay if the students became

more sensitive to the issue of American pluralism and identity. A brief bibliography accompanies the module.

The groundwork has now been laid for institutionalizing this project. The college community in general participated in the project, principally through discussions and attendance at lectures. During the spring 1997 semester, the history department will be refining the pluralism and identity pilot module into a U.S. history survey course. The development of a new history course on diversity and unity will continue with input from members of the history, sociology, and psychology disciplines. We also plan to investigate the use of oral history as an approach to the teaching of pluralism and identity in history courses.

Dr. Kaufman will teach a revised American literature course including works by such authors as Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, Abraham Cahan, Leslie Marmon Silko, Etheridge Knight, and Aurora Levins Morales. During spring 1997, American literature courses will focus on gaining approval for a new course in American ethnic literature.

In their responses to the project's four questions, students spoke repeatedly of the importance of our freedom. Students were optimistic about our ability to act at individuals and, at the same time, to work together harmoniously, as they assert we did during Desert Storm. Pride in being an American came across strongly in student responses, as did an awareness that Americans are obliged to "stand up for what you believe in" and "accept others' cultures." As to what divides us, some students felt it was a lack of understanding of different groups, ethnic and racial ones in particular. Further, students felt that mutual respect, toleration, and learning about other groups will help to overcome these situations. This belief in the power of education is an encouraging one. Now we must continue to function as a scholarly community should: to bring an informed awareness to the solid instincts that so many of our students have.

TEAM

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BLACK RIVER TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Pocahontas, Arkansas

BACKGROUND

Now in its sixth year as an institution of higher education, Black River Technical College (BRTC) was founded 25 years ago as a vocational-technical school serving a homogeneous white population of rural northeast Arkansas. The community's historical farm base dwindled while its industrial segment grew in the past two decades, but the predominantly low-tech job market has suffered tremendously from foreign competition in the past year. The severest blow came last year with the closure of the community's oldest and largest employer, Brown Shoe company, which at the time employed over 10 percent of the community's total work force. The result: Randolph County's jobless rate is today the highest in the state. BRTC has stepped forward to provide retraining and other educational opportunities for a significant number of these and other displaced workers of all ages, many of whom have lived and worked their entire lives in this community. Their arrival at BRTC coincided with the college's entry into the *Exploring America's Communities* project; their presence both affirms the need and enhances the possibilities of this humanities project for our college.

PLAN

Our Action Plan centerpiece is The Century Wall, a large mural depicting the faces of 100 Americans who, in all their pluralities of color, religion, and ethnic identities, have made a difference in shaping the 20th century. The project includes a student-researched/student-written booklet that contains a keyed schemata and short biographies of the 100 persons. Thus, the wall serves as a silent, but eloquent, educator: for those who live and work here, for those who pass through, and for students of all ages from the region. By involving our staff, students, and the entire community in developing and selecting those to be depicted on the mural, we hoped to increase awareness, understanding, and apprecia-

tion of America's incredibly rich and beautiful diversity. The need for such understanding is especially great here at BRTC, where so many of us have lived in near-total isolation from other cultures and where many at this time in their lives feel deep, economics-driven resentment and distrust of large segments of America's peoples.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

From the very first press coverage announcing BRTC's participation in *Exploring America's Communities*, community interest has been remarkably keen. Wherever we team members went, people had ideas for us as to who might be depicted on the wall. We sent letter surveys to our colleagues at Arkansas State University as well as to local organizations and schools. We promised that any eligible name submitted would be considered and that any group responding would be acknowledged in the booklet. By the end of the spring semester, the list of nominees was quite interesting and growing daily.

Summer activity on the project included contacting prospective muralists and learning about the art of mural painting as well as working on our own reading lists and planning infusion activities for the fall semester.

By the beginning of the fall faculty workshops, the English faculty had decided to include in the syllabus for all Freshman I and II composition students the required reading of a multiculturally appropriate novel that would yield the opportunity for dialogue and essay writing. Novels that represented Asian American, Mexican American, Native American, and African American literature were selected and coordinated. Portfolios of student writings, as well as consensus from the faculty, have led to the commitment to repeat the activity in the spring 1997 semester.

Government students were busy with a focused study on the role of the media in shaping our perceptions of ethnic groups in America. The activity will be repeated in the spring semester and, as

with the English infusion activity, evaluated and assessed for possible inclusion into the curriculum on a permanent basis. Other students, meanwhile, were involved in gathering continued community input into The Century Wall. Approximately 30 members of Phi Theta Kappa staffed booths at four separate community events. Visitors numbering in the thousands actually submitted up to five nominations for the wall.

Completion of the booklets for The Century Wall is planned for the spring semester. At that time, a class of freshman English students will pair up with a desktop publishing class to collaborate on the research, writing, and production of the booklets.

"My students were clearly affected," said one instructor who taught *The Joy Luck Club*. "They read the novel and then saw the movie. They cried. They discussed the story, they related their own feelings about their mothers, and they kept stressing they never knew how much we have in common with people of different cultures." Another student, whose readings included *A Lesson*

Before Dying and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, wrote, "With the combination of the stories and class discussion, the distance we've come as a human race and how far we have to go has become very evident." Especially remarkable was this written statement from a student, who, after reading *The Education of Little Tree*, admitted this was the first book he had ever completely read: "I don't read much, maybe because I don't have the time or willpower to start. I waited until the last minute to start on this book. Although I didn't want to begin, after I started reading I couldn't put the book down. This book contains many morals and small lessons. I enjoyed it the most because I learned a lot about Indians and their culture. I had heard and learned about Indians and how they were treated, but never realized the reality of it until this book."

TEAM

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BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Bronx, New York

BACKGROUND

Bronx Community College (BCC), founded in 1958, is the oldest of the six community colleges in the City University of New York, a multicampus urban university complex serving 100,000 students annually. With an enrollment of approximately 8,000, Bronx Community College offers 26 major curricula that prepare students both for advanced studies at four-year colleges and vocational training in diverse occupations. Ethnically, the college is about 40 percent African American and 49 percent Hispanic, but these numbers disguise the diversity of individuals within these categories—a significant population of English-speaking immigrants from the Caribbean are generally numbered among the African American population.

PLAN

The goal of BCC's Action Plan was to improve both our core curriculum and the college's teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity by addressing a lack of cohesion in the liberal arts core curriculum and the need to provide more rigorous academic experiences in humanities courses. Policy requires that candidates for associate of arts degrees in liberal arts take at least two "enhanced" courses: courses that provide additional educational experiences and stress writing and creative thinking. Therefore, we planned to develop a series of enhanced units that addressed American pluralism and identity and that could be grafted onto existing courses in various departments, thereby transforming the entire core curriculum.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It was fairly easy to integrate material on pluralism into the *Fundamentals of Interpersonal Communication* course content because intercultural communication is one of the units of the course. To help students understand the implications of cultural and co-cultural identity, they read articles dealing with nonverbal communication in different cultures. It was clear to them that when individuals from different cultures use different kinds of nonverbal communication, misunderstandings can arise. They discussed the stresses that they have undergone because of their multiple cultural memberships. While they certainly understand what divides us, it is more difficult for them to deal with issues of "What do we have in common?" and "What does it mean to be an American?" Many of our students feel that what it means to be an American is defined by someone other than those in their cultural group. As one student wrote, the definition is written by individuals "who are in positions of power." On the other hand, the students recognize that they are in college because they have adopted the American belief

"The overwhelming conclusion we reached was that Americans are tied together by a common belief in basic human rights and the need for individual liberty to allow the exercise of those rights. It was clear from the comments of faculty and students that the most important ingredient in the glue that binds American culture together is toleration."

—Bronx Community College

that hard work will pay off. They realize that some cultures have the attitude that individuals can do little to change their future, while in the United States individuals believe that they are able to control their fate.

An enhanced unit, *Poetry of a Diverse People*, used in a written composition and poetry course had mixed results. The class read American poets voicing the concerns of many and varied ethnic groups, then discussed how individuals and groups interact with one another. This did not prompt a clear and readily accepted definition for "American" in phrases such as African American, Hispanic American, Chinese American, and Native American. For the students, the typical American remained a white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

Although the exercise was successful in that it broadened the canon of American poetry and involved the class directly in poetry itself, it did not evoke a clear idea of what unites us as Americans. Rather, it seems to have sharpened perceived ethnic differences. Nevertheless, the students recognized the great chasms that separate us all and the folly of labeling people because of their race, ethnic group, appearance, or culture.

Students in the American Experience history course, a one-semester survey of U.S. history, were given two additional reading assignments: one on assimilation, the other on ethnic adaptation. The former, drawn from Alan M. Krant's *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880–1921*, dealt with problems confronting newcomers in the period 1880–1910 and their various strategies for becoming American. The second article, drawn from Elliott R. Barkan's *And Still They Come: Immigrant and American Society, 1920 to the 1990s*, dealt with the reaction of the grandchildren of immigrants, during the 1960s and 1970s, their affirmations of self-worth through ethnic identity, and their rejection of the melting pot theory of Americanization. After analyzing these readings, students were asked, "What is it that Americans do or should have in common?" The least common denominator for all these students was that to be an American means to be free from cultural constraints and long-established customs associated with the cultures from which they or their parents had emigrated. Pressed to better explain their perceptions, most ended up articulating statements of freedom that mirrored the Bill of Rights.

By looking at other cultures, our students have developed a better concept of their own sense of place in this country. The faculty involved have each benefited because they, too, have asked and tried to answer the same questions. Nevertheless, the question "What makes us an American?" remains very difficult to resolve, even in a situation such as ours, in which we witness the struggle of new Americans actively engaged in trying to find meaningful personal solutions to this conundrum.

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BUTLER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Butler, Pennsylvania

BACKGROUND

Butler County Community College (BCCC) serves Butler County in western Pennsylvania, a partly rural, partly industrial, and partly suburban area. The college admitted its first students in 1966. In fall 1996, student enrollment in credit courses was 3,098. Eighty students have been identified as minority students, 50 of those as African American, 6 as Native American, 15 as Asian or Pacific Islanders and 9 as Hispanic. This population mix, heavily white, non-Hispanic, represents the mix in the community.

"Our students generally agreed that our freedom unites us but that it is economic status, more than race or ethnicity, that divides us."

—Butler County
Community College

PLAN

Because the local population is overwhelmingly nonminority, BCCC's Action Plan aimed to revise syllabi of several courses to include contributions of minority communities that students might otherwise never know. The following courses were chosen for revisions:

- American history surveys,
- American literature surveys,
- fine arts courses: *Introduction to Art, Introduction to Music, and Literature and the Arts.*

A pre- and post-course student inventory would also be devised to assess any understanding of the material that students may have brought with them and whether our instruction had had any effect.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The two-semester American history survey sequence needed to be revised to incorporate more social and cultural history. New textbooks have been selected: Norton et al., *A People and a Nation*, and the Stephen B. Oates anthology, *Portrait of America*. Three faculty members who teach early U.S. history collectively chose articles from the Oates anthology to assign as student read-

ing, revised the syllabus, and helped draft the inventory. The pre- and post-course inventory was administered to all students.

The fine arts department examined content sections of *Introduction to Art, Introduction to Music, and Literature and the Arts* syllabi for possible inclusion of American works that would reflect American plurality. A section of the music course was devoted to American music, and students attended a concert of the music of American composers. Art students completed projects on American artists. Several new library resources have been ordered and will be incorporated into the course bibliographies.

In American literature, the syllabi of the two American literature survey courses were revised to include authors from American communities heretofore unrepresented. Because the revision was extensive, the syllabi needed the approval of the humanities/social science division, the college's academic affairs committee, and the faculty organization. New texts have been selected and the American literature syllabi have been approved by all required groups. Implementation began in the spring of 1997.

This project allowed several faculty members the chance to reflect on the diversity of America's communities and also served as a catalyst to spur other related projects. This fall the college cultural community series included a performance by Jack Gladstone, a Native American storyteller, as well as a concert by Guaracha, a Latin American band. Furthermore, a new multicultural club is sponsored by a faculty member not directly involved with the *Exploring America's Communities* project. This project and its related activities are fostering growing interest in America's diverse communities.

TEAM

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CARROLL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Westminster, Maryland

BACKGROUND

Carroll Community College (CCC) is a comprehensive institution with credit and non-credit courses in transfer, career, and technical programs. Although the college has been in existence since 1976, it did not become a degree-granting institution until 1993. Until then, it operated as a campus of Catonsville Community College. The college is located northwest of Baltimore in an area of family farms and small communities that is gradually becoming suburban. Our students are primarily from white, middle-class families, although our minority population does reflect the demographics of the county itself. The student body consists of approximately 2,500 credit students and 6,000 noncredit students.

PLAN

The Action Plan of the CCC team had several components. We wanted to upgrade the American Studies concentration that has been listed in our catalog for several years but which has not been the choice of many students. Our intent was to make the concentration more attractive to students and to find ways for faculty members who teach the courses to unify goals and share approaches to the material. Our Action Plan called for all faculty members involved in American Studies to identify common themes taught in all the courses and to articulate new goals and objectives for the program. The plan also included creating a new, interdisciplinary course as part of the American Studies curriculum and planning for faculty development programs dealing with American pluralism and identity.

The team of faculty members who teach courses in the American Studies program (*American Government, American Literature, U.S. History, and Sociology*) began meeting in late spring. By August we had identified a set of themes that we felt best identified the American spirit and that we all either currently dealt with in our courses or could include without changing our basic ap-

proaches to our subject matter. These themes are the American dream/destiny; individualism; regionalism and rootedness; the migration experience; egalitarianism; the Puritan ethic; and pluralism. We agreed to rewrite our syllabi to make the themes more recognizable and prominent, which will enable students enrolling in American Studies to instantly see the ties between the courses. We also began planning for a spring speakers series—hopefully funded by a grant from the Maryland Humanities Council—to publicize the American Studies concentration to prospective students and to provide faculty development opportunities.

During this same time period, two faculty members who will team teach the new interdisciplinary course, *A Sense of Place: Exploring Our American Identity*, worked to develop it. The course includes literature, history, and geography and applies the themes identified above to six regions: New England, the South, the Industrial Heartland, the Great Plains, the Southwest, and the West. It looks at the effects of history and geography on the literature of each area and the contributions of each region to American pluralism and identity.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

When our mentor, Dr. Jo Marshall, visited our campus in October, all of the pieces of our plan came together in a way we had not anticipated. As we spoke with her, the idea of creating a community of learners, which had been discussed briefly in earlier sessions, became our central theme. Before the day was out, we had decided to work toward scheduling American Studies students together in time-blocked core courses. Suddenly, we had a built-in recruiting campaign and the opportunity for strongly forged ties among the faculty members who would be part of this learning community. The conversations about the American identity course they had been creating since the beginning of the planning process would continue indefinitely once students became part of this process.

When Dr. Marshall and the team met with instructors of required reading, writing, literature, and speech classes to introduce them to their role in our future plans, the enthusiasm that many of them expressed about the project gave us another idea. Why not include them in the new learning community we were creating right away rather than waiting until after we had set up our future faculty development project? The administrators who met with us during the day were enthusiastic about the ideas that were being generated at a fast pace, and they gave us the go-ahead to put the program into effect for next fall.

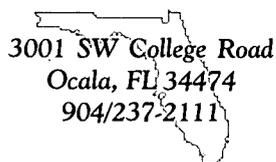
Since October, we have put together a two-year course of study for American Studies students. It groups their required humanities courses, both for the concentration and for general college requirements, in time blocks. The courses for fall 1997 include *Sociology 101*; *English 101*; and *Humanities 111*, *A Sense of Place: Exploring Our American Identity*. The faculty members who will be teaching the courses will be sharing texts, assignments, and field trips. We are hoping to encourage the continuation of conversations begun during class time by having the entire group of students and instructors go to lunch together.

We have created a brochure advertising our program that our recruiters are already taking with them as they visit local high schools. We will also send out a series of publicity releases and are planning to meet with high school English and history teachers to enlist their support for the program.

While we have not yet had the opportunity to engage in formal conversations with students about what it means to be an American, all of us have been talking about the program with students we now have in class, and the response has been positive. The responses of our colleagues have also been positive. All the college personnel we have had to work with to get the program in place have gone out of their way to accommodate us. We feel that we are hurtling along on a fast train right now, but the destination will be well worth the ride!

TEAM

- Faye Pappalardo, Vice President of Teaching, Learning, and Institutional Planning*
- Ann Weber, Associate Professor of English and Explorations*
- Robert Young, Professor of History*



CENTRAL FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Ocala, Florida

BACKGROUND

Central Florida Community College (CFCC) was established in 1958 and now serves about 6,000 credit students with approximately 30,000 involved in noncredit programs. In addition to three campuses, CFCC boasts several venues offering cultural events as well as instruction: the CFCC Exhibit Center hosts traveling exhibitions and lectures; the Brick City Center for the Arts is a focal point for visual and performing artists; and the Appleton Museum of Art (jointly owned with Florida State University) is a large art museum with an extensive collection of Western and non-Western art.

PLAN

Our principal goals were to promote conversation among CFCC faculty about American identity and to carry these discussions into the classroom. The primary mechanism was a series of faculty brown-bag roundtable discussions.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The faculty brown-bag sessions proved a great success. At the first session, humanities instructor John Mathews presented an historical sketch of 19th- and 20th-century immigration to America. Adjunct history instructor Darrell Riley

discussed varying conceptions of American identity over the past two centuries. Education instructor Jana Bernhardt presented examples of how history textbooks have changed in the past century.

At the second session, communications instructor Debra Vazquez outlined America's rich literary heritage and pointed out that not only is there a multitude of talented Asian, African, and Latino American authors currently working in this country, but that there has been for centuries. By having those present read several short works, she demonstrated that questions of pluralism and identity are profoundly expressed by these authors.

In the third session, humanities instructor Ron Cooper used audio recordings to show that the presence of similar musical structures within American vernacular styles illustrates the borrowing among poor, rural musicians and songwriters of varying ethnicity. Communications instructor Joe Zimmerman used D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* to demonstrate how American film, even from one of our most gifted filmmakers, has perpetuated racial stereotypes.

The series drew 15 to 20 faculty members to each session, and each was videotaped for viewing and discussion on our other campuses. One luncheon was attended by CFCC's new president during his first week on campus.

Our mentor, Dr. Daniel Rivas of Saddleback College, addressed the entire faculty and challenged the college to continue to grapple with questions surrounding American identity in all disciplines. After his address, Dr. Rivas joined the members of the humanities, social sciences, communications, and fine arts divisions for a prolonged discussion.

This year's CFCC Film Series included *My Family* (1995), about several generations of a Mexican-American family's successful struggle to survive in an Anglo American-dominated society, and *Powwow Highway* (1988), about the picaresque exploits of a young Native American

and his white companion. Both films were followed by conversations led by CFCC faculty members.

Two new courses were created. *Introduction to Multicultural Education* will be a prerequisite for admission to the education departments at Florida's nine state universities. Topics include exploring American commonalities as well as appreciating our differences. The second new course, *Introduction to Children's Literature*, includes an examination of American identity in a multicultural society. Two courses were revised by the addition of new materials. *HUM 2450: American Humanities* took "Search for Identity: Common Ground Within Diversity" as a guiding theme of the class. Students collaborated to produce a mural that will adorn a wall of the student lounge on the CFCC Citrus Campus. In addition, Diane Ravitch's *The American Reader*, a multicultural anthology, was added to the required reading for *American Humanities*.

The question of what divides us was easier for us to answer than what we have in common. The most frequent responses were color, class, ignorance of each other, and fear. Regarding what we have in common, students and faculty alike emphasized our shared political institutions—the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution—our economic institution of free-market capitalism tempered with government regulation, and our cultural institutions, with far more emphasis on the popular arts and mass media than on the fine arts and literature. What brings us together? Most mentioned was the belief that despite the differences, we were still Americans. As one student said, "With all our differences, we're still an 'us'!"

TEAM

Ron Cooper, Instructor of Humanities and Social Sciences
 Ira Holmes, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences
 Debra Vazquez, Instructor of Communications



CHESTERFIELD-MARLBORO TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Cheraw, South Carolina

BACKGROUND

Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College (CMTC), a state-supported two-year college, was established in 1968. The college is located in the northeastern part of South Carolina and serves a large, three-county rural geographic area. Over 12 new industries have located in the service area during the past 20 years, bringing diversity to our communities from countries including Germany, Japan, England, and France. The college offers a variety of associate degree, certificate, and diploma programs. At present, 1,026 students attend Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College in 28 programs. A majority of the students are first-generation college students and desire degrees, diplomas, or certificates that will lead to job placement, job advancement, or college/university transfer.

PLAN

The primary goal of CMTC's Action Plan was to broaden the scope of its existing course offerings to include resources that could be used concurrently with both literature and history. These resources would focus on cultural pluralism and how that pluralism shaped the American identity. Our plan included the development of a one-semester-hour seminar course that would address the theme of integrating American literature and American history. This seminar course is to be offered concurrently with *American Literature II* and *American History II*, with the historical time frame c.1890–1996.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Course objectives have been developed, audio visual resources identified, and library holdings have been evaluated. A list of speakers is currently being developed and expanded. The new seminar course has been designed to expose stu-

dents to common, unifying themes of the American experience. The parallels between American literature and history are examined over a 15-week period. Students meet for a one-hour weekly class session to discuss, interpret, and analyze the individuals and groups that comprise America. Topics include an examination of contributions to the literature and history of the United States made by Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and European Americans. Special emphasis is placed on interpreting the question, "What is an American and what has been the American experience?" Although our Action Plan identifies both *American History II* and *American Literature II* as the focus of our efforts, the team faculty included common themes of "American culture" into the first-semester American history and American literature courses.

The response of colleagues to *Exploring America's Communities* has been extremely positive. A spin-off to this activity will be to connect its objectives across the curriculum. The work that has been accomplished through our participation in this project will also be applicable on a statewide level through the South Carolina International Education Consortium (SCIEC). Course outlines will reflect statewide initiatives to internalize courses in social sciences, humanities, and communication. The objectives that were developed for the seminar course will also be applicable to the efforts of the SCIEC. The AACC project has had a positive impact, not only for Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College's efforts to strengthen existing courses and curriculum, but also for statewide initiatives.

TEAM

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COLLIN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Plano, Texas

BACKGROUND

Collin County Community College (CCCC), a three-campus district located in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, has grown since its inception in 1986. It now serves 10,600 credit students (5,474 full-time enrollees) and 12,000 non-credit students annually. Two campuses serve suburban populations that account for 82 percent of the student body. A third campus draws students from small towns and rural environments. Persons of color represent 17 percent of our student population: 6 percent Hispanic, 5 percent African American, and 6 percent Asian American.

PLAN

Our Action Plan focused primarily upon integrating issues of American pluralism and identity into our core curriculum. We established some common ground with our faculty through small group discussions about a set of readings. We also designed two learning communities to provide students with an in-depth opportunity to search for our commonalities as Americans while recognizing our different historical and cultural experiences. Our goals included extending the conversation outside classroom boundaries through a speakers' series capable of provoking students' critical thought, self-examination, and response to the question, "What does it mean to be an American?"

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CCCC's vice president for instruction supported *Exploring America's Communities* as a major instructional theme, which helped establish a receptive climate. Full-time faculty, during their fall divisional meetings, addressed selected readings through small group discussions facilitated by study questions designed by project team members. All faculty received an extensive annotated reading and film list whose titles were available in our excellent library collections.

Students enrolled in *Introduction to Sociology* sections viewed Min Wah's film, *The Color of Fear*, which chronicled a series of frank discussions of racism and prejudice among men of different racial and cultural backgrounds. The film was an excellent teaching tool, calling attention to the "silent consciousness of white privilege." Students began to acknowledge that while minorities must understand the white experience in order to succeed in society, the opposite is not true.

Many of the American history sections integrated conversation formats throughout their survey course. One faculty member, teaching 200 students in five sections, used the concept of community as the catalyst for the introduction and conclusion of each course unit. Conversations in class examined the rhetoric of democracy and the evolution of terms such as *equality* and *the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*. Lively discussion ensued in response to David Potter's article, "The Civil War in the History of the Modern World," as students explored the balance between order versus liberty and of nationalism versus liberalism.

Many of the conversations in our courses were responses by students to our speaker series. Writer and storyteller Greg Howard of the Cherokee Nation spoke about the "first Americans" to more than 75 students while Ron Cowart, director of the refugee affairs office in Dallas, discussed the growing presence of Asian American communities in our region. Eddie Stimpson, the son of a North Texas sharecropper and author of *My Remembers*, described the Jim Crow America of his youth while June Van Cleef, professor of photography, explored the disappearing rural communities of Texas.

Anchoring the project's instructional efforts were two fall-semester learning communities. *The Road to the White House* explored America's communities by applying sociology to politics. Students studied race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, region, and religion as factors contributing to our views of the political environment, candidates,

and national issues. The learning community *Rhetoric and the Republic* was designed around a four-part project: Who Am I? Who Is The Other? What is a Community? and, finally, What is My Community? During the spring 1997 semester, we are implementing three additional learning communities that will explore America's communities from the perspectives of four disciplines (history, rhetoric, sociology, and political science).

What have we learned from our students' conversations? Students identified freedom, individualism, and opportunity as defining American characteristics. Many students saw America as a place with possibilities. Dividing us were race, religion, and money. The more reflective students identified racial, ethnic, and religious differences as sepa-

rating us. Students noted that tradition and crisis were elements that bring us together. In times of crisis, we support each other, regardless of divisions. We share the Constitution, voting, freedom of speech, love of family, and service to community. Some students identified a common need for a higher power. They saw our commonalities as love of freedom, a chance to better ourselves, and an ability to be an individual.

TEAM

- Kay Mizell, Professor of English*
- George Rislov, Associate Professor of History*
- Harriett Schwartz, Dean of Social Sciences and Public Services*
- Kyle Wilkison, Professor of History*



CUMBERLAND COUNTY COLLEGE
Vineland, New Jersey

BACKGROUND

Cumberland County College (CCC), established in 1966, is a small, rural community college in southern New Jersey. Cumberland County, with a population of 138,000, is the poorest county in the state and has the highest unemployment rate along with the highest teenage pregnancy rate. Eighty percent of the students are the first in their families to attend college. During the 1995-1996 academic year, approximately 100 students could be categorized as language minority students from among the 2,500 full- and part-time population. The majority of the full- and part-time students are women. Most of the minority students are African American and Hispanic, predominantly of Puerto Rican origin. Other groups represented include people from other parts of Latin America, Ukrainians, and Native Americans.

PLAN

The primary goals of our Action Plan were to:

- emphasize more pluralism in our U.S. history and our American literature courses;
- assign writing topics on pluralism and American identity in three developmental writing courses;
- develop a new course in 20th-century American culture; and
- introduce an American Studies option into the CCC curriculum.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Team member Sharon Kewish has revised EN 209, a survey course of American literature from the colonial period through the 19th century, and EN 210, a survey course of American literature from the mid-19th century through the mid-20th century that reflects American pluralism and identity. Among the authors added to the

curriculum were Harriet Beecher Stowe, Louisa May Alcott, Emily Dickinson, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Sarah Orne Jewett, Willa Cather, Gertrude Stein, Hilda Doolittle, Marianne Moore, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Katherine Anne Porter, Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, Richard Wright, Edith Wharton, Lorraine Hansberry, and Gwendolyn Brooks.

Ms. Kewish is now working on the inclusion of additional Asian American and Spanish American writers. Since there is not enough time in each semester to discuss all of these writers, as many as possible are presented for discussion, some in more depth than others. The traditional American literature canon is greatly enhanced by these additional voices. Of the four major papers required in each American literature course, two may focus on these works.

Richard Curcio has enhanced the pluralism focus of two U.S. history courses. He has purchased new materials for the library that will contribute to the changes he has made in the syllabi. In addition, he has created a new course in 20th century American culture.

Students in three of the developmental English classes wrote paragraphs or essays on a topic relating to pluralism or American identity. It was their final writing assignment before the college basic skills test. We prepared for the assignment

by doing in-class brainstorming on possible topics: food, shopping for clothes and checking labels for where they were made, interviewing friends or coworkers from an ethnic background different than theirs, personal experiences, descriptions, and American identity. Most of them chose to write about what it means to be an American. Students love to talk about their backgrounds, and several of them were willing to share their papers with others. Some of the topics included *Puerto Rican and Proud*, *My Guatemalan Grandmother*, *Interview with a Filipino Nurse*, *My Ethnic Heritage*, *Growing Up in Lebanon*, and *What It Means to be a Turk*. Most students concentrated on what being American means to them and what we have in common. The ideas that emerged had to do with rights, equality, and opportunities.

Participation in this project has allowed us to improve and update the curriculum, encouraged us to keep the dual themes in the forefront for both students and staff, and got us started with additional activities that will contribute to the *Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground* conversation at Cumberland County College.

TEAM

Sharon Kewish, Associate Professor of English
Nancy Kozak, Chair of English and Humanities
Richard Curcio, Assistant Professor of History



DANVILLE AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Danville, Illinois

BACKGROUND

Danville Area Community College (DACC) is located in a rural, blue-collar community in east central Illinois. The college was established initially as an extension center of the University of Illinois in 1946 and became a public junior college in 1949. Enrollment is approximately 1800 FTE credit students. The Danville community consists of a European American majority, but

ethnic and racial diversity are an important part of its composition. African Americans comprise 12 percent of the population, and both the Hispanic and Asian American populations are growing. The college has led community discussions through Jefferson Meetings on constitutional issues and through World Affairs Council symposia. College faculty are often speakers for community organizations on all aspects of human relations and the humanities.

"When we make heaven our home, God's not going to separate us. There's not going to be blacks over here in this corner, whites over here in this corner, and Hispanics over here. If you're not ready for it here what are you going to do when you get there? God's not going to give you a choice . . . We had better get it together now."

—Alma Brooks, African American, Danville Area Community College

PLAN

The centerpiece of DACC's Action Plan was a project in which students collected materials from members of minority communities in the Danville area that could be used for curriculum development in DACC's humanities classes and that would be available to the local community.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The project was launched through rhetoric classes that were team taught with courses in Illinois history, African American literature, and women in literature during the fall 1996 semester. Two rhetoric classes piloted

the project in spring 1996. To date, the project has involved more than 75 students who have gathered oral histories from community residents who identify with three minority groups: African American, Latino, and Asian. The students prepared for their interviews with a variety of conversations about diversity: background research, guest speakers; and class discussions. They were also instructed in the techniques of oral history research, with particular attention to the development of

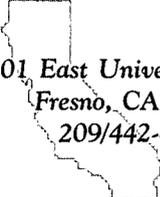
sensitivities necessary for effective, nonthreatening interviewing. The project encouraged students to take charge of their own learning since they were required to initiate contacts with interviewees, conduct interviews, make transcripts, and evaluate their experiences and information.

We honored those who gave interviews with a celebration. Entitled "E Pluribus Unum," the festive event on a Tuesday evening in November featured displays of pictures and quotes from the interviews, arranged under common themes such as work, recreation, family, and education.

We still need to establish the most effective way to make the materials accessible at college and community libraries and museums. We expect liberal arts instructors to add the materials to curricula in social science and humanities courses at DACC, so the material must be made usable for them. Due this spring is a special, expanded issue of *Waiting for Rain*, the college literary magazine, which will feature student writings and other material centered on the minority ethnic experience in the Danville area.

TEAM

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Janet Duitsman Cornelius, Instructor of History and Social Sciences
Kenneth P. Leisch, Chairperson of Liberal Arts Division



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FRESNO CITY COLLEGE

Fresno, California

BACKGROUND

Fresno City College (FCC) is located in the agriculturally rich San Joaquin Valley, geographically in the middle of the state of California. Fresno is one of the most ethnically diverse communities in the valley and state, with a population of approximately 350,000 inhabitants that include African Americans; Armenians; Asian Americans (Chinese, Japanese, and Southeast Asian);

Basque; Latinos (mostly Mexican); American Indians; Punjabi (Sikhs); and various European Americans from many ethnic backgrounds. Established in 1911, the college is the oldest in the state. It provides a culturally diverse student body of approximately 18,000 with course offerings ranging from transfer classes to four-year institutions to a multitude of technical and vocational programs that prepare students for immediate entrance into the local job market.

PLAN

The college's Action Plan had four major objectives:

- establish a discipline called *American Studies*;
- engage the faculty at large by forming a committee on pluralism and identity;
- make changes in the overall curriculum; and
- ensure program dissemination of activities focusing on diversity and identity on campus and in the community.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Thus far, all of our objectives have begun and are ongoing. American Pluralism and Identity Committee (APIC) member,

Richard R. Valencia, has developed a new course entitled *American Pluralism: The Search for Common Ground*, which will be piloted in the spring semester of 1997. It is the first step toward establishing an American Studies program. At the beginning of the fall 1996 semester, the social science division held a half-day colloquium on the subject of pluralism and its meaning.

In the spring of 1996, the social science division presented a symposium, *Growing Together in the Twenty-first Century: The Search for Common Values in the Midst of Our Diversity*. The activities included an essay contest addressing topics of pluralism and diversity in our society, a panel discussion by 14 students representing various ethnic groups who attend FCC, and a celebration of multiculturalism. This event was a collaborative effort of FCC, Fresno State University, Fresno Center for Non-Violence, and Centro de la

"We concluded that there are many answers to life's challenges, predicaments, and questions. We share a common set of general values. We believe that we have political rights, religious rights, the freedom to make a living in a free enterprise system, and access to educational opportunities so that we can compete effectively in political and economic institutions. One of our greatest cultural advantages is that we have a common language through which we can demonstrate our tolerance and work out our disagreements."

—Hagerstown Junior College

Familia, in conjunction with the *Exploring America's Communities* project.

In an attempt to integrate the discussion of identity and pluralism, the college's honors' colloquia included several conversations on the meaning of diversity, ethnic identity, and commonalities of American culture.

At this juncture, the APIC has started all of its goals as stated. Another class focusing on pluralism will be developed by faculty in the humanities division. The college is planning a major celebration of diversity for the spring, and the administration has allocated several thousand dollars for the event. The APIC will work with faculty to integrate sections of courses such as American literature, American history, and ethnic studies into the new American Studies program.

One of the more perplexing issues is to attempt to define the concept of pluralism. The term *American* is loaded with an emotional flavor that is difficult to dilute when applied to different groups. What is evident is that the term refers more to an ideal than a reality. Some faculty members have suggested that what we are confronting is more the question of a personal identity than anything else. Students find that the whole concept of a national identity is confusing and ambiguous. One of the most salient comments is that we, as a nation, are more divided by social class than by race, ethnicity, or gender. One committee member believed that it was the hope of what the United States represents that is the common experience of many Americans. What is abundantly clear is that pluralism, diversity, and multiculturalism are concepts as well as forces that need to be better understood in order for us to prepare our students for the 21st century.

TEAM

Wendy Rose, Instructor of American Indian Studies
Kehinde Solwazi, Instructor of African American Studies

Gerry Stokle, Associate Dean of the Social Science Division

Richard Valencia, Instructor of Sociology and Chicano-Latino Studies

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HAGERSTOWN JUNIOR COLLEGE

Hagerstown, Maryland

BACKGROUND

Hagerstown Junior College (HJC) is located in a semi-rural area 70 miles west of Baltimore, Maryland. The college attracts students from nearby Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Virginia. Each semester there are approximately 3,000 credit students. Approximately 1,100 are full-time and 1,900 are part-time. In addition to the credit program, the college serves 7,000 noncredit students through its continuing education programs.

PLAN

The primary goal of our Action Plan was to conduct a series of faculty development activities to provide the background and foundation for infusing the curriculum with common threads that bind diverse communities within the American experience.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In May, the team organized a colloquium entitled "Who are We in the Western Maryland Region?" The panel represented the Mennonite, Pennsylvania Dutch, and African American communities. This event was well attended by the faculty and served to highlight not only some of the major cultural attributes of these communities, but also reminded the audience of the many common threads running through the cultural experience of the local region. In August, we continued with a second faculty colloquium that featured HJC faculty who spoke about their heritages from India, Iran, and Greece. Each of the speakers responded to a series of questions about how their cultures compare and contrast to American society. Each speaker gave a brief demographic description of their native land and then proceeded to comment on family structure and values, ways of dress, educational expectations, economic conditions, national and religious holidays, and stereotypes by and about Americans. Each presenter brought a collection of cultural artifacts, which

added a visual dimension of cultural enrichment. Even though most faculty members see each other frequently during the year, there is seldom the opportunity for an in-depth, formal discussion of personal and cultural experiences. The colloquium was an excellent format to illustrate the diversities in our midst while sharing our common experiences. Immigrants to this country have learned that while there are vast differences between their two cultures, there are great similarities.

During the fall semester, we sponsored three "lunch-and-learn" activities during our Thursday meeting time. Each of the three programs explored different facets of culture. The first panel featured three students: a Native American, a Ukrainian, and an immigrant from the Dominican Republic. Each spoke about native customs, activities, and routines and commented on how their lives have changed through the American acculturation process. The second session featured speakers from three different religions. This panel articulated the commonalities and divisions that religion can bring to culture. An Episcopal priest, a Jewish rabbi, and a follower of a Hindu guru spoke about the basic tenets of their faiths, the uniqueness of their convictions, and their qualified statements about "the many trails to the top of the same mountain." The third session was a presentation of ethnic expressions in music by an Irish American and an Iranian American. The listeners found the Irish harp to be very relaxing and the commentary between selections to be quite informative. Music is not simply a form of entertainment; it reflects and molds society's values. The harp, for instance, was used as a political instrument. In their songs, harpers criticized the British crown, and, as a result, the Celtic harp was virtually destroyed.

Conversations in classrooms, faculty offices, and hallways cannot be summarized in a unilateral convergence. Our programs, which focused on family values, religious commonalities, and cultural traditions, have shown us that there are many answers to life's challenges, predicaments, and questions as they are played out in different parts

of the world and in different segments of American society. We are brought together by the tenacious belief that, in America, despite our history of examples of extraordinary injustice, discrimination, and individualism, eventually there will be equal opportunity. In our class discussions, we realize that the universals of culture derive from the fact that all societies must perform the same essential functions if they are to survive. In meet-

ing these prerequisites for group life, people inevitably design similar, though not identical, patterns for living.

TEAM

Ronald Ballard, Professor of English and Philosophy
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HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE

Chicago, Illinois

BACKGROUND

Harold Washington College (HWC) is located in Chicago's central business district and at the center of the area transportation network, allowing the college to draw its student population from all of the communities that make up this great urban metropolis on Lake Michigan. The student population reflects the diversity of the city, country, and the world. The on-campus student body of approximately 8,000 is supplemented by students on various off-campus sites as close as city hall and as far away as Saudi Arabia. Although no ethnic group has a majority, African American students are the most numerous, followed by Hispanic American and European American students, and increasing numbers of Asian American students. It is important to note that within these groups there is much geographic diversity and that the college has a significant foreign student population. As one views this population, it is easy to conclude that Harold Washington College is a college that can be defined as a reflection of the communities it serves.

PLAN

The primary goal of our Action Plan was to explore the common ground that exists in the historical experiences of African Americans and Hispanic Americans. We did this by matching an African American history class and a Latin Ameri-

can history class and requiring all students to read common materials and participate in common conversations and experiences in addition to the requirements of each course. We hoped that students would see the commonality as they study the uniqueness of the historical experiences of each group. By drawing upon the entire college community for both support and resources, we hoped to encourage movements toward common ground throughout our college.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The plan to link African American history and Latin American history courses was implemented in fall 1996. The joint sessions went especially well. We required invited speakers to talk with each other and the students. Students from both classes requested more opportunities for joint meetings to explore common past and present experiences. These sessions and interactive journal assignments allowed us to successfully use conversation as a classroom activity to address the issues of American pluralism and identity.

The combined lectures addressed the following topics:

- common ground in the pre-European religious experiences of African and Mesoamerican people;
- the life and work of Derrick Walcott, Nobel Prize-winning writer;

- a field trip to Mesoamerican and African art exhibits;
- slavery in Mesoamerica and pre-colonial Africa;
- the African impact on Latin America; and
- music as common ground.

These conversational experiences have led to the following conclusions:

- An American is anyone whose ancestral or present historical experiences have been transformed by and has transformed American history and culture. One is always becoming an American.
- Americans continue to be divided by ignorance of our common historical

experiences, our common present, and our common destiny.

- Only education, common experiences, and fear of common destruction seem to bring Americans together. The alternative is continuous civil and uncivil wars.
- Americans need to realize before it is too late that we share a common human history that intersects more often than we are aware of or want to acknowledge.

TEAM

Michael Ruggieri, Professor of Social Sciences
Christine A. Franz, Dean of Instruction
James Heard, Professor of Social Sciences

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HARRISBURG AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

BACKGROUND

Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC), established in 1964, was the first community college in Pennsylvania. The college is a multicampus institution that offers programs and courses at three campuses in south central Pennsylvania. The college has 10,719 credit students and 17,749 students in noncredit programs. HACC is “dedicated to delivering superior educational value characterized by learning-centered teaching and continuous instructional enhancement and innovation in our multicampus environment that is accessible, affordable, and well-maintained.” The college recently received a national award for its diversity initiatives.

PLAN

Our plan for the *Exploring America's Communities* project was to bring English teachers together for meetings every three weeks during the regular semesters to discuss the writings of African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans,

women, and others. The emphasis is on what holds Americans together. Seminar speakers and readings focus on content literature. Attention is more on what is being read, rather than arguments for diversity. The meetings function to clarify the goals and the direction of the *English 101-102* sequence, bring adjunct and full-time faculty together, and enhance faculty understanding of diverse literatures. A multicultural text has been selected for adjunct *English 101* teachers. Appropriate meetings with campus leaders in diversity initiatives were planned. Course outlines and syllabi were reviewed, and appropriate changes are being made. The primary goal is to enhance and improve instruction through conversations on American pluralism and identity.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A multicultural reader was selected for adjunct *English 101* instructors. Three discussion meetings were held in fall 1996 with approximately 15 adjunct and full-time faculty in attendance. A videoconference was held in November on *Afri-*

"We concluded that there is much common ground. We are more alike than unlike. We want our students to learn that all humanity shares certain basic challenges. We all want to live and be comfortable. We want to be accepted and respected. We want our families to live in safety. We want to celebrate our accomplishments. There is much opportunity for those who seek it out. This is still a land of opportunity."

—Harrisburg Area
Community College

can Americans and the Publishing World, sponsored by the college president. Reports were made to the director of institutional diversity, the institutional diversity task force, and the communications and the arts division. *Lakota Woman*, a national best-selling novel by Mary Crow Dog, was selected to be read and discussed during the spring 1997 meetings. The group discussed the article, "I Am The Canon: Finding Ourselves in Multiculturalism," by Patrick Shannon. We talked about student reactions and student learning. Each participant was enthusiastic about discussing the material.

Work remains to be done on this two-year project. We will continue our conversations, plan for a seminar leader or videoconference, discuss *Lakota Woman*, discuss assignments, consider publishing student essays and assignments, consider offering an adjunct teacher release time

to oversee the project in the future, and continue to report progress to appropriate campus bodies.

Our conversations on What does it mean to be an American? What divides us? What brings us together? What do we have in common? among students and colleagues were lively and yet serious. The discussions were engaging and intellectually stimulating. Eyes were opened to the different struggles and dreams of a diverse people. Students were able to see others and their struggles. The college community is made stronger because we can see how much is held in common with others from differing backgrounds. The conversations allow us to feel a sense of pride and respect for the experiences of others, making compassion and empathy possible. Those with privilege and those without privilege will not always come together, but breaking the silence and discussing the issues that seem to separate us often works to bring us together. The dialogue has been fruitful and must continue.

TEAM

Cathryn Amdahl, Assistant Professor of English
James Boswell, Associate Professor of English
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HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Jersey City, New Jersey

BACKGROUND

Located in Jersey City and West New York, New Jersey, and established in 1974, Hudson County Community College (HCCC) enrolls a richly diverse student body (48 percent Hispanic, 19 percent African American, 16 percent white, 12 percent Asian, and 5 percent other). HCCC is an urban community college located in a center of immigration, so its students are both newly arrived in America and longtime residents. The college offers 21 degree programs enrolling approxi-

mately 4,000 students in a variety of terminal and transfer degrees. An additional 2,000 students a year take continuing education courses at HCCC.

PLAN

HCCC's Action Plan focuses on students in developmental *Basic English I* and *II* courses. Many of our entering students—both native-born Americans and immigrants—are placed in developmental courses in reading, writing, and mathematics. The primary goal of our project is to pro-

vide reading materials and writing assignments that will help these students develop college-level skills while reinforcing their knowledge of American culture. Specific objectives are to develop a course anthology of readings on eight specific topics such as Colonial America, Slavery and the Civil War, The New Immigration, and the Frontier in America. Also included in the plan is the development of an oral history project and presentation of faculty development workshops.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Much progress has been made in the collection of materials for the developmental English course anthology. Both full-length texts and shorter articles and chapters suitable for developmental students have been selected, and some have been field-tested in the classroom. For example, Professor Rosie Soy's *Basic English II* course featured various readings on issues of American identity as seen through the eyes of Americans of different ethnicities. These included Elizabeth Wong's short story, "The Struggle to Be An All-American Girl"; Deairich Hunter's story of an African American teenager's high school life in Brooklyn, New York in *Ducks vs. Hard Rocks*; and two novels by immigrants, Anzia Yezierska's *Bread Givers* and Esmeralda Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican*. Barry Tomkins' class also studied *Bread Givers* as an example of the immigrant experience in the United States, especially the conflict in values between the younger Americanizing generation and those of the old country, a conflict well-known to many of our students.

Professor Jani Decena-White piloted the oral history component of the project in her *Basic English II* class. Students evolved methods and tools for interviewing, using team member Barry Tomkins, himself an immigrant, as a subject. Stu-

dents worked in collaborative groups to determine what questions to ask, revising and writing up the interview and also doing a follow-up interview. The project focuses on the subject's own personal history as it relates to the question of American identity.

Three team members also gave faculty development workshops: Rosie Soy on *Integrating Asian American Literature into the Curriculum*; George Satterfield on *Social History Documents Across the Humanities*; and Jani Decena-White on *Our Story, The Oral History Project*.

The responses of students and colleagues to the questions following our discussions have been varied. Although there is consensus that an American identity exists, ideas about how it is constituted are often vague. Some students responded that an American means someone usually born in this country or naturalized if an immigrant. A number of people of color pointed out conflicts between their own view of themselves as American and their rejection as Americans by other members of American society. Interestingly, writing on the topic, "Should English be the required language in the workplace?" many students approved of an English-only rule despite their own second-language background. Many students and colleagues pointed out that the notion of an American identity related not to commonality of background or experience, but to what Americans share across boundaries of gender, race, and ethnicity, a core of values tied to democracy and personal freedom

TEAM

Jani Decena-White, Instructor of English
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 Rosie Soy, Instructor of English
 Barry Tomkins, Assistant Dean

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INDIAN HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Ottumwa, Iowa

BACKGROUND

Established in 1966 when Centerville Junior College and Iowa Technical College merged, Indian Hills Community College (IHCC) is located in rural southeastern Iowa. The college serves a mostly culturally homogeneous 10-county district. The main campus, located in Ottumwa, offers classes to approximately 3,000 students, half of whom are enrolled in transfer courses. The college is embarking on an ambitious outreach program that will put extension centers in each of the eight remaining district counties. These extension centers will be able to offer in-house courses as well as courses offered over the state's Iowa Communications Network's fiber-optics educational transmission system. As part of the network, the college is able to broadcast live any of its classes to any other college or high school in the state.

PLAN

Indian Hills Community College's *Exploring America's Communities* Action Plan was initially three-fold. The first part called for the introduction of a course addressing current issues of cultural pluralism and identity. The second part called for workshops to acquaint the faculty with such issues and sensitize them to the implementation of the issues in their classes. The final thrust was to organize a cultural fair that would bring expert lecturers, artists, and crafts people to the college for students and community members to experience and appreciate. Our plan was to be annually thematic, with Native American culture being the first highlighted.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We are pleased to report that we have completed each of these goals and have added more! We have instituted and are currently teaching a new course, Native American Studies. We held a workshop entitled Incorporating Native

American Materials into the Classroom, which was offered not only to our college instructors, but to area K-12 teachers as well. We have also made arrangements for Native American performers and artists to participate in our first annual cultural fair. In addition, we have substantially developed our library's Native American collection; we undertook a week-long student trip to South Dakota, camping on the Oglala Lakota Pine Ridge Reservation, and we have begun to put together a video that details Native American history and culture in southeastern Iowa. This video will be distributed free of charge to all schools and libraries in the area.

Instructors who incorporated Native American issues into their classes at the beginning of the fall term were initially limited by the lack of resources available for student and faculty use. This problem was greatly alleviated by the end of the term as the library responded by adding 99 new titles, with 54 additional titles on order. In addition, the library has subscribed to a newspaper and two periodicals that deal exclusively with Native American issues.

We also recognized that certain texts are essential to a large number of students and placed these texts on the reserve shelf. We placed greater restrictions on the time that books dealing with Native Americans can be checked out. It is hoped that these solutions will allow all students greater access to these resources as more instructors incorporate the Native American experience into their courses.

As previously stated, our faculty has embraced this project enthusiastically. Most believe that the issues involved in this project need to be addressed, and we have provided the needed push to get them started. It has been gratifying to see how excited our colleagues have been about this project.

TEAM

Rhonda Eakins, Director of Humanities Program
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IOWA CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Fort Dodge, Iowa

BACKGROUND

Iowa Central Community College (ICCC) is located in rural northwest Iowa. Established in 1968, the college serves a nine-county area through its four centers and an interactive telecommunications system. The majority of residents in this area are English-speaking of northern European descent. However, in recent years the population has been changing with an influx of Asian and Hispanic immigrants to Fort Dodge and Storm Lake. The college student population of 2,500 is somewhat more diverse, with international students from 11 countries and numerous African American students from other parts of the country.

PLAN

Our college's Action Plan was to develop a course to integrate American history and literature, emphasizing the quest for common ground and what it means to be an American among the plethora of American voices. Students enrolled in this course have the opportunity to experience American pluralism and identity through community volunteerism. This introductory humanities course is discussion-based and team-taught. It involves a variety of teaching techniques to attract a broad range of students. American pluralism and identity is examined through a study of the intertwining of history, literature, music, art, film, and dance. The cornerstone text for exploration of American values and the common defining vision of America is the Declaration of Independence. Students first define their own vision of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and then examine interpretations according to literary and historical voices within the ethnic groups. An important thesis, which the course addresses, is that the Declaration of Independence expresses an ideal that has not been realized for many Ameri-

cans and that it is the struggle to achieve this ideal that binds us together as Americans.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

At this point in time, our Action Plan has successfully followed our timetable. The course is slated to be taught for the first time in the fall of 1997. The sequential steps in the planning, development, and acceptance of the course went very smoothly. This result was due to the effort made by team members to introduce a broad range of faculty members, department heads, and administrators to the project. During fall staff development days in late August, our mentor, Elizabeth Brown-Guillory, spent the day meeting with these groups. In addition, she was the principal presenter for an afternoon workshop, *Finding Common Ground in the Classroom*. About 30 faculty members and six community members attended the workshop, which was held off-campus in a local meeting room. The program included a small group activity on diversity in the classroom and a literary presentation by Brown-Guillory, during which she incorporated a variety of short literary excerpts into the whole discussion of common ground.

At the same time that we were implementing our Action Plan, the human rights director for Fort Dodge was beginning a citywide diversity council. Several people from the college, including two of the project team members, have since become members of the council. It is through this effort that we hope to expand to the second level of our Action Plan: the development of an outreach program to our nine-county area.

TEAM

Bette Conkin, *Advanced Instructor of Language Arts and Humanities*
Roger Natte, *Professor of Social Sciences*
Mary Sula Linney, *Chair of Language Arts and Humanities*

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ITAWAMBA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Fulton, Mississippi

BACKGROUND

Established in 1948, Itawamba Community College (ICC) is a comprehensive two-year public institution serving students in five counties in rural northeast Mississippi. The main campus is located in Fulton, with the vocational and technical complex in the nearby Tupelo. The 1996 college enrollment includes 3,500 credit and 3,500 noncredit students. The college subscribes to the philosophy that the mission of the community college is to bring the concept of educational opportunities for all closer to reality. Students have an opportunity to pursue a two-year college parallel associate of arts degree, a two-year technical associate of applied science degree, or an occupational vocational certificate.

PLAN

The primary goals of our Action Plan to enhance the teaching and learning of American pluralism and identity included:

- acquiring appropriate video and print materials;
- implementing curricular changes in American literature, history, and honors classes; and
- establishing a multicultural speakers forum.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our library is now brimming with new video and print materials on the American Indian, African American, and Latino experience in the U. S. Revised curricula in *American Literature I* and *Honors Seminar I* have also been implemented.

Students in *American Literature I* began the fall semester by re-

sponding on a personal level to four questions: What does it mean to be an American? What divides us? What brings us together? What do we have in common? Throughout the semester, they applied these four questions to the works of 25 authors from the colonial, revolutionary, and renaissance periods. This course is being offered statewide on the Mississippi Community College Network during the spring 1997 semester.

Curricular changes in *Honors Seminar I* arose from the choice of the study topic—Native Americans. Students began the semester by viewing and discussing videos presenting both romantic and realistic portraits of Native Americans. As the focus narrowed, students learned more about the Native Americans of our region through videos, readings, and guest speakers. The semester ended with the study of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, a contemporary Native American novel. *Honors Seminar II* will explore the African American culture.

American History I has undergone revisions as the instructor acquired materials and restructured the curriculum to include the four American identity questions. It is being piloted during the spring 1997 semester.

ICC's project mentor, David Trask, launched our multicultural speakers forum during his site visit in October 1996 by addressing the four questions from a national perspective. Other forum speakers include William Ferris from the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi and representatives of Native, African, Mexican, and Asian American culture.

Student response has been particularly gratifying. Students who attended Trask's address entered into an enthusiastic dialogue that lasted late into the evening. Written material from the American literature class indicated thoughtful reflection and a true appreciation for American pluralism and identity.

TEAM

Clinton Boals, History Instructor
 Clifford Brock, Dean of Academic Instruction
 Elizabeth Montgomery, English Instructor

"For all our focus on our differences, we often lose sight of what we, as Americans, share with each other.

For instance, an American is born with the secure knowledge of being able to criticize his government without fear of execution. We are all free to make whatever kind of life for ourselves that we can within the boundaries of the law."

—Ben Reese,
 Student, Itawamba
 Community College

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KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

BACKGROUND

Kirkwood Community College (KCC) came into existence as part of community college legislation enacted in 1965 by the Iowa state legislature. The legislation mandated that KCC provide comprehensive service to our community, including the first two years of college coursework, vocational-technical training, job training and retraining, high school completion, and continuing education opportunities. KCC is the fifth largest higher education institution in the state of Iowa, with learning centers in each county of our seven-county service area. Each center is tied to the main campus via fiber optics and microwave broadcast

A young man from Bulgaria stressed hope and a chance to dream. "At home, opportunity is limited. The economy has collapsed, and I have no real chance for the future. Here in the United States, what I can do or be depends on me!"

—Kirkwood Community College

system, allowing us to offer a full range of classes at each site. Current student enrollment is over 10,000 in credit programs.

PLAN

Our Action Plan called for:

- creating a new course, *Understanding Cultures: American Pluralism*;
- hosting a visiting scholar series on American pluralism;
- restructuring the American history curriculum from a two-course sequence to a three-course sequence, allowing greater time for discussion of pluralism;
- working on ways to offer linked or blocked courses with pluralism themes;
- influencing the current review of literature courses by encouraging a pluralism focus; and
- revising the critical-thinking component of our "Introduction to Liberal Arts" student orientation program to include pluralism as a basic element of the Kirkwood experience.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our discussion of the content of *Understanding Cultures: American Pluralism* is ongoing and continually evolving. We have struggled to be inclusive without diluting the basic concept of the course. In an open meeting of the diversity committee, to which all members of the academic community were invited, we sought to define diversity within our community and our society. We requested that all attending who wished to speak on the subject provide a written position paper in advance. About 25 persons attended, and more than a dozen submitted position papers.

Our visiting scholar series has been successfully accomplished. We solicited and obtained cooperation throughout the college community on this project, and we have scheduled a broad range of activities that appeal to all segments of the academic community. Of special note was an all-day workshop on diversity, international, and intercultural issues. The Stanley Foundation has provided financial support, allowing us to include outstanding speakers and to open the sessions to all interested faculty and staff. Approximately 40 people attended, and several other community colleges in the state sent observers.

Implementation of the needed curricular changes in the American history sequence is in process. Implementation may be possible by fall 1997.

Our project mentor, Virginia Meyn, assisted us with identifying those problems regularly encountered with paired, linked, or blocked courses. These challenges include large numbers of part-time students, individuals who have met a core requirement in one or more of the linked disciplines and are reluctant to take electives, and scheduling the courses at times that meet both staff and student needs. We are working toward finding creative solutions to these difficulties.

TEAM

William Rosberg, Professor of Political Science
Dan Tesar, Associate Dean of Social Sciences
Nicholas Wysocki, Instructor of Arts and Humanities

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LAKELAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Kirtland, Ohio

BACKGROUND

Serving Lake County in northeast Ohio, Lakeland Community College's (LCC) service district is bounded by Lake Erie to the north; rural Ashtabula County to the east; and urban Cuyahoga County, the home of Cleveland, to the west. The 1990 census showed a population of 215,000, only 3 percent of whom are minorities. LCC's fall 1996 credit student enrollment was 8,400, with 4,300 full-time equivalents. The minority student population, 5 percent of the total student body, has grown by 22 percent over the past five years.

PLAN

The primary objective of our Action Plan was to identify strategies for enhancing the institutional climate for a conversation on American pluralism and identity. From the beginning, the challenge was how to make the conversation acceptable as both a subject for debate and a basis for action to effect changes. To this end, the team designed the following specific goals:

- establish a new course, *Multicultural Literary Studies*;
- form a representative task force on American pluralism;
- establish a resource center of curricular and bibliographic material;
- develop a proposal for a new general education outcome for the associate of arts and associate of science degrees that reflected attention to American pluralism and identity; and
- propose a new major college goal on pluralism to prepare for accreditation.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The first goal of our Action Plan, establishing a new course in multicultural literary studies, has been achieved. It is scheduled to be taught

in spring 1997. The course is designed to allow different thematic emphases each time it is taught. For the inaugural version, the theme is *Growing Up in America*. A variety of readings and films will be assigned, and students will be invited to survey the rich multiplicity of American experiences and compare them to their personal backgrounds. As stated in the catalog description, "the course will address questions of social cohesion and division; the effects of history and social systems on individual experience; and the way literature and film both reflect and shape our perceptions of ourselves and members of different cultural groups."

The team met with the college's major joint academic planning group, the vice president's academic advisory council, and obtained approval to form a task force on American pluralism. Membership includes six faculty from five divisions, two staff members, and three administrators. The members met several times during fall quarter and began work identifying current instructional activities in multicultural studies; planning faculty development activities; and coordinating academic, continuing education, and student activities programming.

During spring 1996, team member Rollie Santos designed a questionnaire to survey current faculty instructional practices in the area of multicultural studies. The questionnaire was intended to provide the task force with information about the state of instructional design and the levels of commitment to this subject. A summary analysis was distributed to the faculty. In addition, the paper, *Faculty's Perceptions of Pluralism: A Lakeland Community College Study*, has been accepted for inclusion in the ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges.

During the annual fall conference for faculty, staff, and administrators, the team scheduled a two-hour session entitled *Pluralism and Pedagogy: Developing Multicultural Curricula for Lakeland Classrooms*, consisting of a series of short presentations, a break to peruse assembled resources, and

a workshop. Drawing an estimated 45 people, the session addressed the history of multicultural curricular transformation.

The multicultural studies center, consisting of files of faculty syllabi, journal articles on pedagogy, course outlines, programs from other institutions, special issues of community college journals focusing on multicultural studies, and selected books

with a similar focus has been established. The tasks of identifying American pluralism as a general education outcome and formalizing pluralism as a major college goal are in the discussion stage.

TEAM

*Lawrence Aufderheide, Dean of Arts and Humanities
Rolando Santos, Assistant Professor of Economics
Meryl Schwartz, Instructor of English*



LEE COLLEGE
Baytown, Texas

BACKGROUND

Established in 1934, Lee College is a comprehensive, public, two-year community college located in a suburb of Houston. Through a variety of programs and services, Lee College prepares students for success in higher education or employment by providing a broad base of programs, including extension courses, adult education, continuing education, and community services. During the coming academic year, Lee College will enroll over 12,000 credit-seeking students. These students reflect the service area community in diversity: 71 percent Anglo, 15 percent Hispanic (most of whom are Mexican American), 12 percent African American, and 2 percent other minorities.

PLAN

Since the primary mission of Lee College is to serve the educational needs of its community, the goal of its *Exploring America's Communities* project was to enhance the faculty's ability to fulfill its mission. The project team had concerns that the diversity of the faculty did not match the diversity of the student body. The team's focus, therefore, was to broaden the cultural understanding of the faculty so that the faculty would, in turn, incorporate additional materials into their courses. In particular, the team focused on the rich His-

panic culture of the Mexican American students in the college population. The specific goal was to conduct workshops that examined the commonality existing between a selected number of cultural themes important to this Hispanic population and those of the entire student body. The team hoped that increasing the faculty's knowledge and comfort-level with these themes would encourage infusion of relevant literature and history into the existing curriculum.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As a result of our team's efforts, the people associated with Lee College have had several opportunities to consider the topic of American pluralism and identity. The team and its mentor, Carmen Salazar, have discussed the issues with our college president and academic dean as well as with the chair of our institution's allied health division. The allied health faculty is interested in developing a new core course combining specialized Spanish-language instruction with history, literature, and culture components. The project team is assisting with the development of this course, projected to become part of the curriculum in the 1999-2000 academic year.

Other accomplishments from our year's activity in the AACC project include the compilation of a bibliography of printed material relating either directly or indirectly to the subject of death as it is



"Americans are curious about differences among groups, but they do not want to hurt others' feelings or to start disagreements. Perhaps one thing that unites ordinary Americans is our dislike of and discomfort with controversy and difference. Americans prefer to ignore difference, especially if the points of view cannot easily be resolved or are based on long-standing or traditional conflicts."

—Lee College

dealt with by writers who approach the subject from a Mexican, Central American, and South American point of view; and the improvement of our library's collection of materials, which now better reflect the lives and interests of our Spanish-speaking community. The team is seeking funds to purchase additional materials for the library.

The faculty workshop series has been successful. Faculty attended sessions addressing the correct pronunciation of Hispanic names, the traditional "corridos" ballad, and the natural healing beliefs prevalent in the local border culture. A sym-

posium program spotlighting important aspects of Mexican American culture is planned for spring 1997. The program, supported by the college Lyceum Committee and the literary resources of the Arte Publico Press, features a number of Mexican American authors who stress cultural elements in their work.

What remains is for the conversation on American pluralism and identity to spread. The conversations that we have held have been received and expanded with enthusiasm, but the Lee College team remains convinced that little time to explore, consider, and converse is the true enemy of finding that common ground which we all seek.

TEAM

John Britt, Instructor of History
 Ted Olsen, Instructor of Spanish
 Roberta L. Wright, Assistant to the President

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LEEWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 Pearl City, Hawai'i

BACKGROUND

Leeward Community College (LCC) was established in 1968 to serve the Leeward coast and Central O`ahu districts of Hawai`i. Between 5,500 and 6,000 students are enrolled each semester in liberal arts and vocational education programs offered on campus and at an off-campus installation in one of the rural communities. Sixty-three percent of students self-identify themselves as of Asian/Pacific Islander heritage.

PLAN

The success of the college's joint oral history project with the Pearl City High School inspired the project team to participate in *Exploring America's Communities*. The college's Action Plan called for examining the multicultural strands

in the communities of Waipahu and Pearl City by infusing curriculum of two existing core courses, *American History 282* and *American Studies 211*, with American pluralism and identity topics. Videotaped co-curricular panel presentations and activities by community leaders and locally available experts were to be supplemented with perspectives presented in the classrooms.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Each co-curricular session elucidated one of the goals of the project. Receptions held after the sessions set an informal, congenial tone for audience and speakers to continue the discussion. Students followed up the sessions with in-class discussions and journal entries to ensure a broad range of reflective responses. The line-up of sessions featured a strong agenda of speakers and qualified moderators. Topics were as follows:

- *Labor Unions and the Coalescence of Community: 1946 Sugar Strike* emphasized the forces that built community solidarity in Waipahu and throughout the Territory of Hawai`i among disparate ethnic groups of workers. Striker solidarity and logistics under the leadership of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union opened the door to middle-class aspirations for agricultural laborers.
- *What Hawaiian Sovereignty Means to Non-Hawaiians* stimulated project participants to face the issue that American community has damaged indigenous communities. This is especially true in Hawai`i as the only American state to once have been an internationally recognized sovereign kingdom. For us, the question of forces that bring us together is more than an academic exercise.
- *Localism and the Late Arrivals: The Samoan Community* explored the stresses that impinge upon immigrants who arrive after a polygot community has stabilized and developed its pidgin language.
- *Rediscovery of Community: Old Pearl City Walking Tour* inspired students to see that

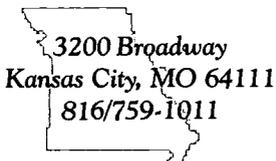
the process of local history research is as important as the product.

- *Postmodern Economic Change: Waipahu Bounces Back* provided an outstanding example of a town undergoing the pangs of economic change as the decline of the sugar economy has threatened the town's viability.

Now that the project is approaching completion, we are institutionalizing it by expanding the network of involved instructors, developing new instructional partnerships, and disseminating the tapes of the co-curricular sessions to the community. A learning community seminar using three professors from the University of Hawai`i at West O`ahu and three from Leeward Community College is planned as a capstone course for the associate of arts degree and as a threshold course for the university's baccalaureate. Team members Patricia Kennedy and Donald Thomson are scheduled to teach during the fall 1997 semester, serving as the link between the project and the proposed learning community.

TEAM

Douglas Dykstra, Acting Assistant Dean of Instruction
 Patricia Kennedy, Assistant Professor of History
 Donald Thomson, Professor of American Studies and Sociology



METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES
 Kansas City, Missouri

BACKGROUND

The Metropolitan Community Colleges (MCC), established in 1964, is a four-campus system spread throughout the greater Kansas City area. The district serves almost 18,000 students who attend both day and evening classes on part-time or full-time schedules. Each campus reflects the demographics of its location, because students prefer to attend the college near their homes. Consequently, the Penn Valley campus, located in the heart of the city, attracts a much more diverse population than do the other campuses.

PLAN

Our team formulated a team-taught course, *Humanities 161: Exploring the American Experience* to address a perceived lack of curriculum dealing with American pluralism and identity. While individual instructors had addressed diversity issues in their classes, our college had no institutional recognition of emerging diversity in the form of regular course offerings, and courses such as women's literature and African American literature or history were tied more into the field of study than into a general study of pluralism.

"Our students found that one commonality among Americans was the desire of people to seek a new and better life, regardless of their roots. Others saw the love for family, security, and freedom to choose as a unifying factor."

—Metropolitan
Community Colleges

Our course was to focus on pluralism in the Midwest since the area reflected the American movement from agricultural to urbanized society and the movements of multicultural groups that accompanied it.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our faculty selected Ronald Takaki's *A Different Mirror* as the core history text to address multiculturalism and

supplemented it with literary texts reflecting the groups we wished to address. For the Native American segment of the course, we chose N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. For the African American portion, we chose Langston Hughes' *Not Without Laughter*; for the Asian American section, Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior*; and for the Hispanic portion, Sandra Cisneros' *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*. We also felt that any course that dealt with the American multicultural experience in the Midwest could not overlook the contributions of European settlers, so we included a segment that featured Willa Cather's *My Antonia* to represent diversity among the white settlers.

Our teaching team consisted of four instructors, one from the history department and the others

from the English department. All attended each class. One instructor presented material, and the others punctuated with commentary. Interruption was viewed not as rudeness but as spontaneous involvement, and the class reacted enthusiastically. Sharing the ideas of the instructors with the students was vital to our course's success.

Throughout much of the course, we focused on the differences among the various groups we studied. In the last few weeks, however, we focused sharply on the commonalities all groups shared. The final exam was an in-class essay, open book, that addressed this very issue, and the responses were encouraging and, in some ways, surprising in terms of how the students saw the commonalities. One outstanding student wrote about how all Americans value family, safety, and freedom, an approach that showed our students were assimilating material well and redefining the issues in creative ways.

TEAM

Beverlye Brown, Instructor of Literature and English,
Maple Woods Community College

M. Albert Dimmitt, Sr., Instructor of History, Penn
Valley Community College

Mary Kitterman, Associate Dean of Instruction,
Maple Woods Community College

Mark Lidman, Instructor of English and Culture,
Longview Community College

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MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Gulfport, Mississippi

BACKGROUND

The roots of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC) go back 85 years. In 1911, a number of prominent citizens donated 656 acres of land and \$626 to establish an agricultural institution in the small town of Perkinston, Mississippi. A year later, three buildings were completed, and the institution began operation in the fall of 1912. In 1962, 50 years later, the governor

of the State of Mississippi signed into law House Bill 597, which created the present Gulf Coast Junior College District. In 1965, two branches of the college were built and a multicampus district was reality. MGCCC is located in the four southeastern counties of Mississippi. Demographically, the college serves communities that range from rural to urban. The college district's population is approximately 78 percent white, 19 percent African American, 2 percent Asian, and 1 percent

"Our Exploring America's Communities workshops and courses revealed that the basic ties that bind us are that we love our families, value our freedom, and yet we have a prejudice that seems to stem from fear of others who are 'different' from us—the 'difference' basically because we are ignorant or lack knowledge of each other."

—Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

other minorities. Fifteen percent of the district's population subsists at the poverty level. The college serves nearly 20,000 persons through its credit and non-credit programs each year. The racial/ethnic composition closely parallels the district's. The fastest growing segment of MGCCC is Asian/Pacific Islanders. In the past five years, this group has grown by 105 percent. In addition, the number of Hispanic students has increased by more than 31 percent, and the number of African American students has risen by 12 percent.

PLAN

The main objective of our Action Plan was to establish a new, team-taught, interdisciplinary course entitled, *Film: The American Experience*. The course objective is to explore—through great American films, selected historical readings, novels, and short stories—America's progress as a polyglot attempting to assimilate itself but often dividing itself along lines of race, prejudice, bigotry, religion, and sex. In addition, the course seeks to evaluate what unites us: brotherhood, common interest, tolerance, and respect as well as greed, religious fervor, love of sports and music, and our response to war. To involve faculty colleagues in this project, we included a workshop on multiculturalism in our plan.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Instead of just one workshop on multiculturalism and the subject of our new course, our team conducted four workshops, which were attended by approximately 250 staff, faculty, administrators, and students.

The course, originally scheduled for the fall 1996 semester, was filled by the second day of preregistration, so we opened another section at night. The course juxtaposed topics, times, and questions. Through films and novels such as *Ragtime*, *The Reivers*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *All the President's Men*, *Philadelphia*, and *Dead Man Walking*, it exposes students to a variety of divisive and unifying factors in American society. Among the topics examined are racism, ethnic and religious bigotry, cultural conflicts, AIDS, homophobia, and capital punishment.

During the semester, we have experienced the gamut of emotions, ranging from joyous laughter, sincere appreciation of the endurance of the family in *Grapes of Wrath*, utter disgust for the hypocrisy of Elmer Gantry, to heated debate over capital punishment in *Dead Man Walking*. While some students were reluctant to acknowledge the existence of some situations, such as antisemitism, and others, at times, seemed embarrassed to talk about sensitive issues, such as AIDS, the exchange of ideas underscored the multicultural aspects of America and emphasized the importance of mutual respect among the diverse elements of our society. So many ideas have been expressed orally as well as in writing.

TEAM

Henry Black, Instructor of Social Studies
Joan Fitch, Instructor of Language Arts
Foster Flint, Assistant Dean, Learning Resources Center

"To be born in America is to be born into a country of great diversity. Nowhere else on earth is there such a mingling of race, culture, and heritage."

—Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

An instructor in one of our workshops stated, "Of all obstacles to unity in the United States, economic disparity builds the highest and more effective barrier. Differences in race, religious beliefs, educational levels, and social classes may separate people, but income is truly the great divider. As long as an immense [gap in] income level exists in America, there will be conflict and division among us."

—Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

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MONROE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Rochester, New York

BACKGROUND

Monroe Community College (MCC) was founded in 1961 as part of a statewide system of two-year institutions designed to provide technical, paraprofessional, and university-parallel education. Today, MCC is one of 30 community colleges within the State University of New York, and it serves 14,000 matriculated and nonmatriculated students. Rochester is the third largest city in New York State, situated on the Genesee River near its outlet to Lake Ontario. It leads the world in the production of cameras and photographic supplies, optical instruments, recording devices, and related products. Representatives of many local industries serve the college in an advisory capacity in order to coordinate the college's program offerings with the employment needs of the community.

PLAN

Rochester and the surrounding towns have a very diverse population, attracting people in engineering and the technologies; in medical/surgical and related healthcare; and in music, photography, and the other arts. It also has a unique history that has inspired our participation in the *Exploring America's Communities* project with a plan to develop a course entitled *Common Ground in the Rochester/Genesee Region*. Our primary goal is to establish this course as a permanent offering within the social science department. A second goal is to interest other faculty in teaching this course, in developing other courses that explore common ground, and in revising existing courses so that they include a common ground component.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The course, first offered in fall 1996, focuses on our historic community by reading, conducting research, and participating in field trips.

The project team selected Diane Ravitch's *The American Reader* as text. The team also compiled a set of readings drawn from the *Rochester City Quarterly*, which is published by the Office of the City Historian. The class heard several speakers, including a Rochester historian, the president of the New York State Canal Society and professor of geology at MCC, a local historical fiction writer, and a newspaper reporter. This first class was small enough to allow for a seminar atmosphere and much conversation between speakers as they presented their material and between students and faculty. Students became aware of their own family histories and were encouraged to explore the journeys that resulted in their settling in the Rochester/Genesee Valley region. Flyers helped to publicize the course. Counselors involved in registration, along with the three faculty members involved in the project, who also worked in registration, encouraged enrollment.

The faculty team working on this course were extremely pleased with the amount of information we covered and the methodology employed. The atmosphere in the classroom was stimulating. In fact, many of the students said that they looked forward to coming to this class. The final project was a great success. It was either a small group effort or an individual one in which the students could do a poster display, an illustrated report, or a video/audio presentation relative to the Genesee Valley region, or their own ethnic roots in the region, or prominent figures in the region. The project was presented at an evening seminar attended by the students, along with families and friends. Following the seminar we enjoyed a potluck banquet of ethnic foods donated by the students and faculty.

TEAM

Jeanne Ghent, Professor of English
Shirley Jennings, Dean of Liberal Arts
Mary-jo Popovici, Assistant Professor of Communications
Robert Stevens, Associate Professor of History and Political Science

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MOTLOW STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Tullahoma, Tennessee

BACKGROUND

Motlow State Community College (MSCC), established in 1969, is a small, rural institution whose student body reflects the population of its service area in middle Tennessee, a population comprised predominantly of Appalachian, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. In the fall of 1996, MSCC enrolled 3,160 credit students and 35 noncredit students. Our students' family backgrounds and values tend to reflect the subculture of the region, including a resistance to change.

"In comparing and contrasting ideas presented in literature and history readings, we have become aware of much diversity and yet we see connections as well, such as in our study of transcendentalism through Emerson, Thoreau, Mark Twain, and Martin Luther King. We see commonalities in how we view family, individualism, and loyalties to place. In this very search for our roots and our values, we find a commonality."

—Motlow State
Community College

diversity originally present in our cultural community. By looking to the past and seeing how values have been formed, we are assisting students to deal with change and the concomitant shift in values that change often brings. Our long-range goal is to produce an integrated honors program that addresses, in an interdisciplinary fashion, the richness of our cultural heritage and the skills necessary to adapt to and profit from change. The lessons learned from this process will be shared with the larger student body through a more integrated curriculum.

PLAN

While MSCC offers courses in U.S. history, English composition, and U.S. literature, our Action Plan intended to engender in our students an integration of continuity and change through their own unique cultural community. The goal of the college is to introduce an understanding that goes beyond tolerance to achieve acceptance. Our Action Plan is being accomplished by an integrated program of study that investigates, through both oral and written literature and historical records, the diversity

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our prototype team-taught course, *Honors 201 and 202*, was taught this fall for the first time. The course operates from a syllabus that looks at change and value shifts in the past in order to develop sensitivity toward and acceptance of other cultures. Issues covered in the class address the traditions of the area served by the college while exploring the cultural and historical diversity of the region. Students discover through the distinctiveness of their own heritage the commonality of the threads that bind them to the broader American culture as they examine the "Story of Family"—personal, regional, and national.

This course has succeeded in raising the awareness of our students concerning the cultural richness and diversity of our Appalachian heritage. Students have become aware that their region is not a backwater, but it is now, and always has been, involved in the mainstream of historic and cultural events. The course has emphasized the racial and cultural diversity represented by the three groups present in our region since 1876: black, red, and white.

Students have also been involved in special events outside the classroom as part of this experience. The group spent three days visiting the birthplace of Sequoyah; the Oconoluftee Cherokee village where traditional lifestyles are carried on; the museum of the Cherokee Nation; Cades Cove; Smokemont Pioneer Village; and the Walker Sisters' Cabin. In November, the class took a one-day tour of Franklin Battlefield, site of the bloodiest close combat in the West during the War Between the States, and paid visits to the historic Carter House, Lotz House, and Carnton. In December, students had the opportunity to tour the Shiloh Battlefield. Guest speakers visited the class twice.

We will continue to work toward our long-range goal of an expanded, interdisciplinary honors program by broadening the membership base and

overall faculty involvement of our honors committee. We also plan to enrich our regular curriculum with some of the interdisciplinary materials and approaches that have proven successful and to share our experiences with interested middle school and high school instructors in our service area.

Some of the students who participated in this project have always lived in the area, with family roots reaching back to 1810. Others have followed the modern American pattern of migration

demanding by jobs; and a few are military dependents who have lived all over the world. A frank admission and examination of this diversity within the context of the region they now all call home has led to a better understanding of American commonality.

TEAM

Michael Bradley, Professor of History
Mary McLemore, Dean of Liberal Arts
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NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

BACKGROUND

Northampton Community College (NCC) has been educating and training people for nearly 30 years, serving as a leader in developing programs that meet the needs of a diverse and growing population. The college serves a credit enrollment of 6,500 students through more than 60 career and transfer programs leading to associate degrees, certificates, and diplomas. Specialized programs and services such as adult literacy, tech prep, and business/education partnerships have helped the college contribute positively to the community of the Lehigh Valley, and to its student body.

PLAN

The NCC Action Plan focused on improving the college's American literature courses. To accomplish this goal, the team planned to offer faculty a series of professional development programs on integrating multicultural materials into curriculum and to revise the curriculum of several American literature courses.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The professional development program was developed as a series of all-day workshops for the humanities and social science faculty that were led by scholars knowledgeable about specific ethnic groups. Dr. Peter Beidler, professor of English at LeHigh University, conducted a workshop on pedagogical approaches to Native American literature and shared detailed bibliographic material with the faculty. Many items on the bibliography have now been added to NCC's library. Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, noted African American scholar, presented a lecture, *Between God and Gangsta Rap*, as part of the college's Cohen lecture series. Following the lecture, he met with the project team, suggesting ways to incorporate conversations on pluralism into the classroom and recommending specific works that facilitate such conversations. Mentor Eleanor Q. Tignor, professor of English at LaGuardia Community College, presented an historical overview of African American literature. She worked directly with the project team reviewing course outlines, identifying additional works to be included, and discussing ways to engage students from different cultural backgrounds through course assignments. Dr. Liza Fiol-

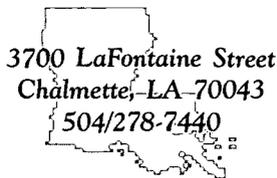
Matta, also of LaGuardia Community College, will be the featured speaker at an all-day workshop in the spring 1997 semester. She will focus on Hispanic literature and culture.

Course revisions have taken place. *English 151 (literature option)* has been modified to include more works by Native American, Hispanic, and Asian American writers. The updated course ran in the fall 1997 with a new textbook and a new set of instructional approaches. The course was divided into themes: initiation and identity; war, peace, freedom, and justice; love and relationships; and family. This approach enhanced discussion of the concepts of pluralism and identity. *English 265G (African American literature)* was revised to broaden understanding about what it means to be an American. The course syllabus will also be revised to use works that support classroom conversations about pluralism and identity. *Ameri-*

can Literature I (survey course) also underwent a set of improvements. The syllabus was revised to incorporate more multicultural works. A bibliography of multicultural resources was developed, and exams were modified to examine students' understanding of the relationships between works included within the traditional canon and those not included. Students were encouraged to select related topics in homework assignments, and classroom discussions focused on teaching commonalities between works from various cultural groups. The second semester of this course sequence will also be updated.

TEAM

*James Benner, Director of Developmental Education
Sharon Gavin-Levy, Assistant Professor of English
Leonard Roberts, Professor of English
Doreen Smith, Dean of Arts and Sciences*



NUNEZ COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Chalmette, Louisiana

BACKGROUND

Nunez Community College (NCC) was established in St. Bernard Parish by the Louisiana legislature in the 1992 as an open admission college. The college is located in a suburban area seven miles from the New Orleans central business district. The racial composition of Nunez students is 84 percent white, 10 percent African American, and 6 percent Asian, American Indian or Hispanic. This racial composition is more diversified than the population of St. Bernard Parish itself.

PLAN

The Action Plan for Nunez Community College was to provide the community with opportunities to learn of the cultural diversity that exists in its midst and the commonalities that bind

the people of all the diverse cultures together. The team's objectives were as follows:

- to incorporate more emphasis on cultural diversity into existing courses;
- to provide opportunities for NCC students to be exposed to various cultures by the scheduling of curriculum-related field trips and visits to a myriad of activities throughout the New Orleans metropolitan area; and
- to integrate servicelearning into the curriculum.

Because of the cultural diversity of those in the college's service area, the existence of the service-learning component in selected courses allows students and those in the community with whom they come in contact exposure to cultures different from their own.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the project period, the team's pursuit of the project's goal took various forms. Much of what had been accomplished by the project's end was a direct result of acquiring early support

"Southeast Louisiana is a small enough region of the South for students to identify their membership in it and to perceive with some clarity the ethnic 'gumbo' which comprises its demography. Our students pointed to traditional public gatherings directly related to the history and culture of this area as a notable 'common ground.'

Some students noted that in our community what most brings people together are two extremes—festivity and disaster. We are most 'together' during Mardi Gras and hurricanes. In identifying what divides us, many students noted prejudice and hate.

One student said, 'Ignorance divides us. Prejudice and hate are a result of ignorance.'

—Nunez Community College

from our president, the Administration Council, the Academic Council, and the faculty of the division of arts and sciences. A multicultural advisory committee was established at the onset of the project. Members of the faculty, administration, and student body representing various cultures at Nunez volunteered to serve on the committee, whose tasks included recommending activities for implementation to the project team.

By the beginning of the fall 1996 semester, changes had already occurred as a result of the college's participation in the project. The NCC catalog noted that service learning was an optional activity for students in sociology. Also listed in the catalog was a new anthropology course, *Human Evolution and Variation*. During that semester, modifications to existing courses also occurred. Courses in the humanities, history, and social sciences were revised to accentuate the importance of pluralism in America through an exploration of multicultural themes. In the course, *Criminal Justice*, for example, the focus was placed on the existence of a bifurcated justice system that sets different standards of enforcement, adju-

dication, and punishment for different racial and ethnic groups.

Along with modifications to the curriculum, team members worked with the library staff to begin identifying works of ethnic or pluralistic importance, which could form the basis of a multicultural resource collection. These works included books, magazines, journals, and audiovisual materials.

Project activities in the fall included the initiation of service learning at NCC. Sociology students had the option of performing service learning as part of the course activities. Students choosing this option worked in a variety of settings, including battered women's clinics, elementary and secondary schools, nursing homes, AIDS associations, hospitals, government offices, and mental health clinics.

The multicultural advisory committee sponsored a festival, *Exploring Louisiana's Cultures: An American Pie*. With extensive news media coverage, the festival became a community affair. The festival's purpose was to show that as diverse as we are, we are that similar. During one week in the fall, diners in the college's cafe were treated to presentations that illustrated Louisiana's diversity. Each day featured a different culture: Asian American, African American, Native American, Latin American, Cajun-French, Italian American, and St. Bernard Parish's own Canary Island/Islenos culture.

We, the Nunez Community College team, realize that there is much still to be done. Our participation in the project is intended to produce long-lasting benefits for our students and community. We have now seen firsthand these benefits.

TEAM

Carol A. Jeandron, Division Chair of Arts and Sciences

Cory Sparks, Instructor of History

Barry E. Pike, Instructor of English and Criminal Justice



RANCHO SANTIAGO COLLEGE

Santa Ana, California

BACKGROUND

Rancho Santiago College (RSC), a comprehensive community college serving the residents of central Orange County, is located in the culturally diverse community of Santa Ana. Santa Ana has one of the largest Latino populations in the state (about 75 percent of the city is Latino, primarily of Mexican origin), and nearby communities are home to large Asian populations. The college enrolls approximately 25,000 students in credit programs and 16,000 in noncredit education classes. The mission of RSC is to be a leader and partner in meeting the academic, cultural, and workforce development needs of a diverse community.

PLAN

RSC's Action Plan consisted of a course module entitled *American Pluralism in Microcosm: The City of Santa Ana as Text*. The major purpose of this unit is to give students the opportunity to explore contemporary American pluralism and identity in the local setting of Santa Ana. It was viewed as an initial step for students to become introduced to our multicultural community in order to explore the concept of common ground. By encountering and reflecting on social phenomena in an urban microcosm of the country at large, it is expected that students will enhance their understanding of pluralism and identity at the national level. A second purpose is to provide students with a chance to learn experientially and cooperatively by visiting designated sites in Santa Ana in teams and reporting their findings to their classmates.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the spring of 1996, the RSC team implemented the new course module in a U.S. history honors course. The students were instructed to address three questions: 1) What populations are visible in Santa Ana? 2) How do they make

use of physical space in Santa Ana? and 3) What kinds of cultural productions are reflected in Santa Ana? Students were sent out in teams and were to return and report their findings to their classmates. This first application of the project was limited to a single classroom with fewer than 20 students. Students returned with creative projects such as thematic maps of Santa Ana, photographic collages, and videotapes. Following presentations by the students, classroom conversations centered on the questions: What does it mean to be an American? What divides us? What commonalities do we share?

The team's next objective was to take the *City as Text* project and adapt it to two different classroom situations—English composition and implemented across four Mexican American history classes. Students were taught a series of observational exercises prior to beginning their research in the community. The composition students followed a modified version of the module that allowed them to explore communities other than Santa Ana. The majority of students in the composition class were European Americans who had little or no experience with Latino or Asian cultures and who appreciated the opportunity to explore areas they had never sought on their own. Students in all courses shared how exciting it was to learn a subject matter under such different circumstances.

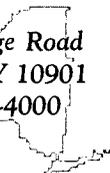
All three instructors who implemented the *City as Text* module intend to continue incorporating it into their curriculum. There are no reservations with regard to the success of the program. An overwhelming 95 percent of the students involved suggested that the project be continued. Future plans include writing a comprehensive report about the project and sharing it with colleagues at other campuses. Team members and students who participated in the project will be making a presentation in May 1997 at the annual conference of the Western Regional Honors Council, whose conference theme—"Pacific Destiny: Beyond Borders, Boundaries, Limits"—is very appro-

pos. The project will also be shared with RSC colleagues through a professional development program next summer. The team plans to explore new avenues of funding to develop projects that can build on their work, i.e., a program wherein students participate in compiling oral histories of community members for an archive.

TEAM

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ROCKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 Suffern, New York

BACKGROUND

Rockland Community College (RCC), located 35 miles northwest of Manhattan, enrolls approximately 6,400 credit and 4,600 noncredit students. Since its founding in 1959, the college has grown from its original location in the former county almshouse to a main campus and five extension sites. As the county's population has changed and moved toward more urban demographics, the college has recruited and enrolled significant numbers of minority students. It is now a truly multicultural community with 18 percent African American and Haitian, 9 percent Latino, and 6 percent Asian/Pacific Islander.

"We see the American as someone who traces her origins beyond the national boundaries of the United States and is thus aware of a hyphenated identity; e.g., Irish American or African American. We are a 'nation of immigrants,' as the old textbooks say."

—Rockland Community College

PLAN

RCC began a serious engagement with the challenges of pluralism and diversity in 1990. In that year, the college president appointed a task force on college pluralism and diversity. After many months of study, the task force made a number of recommendations that were adopted as college policy, including a mandated core course in pluralism and diversity in America as a graduation requirement. In order to sustain this promising start, the primary goals of our Action Plan in-

cluded a series of activities to review and revise our courses in American history and literature and to develop a new interdisciplinary, team-taught course in Latino/Latina culture. We decided that the inclusion of as many faculty as possible was crucial, and we were able to enlist an additional 11 faculty participants. Thus, we were able to divide into subcommittees as well as to work as committees of the whole.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the past year we have been able to reach the goals we established. We have produced revised learning activity proposals and a new course proposal for the Latino/Latina culture course. We have also developed an American studies learning community and are initiating a pilot plan in spring 1997. Our meetings were intensive, task-oriented, and accomplished our main goals. Two visits by Latino/Latina literature and culture scholar Liza Fiol-Matta were extremely valuable. Her first presentation focused on various aspects of Latino/Latina culture, illustrated with readings and analyses of modern Latin American literature. During her second visit she critiqued the first draft of our proposed Latino/Latina culture course and suggested modifications to American history and literature courses.

The team enlisted 11 other faculty members to meet with some regularity to discuss, argue, read, and plan how best to integrate a sense of America's diversity and common ground into campus life.

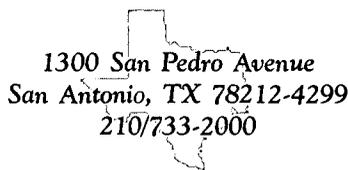
We explored issues of voice, identity, community, and language. We read *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, an article in Harper's on race, and articles about Cuba and the mambo, and we shared various approaches to using such material in our classrooms.

In our revised American literature and history sequences, as well as in the new interdisciplinary course, we have infused the use of seminar, dialogue, and small work groups as ways of integrating conversation and building trust. We are developing learning activities that prompt students to confront controversial issues about American pluralism and identity and to discover common meeting ground.

The rich and varied composition of our task force added much to the ultimate construction of the courses we developed and revised as well as to the learning community we created. Even our points of conflict were not so much obstacles as opportunities and were probably indicative of the exhilarating conversations that will permeate our classrooms when we address the question, What does it mean to be an American?

TEAM

Libby Bay, Chair of the Humanities Cluster
 Beverly Brown, Professor of Anthropology
 Eugenio Espinosa, Assistant Professor of Art
 Sylvia Miranda, Assistant Professor of History



SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE
 San Antonio, Texas

BACKGROUND

San Antonio College (SAC) is an urban campus offering academic, occupational/technical, and continuing education courses. It serves a student population that is 51 percent Hispanic, 41 percent white, 4 percent African American, and 4 percent other minorities, a total of approximately 21,000 credit and 15,000 noncredit students. Established in 1925, San Antonio College is the largest single-campus community college in Texas and one of the largest in the United States. The college is a public institution that provides for and supports the educational and lifelong learning needs of a multicultural community.

PLAN

SAC's plan was to develop and offer a new course entitled *American Pluralism and Identity*. This team-taught course explores common American values as they are expressed in the following San Antonio/South Texas ethnic communities: German American, African American, and Mexican American. Students explore the sociology, the historical development, and the literary expression of American values. Field trips and

guest speakers are an integral part of the course's requirements. This course reflects the college's mission of responding to the educational needs of a diverse population.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Thus far, the following team goals have been met. We have:

- selected the faculty to teach *American Pluralism and Identity*;
- written a comprehensive syllabus that includes novels, sociological readings, historical documents, and classroom activities that represent the three ethnic groups;
- recruited guest speakers David McDonald, director of the Navarro House Historical Site, and Walter Schumann, a German interpretive guide;
- arranged field trips to a San Antonio Public Library, the New Braunfels historical district, and the Institute of Texan Cultures;
- received approval for the new course from the coordinating board and the academic council of San Antonio College;



- listed the course in the spring 1997 schedule of classes; and
- created a colloquium on American pluralism and identity featuring speakers from a variety of ethnic groups to round out the ethnic diversity of the course.

Faculty members who have been working on the project have spent much time focusing on questions of American pluralism and identity and have come to several conclusions. While there is clear evidence of strong commitment to the values of family, education, self-determination, community, work, and spirituality among Americans, there is great diversity in the expression of these values

among various ethnic groups. We are also divided by the inability to perceive that these values can be expressed in different ways in different communities. We have found these questions to be more problematic and critical than was first imagined. It is hoped that we will be able to communicate the importance of these questions to our students and that we can all work together throughout the semester to reach some firm conclusions.

TEAM

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SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE
Santa Rosa, California

BACKGROUND

Established in 1918, Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) is a large, single-campus but multi-site, public community college located 52 miles north of San Francisco. The college attracts more than 30,000 students each semester. Seventy-six percent of the students are white, with the next largest group being Hispanic (12 percent). There are smaller but noticeable percentages of African, Asian, and Native Americans, as well as international students. Because the county remains largely rural and agricultural, SRJC offers classes at various outlying locations. The main campus in Santa Rosa, however, offers a comprehensive program in general and vocational education, mostly to drive-in, suburban students.

PLAN

Over the years SRJC had done much in the way of multicultural education: in staff development opportunities, in curriculum, and in events open to the campus and community. There was, nevertheless, a need for greater focus and for sustained attention over time. The American Cul-

tures Project of 1996, as part of *Exploring America's Communities*, was designed to do the following:

- provide an ongoing forum where the various humanities disciplines can present their differing perspectives on important aspects of American culture and where both students and faculty have an opportunity to formulate a holistic view of American culture;
- initiate a collegewide conversation on American values and culture;
- support the promotion, enrichment, and refinement of our humanities offerings; and
- provide means and inspiration for faculty to develop courses to fulfill an American Cultures requirement.

To meet these objectives, we have worked to create a new, ongoing program, the American Cultures program, which was composed initially of three parts: 1) a public lecture series, or "American Cultures Forum"; 2) a learning community course devoted to an aspect of American culture; and 3) a faculty study group.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

To date, much has been accomplished, but the effects of many of our efforts remain to be seen. Much of the work during 1996 has focused on planning and preparing for the lecture series, which will begin during the spring 1997 semester. Seven lectures are scheduled to be held in the college's 200-seat auditorium, and they are being advertised via the printed schedule of classes and flyers. A one-unit course has been set up for the lecture series, allowing students to get credit for attending the events and the discussion sessions organized around them. The overall theme for the semester is *E Pluribus Unum: Cultural Diversity and American Identity*. Topics for the lectures and events are currently set as follows: *Soul Music: From Plato to Motown (An Exploration of Formalism and the Devil's Music)*; *Evolution of the Blues Concert*; *Edwin Hawkins Gospel Singers*; *Entangled Lives: Facing Our Slaveholding Past*; *Feminist Theater: The History of Women's Theater in America*; *Landscape and Inscape: The Invention of American Culture*; *Crossing Cultures in Film*; and *Panel Discussion: The Question of American Identity*.

The learning community course, *Declarations of Independence: Culture and Conflict in the Formation of American Identity*, was offered for the first time in fall 1996. It filled quickly, and students in the class report having had a very valuable experience. The course combines credit for *English 1A: Reading and Composition* and His-

tory 21: *Race, Ethnicity and Gender in American Culture*, and students have engaged in thorough discussions and writing projects centered on American pluralism. For them, the fall semester has truly been an in-depth American conversation.

The faculty study group has now met three times, and discussions have been exceedingly lively. Our plan and hope here is that the study group will link up with the public lecture series—both by addressing issues that arise in that venue and by discussions with visiting presenters.

In order to successfully institutionalize the program, we must see that the coordination needs are clearly defined and securely transferred to a strong advocate. We must immediately begin planning the year-long lecture series for 1997–1998 and lining up another learning community course. In particular, we need to develop more extensive ties with students and community: a high school liaison; more active involvement by our associate students and appropriate campus clubs; and awareness, involvement, and support of community groups such as 100 Black Men and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Finally, we need to continue to develop awareness and support within the faculty and staff at the college so the lecture series can truly become a campuswide forum.

TEAM

Martin Bennett, Instructor of History
Cott Hobart, Instructor of Humanities
Susan Mason, Adjunct Instructor of English
Ron Taylor, Assistant Dean of Instruction, Letters and Social Sciences

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SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE Cumberland, Kentucky

BACKGROUND

Southeast Community College (SCC), established in 1960 as part of the University of Kentucky Community College System, serves a pre-

dominantly rural population in southeastern Kentucky. During the fall 1996 semester, 2,346 students were enrolled at SCC, of whom 1,632 were full-time and 714 were part-time. The college also served approximately 1,600 persons through the noncredit programs.

PLAN

The primary goals of our college's Action Plan follow:

- introduce our *Exploring America's Communities* project to the college's institutional advisory board and faculty;
- plan and initiate the process of linking U.S. history and Spanish language courses;
- secure institutional funding to support the project;
- identify and acquire library resources to support the project;
- lead a development of leadership class to plan and conduct an essay competition among eighth-grade students in the Bell County school systems that is devoted to the project themes; and
- conduct professional development workshops for the Southeast Community College faculty.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SCC has been successful in accomplishing the majority of the goals stated in our Action Plan.

Via e-mail and voice mail, information about the project has been disseminated to all faculty and staff at the Bell County campus. The project was also presented to all SCC faculty at a monthly faculty meeting and at bimonthly facilitators meetings. Library resources have been acquired, catalogued, and shelved and are now available to all 14 community colleges within the University of Kentucky system via interlibrary loan.

The essay competition among eighth-grade students in the Bell County schools was conducted by a development of leadership

class. The students organized and conducted a semester-long essay competition answering the question, What does it mean to be an American? It culminated in a series of student-directed workshops devoted to the project's theme for the 10 essay winners and their families and an awards ceremony banquet that recognized all the participants.

Issues and themes that the U.S. history survey courses and the Spanish classes share have been identified and partially integrated into those classes at the Bell County campus. The process of seeking official permission through the University of Kentucky Community College System's office to link the two courses has been initiated. Instructors are using videos acquired for the project to spark discussions of the project's themes. Especially effective discussion starters have been the videos *Talk to Me: Americans in Conversation and Surviving Columbus: The Story of the Pueblo People*.

Students and faculty at Southeast Community College have identified the most divisive aspects of American society as race, religion, and social/economic class. What we have in common was identified as opportunity and the "freedom to do and be what we want to be." Other students and faculty members feel what brings us together as Americans are times of war and tragedies and the good will of such holidays as Thanksgiving and Christmas. When asked to suggest metaphors for America, students said that "America is a large, colorful Monet," "part vegetable soup because the soup is very obvious as to what vegetable it is, but the broth is a blend of all the ingredients," or a "playground" because "so many different children come to the playground." Concern was also expressed about the lack of a shared civic culture as well as a general sense of confusion about what we do have in common.

TEAM

- Harry Bralley, Assistant Director, Bell County Campus
- Edward Frost, Instructor of Developmental Studies
- Joseph Marcum, Assistant Professor of History
- Margaret Marcum, Assistant Professor of Spanish and Education

"It was generally decided that what we have in common are such attributes as opportunity, language, the ability to unite during times of adversity, values and rights expressed in our founding documents, and similar dreams and expectations."

—Southeast Community College

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TARRANT COUNTY JUNIOR COLLEGE DISTRICT

Fort Worth, Texas

BACKGROUND

The Tarrant County Junior College District (TCJCD) opened in 1967 with its first campus in South Fort Worth. The northeast campus opened in 1968, followed by the northwest campus in 1976, and finally, the southeast campus opened in 1996. All four of our campuses could best be described as urban and diverse. Our total student population averages about 26,000 each semester, with about 76 percent white, 10 percent Hispanic, 9 percent African American, 4 percent Asian American, and 1 percent Native American, percentages reflective of the Tarrant County population in general. Our faculty is about 30 percent nonwhite. The numbers of Asian and African American students are steadily increasing.

PLAN

The initial goal of our Action Plan was to develop an inclusive, nontraditional approach to the teaching of American literature, history, and culture. From this initial goal we derived some supporting objectives, the most immediate of which was to add to the fall 1996 schedule a

multicultural team of *History 2613: United States History to 1876* and *English 1613: Composition I*, along with sections of the initial pair on each of our campuses. Our next objective is to continue adding a variety of sections of already existing courses across the core curriculum, sections that would be committed to the multicultural theme. Our long-term goal is to create a unified learning community through which the faculty would work together to plan and deliver a cluster of classes committed to carrying out our initial goal.

"Our faculty and students agreed that Americans strive for self-discipline, self-restraint, and the rule of law. Americans believe that our freedom provides hope for improvement in all sectors of life. We believe that things can be better."

—Tarrant County
Junior College District

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The TCJC common ground team committed itself to a series of steps that successfully lead to the scheduling of common ground courses in the spring of 1997. The team visited department chairs, division chairs, presidents, and chancellors on the four campuses, apprising them of the common ground project and of our plans to conduct faculty development meetings. The administrators' reaction was positive. A districtwide newsletter, *The Quest*, developed by the TCJC team serves as an instrument to keep faculty and administrators abreast of our progress. To maintain the interest and involvement of administrators, faculty, and students, the TCJC team conducted four workshops on various aspects of the project. The final meeting took the form of a show-and-tell session. We shared our spring publicity materials and ideas on content and sequence for our common ground courses scheduled for spring. Team members shared sample brochures, letters, and flyers addressed to our spring composition and history common ground students.

We have been able to accomplish much. Our charter teaching team believes they now have a feel for what works and what doesn't work in regard to reading assignments, types and numbers of texts to use, utilization of class time for student work, essay prompts, and lecture and discussion time. Our faculty has successfully moved the course from the realm of the merely theoretical to the world of the real classroom. Pairing a content-centered course (U.S. history) with a skills course (composition) seems to be working well because the ideas explored in the history component provide the students with substantial topics on which to write. Classroom discussion centered on historical information gathered from textbook readings, lecture, and documents as well as more contemporary viewpoints from our essay reader.

We have a proposal from faculty members on one of our campuses to add a teamed U.S. history and fundamentals of public speaking combination.

Students would study famous speeches from American history, such as those from the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, and use them as inspiration for speeches of their own.

We have had several discussions about what it means to be an American. Generally speaking, students and faculty alike seem to believe that being an American has more to do with adherence to specific ideals and values than it has to do with cultural identity, although these ideals and values are reflected in what could be termed *American culture*. We have in common a sense of hope that things could be better and a belief in the possibility of progress on both the in-

dividual and community level. We tend to believe in the value of competition, the availability of opportunity, the inevitability of change. Indeed, American culture is always in a state of flux, reflecting our collective restlessness and our relentless search for a better life.

TEAM

George Edwards, Professor of History
 Timothy Gilbert, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion
 Jane Harper, Chair of the Humanities Division
 Antonio Howell, Associate Professor of English
 Violet M. O'Valle, Professor of English

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TULSA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 Tulsa, Oklahoma

BACKGROUND

Tulsa Community College (TCC), an urban, multicampus, comprehensive community college, was established in 1969. It is the largest junior college in Oklahoma, serving students on four campuses. The college has over 22,000 credit enrollments each semester, offering university-parallel associate degrees as well as certificate and associate-degree technical and occupational programs. The minority population of the college closely mirrors that of the metropolitan Tulsa area, 8 percent African American, 5 percent Native American, 2 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 1 percent other.

"Americans value personal freedom, yet long for a sense of community. Tension is created over how Americans can maintain personal freedom while fostering community."

—Tulsa Community College

PLAN

The primary goals of TCC's Action Plan are to promote professional development, to develop and enhance curricula, and to raise the general institutional awareness of issues surrounding American plurality and identity.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The team's first priority has been to involve faculty and staff in a number of activities designed to encourage the incorporation of concepts of American pluralism and identity into the curriculum. Approximately 20 faculty and staff members have been meeting monthly since February 1996 in informal, yet structured, reading and discussion groups. They have discussed and reviewed specific articles and books and exchanged annotated bibliographies of recommended multicultural resources. While the project team arranged for meetings and notification, the group's members took turns leading the group. Another, smaller group of faculty and staff met bimonthly throughout the summer and fall semester to read and discuss Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* as a baseline, outsider's look at American culture in the 1830s. Ronald Takaki's *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* is the focus of discussions during the spring semester. Visits by Dr. Sharon Harley, director of the University of Maryland's African American program, and the AACC mentor, Dr. Bob Sessions, professor of philosophy, Kirkwood Community College, and facilitated discussions on core American values were three of the most effective catalysts for awareness.

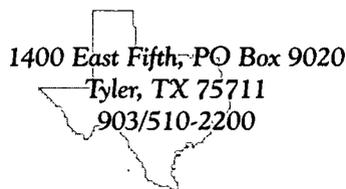
The goal of enhancing and enriching the curricula has been accomplished by those participating in the second American Conversations study group. They compiled an annotated bibliography and recommended that the college purchase books and multimedia resources for research and classroom use. The group has also discussed incorporating service learning into their existing courses. A new course, *American Humanities*, developed before TCC's participation in *Exploring America's Communities* project, is being expanded into a third campus. Resources recommended by the American Conversations group and the project team will be purchased to enhance this course. The team is exploring the possibility of an American Studies option.

The third major goal—to raise the general institutional awareness of American pluralism and identity—has been accomplished via multiple information and brainstorming sessions with vari-

ous college leaders, including the president, board of regents, student activities directors, student organization leaders, and division chairs. Tulsa Community College has just begun to address the issues of American pluralism and identity. The reading and discussion groups will continue to meet and students have indicated an interest in duplicating the project. The higher education cultural roundtable has taken *Democracy in America* as its program theme for the academic year. The influence of *Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground* will continue to diffuse throughout the curriculum and culture of Tulsa Community College.

TEAM

Cherie Hughes, Assistant Professor of Humanities and Religious Studies
Chris Myers-Baker, Instructor of Humanities
Kathryn J. Purser, Dean of Instruction



TYLER JUNIOR COLLEGE
 Tyler, Texas

BACKGROUND

Tyler Junior College (TJC), established in 1926, has a strong transfer program as well as a workforce training component through technical/vocational and continuing education. We have an enrollment of approximately 8,500 full- and part-time students each semester and 15,000 noncredit students per year. Located in an urban community of 75,000 people, TJC has a diverse population—20 percent African American, 65 percent Anglo, and 15 percent Hispanic. The college attracts enrollment from surrounding rural communities as well as from several cities in Texas.

PLAN

TJC's Action Plan focused on the following goals:

- infuse existing curriculum for specified courses with at least one pluralism concept;

- provide opportunities for faculty dialogue pertaining to cultural diversity;
- establish multicultural awareness throughout the campus and community; and
- initiate student pluralism projects.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We implemented a new course, *The American Experiment*, combining American history and English composition to organize and analyze historical data and examine the broad cultural development of the United States through writing and discussion. Community leaders served as resource persons for this class. In addition to this specified course, faculty members across the disciplines pledged to include additional pluralism components in their respective courses.

The team created several team opportunities to foster faculty dialogue. A luncheon for all faculty

was held to explore issues of determining the American identity through presentations and roundtable discussions. The pluralism committee developed and distributed an annotated bibliography on pluralism issues to be infused across the curriculum. The president's reading group chose to study *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *In the Lake of the Woods*, and *The End of Education*. Our pluralism and identity committee and instructional deans initiated in-service training to explore cultural differences. A particularly effective effort related to Sivasaliasm Thiagarajan's flexible simulation game, BARANGA. This simulation provides a model in which players analyze their differences with new insight and perspective.

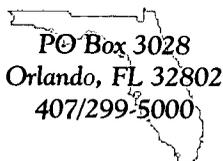
Campus and community pluralism and identity projects included a speakers' series open to the community with the theme, *Ethical Issues in Pluralistic America*; International Week sponsored by government classes; a series of student newspaper articles pertaining to race relations on campus; and a student-generated art exhibit exploring the question of what it means to be an American that invited viewers to interact by writing publicly displayed responses to the artwork.

Members of the pluralism committee have begun classroom conversations on cultural diversity issues by using current events to stimulate student discussion and to increase awareness. Examples of discussion topics include issues raised by the O. J. Simpson trials, the Rodney King trial, and immigration and affirmative action policies.

At Tyler Junior College, the people who have worked closely with the *Exploring America's Communities* project objectives felt that we had a jump start on the project. Instead of beginning with a small, administratively driven group, we began with a much larger core committee that included faculty from several humanities disciplines as well as two academic deans. Informal from its beginning, the committee grew and came to reflect the very common ground addressed by the project. It is in this way that the work we initiated through this project will continue beyond the project period.

TEAM

Shirley Bishop, Instructor of Sociology
Noamie Byrum, Instructor of English
Carolyn Hendon, Instructor of English
Lou Kuck, Interim Dean of Health and Natural Sciences
David Ligon, Instructor of Government



VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Orlando, Florida

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1967, Valencia Community College (VCC) serves Orange and Osceola counties in Central Florida, providing programs leading to the associate of arts degree as well as over 40 associate of science degrees. It is the fourth largest community college in Florida with four campuses and two centers. In 1996, the college enrolled 37,000 credit students and 11,000 continuing professional education students. This enrollment reflects the area's demographics: 68 percent white, 11 percent African American, 14 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent Asian American. This diver-

sity brings a richness to campus life and variety to the classroom while challenging the college to recognize and address its multifaceted constituency.

PLAN

Our Action Plan focused on developing activity packets or modules for use throughout the humanities curriculum. The modules center on a theme such as duty/freedom or equality/hierarchy and provide a structured sequence of thematic learning activities. These activities include:

- a concrete activity or stimulus: a reading, video, debate, simulation, or other

experience that will challenge and stimulate students to think;

- a personal observation or reflection: an opportunity for individual analysis, response, and reflection;
- a collaborative activity: small group discussions or other student-centered activity;
- synthesis and application: opportunities for research or applied learning, i.e., an essay, research project, or community involvement;
- assessment: evaluation of topic activities, including a common ground questionnaire prepared by the project team.

In addition to transforming existing curriculum, the project provides the groundwork for an NEH summer 1998 institute on non-Western civilizations. The new content knowledge that the faculty acquired in the summer institutes will then be implemented in activities that help students experience the diversity of cultures and opinions. The Action Plan also included plans to organize a collegewide, public event series featuring panels of experts interacting with student and faculty audiences to highlight the common ground agenda.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The enthusiasm of our colleagues led to success in implementing the new modules. De-

mocracy and Individual Rights was the theme in a government course, while *Religious Tolerance and Intolerance* was addressed in a medieval humanities course. Each humanities instructor has been asked to implement a diversity module once during the spring semester. We are encouraging faculty in the social sciences to do the same.

The diversity forums were organized around the topic of affirmative action and were a rousing success. The expert panels included VCC faculty and officials and representatives from local liberal arts colleges and major corporations. Students responded vocally and passionately, often carrying the discussion back to their classrooms. The topic of the spring forum—*The Future of Feminism*—was part of the college's women's history month activities.

Overall, the module activities and the forums have instigated a number of civil and reasoned conversations about the meaning of the American experience and the role that diversity plays. It is just such conversations that academia is supposed to promote. As our first summer institute approaches, we expect that such conversations on diversity and commonality will already be a part of the humanities curriculum.

TEAM

Philip Bishop, Professor of Humanities
Daniel Dutkofski, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies

4800 Freshman Drive
Culver City, CA 90230
310/287-4200

WEST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE

Culver City, California

BACKGROUND

West Los Angeles College (WLAC), one of nine Los Angeles community colleges, was founded in 1969 in the aftermath of the Watts Riots. Located between the Baldwin Hills and the Pacific Ocean, WLAC was constructed on land once part of the MGM backlot. Its 7,800 students are 52 percent African American, 10 percent Asian American, 16 percent Hispanic, 16 percent white, and 6 percent other minorities. The cam-

pus stands one mile south of SONY/Columbia studios, one mile north of Dreamworks, and five miles north of Los Angeles International Airport.

PLAN

The primary goals of our Action Plan were to expand and deepen our interdisciplinary studies program called *Partners*. Expansion involved offering more sections of the current program at the college, creating new programs, and extend-

ing the Partners program to our local high schools as a high school-college bridge. Deepening the program involved developing the curriculum to include greater emphasis upon Asian American, Native American, and immigrant groups; updating material on African Americans and Latinos; and reconfiguring materials to emphasize the diversity and commonality of the American experience.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our accomplishments include the incorporation of English texts that combine traditional and multicultural readings; they will be introduced in our classes this spring. Lectures and films have been altered. The program now uses the film *Last of the Mohicans*, portions of the original novel, and a lecture on the eastern Native American population to compare and contrast various aspects of the Native American experience; the film *Gone With the Wind*, excerpts from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and contemporary accounts of the Civil War and Reconstruction periods to analyze the

historiographies of the period; and two films by the same director—*El Norte* and *Mi Familia*—to create an atmosphere conducive to discussing and considering the positive and negative effects of immigration. A major paper on the impact of immigration upon the immigrant and the American citizen has been added to course requirements.

Our college catalog, schedules, and special Partners brochure have been reconfigured to increase the visibility of multiculturalism on the campus. Our brochure now stresses the transferability of all classes in the program and our participation in the *Exploring America's Communities* project. We have begun the process of expanding the program to one of our local high schools, and we have developed materials to encourage enrollment.

TEAM

Bruce L. Anders, Professor of English
 Leige Henderson, Dean of Academic Affairs
 Virginia F. Mulrooney, Professor of History
 Kate O'Connor, Professor of English
 Lloyd S. Thomas, Professor of English

"Our students identified and discussed the things we share despite our differences: love of family and friends, fear of rejection, desire for achievement, the need to define who we are and who we might become. We believe that our students' awareness of our common ground has been greatly enhanced by this project."

—Indian Hills Community College

One student wrote, "It is our humanity that unites us. In both films and novels we have found characters who were able to see beyond color, religion, or class, and accept others as worthwhile human beings that made the difference. We saw characters who did not see rich or poor, black or white, or good or evil. They simply saw people who were wise enough to know that people are simply different, but that difference does not mean some are better than others. We saw characters who valued and respected human life and tried to pass their wisdom on to others, and by doing so tried to remove some of the ignorance in America. Only by learning about and accepting our differences will America ever be truly united."

—Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. PARTICIPATING COLLEGES

Alpena Community College Alpena, MI	Kirkwood Community College Cedar Rapids, IA
Anoka-Ramsey Community College Coon Rapids, MN	Lakeland Community College Kirtland, OH
Atlanta Metropolitan Community College Atlanta, GA	Lee College Baytown, TX
Bergen Community College Paramus, NJ	Leeward Community College Pearl City, HI
Black River Technical College Pocahontas, AR	Metropolitan Community Colleges Kansas City, MO
Bronx Community College Bronx, NY	Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Gulfport, MS
Butler County Community College Bulter, PA	Monroe Community College Rochester, NY
Carroll Community College Westminster, MD	Motlow State Community College Tullahoma, TN
Central Florida Community College Ocala, FL	Northampton Community College Bethlehem, PA
Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College Cheraw, SC	Nunez Community College Chalmette, LA
Collin County Community College Plano, TX	Rancho Santiago College Santa Ana, CA
Cumberland County College Vineland, NJ	Rockland Community College Suffern, NY
Danville Area Community College Danville, IL	San Antonio College San Antonio, TX
Fresno City College Fresno, CA	Santa Rosa Junior College Santa Rosa, CA
Hagerstown Junior College Hagerstown, MD	Southeast Community College Cumberland, KY
Harold Washington College Chicago, IL	Tarrant County Junior College District Fort Worth, TX
Harrisburg Area Community College Harrisburg, PA	Tulsa Community College Tulsa, OK
Hudson County Community College Jersey City, NJ	Tyler Junior College Tyler, TX
Indian Hills Community College Ottumwa, IA	Valencia Community College Orlando, FL
Iowa Central Community College Fort Dodge, IA	West Los Angeles College Culver City, CA
Itawamba Community College Fulton, MS	

APPENDIX B. PROJECT MENTORS

Elizabeth Brown-Guillory, associate professor of English at the University of Houston, Texas, has extensive experience in reshaping curriculum to include minority texts by pairing canonical and noncanonical readings. Her recently written play *Missing Sister* premiered this year in Houston.

Carole Edmonds, dean of arts and sciences at Kellogg Community College, Michigan, has directed NEH projects on the use of multicultural texts. She is currently leading a two-summer institute on Native American and African American history and literature.

Charles Errico, professor of history and assistant division chair at Northern Virginia Community College, also teaches history at the graduate level at George Mason University. Errico has developed a cable television course on American history since World War II, which focuses on cultural and social history.

Kathy Fedorko, professor of English at Middlesex County College, New Jersey, is the author of *Gender and the Gothic in the Fiction of Edith Wharton* (University of Alabama Press, 1995). Fedorko has directed several NEH projects and served as a mentor for AACC's Advancing the Humanities projects.

Robert Franco, associate professor of anthropology and coordinator of Asian-Pacific studies at Kapi`olani Community College, Hawai'i, directed the college's AACC/Kellogg Beacon project and its service learning program—*Integrating Service into a Multicultural Writing Curriculum*.

Jo Marshall, dean of instruction at Chattahoochee Valley Community College, Alabama, has directed several NEH projects, including *Community Conversations*, a joint

project of Phi Theta Kappa and the Community College Humanities Association. She is a national facilitator for Phi Theta Kappa's humanities-based Leadership Development Program and is also a board member.

Virginia Meyn, professor of humanities and English at Saddleback College, California, has been active in the development of the college's Cross-Cultural Studies, Women's Studies, and Honors programs. In 1995, she co-directed an NEH Summer Institute on Latin American literatures and cultures.

Anne Mulder, professor of higher education at Nova Southeastern University, professor of English and former president of Lake Michigan College, has served on numerous national boards, including that of the American Council on Education and AACC. She currently advises the Kellogg National Fellowship Program.

Max Reichard, professor of history and humanities at Delgado Community College, Louisiana, has published numerous scholarly works on history and humanities topics. An active contributor to NEH projects, he has particular expertise in social and comparative history, the history of higher education, and diversity in the higher education curriculum.

Daniel Rivas, dean of liberal arts at Saddleback College, California, specializes in French language, literature, and civilization. He has had administrative responsibility for several NEH-funded projects, serves frequently on NEH review panels, and was a mentor for *Advancing the Humanities and Improving Foreign Language Education at Community Colleges*.

Carmen Salazar, chair of the department of foreign languages at Los Angeles Valley College, California, is author of *Avanzando*:

gramática española y lectura, the Teacher's Annotated Edition. Salazar has chaired several test development committees (*DANTES, Spanish Achievement Test, and AATSP National Exam*) and has developed language exams for the Educational Testing Service.

Rebecca Seaman, instructor of social sciences at Southern Union State Community College, Alabama, and Phi Theta Kappa chapter advisor, has extensive experience in developing and directing curriculum development workshops. Her recent scholarship has focused on periods of trauma to America's native tribes and communities.

Robert Sessions, professor of philosophy at Kirkwood Community College, Iowa, has directed several NEH projects and served as a mentor for AACC's *Advancing the*

Humanities projects. He teaches courses in ethics and philosophy, as well as two thematic, interdisciplinary courses.

Eleanor Q. Tignor, professor of English and chair of the task force on pluralism at LaGuardia Community College, New York, has been at the forefront of addressing issues of curriculum reform and multiculturalism at the college and nationally. She lectures extensively on composition, African American literature, and multiculturalism.

David Trask, professor of history at Guilford Technical Community College, North Carolina, specializes in American history with particular expertise in the Native American experience, immigration, and ethnocultural analysis of politics. He is currently working to involve two-year college history faculty in the American Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians.

APPENDIX C. SELECTED RESOURCES

American Association of Community Colleges

One Dupont Circle, NW
Suite 410
Washington, DC 20036
202/728-0200
<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is the primary advocacy organization for the nation's 1,100 two-year degree-granting institutions. Organized in 1920, AACC promotes the causes of its member colleges through 1) legislative advocacy; 2) monitoring of national issues and trends; 3) collection, analysis, and dissemination of information; 4) representation with other educational agencies and the national media; and 5) research and publication of news and scholarly analyses. The association is a nonprofit organization located in the National Center for Higher Education in Washington, DC.

National Endowment for the Humanities

Public Information Office
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20506
202/606-8400 or 800/NEH-1121
202/606-8282 TDD
e-mail: info@neh.fed.us
<http://www.neh.fed.us>

Created by Congress in 1965, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is an independent grantmaking agency dedicated to supporting research, education, and public programs in the humanities. NEH supports exemplary work to advance and disseminate knowledge in all the disciplines of the humanities. Endowment support is intended to complement and assist private and local efforts. In the most general terms, NEH-supported projects help improve humanities education, aid scholarship and research in the humanities, and foster in the American people a greater curiosity about and understanding of the humanities. Currently, NEH is in the second year of a three-year initiative on Teaching with Technology. This initiative, like the AACC project described in this publication, is funded in the Education Development and Demonstration program in the Division of Research

and Education, the Division where the largest number of grants to two-year colleges have traditionally been awarded. Contact the Division of Research and Education at 202/606-8380 (e-mail: education@neh.fed.us) for specific information about the types of projects funded.

Talk to Me: Americans In Conversation Video

The Cinema Guild, Inc.
1647 Broadway, Suite 506
New York, NY 10019-5904
212/246-5522

<http://www.cinemaguild.com/cinemaguild>

Broadcast in early 1997 on PBS stations nationwide, *Talk to Me: Americans in Conversation* is a National Conversation film commissioned by NEH. It is a lively, sometimes lyrical exploration of what being American means at the close of the 20th century. Interviews and archival materials are juxtaposed with icons of American popular culture—everything from handmade quilts and old family photographs to *Star Trek*, *Route 66*, and *The Wizard of Oz*. The video is accompanied by a short discussion-starter video and a resource guide for community and classroom use.

Exploring America's Communities Teleconference

American Association of Community Colleges

Community College Press
PO Box 311
Annapolis Junction, MD 20701
301/490-8116
<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>

This one-hour edited version of the introductory teleconference for AACC's *Exploring America's Communities* project was produced by Eisenberg Associates. The teleconference features presentations by humanities scholars and community college leaders on aspects of what it means to be an American—who we are, what divides us, what brings us together, what do we have in common. Moderated by Charlayne Hunter-Gault of PBS's "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer," this program was designed to initiate discussions about

finding the common values and goals for which diverse communities strive. The program includes poetry readings, music, and call-in segments from community college participants across the country. Limited copies of the teleconference *Program Book* containing scholarly essays and selected readings are available; call 202/393-2208.

Community College Humanities Association

c/o Essex County College
303 University Avenue
Newark, NJ 07102
201/877-3204

The Community College Humanities Association (CCHA) is a national, nonprofit association devoted to strengthening the humanities in the nation's two-year colleges. The only national organization of its kind for humanities faculty in two year colleges, CCHA also serves as a Council of the American Association of Community Colleges. It is an affiliate of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS); the National Humanities Alliance (NHA); the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History; and the American Historical Association (AHA). CCHA has the following purposes:

- to advance the cause of the humanities through its own activities and in cooperation with other institutions and groups involved in higher education;
- to provide a regular forum for the exchange of ideas on significant issues in the humanities and in higher education;
- to encourage and support the professional work of faculty in the humanities; and
- to sponsor conferences and institutes that provide opportunities for faculty development and enrichment;
- to promote the discussion of issues of concern to faculty and administrators in the humanities; and
- to disseminate information through the publications of the Association.

CCHA is organized into five regional divisions and acts as host to five regional conferences, which alternate yearly with national conferences. In addition, it admin-

isters a national awards program, a literary magazine competition, a mini-grant program, and special initiatives in the humanities. CCHA publishes a tri-annual newsletter, *The Community College Humanist*, and an annual scholarly journal, *Community College Humanities Review*.

Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society

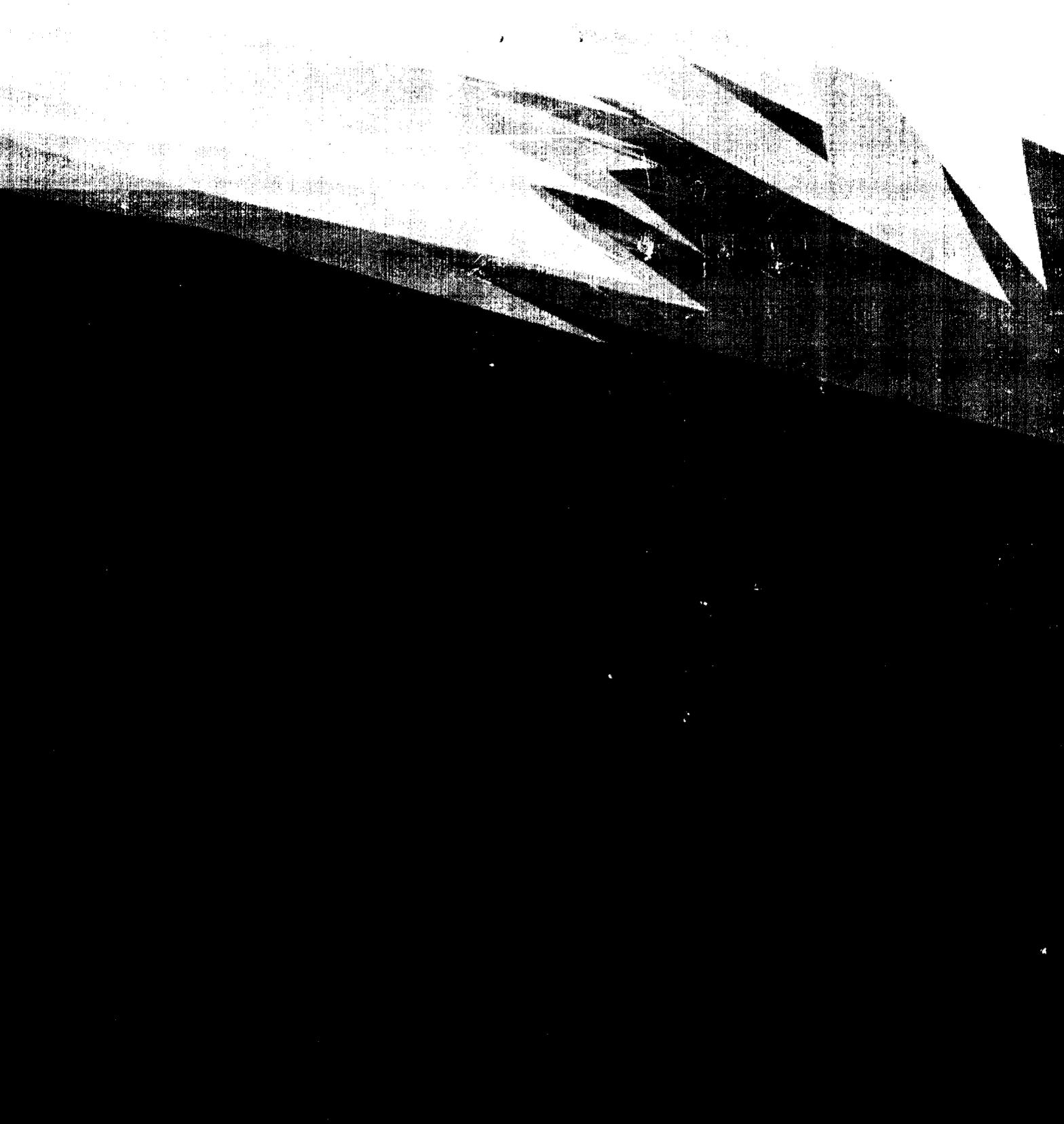
460 Briarwood Drive, Suite 415
Jackson, MS 39206
800/946-9995

<http://www.phithetakappa.jackson.ms.us>

Established by Missouri college presidents in 1918, Phi Theta Kappa is recognized as the largest honor society in higher education with more than one million members and 1,200 chapters located in all 50 states within the United States and in Canada and Germany. Phi Theta Kappa recognizes academic achievement of two-year college students and provides opportunity for growth and development through honors, leadership, and service programming. In 1994, Phi Theta Kappa-Community College Humanities Association's, NEH-funded project, *Community Conversations*, was added to its extensive array of programming.

Each year, more than 70,000 students, with cumulative grade point averages of 3.5 or higher, completing a minimum of 12 hours of associate degree course work, are inducted into Phi Theta Kappa. Students must maintain high academic standing for the duration of their enrollment at the two-year college. More than 150,000 members actively participate in Society programming each year. The average age of a new member is 30, with ages ranging from 18 to 80. Nearly 375 senior institutions provide in excess of \$26 million in scholarships to members. Distinguished alumni include Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, ambassador; Fred Haise, Apollo XIII astronaut; Sela Ward, actress; and H. Ross Perot, businessman.

Headquartered in Mississippi since 1935, Phi Theta Kappa has a permanent staff of 45. In 1997, Phi Theta Kappa will take occupancy of its new headquarters facility, The Center for Excellence, which is located on the grounds of Mississippi's Education and Research Center in Jackson. Future plans for the facility include state-of-the-art interactive technology, enabling nationwide delivery of Society programming.



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20036-1176





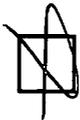
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



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