

CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS

National Video Conference on Welfare Reform

CRGE's Poverty and Welfare Research Interest Group, chaired by Dr. Clyde Woods, Afro-American Studies Program, joined forces November 16 with the African-American Leadership Institute of the James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership to host an on-campus forum and a national video conference about welfare reform.

In anticipation of the reauthorization of two key federal welfare laws, this forum helped fill the need for informed debate. The two-part program began with a panel featuring social services directors from Maryland counties and the District of Columbia, a social services provider from a nonprofit agency, and a representative from a national research organization: Carolyn Colvin, District of Columbia Department of Human Services, Yvonne Gilchrist, Baltimore City Department of Social Services, Victoria Stanley, Dorchester County Department of Social Services, Nicole Mason, National Women's Alliance, and Jocelyn Frye, National Partnership for Women and Families.

UM faculty included Dr. Cheryl Miller,

associate professor, Department of Political Science, Thomas Perez, assistant professor, School of Law, and Dr. Bonnie Braun, extension family life specialist, Department of Family Studies. Dr. Braun is the lead Maryland researcher on a 15-state research steering committee that is tracking the impact of this public policy change on rural communities and the lives of rural families (ref: "Rural Families Speak: Life in the Wake of Welfare Reform," spring 2001 newsletter, available on our website).

During the program's second half, a national video conference on welfare reauthorization featured policy makers, analysts, and a media representative.

Working together, the Poverty and Welfare RIG and James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership are making a significant contribution in helping communities in the region, state, and nation understand the impact of the 1996 Temporary Aid to Needy Families Act (TANF) and the Farm Bill, which includes authorization for the food stamp program. Both are up for reauthorization in 2002 .

Members of the Poverty and Welfare RIG are campus scholars whose work focuses on impoverished communities. They foster discussion and scholarship on this issue.

The mission of the James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership (www.academy.umd.edu) is to foster principled leadership through scholarship, education, and training with special attention to advancing the leadership of groups historically under-represented in public life.

Collaboration between the two groups will continue this spring with a second forum that will again include a national video conference. Remember to check our CRGE website, www.umd.edu/crge, for scheduling information on this event.

Fostering collaboration is a significant part of CRGE's mission. These forums harness RIG resources with those of the Academy of Leadership, thus helping to better shape productive conversations about the issues of welfare reform.

Please let us know of your events and programs. It is our purpose to foster collaborative and interdisciplinary work at the intersections of race, gender, and ethnicity. Should you have an interdisciplinary event with a focus on social justice that brings together members of the campus community, advocacy organizations, or community activists, CRGE may be able to help coordinate your event or offer some other form of support. ❀

Consortium on Race, Gender, and Ethnicity
2103 Tawes Fine Arts Building
College Park, MD 20742

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND





CONNECTIONS

NEWSLETTER OF THE CONSORTIUM ON
RACE, GENDER, & ETHNICITY

Graduate Colloquium February 7

The first session of the spring CRGE Graduate Colloquium, Thursday, February 7, 12-2 p.m., will offer lunch to UM graduate students and faculty and a presentation by the Life Writing Research Interest Group (RIG). Members of the Life Writing RIG are an intercollegiate group of scholars involved in diverse documentary projects ranging from the collection of oral histories to memoir writing.

The Graduate Colloquium is designed to encourage graduate students from a variety of disciplines to discuss their interests regarding the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and other dimensions of difference.

Four sessions conducted in the fall semester included faculty speakers, presentations by various research interest groups and graduate students, and open dialogue.

Sessions will be conducted every third week during the spring semester. For updated information, including colloquium locations, please check our website, www.umd.edu/crge. To be included on the Graduate Colloquium list-serve, send a request to Amy McLaughlin, amcloughlin@socy.umd.edu.

Spring 2002 Speaker Series

Building Interdisciplinary Connections at the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Ethnicity," the Consortium's 2001-2002 speaker series, will continue to bring interdisciplinary scholars to our campus this spring.

The Consortium presents this speaker series as a way to foster greater communication, cross-fertilization of ideas, and collaboration among our research interest groups (RIGs) as well as among other students and faculty.

Fall speakers included: Lynn Weber, University of South Carolina,

FROM THE DIRECTOR

"An intersectional approach to discrimination acknowledges that every person be it man or woman exists in a framework of multiple identities, with factors such as race, class, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, citizenship, national identity, geo-political context, health, including HIV/AIDS status and any other status, that are all determinants in one's experiences of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances. An intersectional approach highlights the way in which there is a simultaneous interaction of discrimination as a result of multiple identities."

Declaration of the NGO (non-governmental organizations) Forum, September 3, 2001, Durban, South Africa

Returning on September 9, 2001, from the NGO Forum of the "World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances," Durban, South Africa, I felt as if I had glimpsed the beginnings of a new world order. My sense of standing at a moment of impending historical change was captured by sister-traveler Sonia Walker who said, "It just seems as if the world will

be different after this." Little did we know that within 48 hours of our return and before we had even shaken off the remnants of jet-lag, cataclysmic events in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania would catapult us into a realignment of powers and alliances we could not have imagined.

I left South Africa deeply sensitized to the arrogance of power that was conveyed to the world community by the failure of

Secretary of State Colin Powell to attend the world meeting and by the decision of the United States to officially withdraw from conference deliberations. A surprising number of people—shopkeepers, taxi drivers, hotel clerks,

and conferees—upon learning that I was a U.S. citizen wanted to express disappointment and dissatisfaction over this country's actions. While not all commentators agreed with the language equating Zionism with racism, which was the breaking-off point for the United States, most felt there were so many other issues of importance and so many different ways in which racism is manifested in the world today that the U.S. should have participated in the forum.

"They Came From Around The World Just To Be Heard!" proclaimed the head-

continued on page 3



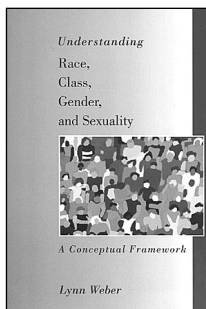
DALIT MARCHERS AT WCAR

Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework; Noliwe Rooks, Princeton University, *Hair Raising;* Gayatri Gopinath, University of California, "Impossible Subjects: Sexuality, Diaspora, and South Asian Public Cultures"; and Keith Warner, George

Mason University, "From 'Down the Way Where the Nights are Gay': Caribbean Immigration and the Bridging of Cultures."

To keep updated on our spring 2002 speakers and dates, please check our website, www.umd.edu/crge. ❁

First Framework for Work at the Intersections Published by CRGE Author



“The problem is that while students come away from these anthologies knowing that intersections are important, they don’t know how one then goes about doing this work—or even how to conduct an in-depth critique of the

analytical work being produced by others.”

Dr. Weber’s *Conceptual Framework* introduces the vocabulary and themes of intersectional analysis; offers a historical timeline and data on current patterns of oppression in education, citizenship, government representation, work and economy, family and reproduction; suggests personal benefits of learning to critique systems of oppression; emphasizes interlocking characteristics and their simultaneous expression within power relationships; and provides an approach for interpreting and critiquing scholarly articles on race, class, gender, and other differences. Her pedagogy reflects nearly 20 years of teaching and consulting with faculty and students across the United States.

In addition, says Dr. Weber, “People working in community organizations have also read this book and found it useful in the way they think about social change.

“Although I’ve presented a lot of complex and sometimes emotionally charged ideas, I’ve tried to make the book easily accessible to students and scholars and to all people concerned about social policy. The book ends by addressing the need to develop

Understanding *Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework* by Lynn Weber is the first textbook to provide a conceptual frame and a process for analyzing the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Published earlier this year by McGraw Hill (ISBN: 0-07-243461-9), the text is currently in its second semester of use and is receiving “an incredible amount of positive response,” according to the book’s author. An accompanying book of eight case studies (ISBN: 0-07-243463-5) by Dr. Weber and Heather Dillaway was published in July 2001. Both books are in softcover and are being used in the social sciences and the humanities.

Over the past decade, starting with Anderson and Collins, there has been an explosion of anthologies that reflect an understanding of teaching about diversity. For example, says Dr. Weber, “Starting from personal experience, the micro, is a way to engage people in thinking about the macro. So most of these anthologies begin with a group of essays by people in



DR. WEBER, CONSULTANT TO CRGE AND CO-DIRECTOR OF THE CRGE PROGRAM AREA INTERSECTIONS, IDENTITIES, AND INEQUALITIES, IS A SOCIOLOGY PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF THE WOMEN’S STUDIES PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

different social locations, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, etc., telling pieces of the stories about their own lives. From there the anthologies include some historical, legal, literary, and social science articles and engage questions about the intersections of lives at the macro and analytical levels.

and implement strategies that make change in favor of social justice...I hope this book has application to the kinds of work that lots of people are doing.”

The books can be ordered at 1-800-338-3987 or the McGraw-Hill web site www.mhhe.com/sociology. ❀

Suggested Reading

The following books have been suggested to us as interesting examples of works on the intersections of race, gender, class, and nation. It is our goal to highlight and promote work at the intersections by providing a starting point for those who are interested in learning more about this approach to scholarship. We welcome your suggestions of books and journal articles to include in our next column.

Color-Line to the Borderlands: The Matrix of American Studies, Johnella Butler, ed., University of Washington Press, 2001: A collection of essays outlining the development of the field of ethnic studies. Includes articles by Ronald Takaki, Manning Marable, Evelyn Hu-Dehart, and Shirley Hune. The institutional commitment to the field as well as its own diverse nature are discussed and analyzed.

Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and the Cultures of Travel, Inderpal Grewal, Duke University Press, 1996: An interdisciplinary analysis of travel narratives written by nineteenth-century English women visiting India and by Indian women experiencing England. Ideas of gender and nation take shape through the various sources and methodologies employed.

Globalization and its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money, Saskia Sassen, The New Press, 1998: An essay collection that articulates the meaning and consequences of globalization on gender, migration, information technology, and inequality.

Thicker Than Blood: How Racial Statistics Lie, Tukufu Zuberi, University of Minnesota Press, 2001: This work questions the connections between the social construction of race and the growth of statistics as explanatory tools. Zuberi’s analysis pierces the illusion of neutrality that surrounds statistics and suggests that they need to be racialized.

Understanding Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework, Lynn Weber, and *Understanding Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality: Case Studies*, Lynn Weber and Heather Dillaway, McGraw-Hill, 2001 (see Book Corner). ❀

FROM THE DIRECTOR

continued from page 1

line of the NGO Forum newspaper. For many of the participants, the NGO Forum in Durban provided the opportunity to bring issues, concerns, and experiences to the attention of the world. Dalits from India sought to educate about the role of caste discrimination. Romas from Europe cited their experiences of slavery, extermination, and deportation. Indigenous people from around the world asserted their right to self-determination and an end to the destruction of ancestral lands, resources, and culture. Just outside the conference entrance gates, a group of South African women who had traveled from many different parts of their country protested the \$100 (U.S.) conference registration fee. A coalition of South African unions, community organizations, and activists marched against capitalist presence at the meetings, arguing that “privatization, cut-offs, evictions, etc., keep racism alive,” making services more expensive, causing retrenchments, and putting profits before need, resulting in increased suffering for the Black working-class majority.

Africans and African descendants, acknowledging a common history of slavery, conquest, colonization, and apartheid at the hands of Europeans, called for reparations. There were heated discussions on this issue. Concerns ranged from the development of concrete plans for pursuing reparation litigation to ways of enforcing judgments. There also was deep frustration and apprehension about U.S. refusal to

fully participate in the forum process and what affect this would have.

Nevertheless, members of African, South American, and European NGOs pledged to vigorously pursue the reparations issue, and the final Declaration of the NGO Forum contained the following language:

“Slave-holder nations, colonizers and occupying countries have unjustly enriched themselves at the expense of those people that they enslaved and colonized and whose land they have occupied.

As these nations largely owe their political, economic and social domination to the exploitation of Africa, Africans and Africans in the diaspora they should recognize their obligation to provide these victims just and equitable reparations.”

These voices were heard throughout South Africa. The television evening news, broadcast three times in three different languages (English, Afrikaans and Zulu), contained daily stories about the conference. Excerpts of Forum testimonies, entitled “Voices of Victims: Human stories of racial discrimination with firsthand accounts from every region of the world,” were broadcast nightly. Youth and child-oriented programs examined the meaning of words like xenophobia and discussed the state of race relations in contemporary South Africa. The conference became a wonderful opportunity for national dialogue.

Sadly, the United States, in its official posture, chose not to listen, and as a result, our citizens missed out on the opportunity to gain a broader understanding of these issues in both a national and global con-

text. In this country, the conference received very little media coverage and few people even knew that it had taken place. In the wake of the events of September 11, the lack of attention to the discussions of these issues in Durban is especially troubling.

The Durban conference was about human rights, about the evils of racial and religious intolerance, about xenophobia, state-sponsored terrorism, poverty, and discrimination throughout the world. The documents that were produced argued for an intersectional approach to understanding issues of gender, race, class, and ethnicity. The meetings involved nations and people coming together to acknowledge violations of human rights, to set goals, and to identify peaceful strategies towards achieving a more just world.

In my mind, the connections between Durban and the aftermath of September 11 are profoundly ironic. Within less than a week, I observed a government that had refused to participate in an important world conversation — one of vital interest to victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance throughout the world — calling for the help and support of nations and peoples whom they had rebuffed only days earlier.

Yes, Sonia was right. The world has become different since we returned from Durban. But is the US ready to listen?

Sincerely,

Bonnie Thornton Dill



NGO FORUM LOGO

ANNOUNCING THE CRGE INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (CRISP)

Beginning fall 2002, the Consortium will administer a two-year graduate fellowship program designed to develop national and international leaders in the research and scholarship of intersectional analyses.

CRGE Interdisciplinary Scholarship Program (CrISP) scholars will be first- and second-year graduate students from any of the following academic areas: American studies, family studies, human development, sociology, and women's studies. CRGE faculty mentors will work with each student's departmental advisor to help design an appropriate course of

study complimentary to the department's expectations and the student's interests.

Fellowship goals are

- To attract exceptionally talented graduate students who have the desire to study issues of race, gender, and ethnicity, who are interested in interdisciplinary ideas, and who have the ability to creatively draw on the research resources and faculty of this campus
- To increase the visibility and impact of research and scholarship at the intersections of race, gender, and other dimensions of difference by enhancing departmental

resources for recruiting and supporting highly qualified graduate students

- To create an innovative training program for the next generation of scholars and leaders who in turn will help re-conceptualize epistemological, theoretical, and methodological approaches to the study of intersections

CrISP fellowship recipients will be offered half-time assistantships with the Consortium. As CRGE research assistants, students will be mentored by a senior faculty member and will have the opportunity to learn firsthand the processes of research, publication, and administration. Additional information and application material will be posted on our web site in 2002.

RESEARCH INTEREST GROUPS

14 Campus Groups Receive CRGE Funding

CRGE has awarded more than \$20,000 to 14 campus groups in its third annual research interest group (RIG) grant competition. Grants for the 2001-2002 academic year range from \$500 to \$5,000 for multidisciplinary projects that focus on the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and other dimensions of difference.

RIGs are chaired by UM faculty and may include additional faculty, community scholars and activists, and graduate students. During the past two years, more than 70 graduate students have been RIG members.

This year's RIG recipients and their projects include the following:

African-American Women in Film, chairperson Dr. Carmen Coustaut, Theatre: A short film will focus on the issues of race, ethnicity, and class as experienced by working-class African-American women dealing with issues of gender and culture.

American Women and Classical Myths, chairperson Dr. Lillian Doherty, Classics: A refereed volume representing the diverse perspectives and intellectual strengths identified during the group's 1999 conference will be published. This RIG also will conduct a workshop to discuss how gender, race, and ethnicity are depicted in classical myth and in turn affect the way in which myth is taught and studied.

Caribbean Research Interest Group (CRIG), chairperson Dr. Lynn Bolles, Women's Studies: CRIG will explore and discuss the historical and contemporary processes that contribute to the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, education, age, religion, and nationality in the Caribbean.

Cyberculture Working Group (CWG), chairperson Dr. Katie King, Women's Studies: CWG will continue to discuss ways that race, gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and ability are articulated and performed in cyberspace. It will also sponsor a third national conference.

Development of Printmaking by African-American Artists since 1950, chairperson Scott Habes, Art Gallery: An exhibition of the development of printmaking by African-American artists from the 1950s to the present will emphasize the lives and experiences of people of color and encourage the study of race, gender, and ethnicity.

Entre Nosotras: A Study of How Latinas Cope with Childhood Sexual Abuse, chairperson Daniela Ligiero, Psychology: A qualitative study will contribute to the understanding of the experiences of Latinas who were sexually abused as children as well as the cultural factors that have influenced their lives and coping abilities. How gender, race, and ethnicity intersect to influence coping strategies and views of self as survivor will be an important part of this study.

Gender and Performance, chairperson Catherine Schuler, Theatre: A series of professional theatre productions, solo performances, round tables, and lectures designed to explore historical, theoretical, and practical connections between gender and performance will be conducted.

Life Writing Project, co-chairpersons Dr. John Caughey,

American Studies, and Dr. Susan Leonardi, English: This project will continue discussions focused on the cultural study of individual lives—and on how subjects can best represent the ways that they have negotiated social location, race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and class.

Material Culture/Visual Culture Working Group: A Theme Year in African-American Material and Visual Culture, co-chairpersons Dr. Mary C. Sies and Psyche Williams-Forsen, American Studies: This RIG will continue its studies of the material and visual culture of America.

MITHologies Working Group, chairperson Dr. Martha Nell Smith, Maryland Institute for Technologies in the Humanities (MITH): A conference examining the concept of the "Digital Divide" and focusing on resilience, communities, and lifelong learning will be conducted.

Poverty and Welfare Research Interest Group, chairperson Clyde Woods, Afro-American Studies: By examining the social conditions faced by impoverished communities and examining the policy design and implementation at local, regional, state, national, urban, and rural levels, this RIG will promote interdisciplinary communication specifically focused on the intersections of race, gender, and ethnicity—issues imbedded within debates over poverty and welfare policies.

Staging Slavery: An Interdisciplinary Exploration, chairperson Heather Nathans, Theatre: A seminar and colloquium/performance series will examine representations of slavery on the American stage and in the public sphere from the colonial period to the present.

Structure and Agency in Education, chairperson Dr. Barbara Finkelstein, Education: This RIG will focus on research that helps reveal the relationships between power and tradition, the relationships between global and local cultures, the interplay between social justice and education, and the intersections of large and small structures.

Working Group on Intersectionality and Globalization, chairperson Claire Moses, Women's Studies: This RIG will share the theories, methodologies, and assumptions of its individual disciplines regarding race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality, and ethnicity and will discuss how these issues construct and complicate each other. ❖

COMING SOON!

RIGS COMPETITION FOR 2002-2003

Information and applications for our fourth annual research interest group (RIG) grants competition will be available on our website, www.umd.edu/crge, after April 1, 2002.

RIGs focus on the development and exchange of knowledge pertaining to any of the three CRGE program areas: "Intersections, Identities, and Inequalities," co-directors Dr. Bonnie Thornton Dill, sociology, Women's Studies, Afro-American studies, and Dr. Lynn Weber, sociology, University of South Carolina; "Resilience, Communities, and Lifelong Learning," director Dr. Sandra Murray Nettles, human development; or "Health and Social Well-being and Low-income Women, Children, and Families," director Dr. Ruth Enid Zambrana, women's studies.

RESEARCH REPORTS

Research at the Intersections of Urban Schooling:

Black, Poor, and at-Risk in Inner-City Schools

Lory J. Dance, Assistant Professor, Sociology

As a graduate student at Harvard University in the early 1990s, I noted a conspicuous absence of student perspective regarding the social scientific studies of urban life and schooling. Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, few sociologists had, literally, walked urban streets in order to contribute ethnographically rigorous insider accounts that could contribute to the national debate about American inner cities.

Even now, though critical theorists, especially cultural reproduction theorists like Pierre Bourdieu, have examined the mechanisms of schooling that facilitate inequality, few scholars have mined the unique experiences of inner-city students. Therefore, I have developed my sociological expertise within the context of the city, studying the role of urban public schools in the reproduction of inequality.

Using a variety of qualitative methods that include field observations, focus groups, and in-depth interviews with individual students and their teachers, I pursue answers to important questions about schooling in urban settings. For example, what are the tensions between street culture and school culture as experienced by urban students who are mostly males of color? Why do some students feel compelled to assume gangster-like postures within school-based contexts? How can schools effectively deal with student attitudes and mannerisms, which evolve from the need to survive street culture, without pushing street-savvy students out of school? Answers to questions like these elude quantitative and macro-level approaches, yet benefit from an intersectional approach.

Accomplished sociologists such as William Julius Wilson, Douglas Massey, Elijah Anderson, and the late James Coleman and anthropologists such as Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu at the universities of Harvard, Pennsylvania, Chicago, and U.C., Berkeley, have illuminated the social and cultural structures that severely constrain the opportunities and life chances of Black Americans. Elijah Anderson is among a handful of current-day sociologists who walk upon and conduct ethnographies on urban streets. Hence, there remains a shortage of face-to-face, eye-to-eye studies that elucidate the agency, albeit severely constrained, of Black students from urban communities.

Starting with work on my dissertation in the 1991-92 academic year, I have researched sixth- thru tenth- grade urban and inner-city students who are persistently labeled at risk because they are racial-ethnic minorities from low-income neighborhoods. My first research site was the Boston metropolitan area (i.e., Cambridge, Dorchester, and Roxbury). From 1991 to 1996, and during the springs and summers of 1997 and 1998, I conversed with, interviewed, observed and, in several cases, accompanied students within and outside of school walls in order to better understand how successful, strategic navigation of street culture may hinder academic

EDITOR'S NOTE: *In this space generally reserved for research reports, we would like to introduce Dr. Lory Dance from the Department of Sociology, a CRGE affiliate, and Nicole Mason, founder of the National Women's Alliance, a new collaborating partner. We have selected Dr. Dance and Ms. Mason as examples of scholars who are working at the intersections of race, gender, and ethnicity. They are involved in two very different projects, yet both projects focus on intersections. Dr. Dance describes her research on adolescents living in inner-city environments. Her work demonstrates the benefits of an intersectional perspective in fostering a sense of social agency among participants. Ms. Mason, graduate student, Department of Government and Politics, introduces us to the organization she's founded and which integrates the scholarship of intersections with the pursuit of social justice. We hope by describing these two very different projects we not only stimulate interest but inspire creative ideas for future growth.*

success. My dissertation, "Streetwise versus Schoolwise: The Attitudes of Urban and Inner City Youth Towards School," documents my research from 1991 to 1995. My book, *Hard Like a Gangsta: The Impact of Street Culture on Schooling*, Routledge, 2002, documents research from 1996 to 1998. Given the ethnographic depth, expanse, and detail of my research, my findings are best rendered in book form. Currently, I am compiling two new volumes: *At-Risk Near Harvard U: Working Class Teens and the Teachers They Love* and *Black Strawberries: Teenagers, School Reform, and Urban Change in North Philly*.

During the 1997-98 school year, I conducted preliminary research at a high school in Baltimore, Maryland, in order to explore the impact that small learning communities within schools have upon student attitudes towards schools. This Baltimore study was preliminary to my current research in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (funded by the Spencer Foundation). Since February 2000, I have been conducting research at two high schools in north Philadelphia. Ninety-nine percent of the students in each school are Black Americans from low-income urban neighborhoods.

The small learning community I am currently studying in Philadelphia is the Talent Development Model's Ninth Grade Success Academy designed by sociologists at The John Hopkins University. My research examines students' and teachers' perceptions of small learning communities (SLCs) within schools and whether these SLCs facilitate smooth transitions between school and non-school settings. Several studies have suggested that smoother transitions can lead to educational outcomes that are more positive. I am one of a handful of researchers actually testing this hypothesis.

Most of the research on this model is quantitative. While some researchers are conducting interviews with students and others are conducting interviews with teachers, currently I am the only researcher attending classes with students, interviewing and conducting surveys of students, and interviewing the students' teachers. I am also conducting interviews with community members and making observations beyond school walls in order to gather data on continuity and change in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood. These methods lend themselves to inquiries naturally relating to the influence of socially ascribed characteristics upon the daily lives of study participants.

continued on page 6

Since the 1991-92 school year, I have interviewed and observed hundreds of students, focusing on their agency against the backdrop of social structural constraints like poverty, racism, street culture, and residential segregation. My interview questions range from the general to the personal, probing, and poignant. More often than not, students offer insightful answers that detail the incongruity between street culture and school culture or among school-life, social-life, and home-life; but students have only done so after first placing me under scrutiny, then determining my interest in their lives genuine and worthy of trust.

Perhaps more than other types of research, qualitative inquiries with at-risk students within inner-city contexts not only take careful planning and design, but exceptional sensitivity to the influence and presence of social inequality. The rendering of qualitative findings in book form entails follow-up site visits that slow the writing process yet yield a more detailed and complete final product. Despite my overall success, I have encountered more than a few challenges and interruptions. I have had to seek my answers within inner-city contexts where some students were inaccessible due to incarceration, to the homicide of brothers, nephews, or fathers, or to the crack addictions of mothers or other caretakers. I have had to temporarily halt field observations to break up fights, temporarily halt interviews to console students who mourned for family members recently murdered, and temporarily leave classrooms or postpone interviews with teachers because of fights in hallways, fires set by students in lockers, or other pressing needs. Early on, however, I realized that these interruptions were also a part of what I needed to observe and understand. According to my student and teacher respondents, my data collection has been successful at least in part because of my tendency to confront rather than avoid such challenges.

Though this type of research can be demanding and sometimes difficult, a crucial outcome is that the opinions, experiences, and agency of students becomes part of my text, and thus students are able, indirectly, to contribute to debates about schooling and to social scientific findings about social and cultural constraints. By boldly going where few researchers have gone before, I contribute findings that will allow urban school districts across the nation to design and refine school policies and reforms that better meet the needs of at-risk students. My findings also provide an indispensable piece of a complex puzzle that yields a more complete, social scientific picture of social life in urban settings. Identifying and understanding life struggles and successes at the intersections of race, gender, and class create opportunities both for agency and social change. ❖

The National Women's Alliance: Centered at the Intersections

Nicole Mason, graduate student, Government and Politics, executive director, NWA

What is an intersectional approach to social justice? How can gender, ethnicity, race, and other dimensions of diversity be incorporated in social justice

agendas that increase the visibility and voices of marginalized groups? The National Women's Alliance (NWA) is an effort to move beyond gender- and race-specific organizing paradigms and to implement an intersectional framework that addresses multiple forms of oppression and discrimination in society.

NWA is a proactive, grassroots, women of color organization devoted to addressing the intersections of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation through community organizing, training, and advocacy. Our goal is to bring communities and women and girls of color together to work toward a collective agenda for social, economic, and political change.

I founded the National Women's Alliance in 1997 on the premise that social justice does not occur in a vacuum, but rather by examining the root causes of oppression and by building coalitions. We are a model for organizing across race, class, ethnic, gender, and sexual borders and the only national technical assistance, advocacy and membership organization in the country that specifically focuses on the needs and concerns of women and girls of color.

NWA strives to end all forms of oppression and to promote social justice.

The Need for an Intersectional Approach to Social Justice

In monocausal approaches to social justice, women of color are often without a political framework with which to organize or to provide a context for their experiences. Monocausal models of social justice ignore the fact that women of color are often situated within overlapping systems of subordination.

Employing an intersectional approach to social justice, it becomes clear that race, class, gender, and sexual oppression are inextricably linked and cannot be separated to advance single-issue agendas. Also, it is understood that the oppressive tools used to maintain race privilege are the same tools used to maintain gender, race, class, ethnic, and other privilege. An intersectional approach to social justice requires a paradigmatic shift in thinking about power relationships and the nature of oppression.

Programs

Some of our many programs include The Center for Social Policy and Urban Progress, the Angela Y. Davis Youth Fellowship Program, The Bridges Project, the Community Education and Training Program, and the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Technical Assistance Project.

Current Projects

Radical Women of Color Organizing Conference, May 9-12, 2002, University of Illinois at Chicago:

The conference aim is to strengthen the skills of women of color working in their communities; to create a safe space to share experiences and exchange ideas; to critically examine the way women of color work together in various social movements; to provide a space for scholars to share current research efforts that employ intersectional frameworks in their analysis; and to bring together grassroots organizers, activists, scholars, community leaders, and concerned women to develop an agenda for change.

continued on next page

RESEARCH REPORTS

continued

Women of Color Working Group: Women of color scholars and community organizers are offered opportunities to explore the meaning and impact of an intersectional approach to scholarship and social justice organizing.

Welfare Reauthorization 2002 Public Education Campaign: Through policy updates, community forums, and public education campaigns, NWA is working to ensure that the voices and experiences of women of color are heard in the discussion on the federal reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant.

Development of materials that address violence against women: In collaboration with the Howard University Women's Health Institute and with funding from the Department of Justice, NWA has developed an intersectional model and training manual that addresses violence against women in diverse communities. Entitled "Cultural Competency in Addressing Violence Against Women in Diverse Communities: An Intersectional Approach and Model for Service Providers, Advocates and Community-Based Organizations," this model is based on the intersectional frameworks of Lynn Weber, University of South Carolina, and

Kimberlee Crenshaw, Columbia University Law School. With regard to violence against women, intersectionality sheds light on how race, class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity can make it difficult for some women to access resources, reach for help, leave an abusive relationship, or report an assault.

Partnership with CRGE: In June of 2001, the Center for Social Policy and Urban Progress at the NWA forged a partnership with CRGE. The goal is to create an opportunity for dialogue between scholars and community activists, thus ultimately strengthening research and community advocacy for social justice.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Like CRGE, the NWA believes that race, class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality are interlocking and therefore must be simultaneously considered both in theoretical analysis and in efforts to achieve social justice. Progressive organizing for social justice calls for an intersectional approach and analysis.

It is my contention that identifying issues such as racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia as problems is no longer the task of scholars and organizers. But that our new work is figuring out how to build coalitions that work through the resulting forms of oppression. ❀

CRGE Annual Report Available

Work at the Intersections: Reformulating the World of Ideas, CRGE's annual report for 2000-2001, offers a view of what "work at the intersections" means to the nation's universities, how this research and scholarship is helping to inform public policy, and why international scholars and policy makers may already be looking to the University of Maryland for its collaborative efforts and groundbreaking interdisciplinary research on topics related to race, gender, ethnicity, and other differences.

To request a copy of the 2001-2002 CRGE annual report, call Miyesha Perry, 301-405-2931 or email mp222@umail.umd.edu.

CONNECTIONS

2103 Tawes Fine Arts Building
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
phone 301.405.2931
fax 301-314.0679

CONTRIBUTORS

Samantha Cichero
Lory J. Dance
Bonnie Thornton Dill
Nicole Mason
Amy McLaughlin

EDITOR

Margaret Osburn

Connections is published fall and spring semesters by the Consortium on Race, Gender, and Ethnicity: director, Dr. Bonnie Thornton Dill.

CRGE Website Gets 3000 Hits Per Month

The Consortium website now averages 3000 hits per month and user activity is increasing. More than two-thirds of website use originates off campus.

One of the site's most popular features is the calendar page launched last fall. The calendar is continually updated with events related to the Consortium's mission. An archive of past events is also accessible.

Created as a source of news and informa-

tion and a gateway to related Internet resources, our website offerings continue to grow. Thanks to the entries submitted by the students of Women Studies 611, a new bibliography has been created with annotations to help further research in the field. We also recently added a few photo pages, showing that the promotion of scholarship can be fun too! Please visit us at www.umd.edu/crge. ❀

CRGE AFFILIATES

Afro-American Studies Program
Asian-American Studies Program
Center for Children, Relationships
and Culture
Center on Population, Gender,
and Social Inequality
Committee on Africa and the Americas

Cultural systems Analysis Group
Curriculum Transformation Project
David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the
African Diaspora
Department of American Studies
Department of Family Studies
Department of Women's Studies

Diversity Initiative Faculty Relations
Sub-committee
Human-computer Interaction Laboratory
Maryland Institute for Technologies
in the Humanities
President's Commission on Women's Issues
President's Commission on
Ethnic Minority Issues