

# CONNECTIONS

NEWSLETTER OF THE CONSORTIUM ON  
RACE, GENDER & ETHNICITY

SPRING 2001

## JUNE 22ND: NATIONAL FACULTY HOSTS PUBLIC SEMINAR ON WORK IN THE LIVES OF WOMEN OF COLOR

**M**eanings and Representation of Work in the Lives of Women of Color: A Collective Paradigm” brings together a national group of multidisciplinary, women of color scholars for a public seminar June 22 at the Nyumburu Cultural Center.

Seminar participants will consider how the work of women of color shapes and is shaped by class, sexuality, family, and workplace. Histories of racial oppression and exclusion, cultural constructions of gender, and changes in the global economy will also be discussed.

Individual and collaborative research on these issues began at UM in 1999 as a two-year faculty seminar co-sponsored by the Afro-American Studies Program (AASP) and Collaborative Transformations in the Academy, a joint project that includes AASP, CRGE, and the combined units of the Curriculum Transformation Project and the Department of Women's Studies. Sixteen academics, artists, museum specialists, and policy analysts were selected to examine contemporary scholarship, creative expressions, and pedagogies on gender, race, ethnicity, and labor. Work has been funded by a Ford Foundation grant.

UM participating scholars include seminar director, Dr. Sharon Harley, AASP, and seminar coordinator, Dr. Francille Rusan Wilson, AASP, along with Tauyna Lovell Banks, School of Law, and A. Lynn Bolles, Elsa Barkley Brown, and Seung-Kyung Kim, Department of Women's Studies.

Other selected scholars include Carole Boyce Davies, African New World Studies Program, Florida International University;

## RIG GRANT COMPETITION DEADLINE JUNE 4, 2001

**T**he application deadline for CRGE's third annual research interest group (RIG) grant competition is June 4, 2001. RIG grants provide support for multidisciplinary projects within the University of Maryland community. Upcoming grants of \$500 to \$5000 will be awarded to small groups of collaborating scholars for the 2001-2002 academic year.

Goals are to facilitate collaborative research and inquiry; create opportunities for cross-disciplinary discussion on issues in the study of the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and class; and create groups that assist group members in the preparation and submission of proposals for federal, state, and private sector research grants in CRGE program areas.

Program areas include health and social well-being of low-income women, children, and families; intersections, identities, and inequalities; and resilience, communities, and life-long learning.

Activities that may qualify for a RIG grant include cross-departmental projects that develop concept papers or small-scale studies (\$1,000-5,000); programming and dissemination projects, including performances, exhibits, summer institutes, conferences, symposia, lecture series, and workshops (\$500-2,500); and research/study groups (\$500-1,500).

To receive an official application, call 301-405-2931 or email Miyesha Perry, mp222@umail.umd.edu.

Nancy A. Hewitt, Department of History, Rutgers University; Evelyn Hu-DeHart, Department of Ethnic Studies, University of Colorado; Maria Ontiveros, School of Law, Golden Gate University; Clara Rodriguez, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Fordham University; Vicki Ruiz, Departments of Chicana and Chicano Studies and History, Arizona State University; Denise Segura, Department of Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara; Rebecca Tsosie, School of Law, Arizona State University; and Deborah Willis-Kennedy, Center for African-American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution. ❖

## GRADUATE COLLOQUIUM SCHEDULED FALL 2001

**G**raduate students and faculty are invited to discuss the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical implications of research on race, gender, ethnicity, and other dimensions of inequality at a monthly colloquium beginning this fall.

Colloquium sessions will feature faculty panels, professional advice, and presentations of original work by graduate students. Sessions will be scheduled every third week throughout the fall semester.

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### VISITORS WELCOME ...

The Consortium for Race, Gender, and Ethnicity (CRGE) has moved from a small room in Woods Hall to the Tawes Fine Arts Building, suites 2103-05. We share our wonderful new space with the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the African Diaspora and The Committee on Africa and the Americas.

Visitors are welcomed: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., weekdays. Our phone number is 301-405-2931.

CRGE, created in 1998 by Dr. Bonnie Thornton Dill, has grown from one graduate student and a part-time staff member to two graduate students and two full-time staff members.

## Book Corner

### UM AUTHOR'S MEMOIR "CRAZY VISITATION" MAKES UNCOMMON CONTRIBUTION TO RESILIENCE LITERATURE

**C**razy Visitation: A Chronicle of Illness & Recovery, a new memoir by UM professor Dr. Sandra Murray Nettles, is the kind of book an Oliver Sacks fan might like.

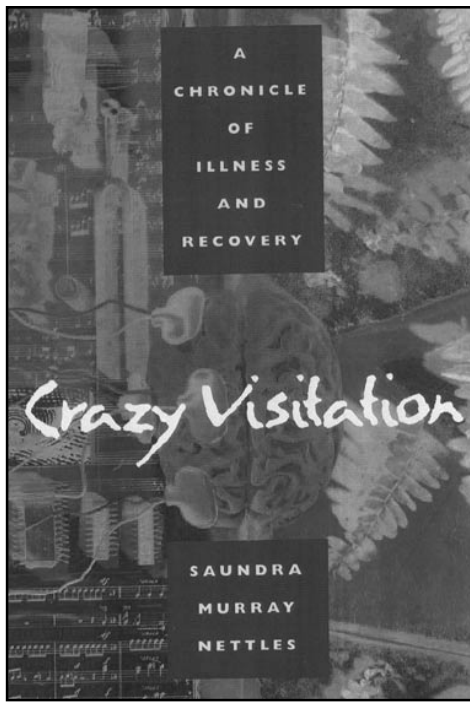
Chapter one opens with the author's scores on a Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale four months after emergency surgery to remove an orange-size tumor from her brain. "I was appalled," says Dr. Nettles. "The scores were in the very low range, really low given my age and education—not the scores of a professor at the University of Maryland, that's for sure. I knew that my brain had been damaged."

*Crazy Visitation* is a reworked chronology of dramatic events, medical fact, and reflection on the nature of biological and psychological resilience. The author tells the story of her benign, but deadly tumor, called a meningioma, its misdiagnosis over a possible 30-year period, and her subsequent fight to reclaim her brainpower and her identity.

Classified by its publisher, University of Georgia Press, as health and wellness/psychology/memoir, *Crazy Visitation* is a one-of-a-kind book. It adds the compelling narrative voice of personal experience to the literature of resilience and quite possibly is the only published memoir to be written by a brain tumor survivor. Other accounts come from caregivers.

In writing her memoir, Dr. Nettles heavily relied on 15 years of past journal keeping to recreate a pattern of symptomatology, including behaviors, as well as eyewitness accounts from family and friends, and interviews with her neurosurgeon, Dr. Rafael Tamargo.

"The focus of the book, and the reason I wrote the book was to understand my own resilience. In the book I talk about the biological resilience of the brain and the theories of psychological and social resilience. I also talk about the resilience of transforma-



SAUNDRA MURRAY NETTLES' *CRAZY VISITATION: A CHRONICLE OF ILLNESS & RECOVERY*, FOREWORD BY RAFAEL J. TAMARGO, M.D., UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA PRESS, IS SCHEDULED FOR PUBLICATION THIS SUMMER.

tion. That's when people undergo certain traumas and they emerge different than they were before."

*Crazy Visitation*, which will be available in bookstores this fall, is expected to impress a wide audience of readers. As Dr. Tamargo states in his foreword, "it transcends the simple description of a medical event" and will be "...of great interest to physicians, nurses, and medical workers...it also will be of interest to readers who want to explore the many issues raised by this narrative, such as the resilience of our spirits and the importance of our family and friends..."

"Above all this book will be appreciated by all of us who want to be inspired to carry with dignity our common burdens." ❖



SAUNDRA MURRAY NETTLES

## Life Writers

### Thrive at UM: DOCUMENTARIANS SPEAK SPRING 2001

**B**irth Marks author and Drake University professor Sandra Patton shared clips from her documentary film and discussed her research on transracial adoption May 4, UM, College Park. April 26, American Studies Association president, professor Michael Frisch shared his experience collecting oral histories from New York factory workers and chaired a special life - writing panel on computer-assisted oral history transcription.

At the end of the spring semester, Sharon O'Brien, noted author of biography and memoir, will conduct a practical workshop on life writing. Participants will write brief pieces and she will suggest ways to incorporate the pieces into on-going projects. (Check our website, [www.cрге.org](http://www.cрге.org), for time and place.)

The Life Writing Project, one of the most successful examples of multi-disciplinary dialogue and exchange is funded through CRGE's research interest group program, and brings together scholars interested in the cultural study of individual lives. Since its beginnings in 1998, about 25 scholars from several area campuses have met regularly for a variety of activities related to research and writing.

Members of the group share their concerns about the ways scholars research and represent the complexities of their subjects' lives. The influence of the researcher/writer's social and cultural background is also of particular interest to the group. Through the focus on particular lives, multidisciplinary group discussions yield valuable insights about the ways individual experience interacts with social, cultural, and political factors.

Three sessions in the fall of 2000 focused on individual projects by group members. Susan Leonardi and Rebecca Pope submitted the introduction to their nearly finished biography of Ida and Louise Cook. The book's introduction was, in part, a meditation on life writing itself and a reflection on its process. Carla Peterson submitted part of her current research on the history of Black

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

The faculty and staff of the Consortium on Race, Gender, and Ethnicity are excited to welcome the arrival of spring and the second issue of *Connections*. Over the past year, we have worked hard and experienced tremendous growth. Our goal over the next year is to be recognized as a leading national center for scholarship on the intersections of inequality.

To help facilitate this process, we are redefining one of our three research programs areas: Gender Studies, Race, and Economic Well-Being has been renamed Intersections, Identities, and Inequalities. This program area will continue to include earlier research initiatives in gender studies, race, and economic well-being and will promote the development of theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical approaches to the study of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and other dimensions of inequality. Contextual research on the lives and experiences of individuals and groups will be applied to the multiplicative effects of different types of social disadvantage and the larger perspective of human problems.

In the twenty-or-so years since work on this topic first appeared, scholarship on intersections has grown exponentially, permeating the humanities, the social sciences, and, increasingly, the sciences. As the Consortium promotes work that focuses on intersections, it becomes even more apparent that to give this work visibility, both on campus and nationally, additional scholarship is needed.

To this end, we are proud to announce the hire of a consultant: Dr. Lynn Weber is the author of *Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework* (2000), the first published conceptual framework that defines this field of study. For more than twenty years, Dr. Weber, a professor and the director of the Women's Studies Program, University of South Carolina, has studied and built programs focused on these intersections. Her experience includes building coalitions across disciplines, not just between the humanities and the social sciences, but inclusive of the sciences. Dr. Weber is the ideal person to aid us; she and I will be co-directing Intersections, Identities, and Inequalities. Please join us in welcoming her on her visits to our campus.

In conjunction with my work at the Consortium, I have also been working as a consultant for the Ford Foundation. I

am preparing a report on university based programs that conduct research and teaching at the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, and other categories of identity. This dovetails nicely with our new program area. My findings on the state of scholarship on intersections already reveals how necessary our work is. With my colleagues at the Consortium, I have developed a statement that formulates a conceptualization of work done at these intersections; our aim is to start a conversation on what this means, how one implements it, and its implications for theory and methods.

The statement is included in this newsletter and I would greatly appreciate your reading it with particular attention. On our website ([www.umd.edu/crge](http://www.umd.edu/crge)) you will be able to find additional references that we believe meet our initial understanding of what intersectional work should entail. I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

The Consortium is poised to continue its growth as a first-class research center dedicated to social justice. We would like to thank all of you who make this possible.

Sincerely,

**Bonnie Thornton Dill**

## Life Writers

*continued from page 2*

New Yorkers; her own family history is helping her to reconstruct the social and cultural life of New York's African-American elite from 1830-1930. Group members briefly discussed individual research/writing issues at a third session.

Members of the Life Writing Project also regularly teach courses in life writing, most of them inspired by or influenced by the Project itself. Several UM departments co-sponsored a 1999 lecture series featuring Project members. More recently, John Caughey taught a graduate seminar on life history research in American studies/anthropology and gave a two-part workshop on life history interviewing to the American Cultures section of the College Park Scholars Program.

This fall, Susan Leonardi will teach a new English department course entitled "*A Voice of One's Own: Writing the Personal Essay*." ❁



CRGE FACULTY AND STAFF: (FROM TOP LEFT) BONNIE T. DILL, RUTH E. ZAMBRANA, MIYESHA PERRY, AMY McLAUGHLIN, LIL POWELL ROBERTS, SAUNDRA M. NETTLES, LAURA LOGIE, SAMANTHA CIGHERO

# DEFINING THE WORK OF THE CONSORTIUM: WHAT DO WE MEAN BY INTERSECTIONS?

Bonnie Thornton Dill, Consortium Director and Professor of Women's Studies,  
with Professor Sandra Murray Nettles, CRGE Research Director, and  
University of South Carolina Professor Lynn Weber, CRGE Consultant

Race, gender, ethnicity, and other dimensions of diversity are at the center of contemporary discussions of identity and social organization. In higher education, they are the lightning rod for debates about equity, inclusion, affirmative action, and discrimination. The academy has contributed to these debates through the production of knowledge, much of which has been led by new scholarship created in the interdisciplinary fields of African-American studies, ethnic studies, women's studies, and other academic fields of inquiry, including cultural, gay and lesbian, area, labor, multicultural, and social justice education. The scholarship in these fields is beginning to provide new understandings of difference, both in the U.S. and globally, and through informed pedagogy, this scholarship is being shared with students and colleagues.

While scholars in a number of fields study dimensions of difference and use difference as a way to explain social and cultural variations in research, the new scholarship is distinguished by the fact that it is interdisciplinary and focuses on the ways dimensions of difference intersect to create new and distinct social, cultural, and artistic forms. Examinations of the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and other dimensions of diversity are at the core of the work of the Consortium.

The systematic study of the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and other dimensions of difference is flexible enough to consider large-scale, historically constructed and hierarchical power systems and the politics of interpersonal interactions, including meanings and representations in the experience of individuals. Ideological, political, and economic systems shift and change over time and in different cultural environments. Individuals and groups experience these systems differently according to their social, geographic, historical, and cultural locations, and—when not situated in positions of power—often resist oppression. Knowledge about the system is gained and shared especially among those who work from “outsider within” (Collins) or “border” (Anzaldúa) locations that give

them access to the system but do not complete inclusion within it.

The Consortium views race, gender, ethnicity, class, and sexuality as interlocking inequalities and argues, therefore, that all must be simultaneously considered both in theoretical analysis and in efforts to achieve social justice. Scholarly study of intersections requires a commitment both to rethinking and re-shaping concepts and theories that have treated these dimensions as discrete as well as to applying these newly articulated concepts and theories to everyday life. This scholarship embraces a wide range of approaches that permit complex and slightly different explorations.

Intersectional analysis is also an effort to move beyond binary or oppositional analyses toward an understanding of the ways the ideological, political, and economic systems of power construct and reconstruct one another. For example, Crenshaw demonstrates in her analysis of racism and misogyny in the rap music of 2 Live Crew that when gender and race are considered as completely separate systems of power the result merely creates oppositional discourses that further marginalize those whose life experiences are intersected by both dimensions.

Finally, an intersectional approach questions the very nature of the categories of race, gender, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. As Weber writes, “the dominant ideology of a ‘color-blind,’ ‘gender-blind,’ ‘classless,’ and ‘sexually restrained’ society obscures oppression and history.” Contemporary theorists argue that these categories are socially constructed over time; yet, traditionally, they have been viewed as intrinsic (or biological) characteristics. For example, as Zinn and Dill write, “race is a shifting and contested category whose meanings construct definitions of all aspects of social life...racial meanings are contested both within groups and between them” (p.326). In addition, these definitions are constructed within contexts of power—meanings overlap and occur simultaneously with multiple and various consequences upon the lives of the groups and individuals in question. An intersectional approach,

## KEEP POSTED: WEBSITE OFFERS UPDATES ON EVENTS AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

Scholars and students interested in topics related to intersectionality should bookmark the CRGE website, [www.umd.edu/crge](http://www.umd.edu/crge).

Launched last year, this lively website has an easy-to-navigate home page, a regularly updated calendar of events, and a section exclusively devoted to publications, including the current issue of our newsletter. The site also allows users to access information about current research projects and serves as a gateway to a list of useful resources. In our attempt to offer the most interesting and valuable pages available on various topics, including African-American studies and curriculum transformation, we are always increasing the number of resource sites. One of the Consortium's most important accomplishments, the Ford Foundation-subsidized Collaborative Transformation Project, is also described on our site.

Beginning this summer, annotated bibliographic citations of intersectional works from various academic fields of study will be added.

To help us keep posted on your current research and events, contact Samantha Cichero, web coordinator, [crgewebmaster@umail.umd.edu](mailto:crgewebmaster@umail.umd.edu).

grounded in lived experience, provides the intellectual foundation for the pursuit of social justice.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. “Beyond Racism and Misogyny: Black Feminism and 2 Live Crew. *Words that Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*. Ed. Mari J. Marsuda, et al. Westview Press, 1993.

Zinn, Maxine Baca and Bonnie Thornton Dill. “Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism.” *Feminist Studies* 22.2 (1996): 321-331.

Weber, Lynn. *Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2000.



# RESEARCH INTERESTS

## INTERSECTIONS OF SILENCE: RACE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY ON THE CALIFORNIA FRONTIER

Virginia M. Bouvier, Assistant Professor, Spanish and Portuguese

**H**ow did the presence or absence of women affect the Spanish conquest of California? How did ideas and practices relating, in turn, to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, marital status, age, region, and language shape women's experiences of conquest? My book, *Women and the Conquest of California, 1542-1840: Codes of Silence* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), was inspired by and addresses such questions.

I used a variety of sources for my research, including novels about chivalry; mission census, baptismal, marriage, and death records; journals of explorers, missionaries, and foreign visitors to California; nineteenth-century ethnographic accounts; government and ecclesiastical correspondence and documents; legal transcripts and petitions; and oral histories. An extensive amount of this research was conducted at The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, which houses considerable primary materials, including oral histories from the 1870s and microfilms of California-related documents from major repositories in Spain, Mexico, and elsewhere in the U.S. Additional archival research was conducted at the Santa Barbara Mission Archive-Library, Mexico's Archivo General de la Nación, Instituto Nacional de Historia y Antropología, and the Smithsonian Institution's National Anthropological Archives.

In content and methodology, my study reflects recent interdisciplinary trends in the fields of history, literature, anthropology, ethnic studies, and women's and gender studies. Interdisciplinary trends increasingly draw on each other to analyze questions of individual and group experiences within particular local contexts. Discourse and gender analysis were particularly useful tools for teasing out both female experiences and gender ideologies.

Gender issues during the Spanish exploration, colonization, and evangelization of Alta California from 1542-1840 were integral to the Spanish conquest in a variety of ways. In the context of conquest, which is by nature a complex multicultural encounter laden with issues of power and control, a gendered lens invites new questions regarding relationships between and within groups.

Through the useful lens of gender analysis, I analyzed frontier dynamics between and among men, women, and third-gendered indigenous peoples, as well as between settlers, soldiers, and priests, and between and among Europeans and Indians. My focus on gender adds complexity to a somewhat polarized debate over the role of the missions in Alta California and whether or not the Franciscans were saving or enslaving the Indians. It also breaks down the monolithic nature of each side by analyzing the participation of women--both Hispanic and Indian in their many variations--in the maintenance of or resistance to the system. In so doing, it explodes simplistic dichotomies that pit the Spaniards against the Indians and brings into relief the rifts within the ranks of the colo-

nia authorities and among the indigenous groups of Alta California.

While my book focuses on the presence or absence of women on the California frontier, it also underscores how notions about gender (modified by ideas about race, ethnicity, religion, and other factors) shaped and, in turn, were transformed by conquest. Traditionally, studies of the Spanish conquest of Latin America have sought to explain encounters between the Iberians and the so-called New World in terms of the timing of the conquest, the charisma (or lack thereof) of individual *conquistadores*, the considerations of geography, and the diverse nature of American indigenous groups. I argue that gender ideology was one of the ingredients that helped hold together Spain's conquest of the New World--that it manifested itself in various ways and in different aspects constituted by some three hundred years of exploration, evangelization, and colonization. I suggest that gender ideologies also shaped indigenous behavior toward the Spanish conquerors.

Chapter one argues that gender ideologies provided a way to naturalize conquest. I analyze how chivalric romances encoded a gendered paradigm that primarily portrayed conquest as a male venture enacted upon a female land and its inhabitants. Both the language of imperial conquest and the medieval tale of pagan Amazon women who inhabited a mythic island named California reinforced the chroniclers' feminization of the land and its inhabitants.

Chapter two analyzes Spanish portrayals of the first encounters with the natives of Alta California and argues that the inscription of idyllic gender relations between the conquerors and the Indians may have sanitized a more violent frontier reality, but reflected an initial period of Church-State unity at the height of the Spanish Golden Age of exploration.

Chapter three analyzes the accounts of the 1769 expedition that established the first missions and presidios in Alta California. Slippage between the texts around the issue of gender relations reveals that the Spanish abuse of Indian women served as a lightning rod for tensions between the California natives and the Spaniards as well as the military and the church. The absence of Hispanic women in the early encounters appears to have influenced some indigenous interpretations about the intent of the European newcomers. Conflictive gender relations in some parts of Alta California prejudiced the possibilities for peaceful evangelization, set the stage for heightened conflict during subsequent colonization, and contributed to building a consensus in favor of the participation of women in settling the frontier.

Chapter four argues that female participation in the colonization of California was greater and earlier than historians heretofore recognized. Christianized indigenous families from the Baja California peninsula served as models for the evangelization of Alta California. My analysis of the journals from the Anza expedition of 1775-1776, the first expedition in which women (primarily from the mainland of New Spain) participated, sheds light on the gender ideologies of Spanish authorities and on the ways these ideologies may have clashed with those of indigenous groups.

Chapter five analyzes the role gender played in shaping the experiences of men and women at the missions. Missions offered women

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## INTERSECTIONS OF SILENCE: RACE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY ON THE CALIFORNIA FRONTIER

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opportunities and constraints that were circumscribed by ethnicity, religion, age, and marital status, and that varied over time and by location. My focus on gender reveals a code of silence regarding the use of force at the missions; this intersected with codes of silence about the treatment of women.

Chapter six proposes that Franciscan criticism of and efforts to change indigenous attitudes toward sexuality and marriage provided the ideological underpinnings for evangelization and ultimately nourished the roots of indigenous resistance.

Chapter seven argues that language, religious ceremonies, dreams, dances, dress, and land usage were additional realms where the mission Indians managed to register their dissent and to assert themselves as protagonists in their daily lives. I analyze the gendered dimensions of this cultural resistance.

My final chapter finds that the numerous codes of silence regarding the use of force at the missions and the treatment of women, along with ceremonies, sexuality, and dreams that served to hide female experiences and female agency, also ironically illuminate the gender ideologies of those who created and maintained them. The intersection of these silences has virtually erased from the public record critical insights into the ways that knowledge is constructed and power wielded. I conclude that institutional and cultural patterns of discourse, as well as language, geography, politics, and the agency exerted by marginalized subjects who find power and self-protection in silence all worked together to keep women's experiences hidden from view. ❖

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## RURAL FAMILIES SPEAK: LIFE IN THE WAKE OF WELFARE REFORM

*Bonnie Braun, Ph.D., Family Studies*

In 1996, Congress ended welfare as we knew it and the nation began an experiment in social policy devolved to states and counties for implementation. Researchers were presented with a unique opportunity to measure and monitor the effects of change on families across the country. Most of the studies focused on urban families and most utilized large-scale data sets.

At the same time, the land-grant university system with its roots in rural America mobilized faculty. A 15-state, interdisciplinary research team was formed to track (over a three-year period) the impact of public policy change on rural communities and the lives of rural families. These families, far from urban areas, live on the financial edge and struggle to make ends meet. They include families of diverse races and ethnicity.

In 1999, I was appointed to the Department of Family Studies as an extension family life specialist. My responsibilities include outreach educational programming as well as research that addresses the

needs of Maryland families. I am a member of the 15-state research steering committee and the lead Maryland researcher.

In Maryland, our project is entitled, "Rural Families Speak: Life in the Wake of Welfare Reform." Other members of the UM team include Drs. Elaine Anderson and Susan Walker, faculty, Dr. Julie Kohler, departmental post doc, Maria Vandergriff-Avery, faculty research assistant and doctoral candidate, and Crystal Tyler, doctoral candidate. Dr. Cindy Reeves Tuttle, Department of Nutrition and Food Science, and Connie Barnett and Irmgard Koscielnaik, Cooperative Extension Educator faculty, are also members. They are supported by a team of undergraduate students and support staff.

### STUDY METHODOLOGY AND PURPOSE

The study uses checklists and an interview protocol to talk with nearly 500 women, age 18 or older, who are mothers of children age 12 or younger. Mothers and children live in 27 U.S. counties. All are either below or slightly above the poverty level, as established through their eligibility for or receipt of food stamps or WIC (Women, Infants, and Children's Supplemental Nutrition Program).

The Oregon State University team is responsible for coding approximately 20,000 pages of data during "wave one" alone. Analysis starts this spring even as preparations are underway for "wave two" interviews this summer. "Wave three" occurs in 2002. The multi-state team is challenged to collect and analyze data quickly if its findings are to be considered by policy makers in 2002!

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data will provide "social intelligence"--data that describes the actual experiences of families' lives. This study supplements and compliments large panel and administrative studies and is intended to give voice to women and families. Its purpose is to influence the public policy programming that will ultimately affect the quality of their lives.

In 2002, two key federal welfare laws are up for reauthorization: the Farm Bill, which includes authorization for the food stamp program, and TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families), the so-called welfare reform act of 1996. TANF replaced the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act and ended AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children). The food stamp program accounted for half the budget reduction during the welfare reform actions.

The central theoretical framework for this study is based on a family ecological perspective that links individuals (particularly the women interviewed) to their families and communities. It emphasizes that women experience the effects of welfare reform within specific *microsystem* environments or contexts. This study examines how these rural family microsystems are changing in the face of welfare devolution, which is a significant change in the context of the *macrosystem* of low-income rural women and their families. The macrosystem refers to the often unrecognized system of public policies, values, economic conditions, and cultural expectations that families encounter.

Thus for this study, we are also gathering data from community members regarding their perspectives on the challenges affecting the abilities of families to be economically self-sufficient. Our long-term goal is to *measure, over time, within the context of national welfare policy, the changes in the well-being of rural women and their families and in the well-being of the counties in which they live.*

Objectives are to (1) measure quality of life of low-income rural residents by focusing on variables of income sufficiency, food security, and health (*family data*), (2) analyze interplay among families' quality of life and indicators of economic and social development (*county data*), and (3) analyze the impact of state and national welfare policies as regards risks and opportunities for low-income rural women, their families, and counties (*policy data*).

State and federal welfare policies will be specifically analyzed in terms of quality of life measures and their relationships to the development and maintenance of stable rural workforces and economically stable families.

## MARYLAND STUDY

The Maryland study focuses on two counties: Dorchester and Garrett, targeted for both their similarities (rural and poor) and their distinct dissimilarities. Dorchester County, located on Maryland's Eastern Shore, has its historical roots in plantations, slavery, and fishing. Garrett County, located in the Appalachian Mountains of far western Maryland, has an historical economy founded on the railroad, coal mines, and timber. The historic legacies of each county have an impact on current economic, social, and political conditions.

The agriculture- and aquaculture-based industries of the Eastern Shore pay low wages and, generally, in recent years, have been depressed. In 2000, crabbing, which provides seasonal work, experienced its worst year in recorded history and is expected to be poor again this year. As in many Appalachian regions, most of the coal mining industries in Garrett County have shut down, which has resulted in a high rate of displaced workers. Seasonal work is provided by tourism but wages are low. Both counties are among the state's poorest in per capita income: while the state of Maryland has an average per capita income of \$28,674, Dorchester's average is \$19,860 and Garrett's \$17,396.

The histories of each county are also apparent in the racial demographics of the 34 women who participated in the Maryland study. In Dorchester County, 80% of study participants identified themselves as African-American, 13% white, and 7% multi-racial. While the poverty rate for all persons living in Dorchester is 15%, the poverty rate for whites is 7%, for African-Americans 30%.

In Garrett County, 85% of study participants identified themselves as white, 15% as Native American. The average poverty rate for Garrett County is 15%; the rate for whites is also 15%, but the rate is unknown for Native Americans.

This study offers exciting opportunities to examine the intersections of race, gender, and ethnicity. Through the ecological perspective employed and the diversity of participants in the sample, data collected will permit researchers to examine how the current context of life for low-income single mothers has been shaped in these counties. The ways in which race, gender, and class are embedded in public policies, economic conditions, and cultural expectations and values have historic legacies and contemporary outcomes. The different levels of analysis in this study will illuminate how poor families negotiate these structures.

## FUNDING

Funding for this work has come from the UM Graduate Research Board; UMS Women's Forum; UM Cooperative Extension Service,

Agricultural Experiment Station, and Department of Family Studies; USDA and Maryland Department of Human Resources; USDA National Research Initiative; and the American Association of Family Consumer Sciences.

## STUDY POTENTIAL

The strength of the land-grant university lies in its historical and its renewed commitment to address compelling issues that affect people where they live and work. In this instance, the research is being put to immediate use by a Dorchester County community group as it investigates ways to reduce poverty.

As data is collected, analyzed, and reported to policy makers, program leaders, and community citizens, we can expect great returns on our investment. University students are learning how to conduct community based research which makes a difference. The research process and its findings are enriching the classroom experience for students studying poverty and policy. Faculty from different colleges and different disciplines are building knowledge bases and social capital as they work together. UM is gaining a reputation as a partner in local community challenges. And, benefits should accrue to the women and families in the study, and to the communities, states, and nation as we feed back what we learn when "Rural Families Speak"—having heard what life is like in the wake of welfare reform.



## OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLABORATE

Conducting research on such a large and far-flung scale with women and men of differing disciplinary backgrounds and academic assignments is both challenging and professionally exhilarating. The varying perspectives of faculty members and student researchers strengthen the study's theory, methodology, and analysis. As data continues to flow from Maryland and the other 14 states, the Maryland team invites other UM faculty members and graduate and undergraduate students to propose ways they might engage in this study. Access to this study and its data is through Dr. Braun, who can be reached at 301-495-3581 or [BB157@umail.umd.edu](mailto:BB157@umail.umd.edu). ❀

## PREPARING COLLEGE STUDENTS

### FOR A DIVERSE DEMOCRACY

*Paul D. Umbach, Graduate Research Assistant, Diverse Democracy Project  
Jeffrey F. Milem, Associate Professor and Campus Coordinator, Diverse Democracy Project, College of Education*

The racial composition of the U.S. will dramatically change over the next 50 years. What once was a nation largely made up of Whites will become an incredibly diverse nation. In 1990, Whites made up three-quarters of the U.S. population. By 2050, Whites will represent just over half.

Between 1990 and 2050, demographers predict dramatic increases in the populations of Latino/as, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and African-Americans (258.3 percent, 269.1 percent, 83 percent, and 69.5 respectively), while numbers of Whites will increase only 7.4 percent. Changes are already evident. For example, this past fall, California rather quietly became what is known as a “minority majority” state. In other words, people of color, historically referred to as minorities, now represent the majority in California.

This trend holds implications for colleges and universities as they prepare their students to live in an increasingly diverse democracy. Patricia Gurin, in her expert testimony in the University of Michigan affirmative action lawsuit (1999), described two major types of outcomes influenced by campus diversity – learning and democracy. Learning outcomes refer to active-learning processes that college students use, the engagement and motivation that they exhibit, the learning and refinement of their intellectual and academic skills, and the value they place on these skills after they leave college. Democracy outcomes refer to the ways in which higher education prepares students to involve themselves as active participants in an increasingly diverse and complex society.

To prepare students for participation in a diverse democracy and to increase their engagement of diverse perspectives, colleges have developed a wide range of initiatives, including community service learning programs, intergroup dialogues, and various curricular initiatives. While educators have developed these practices, we have yet to fully understand how students develop cognitively, socially, and democratically through involvements in these campus initiatives and through their informal interactions with diverse peers during college.

One of the primary objectives of the Diverse Democracy Project is to explore the link between diversity and learning on college campuses and to extend the development of promising practices among participating institutions. The project uses an interdisciplinary approach to explore (1) how colleges are creating diverse learning environments and actively preparing students to live and work in an increasingly complex and diverse democracy, (2) the role of the diverse peer group in the acquisition of important cognitive, social, and democratic outcomes both inside and outside of classroom environments, and (3) types of student outcomes that can be best achieved through specific kinds of initiatives designed to increase student engagement with diverse perspectives.

### UM AND THE DIVERSE DEMOCRACY PROJECT

University of Maryland is one of ten campuses participating in the Diverse Democracy Project. University of Michigan researchers are coordinating the research and programmatic activities taking place on ten, large, public institutions that vary in their educational practices and that have diverse student bodies. Various methods are being used to collect information on cognitive, social cognitive, and democracy outcomes, including longitudinal surveys of students, several focused classroom-based studies, institutional records, administrator interviews, and administrator and student focus groups.

The project seeks empirical evidence that will help us learn the best ways to educate a diverse student body. For project purposes, we broadly define diversity to include race/ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexual orientation. The project intends to move beyond the current affirmative action controversy to provide action and discussion about the types of education necessary for citizenship in a diverse society with a common destiny. This project is important to the revitalization of higher education's mission to prepare a diverse student body for future democratic citizenship.

### PROJECT UPDATE\*

This past summer, in the first stage of the project, we surveyed fall 2000, first-year UM students during orientation sessions. Our efforts yielded data from 2,911 respondents, or 76% of the entering class. In the spring of 2002, a follow-up survey will allow us to examine the nature of student involvement as well as changes in key outcomes over their first two years at UM. While the longitudinal data will yield some of the most compelling results, the data collected this summer also provides us with valuable information. The ten campuses participating in this project are each following a similar data-gathering process.

Given the structural diversity of UM's entering class (39% students of color), we might assume students have had a great deal of experience with diversity prior to college. However, many of our students report that they come from racially homogeneous neighborhoods and high schools (see Figure 1). More than 80% of the White students indicated growing up in predominantly White neighborhoods, while approximately half of African-American students reported coming from neighborhoods predominantly populated by people of color.

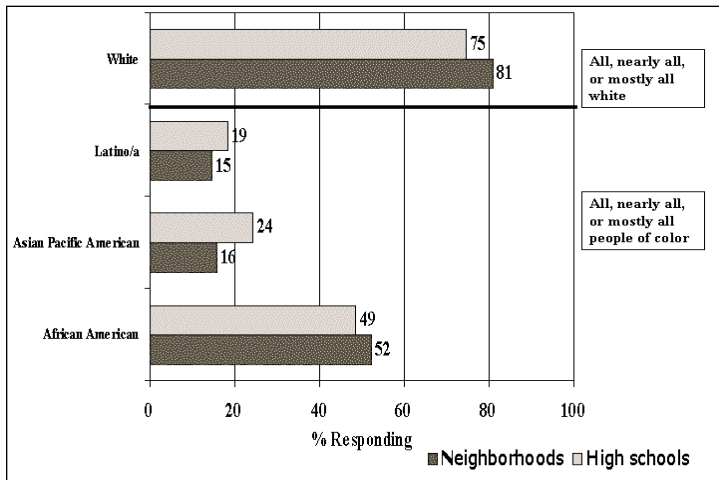
As you might expect, the high schools our students attended were nearly as segregated as the neighborhoods where they grew up. Approximately three-quarters of White students came from mostly White high schools, while just under half of African-American students came from high schools mostly populated by students of color. These findings suggest that, prior to coming to UM, our students had very different experiences with racial diversity. For many students, their first opportunity to interact with racial diversity in a meaningful way will occur at UM.

The extent to which students expect to interact with diverse groups does not vary much across racial groups. Regardless of race, most students stated that they thought it was likely or very likely that they would get to know individuals from diverse backgrounds. For Whites,

\* While we use a much broader definition of diversity for the project, for this article we focus on racial diversity. Because we have only a very small number of Native Americans in our data set, they are not presented in this analysis.



**Figure 1. Racial composition of neighborhoods and high schools.**



Asian Pacific-Americans, African-Americans and Latino/as, more than 75% indicated their intention to get to know individuals from diverse backgrounds.

However, it is also important to consider the things that first-year students plan to do as a way of getting to know people from diverse backgrounds. When asked about their intentions to take a course devoted to diversity, about one-third of White students indicated they would, in contrast to approximately two-thirds of African-American students and Latino/a students who indicated that they would. Similarly, about one-third of White students indicated that they planned to join an organization that promotes diversity, in contrast to almost three-quarters of African-American students and more than half of Asian Pacific-American and Latino/a students.

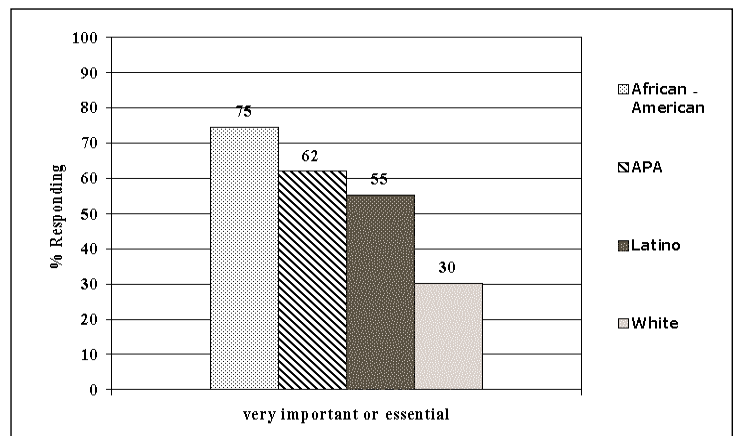
While many of our students intend to interact with people from diverse backgrounds, many reported that they are not likely to become involved in activities that facilitate this interaction. Rather, our data suggest that many students intend to rely on informal contacts to create these opportunities for interaction with diverse peers.

Data also suggest important differences in student beliefs and attitudes that are influenced by race. For example, students of different racial and ethnic groups had significantly different beliefs about how important the diversity of the campus was in influencing their decision to attend UM (see Figure 2). Just over 75% of African-American students rated the diversity of the campus as being important or essential in shaping their decision. The diversity of our campus is salient for other groups as well. Almost two-thirds of Asian Pacific-American students and just over half of Latino/a students rated campus diversity as important or essential in their decisions to attend UM. Conversely, only 30% of the White students stated that the diversity of students was important or essential.

Students from different racial groups responded quite differently to a question related to programs that were designed to increase the representation of students of color in higher education. When asked if colleges should aggressively recruit more students of color, more than three-quarters of all White students strongly disagreed or disagreed, while less than one-third of all African-American students disagreed or strongly disagreed.

These preliminary findings suggest a couple of things about first-year students at UM. First, many of our students come to UM with very little experience with people of different races. Data suggest that

**Figure 2. How important was a racially and ethnically diverse student body as a reason for attending UM?**



the long-term pattern of segregation in our society, as noted by many social scientists, is reflected in the pre-college experiences of our students. College may provide the first and only opportunity for these students to interact with people different than they are.

Second, a brief glimpse at the beliefs and attitudes of these students supports the notion that students of different races bring very different perspectives to the learning environment in ways that can be used to enhance the learning of all students.

After gathering additional data from this cohort of students in the spring of 2001, we will be able to identify the types of educational experiences that students become involved with during their first two years of college and that facilitate growth and development in the democratic outcomes at the heart of this study. Through these analyses, we will determine how effective we are in educating students for their roles as productive citizens in an increasingly diverse democracy. ❖

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING *continued from page 10*

groups on the East Coast. The study will compare race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status and will be conducted by interdisciplinary teams of social scientists and physicians.

Additional research and publications will include (1) the process and role of mentoring racial and ethnic junior scholars in academic medicine, (2) the medical risk factors and birth outcome by race and ethnicity, and (3) culture-specific maternal attitudes and birth outcome.

### IMPACT OF WORK

What does it mean to build knowledge and how does knowledge building contribute to shifting and expanding a paradigm of intersectionality of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and health? A crisis in building scientific knowledge is fueled by serious philosophic obstacles to the incorporation of and/or understanding of the role of socio-ecological and sociopolitical factors (i.e., the allocation and distribution of resources or human capital investment and the intersection of poverty or socioeconomic status with race, gender, ethnicity, and culture).

Recent evidence strongly suggests that scientific work requires theoretically driven interdisciplinary and intersectional models with well-defined variables that are both gender and ethnic specific and have a context within the socioeconomic status of the community. Providing a profound understanding of how race, class, ethnicity, and gender—within the broader discourse of the health and social well-being of low-income women, children and families—serves to benefit society as a whole and is critical to our current research. ❖

## RESEARCH PROGRAM AREA Update

### LOW-INCOME WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Ruth E. Zambrana, *Professor, Women's Studies*

Laura A. Logie, *Graduate Assistant, Women's Studies*

Low-income women, children, and families who live in resource-poor environments with institutional inequities bear a disproportionate burden of ill health. By linking research efforts of CRGE to related initiatives on the UM campus, this research program area is increasing its ability to publicize and disseminate research findings within and outside the university. This ability furthers the opportunities for research on the health and social well-being of these women, children, and families.

#### PREMISES OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAM AREA:

Health disparities within Latino and African-American groups have not changed significantly over the last 30 years. Health-risk and health-access disparities are linked to the lack of health insurance among a large portion of poor families, the exposure to environmental risks in many low-income communities, and the lack of an appropriate and competent institutional response to health care needs of racial/ethnic families.

Racial/ethnic populations are typically groups with limited resources and multiple problems. To understand Latino groups, a cultural deficit model has been used. However, there are distinct differences among Latino groups with respect to historical assimilation, socioeconomic status, migration patterns, and access to resources. It is the economic status of Latino groups, not their cultural background, that places them at risk.

The confusion between culture and socioeconomic status as the explanatory predictor of poor outcomes is clear. By examining the variables of family structure and socioeconomic levels, we begin to identify the class, race, ethnic, and gender parameters of risk and vulnerability for racial/ethnic groups. Our current research focuses on low-income Latino children with an emphasis on access to pediatric health services.

#### CURRENT FUNDED RESEARCH

The compelling need for information on Latino children is spurred by three major factors: (1) the rapidly growing population of Latino children—the largest child minority group in the U.S., (2) the well-documented social and economic challenges confronted by Latino families, and (3) the existing gap in research and practice as regards what works in the delivery of health care services to Latino families with young children.

Providers continuously request information about Latino families as more and more of them interface with programs that provide family support and health services. In fact, the demand has never been so great for ethnic-specific appropriate strategies to enhance the strength of Latino families.

Two projects, “Latino Children: Providing a Research Synthesis for Promoting Relevant Child Health Policy” and “Promising Practices in Family Support for Latino Families with Young Children,” seek to build a scientific, comprehensive, and ethnic-spe-

cific knowledge base regarding effects of the intersection of poverty, institutional barriers, and other non-medical factors that contribute to adverse health status. An intersectional approach takes into account the influence of socioeconomic status, racial and ethnic identity, gender, and institutional barriers in order to promote the development of future health interventions.

#### RELEVANT CHILD HEALTH POLICY

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is funding our “Latino Children: Providing a Research Synthesis for Promoting Relevant Child Health Policy” project. Project goals are to synthesize and analyze existing research on health-related issues, identify policy measures that address these problems, and disseminate information at national and state policy levels.

This study has focused on what we know about pressing health care needs and issues relevant to Latino families and how extant knowledge can be linked to priority policy recommendations that ensure the inclusion of Latino health in the national discourse. But because race, ethnicity, class, and gender are fundamentally institutional systems of group relationships, the next step of inquiry is to investigate and understand the delivery of health care services to Latino children and their families. The identification of health care practices that best incorporate intersectional factors, bilingual and bicultural competence, for example, and change existing delivery patterns from a fragmented to a more comprehensive set of institutional delivery practices will better respond to the individual experiences of Latinos within the health care system.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT

Information on the needs of Latino children and families, especially on the needs of Latino families with very young children (0-3 years of age), is sorely lacking in the U.S. Accurate assessments are difficult due to the historic lack of data. Also, family support and health service programs that work with Latino families with young children typically are under-funded, small, disconnected to mainstream institutions, and often invisible to researchers and policy makers. Consequently, the identification of promising practices supportive of family and health services for Latinos with young children have yet to be widely identified, analyzed, and disseminated.

“Promising Practices in Family Support for Latino Families with Young Children,” is filling four major information gaps: (1) the identification of programs and “promising practices” that most effectively respond to the needs of Latino families and children, (2) the adaptation and administration of surveys to programs that serve over 50% of Latino children and families, (3) the compilation and evaluation of parent training materials for use in community based organizations, and (4) the dissemination of products through printed and electronic media at major conferences.

#### FUTURE RESEARCH

An emphasis on health disparities legitimizes the importance of an intersectional framework for understanding the multiple factors associated with the health of low-income women of color. Our future work will concentrate on factors that effect preventive screening practices for chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, breast and cervical cancer, and diabetes, and quality of life issues for women of color who already have chronic diseases. Sample populations will include African-American and Latino sub-

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*In Memoriam:*  
**PROFESSOR**  
**RHONDA WILLIAMS**

**R**honda Williams, acting chair of the Afro-American Studies Program and a founding member of the Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity, died November 7, 2000 at the age of 43. Professor Williams was trained at MIT as a labor economist. Her interests ranged from econometrics to literature, history, media studies, philosophy, ethics, politics and public policy. She fought actively for social justice and an end to oppressions of all kinds, especially those based on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. She was a brilliant scholar, a beloved teacher, a dedicated colleague, and dear friend. Her passing is a loss to the campus and to the world that had only begun to glimpse the gleam of her shining star.

The words of Rhonda Williams are her legacy. As our memorial to her, we would like to share them with you:

“Because they simultaneously consider racial differences between women and the significance of gender in studies of African-American workers, these [pioneering Black women] economists also advance an analysis unlike those developed by most of their white feminist peers and liberal brother-economists. In comparison to the small post-Civil Rights era brotherhood of Black men economists, these sister-economists led the way in making the case to scholars and activists alike that a consideration of gender is a must for those seeking a fuller understanding of the economic conditions confronting African American communities. ... Their writings display a remarkable dedication to the practice of taking seriously how institutionalized racism and race privilege have shaped and continue to shape the working lives of women in the United States.” Williams,



**RHONDA WILLIAMS**

Rhonda M. "Getting Paid: Black Women Economists Reflect on Women and Work." Sister Circle: Black Women Represent Work. Ed. Sharon Harley. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001.

“As the United States approaches the twenty-first century... in an information-based, transnational and managerial economy, it is becoming increasingly apparent that if we do not better negotiate race and ethnicity in our society, we will not adequately solve the problems of economic inequality and discrimination. Racial and/or ethnic divisions and competition shape our efforts to understand and challenge hierarchy and inequity. As long as we ignore those issues, we cannot solve the problems of poverty, unemployment, and crime, nor effect productive job creation and economic justice. Absent a cultural and economic reckoning with racism...we will fail to revitalize our cities and to recover from the socioeconomic costs of ‘ending welfare as we knew it.’ Although masked behind pronouncements of a ‘color-blind’ society, unfinished racial business weakens our national will to provide one another the portfolio of social and economic rights essential to the sustenance of humane community in the post-industrial global economy.” Nembhard, Jessica Gordon, and Rhonda M. Williams, "How Race Matters: Global Perspectives on Ethnicity

and Economic Inequality, funding proposal, 1998.

“The challenge, then, is to resist the stigmatization of Black families and sexuality without consenting to essentialist notions of individuals, community and culture. ... Clearly, the stigmatization of Black families and sexualities has been/remains a crucial component in the constitution of Black consciousness. That which has been insufficiently addressed is the extent to which

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*Connections* is published bi-annually in the Fall and Spring semesters by the Consortium on Race, Gender, and Ethnicity. Notices of upcoming events and activities which focus on intersections of issues of race, class, gender, ethnicity and difference are welcome. To make inquiries or to be placed on our mailing list, please contact us.

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 Diversity Initiative Faculty  
 Relations Committee

President's Commission on  
 Ethnic Minority Issues  
 Special Assistant to the President  
 for Women's Issues  
 Women's Studies Department  
 The David C. Driskell Center for the  
 Study of the African Diaspora

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## GRADUATE COLLOQUIUM SCHEDULED FALL 2001

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The first session, Thursday, September 20, 12-2 p.m., offers lunch and a talk by Dr. Bonnie Thornton Dill: "Intersections, Identities, and Inequalities in Higher Education." As the fall semester approaches, please check our website (<http://www.umd.edu/crge>) for updated information, including the colloquium location. ❖

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## IN MEMORIAM: PROFESSOR RHONDA WILLIAMS

*continued from page 11*

these narratives may up the ante for Black folk confronting queerness. Unlike their white counterparts, African-Americans live without the benefit of an assumed familial and sexual wellness. Individual white families can and do manifest numerous and myriad behaviors, but dominant narratives rarely read such events as revelation of an

intrinsic and pervasive cultural chaos. The cultural presumption of Black sexual deviance nurtures African-American predispositions to keep at arms length those individuals and behaviors that may reconfirm aberration. This, then, is the core of my thesis: our racialized discourses of sexuality transform the meanings of queerness for many African-Americans. The stakes are not merely homosexuality, but Blackness itself." Williams, Rhonda M. "Being Queer, Being Black: Living Out in Afro-American Studies." *Introductory Readings in Afro-American Studies*. Ed. R. M. Williams. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1995.

For more of Rhonda Williams' work, please examine the following:

Williams, Rhonda M. and William E. Spriggs, "How does it feel to be free?: Reflections on Racial Economic Inequality in the Era of Color Blind Law." *The Review of Black Political Economy*. 27.1 (Summer 1999): 9-21.

Williams, Rhonda M. and Carla L. Peterson. "The Color of Memory:

Interpreting Twentieth Century U.S. Social Policy From a Nineteenth Century Perspective." *Feminist Studies*. 24 (Spring 1998).

Williams, Rhonda M. "Culturally Bereft, Naturally Unfit: African-Americans and the Current Social Policy Consensus." *The Journal of Inter-Group Relations*. (Winter 1996-1997).

Williams, Rhonda M. "Living at the Crossroads: Explorations in Race, Nationality, Sexuality and Gender." *The House that Race Built: Black Americans*. Ed. Wahneema Lubiano. *U.S. Terrain*. New York: Random House, 1997.

Williams, Rhonda M. "Consenting to Whiteness: Reflections on Marxian Theories of Discrimination." *Marxism in the Postmodern Age*. Eds. Antonio Callari, et al. New York: Guildford, 1995.

Williams, Rhonda M. and M. V. Lee Badgett. "The Economics of Sexual Orientation: Establishing a Research Agenda." *Feminist Studies*. 18.3 (Fall, 1992). ❖

