

Levan Center Director's Report
11/18/10

FALL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS:

Scheduled Events:

Flex Workshops: The Center gave two flex workshops during the week before classes: Ethics and Teaching, with Rene Trujillo and me, and Creating a Philosophy of Education, which I gave. We had 20 for the first and 16 for the second. I'll be giving the second one again this spring for new and all faculty.

Ethics and Leadership Presentation: On September 10th I gave a presentation on Ethics and the Craft of Leadership to the District Leadership Academy and in January will give it again for District presidents, vice presidents, deans, and center directors, and others.

Great Books Seminars: We were scheduled to give a St. John's style seminar for interested Presidents Scholars, but because the newsletter did not come out on time we will attempt to do it in the spring. The topic is the Plato's Apology and Aristophanes' play Clouds, and English Professor Ann Tatum and I will facilitate the seminar. Enrollment is limited to fifteen students and the Center will buy the books and provide coffee and water. If successful, the Center will offer one or two seminars each semester.

Humanities Book Discussion Group: The book for this fall is Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities by Martha Nussbaum, along with Victoria Mora's lecture, A Modest Proposal in Favor of Inefficient Education, published by the Center. On Friday, November 19th, fifteen faculty and staff will meet in the Center to discuss the book.

Moral Education at BC: On Wednesday, September 15th, the Center presented a seminar for twenty to twenty-five faculty and staff on the issue of moral education at BC. Psychology Professors Lora Larkin and Tom Vasile, and Philosophy Professor Matt Morgan gave presentations and led the discussion.

Norman Levan for the Humanities Visiting Artist: On October 4-6, Brendan Bannon an internationally known photographer was on the BC campus visiting numerous classes, doing a photo essay of Bakersfield, and giving an evening public lecture and presentation in the Center before a full house.

Poetry and Place: On Tuesday evening, October 12th, the Center, as part of Literary Kern Week, presented a reading of poems about Bakersfield and Kern County. Local poets Don Thompson, Nancy Edwards, and I read and discussed their poems to about thirty people. The Bakersfield Californian ran a fine piece about this event and Brendan Bannon's visit.

Central Valley Philosophy Association annual Colloquium: On Saturday, October 16th, from 9 to 2, the Center hosted the CVPA's annual colloquium. Before about sixty in attendance, three papers were read and discussed. The Center also hosted a lunch for attendees in the Renegade Room. People came from as far away as UC Merced, which brought ten faculty and students. One of the papers given by Reggie Williams, Chair of the BC Philosophy Department, is a paper he presented at a conference this

summer at Oxford University, supported by his receiving a Levan Center Summer Grant. The three papers will be available on the Center's website. Using this event as a model, the Center hopes to host other conferences related to the humanities.

Politics and Ethics Panel Discussion: On Wednesday, October 20th, Bakersfield Californian columnist Lois Henry, KCCD Board member and former county supervisor Pauline Larwood, and BC Professor of Political Science, Steven Holmes discussed the relevance of ethics to the personal lives of politicians, to their political activities, and to political campaigning. The public panel discussion was attended by about eighty people from campus and the community.

Fall Faculty Colloquium: On Friday Morning November 5th, Reggie Williams was honored for his scholarship and presented a new paper on Racism, Sexism, and Misogyny. As usual, a light lunch was provided. The Center will publish his paper. The Colloquium, for the campus community, was well attended by at least 50 faculty, staff, and guests.

Programs:

Humanities Essay Scholarships: ten essays were submitted by first year honor students. The Committee is reading the essays and the winning students will be notified in early December.

Levan Summer Grant Recipients (Levan Scholars): All three scholars submitted reports that were accepted by the Committee and all three have or will give campus presentations regarding their summer projects. Reggie Williams has given his campus presentation. To BC faculty and students, Jeannie Parent will give several slide presentations of her summer Fulbright Study Project in Vietnam and Cambodia and will lead the Humanities Book Discussion Group in a discussion of a book on Vietnam. John Giertz will give a seminar on his work on student perceptions of how religion is presented in the classroom.

SPRING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS:

Scheduled Events:

St. John's/ Norman Levan Center for the Humanities annual seminar and public lecture: On Wednesday, March 2, Mike Peters, the President of St. John's College will give an afternoon seminar for faculty and an evening public lecture on Thucydides account of the Peloponnesian War and Just War.

Reading the Classics: The Center will sponsor a public dramatic reading by the BC Drama Department. Begun last year, this is to be an annual event and this spring's play may be *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Becket.

Faculty Colloquium: The spring Faculty Colloquium will be held probably in late April.

Student Seminars: Two student seminars will be offered this spring. The first on the *Apology* by Plato and Aristophanes' play *Clouds* will be on February 8, 15, and 22. Ann Tatum, BC Professor of English, and I will give that one. The second on Machiavelli's *The Prince*, will be on March 8, 15, and 22, and will be facilitated by Erin Miller, BC Professor of History, and me.

The spring Humanities Book Discussion Group will read a book about Vietnam. The discussion will be late in the semester.

Moral Education: A follow-up seminar on this topic, focusing on specific applications to the classroom will be scheduled this spring as a flex workshop.

Women's History Month: The Center will collaborate with BC's Women's History Month and More Committee to present a panel discussion featuring Dr. Patricia Jennings from Cal State East Bay. She is a sociologist working in the field of reproductive technologies and social inequalities. The panel will consist of her, a BC ethicist, and a BC biologist. The Center will pay for transportation and an honorarium.

Andrei Codrescu: The Center is co-sponsoring with CSUB and KMC a visit by NPR commentator and writer, Andrei Codrescu. The day's events will be held at KMC in the morning and at CSUB in the evening. The Center will be acknowledged in the publicity for the event.

Zen Cartoons: Richard Collins, the new CSUB Dean of Arts and Humanities, may present a lecture on Zen Cartoons, using cartoons from Tricycle and The New Yorker.

Same Sex Marriage and Equality: Using Reggie Williams' soon to be published paper on that topic, the Center may sponsor a panel discussion.

Programs:

Essay Scholarships: The spring Humanities Essay Scholarships will be awarded for outstanding transferring and returning students.

Faculty Summer Grants: Faculty summer grants for scholarship and creative work will be awarded.

St. John's Seminar Fellowship: At least one Levan Fellowship will be awarded for a faculty member to attend the summer seminar series at St. John's College.

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE VISIT

This summer I, along with Dr. Levan and friends, visited St. John's College for a week to attend one of their summer seminars to see how they are conducted. The experience was very valuable and will be put to good use in the Great Books Seminars for President's Scholars, and the Center will sponsor a fellowship for a faculty member or two to attend the summer seminar program for a week.

ADMINISTRATION

Several issues have come up with regard to the use of the facility and will be discussed below. In addition to planning events and programs, the Director's responsibilities now include managing the use of the Center.

DIRECTOR'S SCHOLARSHIP/CREATIVE WORK

My proposal to present at this fall's Community College Humanities Pacific-Western Conference was accepted, but I decided not to go because of the cost. The Conference theme was Mythologies: Sacred Stories and False Stories in the Humanities and my presentation was The Serpent in the Garden: The Bible for Unbelievers. The CCHA PW president recommended it to the CCHA national director for the 2011 national conference. If accepted I'll attend that meeting to give my presentation and talk about the Center.