

SPECTRUM

M U L T I C U L T U R A L C E N T E R

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To the Williams community:

Autumn 2001 is indelibly etched in all of our memories, marking as it does the end of American innocence about the 21st-century version of violence in the world, and opening our eyes—I hope—to the intricacies of its causes. I personally will always associate September 11 and its aftermath with the Multicultural Center. I watched the horror unfold on the TV in Jenness with MCC colleagues and students. As we mourned the loss of so many innocent lives, we were also moved at the story of Mark Bingham, a gay man who was instrumental in preventing the plane that ultimately crashed in Pennsylvania from carrying out another suicide mission. Almost immediately, we became concerned about the possible implications of the attack for people of non-Anglo descent in the US, and indeed, some Williams students, like other South Asian and Arab people around the country, were harassed with taunts gratuitously linking them to the terrorists. Reminded of the misguided nationalism that had led to the harassment of Asian students after the spy-plane incident last spring, the MCC, with the help of SCAMT, a newly formed student group, organized a rally for tolerance on September 20. Around 200 people braved the elements to hear eloquent stories, analyses, and pleas for respect and understanding by students, faculty, and the Williamstown Chief of Police (see article within).

As the semester proceeded, the MCC joined the rest of the college in struggling to overcome of the paralysis engendered by the appalling losses on the 11th of September. "Business as usual" was simultaneously not an option, and absolutely essential. Our work has been infused by the desire to prevent further erosion of the relationship to immigrants and refugees in this country, and further loss of life around the world.

Internally, there's a good deal of news as well. We are all very sad to see Medha Kirtane leave the Center, but wish her all the best as she heads toward new challenges. We have added a new position to the MCC's structure, that of Associate Director, and the search to fill this position is going on right now. Our ongoing staff is doing excellent work as well. Stephen Collingsworth is coordinating, together with Ruth Harrison of the Health Service, the new mediation team, and is also working with Donna Denelli-Hess on an initiative called Men Can Stop Rape. Marcela continues to provide essential support for the many MinCo events, this semester including Latino/a Heritage Month, Coming Out Days, International Week, and NASAW week. Denise regularly goes beyond the call of secretarial

duty to help students with budgeting and planning. I'm deeply grateful to the entire staff for all their work.

Finally, I have been working hard together with a group of interested faculty to come up with ideas to enhance the profile and the function of the MCC on campus. I hope that we can add a significant academic and intellectual component to the Center's work, linking up more closely with faculty here and at other institutions to provide even more opportunities for students to engage with the complexities of diversity on campus and beyond. More to come . . .

Gail M Newman, Director



ASSiA Board members, 3rd Annual AASiA brunch held on September 30th.



Dean of the College, Nancy Roseman, President of the College, Morton Owen Schapiro and Kevin Hsueh '03 at the AASiA Brunch.

Message from Rory Kramer and Renee Robinson, MinCo co-chairs

It's hard to believe that roughly half of our term as MinCo co-chairs is over! Already, MinCo has undertaken a number of projects on campus to improve our Williams community. In response to recent events on campus, from MinCo's inaction in regards to anti-Asian harassment to the first all-campus MinCoFest, the Minority Coalition has decided to focus on a self-evaluation this year. The MinCo Reassessment Project (MRP) began with an all-campus forum to discuss the overall goals of MinCo and our success or failure to achieve these goals. Before the end of the semester, the MRP will hold more forums, focusing on five critical aspects of MinCo: intergroup relations, advocacy, programming, relations with the MCC, and funding. If you have any complaints/suggestions, please contact Renee Robinson or Rory Kramer to make sure the MRP designs the MinCo that we need. By the end of our terms, the MRP should be completed, and concrete changes to MinCo's structure may be implemented. Hopefully, a more efficient, effective, and fair MinCo can more adequately serve its constituent groups and the campus as a whole.

Beyond the MRP, MinCo has continued to work hard. MinCo groups have already organized the successful International Week, Coming Out Days, and Latino Heritage Month, as well as lunch forums, special performances, and dinners. In addition, every MinCo group came together October 10 to introduce ourselves to the campus as a whole with information, dance, music, and food in the first all-campus MinCoFest.

At recent meetings, MinCo has held open discussions with admissions officers and Dean Nancy Roseman about issues ranging from admissions data to the MCC's role in heritage months to housing concerns.

One proposal I'd like to highlight is the

proposal to expand the MCC's role in organizing and running heritage events on campus. One of the most common and disconcerting complaints of minority students on campus is that they play the role of cultural educator instead of student on this campus. The reliance on student initiative for designing and running heritage events during heritage days, weeks, or months is the most egregious example of this pervasive problem. Student design of such important events certainly is important, but equally so is an institutional commitment to these programs, a commitment students often hear about, but rarely see in action. As I like to put it, if there were no BSU (or VISTA, or AASiA, or IC, or any MinCo group) one year, would this school hold any cultural events in February? The answer clearly should be yes, but right now the answer is no. By this time next year, we expect the answer to be a resounding "of course!"

Responses to September 11 — The Rally for Tolerance and Understanding

by Brian Burke '02

The attacks of September 11 touched us all in very different ways. They evoked fear, anger and hate, as well as love, support, and compassion. Above all, though, the attacks evoked uncertainty. On September 20, the Multicultural Center organized the "Rally for Tolerance and Understanding", providing members of the Williams community a chance to voice their own feelings and uncertainties.

The rally, which drew a crowd of about 400 despite a light rain, was organized in response to a series of alleged incidents of harassment that left some Muslim students very afraid—afraid to display pride in their religion, afraid to voice their thoughts and feelings, and even afraid to leave their own rooms. Several students expressed this fear at the rally.

In the first speech of the day, Williamstown Police Chief Arthur Parker voiced his disgust with intolerance and harassment and pledged support for victims of hate. "Anybody who is approached with a bias comment," he said, should "call the police station, dial 911. Realize there is support in the community." His commitment was truly comforting.

But the focus of the rally was not limited to these anti-Arab or anti-Muslim sentiments.

Professor Marc Lynch encouraged students and community members to learn more, and to ask him for guidance if necessary. "There are few things more dangerous," he said, "than great enthusiasm to act combined with great ignorance." Every speaker reinforced this need for increased knowledge, highlighting understanding and compassion as the keys to our personal, community, and national responses to these attacks.

Junior Rory Kramer gave a heartfelt speech in which he challenged each of us to consider how, despite good intentions, our actions and words affect others. And Jonathan Chow, also a junior, asked us to think about "what sort of community we live in and, perhaps more importantly, what sort of community we *want* to live in."

Junior Aamir Wyne also gave a powerful speech in which he declared that "there is a common bond of fear, but there can also be a common bond of resolution that we're going to work through this together. Talking and compassion are the only things that make any difference." Through the rally, the Multicultural Center demonstrated their commitment to creating a community of mutual respect, understanding, and compassion instead of fear and uncertainty.

The Multicultural Center Staff

Denise Church
Stephen Collingsworth
Medha Kirtane
Gail Newman
Marcela Villada Peacock

Paula Moore Tabor,
Associate Director of Alumni Relations

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Address comments to:

Spectrum
Williams College
Multicultural Center
Jeness House
10 Morley Drive
Williamstown, MA 01267
phone: 413-597-3340
fax: 413-597-3456

website: <http://www.williams.edu/MCC/>

Photos by Marcela Villada Peacock

Arrasando! Taking Over!

Latino Heritage Month

This fall witnessed a spectacularly successful Latino Heritage Month (October 24–November 14). It was kicked off with a lively Convocation in Goodrich on Friday, October 26, featuring a welcome speech by Prof. Carmen Whalen of the History Department, a keynote speech by Will Chabrier '77, the General Manager of the Office of Business and Job Opportunities at the Port Authority of New York/New Jersey, and performances of music, poetry and dance by some awfully talented students. A concert and dance with Grupo Fantasia followed until the wee hours. Other highlights included the Buena Vista Social Dinner in Dodd Living room, and *A Slice of Rice, Frijoles and Greens* in Lasell. Each Wednesday, a large group of students, faculty and staff enjoyed lunch and discussion in the Hardy House living room. On October 24, Craig Wilder discussed "Race and Latino Ghettoization in the US;" on November 7, Carmen Whalen presented "Defining Latin@ History: Who, How, and Why?" and on November 14 Scott Wong talked about "The Convergence of Latino and Asian-American Histories." Two movies were shown during the festive month, *Amores Perros* and *Freak*. And we're pleased to report that Williams

now has more people who are able—at least a little—to dance in the merengue, salsa, bachata, and cumbia styles, after taking our dance workshops!



Two Eminent Alumni! Joseph Cruz '91, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Williams and Latino Heritage Month Keynot Speaker, Will Chabrier '77, General Manager of the office of Business and Job Opportunities at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

Native American Students at Williams

by Nalo Jackson '02

NASAW, like other cultural groups on campus, strives to create a supportive environment for Native American students as well as bring knowledge of American Indian culture and issues that are important to American Indian communities to campus. This year's NASAW Heritage Week is a good example of what we are attempting to accomplish. Our theme was "News From Indian Country" because we wanted to bring knowledge about all different aspects of American Indian life. There seems to be quite a lack of knowledge in mainstream society about what issues are important to American Indian communities, so we wanted our week to touch upon these issues.

NASAW held five events: Professor Geoff Sanborn spoke about author Sherman Alexie's "Indian Tears," where he discussed the role of weeping as a demonstrative moment of grief in Alexie's work; there was a viewing of the video

documentary "Black Indians: An American Story" which addressed the significant but often unlegitimated history of those with mixed Black and Indian heritage; there was a viewing of the movie "Dance Me Outside" which is a love story/murder mystery based on the Kidabanessee Reserve in Ontario which gave insight into reserve life; Nalo Jackson '02 gave a lecture on tribal colleges and the role that they play in American Indian education; and Liz Hoover '01 spoke about her thesis work on Mixed-Blood Indian Identities.

Two of our lectures, one on tribal colleges and the other on Mixed-Blood identities, are examples of issues that are currently being addressed in Native communities and we did our best to bring a level of understanding to the campus at large of these issues. All too often, people just don't know what is going on in Indian Country, on the reservation, within Native communities, etc. so we made it a point to try and bridge that knowledge gap with this year's NASAW week.

Community Building at Williams

by Margaret diZerega '02

What did you say when...? How do you handle a friend when...? What do you think about...?"

These are some of the many questions that arose in this fall's training for the Williams Community Building Program's (WCBP) facilitators. WCBP is a unique organization in that it contains a very diverse group of individuals all working together towards a common goal. In the workshops we lead, we stress the importance of community and tolerance with the hope that a certain level of open-mindedness will lead to respect for one another. Underlying those terms of *tolerance* and *community* that we hear so frequently, however, is a larger goal: to learn from each other. By participating in WCBP we have all made an implicit agreement to open our ears and take in what we can learn from our differences. I am always amazed and proud looking around the table at a WCBP meeting because not only is the table too small to fit everyone, but also because each person brings such a unique perspective and has a foot in various Williams communities (that adds up to lots of feet!). The group of facilitators involved in this year's SPARC workshops included former JAs, team captains, singers, College Council members, MinCO leaders and group members, sophomores, juniors, seniors, men, women, and students with such varying experiences and niches at Williams. By having so many facilitators from so many different backgrounds interested in learning more about diversity and community issues, we represent a particularly important way of improving community relations. Simply expecting minorities or other groups to take care of community problems is not enough. All these individuals are attuned to the Williams community and are equipped with tools to facilitate difficult situations regardless of whether they arise in a workshop or around a dinner table. The facilitators don't merely *tell* people how to learn from one another, but rather they *show* how to do it, by attempting to create an environment whereby such learning is made more possible. Perhaps one of the skills we most cultivate in our time with WCBP is communication. It is only through talking and listening that we dispel stereotypes and myths, but also, at a more basic level, learn about ourselves and our peers. I invite anyone interested in this mission to consider joining WCBP and experience an additional level of education here at Williams.

ALUMNI NETWORK NEWS

Career Mentor Weekend 2001: Alumni return in record numbers

by Paula Moore Tabor

A record number of alumni of color returned to campus for the recent Career Mentor Weekend. The Weekend coincided with Homecoming this year and returning graduates enjoyed mingling with students, catching up with one another and pooling their resources to help the families of September 11.

The Weekend activities included an all - Networks tailgate luncheon to which students, faculty and staff were invited. After the Eph victory over Amherst, alumni and students gathered in Payne Hall at Goodrich for refreshments, and a chance to exchange advice on career and social issues at the "Life After Williams" program. A pizza dinner followed at Rice house. After a full stomach and heads full of advice, alumni enjoyed the sweet, gospel sounds of Dave Bass '77, his band, the DBG, and the Williams College Gospel choir for two spiritual-filled hours of entertainment.

Later that evening, with hearts full after the gospel concert, students and alumni demonstrated their generosity by participating in a fundraiser organized by Maxine Lyle '00. Over \$400 was raised to help the families of the September 11 tragedy. Special thanks goes to Maxine, as

well as to Azell Archie '98, Abib Conteh '00, Todd Craig '98, Robeson Jennings '00, Franklin Rasado '96, Darren Schluter '01 and Bill Wood '98, the DJ's who donated their time and talents to help make the event an overwhelming success.

The Weekend concluded with a faculty/staff panel organized to update returning alumni about campus issues and a farewell brunch. Both events were held in Baxter Hall.

OTHER NEWS

Listserves are up and running for WBAN WBAN-L@Eph.williams.edu and WLAN. WLAN-L@williams.edu WAAAN is ready to launch. Special thanks to alumni volunteers Michelle Cartagena '89 and Teresa Rodriguez '95 who serve as volunteer managers to the lists.

STAY CONNECTED

Please keep us up to date with your news-births, marriages, new house, new degree, new career, etc. by emailing paula.moore.tabor@williams.edu. Deadline in time for next issue of the *Spectrum* is Friday, January 4. Please, let's hear from you!

SPECIAL APPRECIATION

A special thank you goes to Dave Bass '77 and the DBG for an extraordinary concert during Career Mentor/Homecoming Weekend. Dave's soothing sounds and spiritual advice peppered in between his singing was our balm of Gilead. Hurry back, Dave!



Dave Bass '77

UPCOMING TRAVEL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Crown of Europe Tour with Professor Fred Greene

March 21-31, 2002. Enjoy 10 exciting days exploring Budapest, Vienna and Prague with your fellow Williams alumni. Complete package includes airfare, accommodations and most meals for under \$1,700. Contact tour coordinator Paula Moore Tabor '76 for information.

BSU Brunch



BSU board members at the Annual Brunch held in September



Renee Robinson '02, Abi Jackson '02 and History Assistant Professor Cheryl Hicks



Gathering at the BSU Brunch

Coming Out Days 2001

by Anne Moore '04

The second week of October was a lively seven days for the BGLT community at Williams this year. Coming Out Week is an annual national celebration of queer issues connected to revealing sexual identity to friends and family. It was kicked off by a very cold barbeque in Morley Circle on Sunday, October 7th. If you've ever wondered how many queer Williams students it takes to start a grill, the answer is a whole lot. We served up veggie burgers and hot dogs with green ketchup to the hungry group who had waited for forty-five minutes to be served.

We were luckier on Monday when seven boxes of Hot Tomatoes Pizza arrived to keep us happy at our dinner forum at Hardy House that evening. Monday's dinner was a very thought-provoking and animated discussion on the often overlooked topic of bisexuality. We discussed the concept of a fluid sexuality spectrum and issues bisexuals face within the queer community as well as in the general community. The conversation highlighted many of the diverse opinions and views, as well as sexual identifications, of students at Williams.

Tuesday's activities included attending the Richard Rodriguez talk entitled "Has Anyone Seen a Hispanic?" Following the very provocative lecture, the community was invited to Hardy House for a safe-sex workshop given by two Williams faculty members. The workshop focused on STDs and disease prevention, which

seemed to upset the presenters who tried to lead the discussion to more risqué topics. After the sex talk concluded, the more adventurous among us took up colorful sidewalk chalk and, exiting the safe space of Hardy, wound our way around campus writing messages for the rest of the students to enjoy on Wednesday when they went to class.

Kristin Engelbrecht-Bleem entertained a number of us on Wednesday afternoon with her reading of selections from her book of poetry, *Cistern Citrus*, which she wrote this past summer for her Dively internship. After the reading, the rest of week involved more social activities, culminating in the notorious Queer Bash.

Although the Queer Bash was the last event of Coming Out Week this year, the BGLTU is formulating an exciting schedule for the rest of the year. Among other activities, we look forward to a panel discussion in December on the topic of Gay Marriage and current laws and bills opposing it. We will be collaborating with the Williams Democrats to bring an event intended to update Williams students' knowledge on gay rights. The Dively Committee has a number of events in the planning, including hosting a selection of hiphop performing groups. Pride Days in the spring should be another exciting couple of weeks for the campus, with speakers, singers, and possibly drag performances. We hope to involve a large portion of the campus in the events we will be offering over the coming months.

Office of Special Academic Programs (OSAP) News

by Molly Magavern

"Being a WCURF fellow has been an reserved space for thought and speculation. . . . WCURF has allowed me to really question, think about and process my motives and interests in academia. . . . For me, academic motives have always overlapped- or more precisely, have mirrored- personal inquiries. . . . I am enthralled/disappointed with what current research is/n't doing, and am even more excited at the prospects of what academic research is capable of doing. Personally, I want to find ways of bridging social activism and experiences- the full engagement of one's senses-into the academic forum."

Crystal Baik '02

"Being a Mellon fellow has allowed me an opportunity to expand my intellectual pursuits beyond the classroom. Materializing research projects from interests that I once thought were random has taught me the value of scholarly work and innovation."

Abigail Jackson '02

Every year, ten sophomores are selected to be fellows in two mentoring programs run by the Office of Special Academic Programs: the Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) and the Williams College Undergraduate Research Fellowship (WCURF). Both programs seek to

Continued on page 6

BSU's 5th Annual Community Dinner



Seniors



Professor Gail Newman, Director of the Multicultural Center, with daughter Mercer Mae.

OSAP News...

diversify academia by encouraging students from groups underrepresented in higher education to pursue academic graduate school and consider entering the professoriate. The student fellows are offered a unique opportunity to explore, through research, their intellectual interests and to learn about graduate school and academic careers. Both programs provide funding for two years so that students can replace summer and work study jobs with work research projects. Fellows work closely with their faculty mentors and often do some research assistant work. While they learn more about their mentors' work, fellows also have a chance to delve into topics of their own design and to answer questions that may stem from a class they took, a book they read, or a personal experience.

Currently, nineteen juniors and seniors are involved in mentored research through these programs. The seniors are Crystal Baik, Ayanna Louis-Charles, Paul Di Blasi, Sergio Espinsa, Abigail Jackson, Nalo Jackson, Mike Lan, Elizabeth Moulton, Carisha Swanson, and Kieran Valley. Six of the seniors are writing honors theses which stemmed from their fellowship work. The juniors are Lisa Ahn, Maria Tope Akinyele, Terri Autry-Williams, Naila Baloch, Alvaro Jarrin,

Marianna Maurer, Jasmine Mitchell, Cathy Szpant, and Lindi von Mutius.

Nalo Jackson, a senior Mellon Fellow who is planning to attend graduate school in American Studies, says, "I would have to say that one of my most positive experiences here at Williams College has been as a Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellow. The Mellon Fellowship has allowed me the opportunity to learn how to conduct research and get paid... something you would never expect to happen as a mere undergraduate!" In two years, Nalo has worked on two main projects. "My first paper focused on children "aging-out" of the foster care system. My junior year was spent away, so while at Montana State University — Bozeman, I was able to work with their Director of Tribal Services, Dr. Nate St.Pierre. In my second paper, I focused on the role that tribal colleges play in American Indian education and developed an outline as to how mainstream educational institutions could emulate tribal colleges' successful strategies. The Mellon Fellowship also supported me this summer as I began research for my thesis on Black and American Indian relations."

The structure and the goals of the two programs are the same, but the eligibility requirements for each are somewhat different. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which funds the

MMUF, is interested in supporting African American, latino/a, and Native American students who want to become professors in the humanities and certain other disciplines. The WCURF program was started by Williams College in 1999 to support students interested in pursuing academic graduate school in any discipline. The WCURF definition of underrepresented is more broadly construed to include Asian Americans and any student who is first generation to attend college or from a family with demonstrated financial need. Alvaro Jarrin '03, a fellow from Ecuador, appreciates that "WCURF is open for research in any discipline. Just look at me, I'm doing creative non-fiction."

Nalo Jackson sums up the experience, saying, "The Mellon Fellowship has given me a taste of what to expect in the world of research and academia, experiences that are essential to have before I take that big step into graduate school. I would highly suggest to anyone interested in furthering his/her own research experiences to take advantage of this wonderful program."

The Office of Special Academic Programs is currently seeking applicants from the sophomore class for both the MMUF and the WCURF. The deadline for applications is February 15, 2002. For more information, contact the OSAP office at x3747 or visit the second floor of Hardy House.

Williamsstown, MA 01267
10 Morley Drive
Jeness House

MULTICULTURAL CENTER
AND
ALUMNI NETWORKS
AT
WILLIAMS COLLEGE