



The Panther P.A.W.S.



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Focus On: The Center for Multicultural Education

UNI's Center for Multicultural Education has had a history of struggle on this campus. This year will commemorate the 35th anniversary of the long road this program has traveled.

The 1960s marked a turning point in higher education for minority students. The struggle for equality around the country played itself out on this campus as well. After controversy erupted on campus about a minority student center, including a sit-in at President James W. Maucker's home, the Ethnic Minorities Cultural Education Center (EMCEC) was founded in 1971.

The center was originally under the supervision of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, but in 1991 it fell under the scope of the Educational and Student Affairs department. This was due to the realization that the program did not have much academic focus and was not trying



The front entrance to The Center for Multicultural Education, which opened in Fall 2003.

to change the university's curriculum in any way. (Since then, Dr. Blackwell and others have managed to add an American Ethnic Studies Minor to the university's curriculum.) The center did, however, have potential to bring multicultural programming to the campus. In 1995 Dr. Michael Blackwell was brought in to the EMCEC to make sure the center provided multicultural programs to the entire campus, not just the minority populations here, namely African Americans.

It took a lot to get the perception out that it wasn't just a Black cultural center. Dr.

Blackwell admits that this perception is still a problem inside the community. "African Americans believed the focus on their culture would be diluted...some interpreted it as they were not as special anymore", comments Blackwell. But, this was not the intention. With the growing number of minorities on campus the EMCEC felt it was its duty to inform the college about these cultures.

In 1997, the EMCEC went through yet another change. It adopted the current name of

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CME QUICK FACTS:

- Founded February, 1971 after controversy erupted on campus about a designated place for minority students.
- Originally named the Ethnic Minorities Cultural and Educational Center.
- Renamed the Center for Multicultural Education in 1997.
- A new facility attached to the Maucker Union opened Fall 2003.
- The CME provides multicultural programming for all students on campus to learn and grow in a diverse world.
- The CME website is: www.uni.edu/cme/

Program Happenings

Welcome back everyone. We hope that the spring semester is finding you in good spirits! Spring is always a busy time of year in higher education and this one is no exception.

Students concerned about assistantships for next year should fill out forms available on the Graduate website (www.grad.uni.edu) or our

website. Please fill out both the Assistantship and Stipend forms and turn them into the office indicated for the particular assistantship. Application dates may vary, so continue to check the PSE website for assistantship updates.

Students ready to graduate this Spring or Summer will need to fill out the graduation applica-

tion on WebCT immediately. For information on how to use WebCT please contact our office manager, Marlene Shea, at marlene.shea@uni.edu or call 319-273-2605.

Once you have submitted the Graduation Application, the Registrar's office will notify

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Program Happenings (cont. from pg. 1)

you regarding graduation procedures such as buying caps/gowns and arrival times.

Graduating master's students will also need to start thinking about completing portfolios. You can find guidelines for the portfolio on our website under **Resources**. Also, look at the **Student Outcomes Assessment Plan** under the **Program Overview** section on the website. This will give you additional direction in creating your

portfolio. Please contact your advisor for help.

Lastly, we wish our graduating Master's and Doctoral students the best of luck in the future. This year's graduates are:

Master's Students:

Jinger Bremer, Wendy Denning, Angie Dickinson, Linda Emery, Amanda Erdmann, Michael Girsch, Stacia Greve, Kim Jasper, Jennifer Johnson, Holly Olsen, Gena Rath, Catherine Rent,

Nancy Scoggins-Rose, Kenneth Smith, Erin Wheat, Molly West, and Rachael Willits.

Doctoral Students:

Eric Braun, Vicki Edelnant, and Delann Soenksen

Commencement will take place Saturday, May 6th at 3 p.m. in the UNI Dome. Congratulations to our 2006 Graduates!

Student Feature: Michael Girsch

"I can't believe it's almost over", says Michael Girsch as he reflects back on his last two years in the Postsecondary



Education program at UNI. Girsch, a 28 year old Cedar Falls native, graduated in 2000 with a BA in Communications and Electronic Media from UNI. His dream was to get into the film business, so after graduation Michael made a move to an unlikely place for film prosperity, Minneapolis, Minnesota. It turned out to be a good decision: Michael made the right connections and eventually made it to Los Angeles, California where he worked on editing

films including *The Santa Clause 2* and *Joe Somebody*. After a while though, "I felt satisfied with my experience in film and believed it was a good time to investigate Student Affairs", Girsch commented.

Michael believes he always had Student Affairs "in the back of [his] mind". As an undergrad at UNI Girsch got involved in something that he says, "changed my life." He spent a semester in Wales through a Regents Study Abroad program in 1998. There he learned more about himself and the world, while discovering what it was to be an American. Since his experience in Wales Michael has traveled to many different countries and also participated last summer in a program through PSE where he and several other graduate students encouraged the youth of Liverpool, England the value of continuing their education.

Michael is currently a Graduate Assistant at the UNI Graduate College. He says the mission of his assistantship this

year was to "cultivate a graduate community" at Northern Iowa. So far his efforts include co-developing a Graduate Student Network group on Facebook, gathering students together for luncheons, a bowling challenge with Dean Susan Koch, and creating the *Graffito*, a newsletter for graduate students.

Michael's experiences have shaped his personality and his outlook on life. He believes that people should always go after every opportunity. "Don't settle" and "Pursue opportunities outside your comfort zone" are pieces of advice he not only wants to give others, but also ones he lives by.

Michael will graduate from the program in May and although he does not have a job lined up at the moment, we can be sure that when the opportunity shows itself, Michael won't hesitate.

-The *Graffito* can be accessed at: <http://www.grad.uni.edu/graffito/>

Hot Topics: FACEBOOK— Should Colleges Allow It?

Facebook, an online student profile directory, was created by Harvard graduate, Mark Zuckerberg, in February 2004. Since then, this website has grown tremendously serving over 2500 schools country and nationwide. Many Iowa schools, including all three Iowa Regents universities, are currently supported by Facebook. Community colleges, private colleges, and large universities are all supported. There is also a High School feature, and as of just recently, college students and high school students may become "friends".

Many kinds of student information can be accessed. Students can choose to share major information, interests, careers, and even phone numbers and current addresses. Many features exist on Facebook including joining school groups, messaging friends, people

searches, and photo sharing.

Why such a huge controversy over this website? Because schools do not get to choose their participation, and because students' information is spread across the internet, many institutions are worried about the implications and complications that may arise: including stalking cases, online hate speech, and incriminating evidence students may share about themselves. A recent action taken at Fisher College in Boston shows how students may use this site to damage their own and others' reputations. Cameron Walker, the president of the Student Government Association at Fisher, was expelled for violating the code of conduct for expressing his opinion online about a campus police officer. This was the first time any college has expelled a student for a

posting on Facebook.

However, there are very positive aspects of this website if used correctly. It is a way for students to become involved in campus life and converse with people they may not normally talk to. Facebook can be a useful tool for student involvement on college campuses now and in the future.

So, you tell us: should colleges allow their names to be affiliated with Facebook? If so, should they advise students to keep their profiles "tasteful"? Please write in and let us know what you think about this new craze.

E-mail comments to: karapark@uni.edu
Results will be posted in the next issue!

Source: Schweitzer, S. (2005). "Fisher College expels student over website entries", *The Boston Globe*, October 6, 2005.

Alumni News: Where are you?

Many alumni have expressed interest in finding out what fellow students have been doing since graduating from the program. Surprisingly, many of you work at UNI or at colleges in the surrounding area! We would like to make this newsletter a way for you to connect with those in your cohort as well as program faculty. Please write and let us know where you are working, contact information such as e-mail addresses and home addresses, and any other information you would like to give.

With permission, we would also like to

feature you in the alumni page on our website. If you would like to be included in the website profiles, please e-mail the following information to Kara Park (karapark@uni.edu):

- Name
- Years in the program
- Current school and position
- Additional education
- Professional Associations
- Any additional personal information such as spouse, children, pets, etc...

Also, please attach a picture to be included in your profile. We look forward to hearing from you!

Gilchrist Hall Update— Since the October 16th fire, Gilchrist Hall (the university's main student services center) has undergone a series of inspections which most recently report over 4 million dollars worth of damage and a projected renovation date of Spring 2007. The Iowa Board of Regents recently agreed to help with the costs of renovation and the replacement of equipment. For more Gilchrist updates please see the UNI website main page.

Alumni Feature: Kristin Van Gorder

Kristin (Kristi) Van Gorder, is a 1998 graduate of the Postsecondary program at UNI. While here, Kristi kept herself very busy becoming involved with Academic Advising at UNI and Admissions at Hawkeye Community College. She also was a graduate assistant at Athletic Academic Advising her two years in the program.

Kristi continues to have an active spirit in higher education. She is currently the Coordinator of Advising, Recruitment, and Retention for the College of Liberal Arts and the School of the Arts at the University of Nevada, Reno. Her duties include overseeing faculty advising for the over 4,000 students at UNR and recruiting students throughout Nevada and California to enroll there. When Kristi is not busy with those tasks she is teaching an "Introduction

to Liberal Arts Education" class every fall.

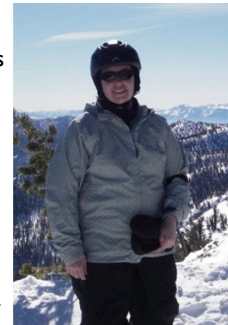
One aspect Kristi finds interesting is the amount of diversity found in a Liberal Arts education, from the faculty to the staff and students. Communication between these groups, and other entities involved, is key in a large university. "When policy is being discussed there must be a lot of dialogue before any changes are implemented", she concludes.

Kristi recently received the State of Nevada Board of Regent's Academic Advising Award for the University of Nevada, Reno. Carrying a \$5000 stipend, it is a clear statement that she excels at her work.

There are many pieces of advice Kristi gives to upcoming Student Affairs pro-

fessionals including, "Always ask questions", and, "Never let a student leave your office upset." She also advises professionals to continue their education and stay current with events and topics in Student Affairs by reading publications and attending conferences. Kristi also suggests that thank-you notes are a must and "a hand-written one is best."

But, no matter what the position, she believes the most important thing is to "love what you do!"



Kristi on the slopes in Tahoe, February 2006.

Who's Who on Campus: Dr. Michael Blackwell

Educator, pastor, professor, and chairman are just some of the titles Dr. Michael Blackwell has had in his lifetime.

Born in Philadelphia and living much of his life in Connecticut during the 1960s, Michael knew he wanted to pursue a college education. He also knew he wanted a doctorate from the start. After receiving his B.A. in Political Science from Wesleyan University in 1978, Michael went to the Divinity School at Yale University. He knew he wanted to become involved in issues such as race, poverty, and violence in America. Michael said, "I was profoundly affected by the life and death of

Martin Luther King Jr. and thought I would go into the ministry" to deal with these issues. After Yale, Michael worked in several churches and communities and taught Religious Studies at Curry College and Southwest Missouri State University. All the while, Michael was pursuing a doctorate in Social Ethics from Boston University, which he received in 1992.

Michael has always been involved in communities where ever he has gone. He loved what he was doing and, "I found out that what I was volunteering to do, I might as well get paid for."

This marked the transition to Student



Affairs for Dr. Blackwell. He commented, "I never thought that I would be doing what I am now."

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Focus On: The CME (cont.)

Center for Multicultural Education and has since moved from its original house location to a center attached to the Maucker Union. The addition was open to the public in the fall of 2003.

Although the CME offers many multicultural education opportunities, Dr. Blackwell wishes more students and community members would take advantage of the programs offered. "Listening to someone talk about one's experiences or work dealing with race or ethnicity helps others learn about struggles and helps them understand how experiences shape the way people think", Dr. Blackwell says. And, for the minority students, this is a place where they can socialize and find role models with people of their own culture.

The CME, like many programs in higher education, still struggles to find funds for programming and hiring new employees. It is hard to do programming and not have adequate staff on hand. Dr. Blackwell addresses another campus-wide problem in that he wishes the university would make a more conscious effort to research why students of color do not persist to graduation as much as white students do. He believes a solution may be to hire more minority faculty and staff for these students to connect with. This, Blackwell says, "Would give the message that the univer-

sity is truly concerned and cares."

Katie Erickson, a first year master's student in the PSE program, is the graduate assistant for the CME and is responsible for much of the programming there. According to Katie, "The CME puts on a lot of great programs for the UNI community to promote multiculturalism and to educate students on multicultural issues", however, she "wishes that students at UNI were more active participants because they could really learn a lot more about themselves and how diversity and multiculturalism help them to better understand themselves and the world."

The CME offers a wide variety of programs including a lecture series on cultural diversity and several heritage month activities. Upcoming activities can be found on the website and are advertised in the Northern Iowan and around campus. Become more involved in your campus and world by visiting the UNI CME!

CME Website: www.uni.edu/cme/

Phone: 319-273-2250

A Word from Dr. Mike Waggoner

The Chinese say that the beginning of wisdom is to get things by their right name. In our attempt to do that with this newsletter, we solicited your suggestions. Among the several we got, we settled on this one from Kara Park, our first year graduate assistant and Newsletter editor. Thanks Kara!

As this issue comes out, spring break fast approaches. And that means our graduating students are shifting into high gear for graduation and the job search. This will be the largest graduating class yet. As they move out taking their places in the profession, a new cohort enters next fall. This applicant pool was the largest ever and we have a substantial waiting list constructed from those we could not accommodate in the initial admission. The best to all of you as your spring rushes toward commencement.

Sincerely,
Mike Waggoner



Katie Erickson: CME Graduate Assistant encourages all on campus to become more involved in activities at the Center for Multicultural Education.

Dr. Blackwell (cont.)

Dr. Blackwell has been the Director of the Center for Multicultural Affairs at UNI for 10 years now. When he came in 1995, he says, "the Multicultural Center was not considered a programming place." That changed when Dr. Blackwell and others shifted the focus of the center to an educational one where the campus could learn and appreciate cultures unlike their own.

Dr. Blackwell turned 50 last year. It made him wonder where the time had gone. "On paper it may seem like I have done much, but there is still much I want to do", he reflects. Some of these things include more time for scholarly writing and more time with his family on the East Coast. Michael also used to write a column in a newspaper and says, "perhaps if I would have continued I could have become a syndicated columnist. There are many things about the world I would like to comment on."

When asked how he would like to be remembered, he asked with a smile, "When I'm dead?" He simply stated he would "like to be remembered as a good and decent person who cared about humanity with a special concern for the poor and disadvantaged." He also stated that he would like to be known as a "humble person" and one who "helped people with every ability I had." He feels that he is someone "who wants to energize other people to meet people's needs."

Helping others realize their potential to help the world is indeed a task worth pursuing and we thank Dr. Blackwell for aspiring to this goal.