UWM COLLEGE of LETTERS and SCIENCE

CULTURES & COMMUNITIES

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Riverside High School, UWM students connect to bring civil rights legacy to life

Fair housing … school segregation… busing for racial equality… the March on Milwaukee…

To people who grew up in the city during the 1960s, these terms can evoke memories of frustration, elation, fear, triumph and more. But to many of today's high school and college students, the Milwaukee civil rights movement is virtually unknown.

A photo from the March on Milwaukee digital archives

Reclaiming that history and bringing the events and people from Milwaukee's civil rights legacy to life was the Service Learning goal for several students in "Multicultural Milwaukee", a Cultures and Communities class, taught by Professor Gregory Jay. His students worked with high school students in Abbie Fishman's senior English class at Riverside University High School, helping them explore the civil rights challenges their parents and grandparents confronted and may very well have fought to change. The students' main research tool was the March on Milwaukee civil rights website. [www.marchonmilwaukee.uwm.edu]

The website, partially funded by Cultures and Communities grants, is a comprehensive, interactive archive of audio files, documents, photos and video footage compiled from the holdings of the Wisconsin Historical Society and the UWM Golda Meir Library *(see page 3)*. This rich collection of resources encompasses first-hand accounts of the people, issues and events of the local 1960's civil rights movement.

Using the website, students watched video footage of press conferences with newsmakers such as activists Father James Groppi and Vel Phillips, Mayor Henry Maier and Police Chief Harold Breier, and listened to audio tapes of their speeches. This immediacy of the materials illuminated the time period for both groups of students, Jay said.

After completing their collaborative research, the students produced posters about people and events they had learned about, but the more important outcome was much greater knowledge of a very relevant history. As a few Riverside students reflected:

> "Knowing that a white man [Groppi] saw past all the differences of racism and saw how horribly African Americans were treated and wanted to change it and make a difference is also something that moved me."

> "I thought these things only happened in the south."

> "This is a very important subject of Milwaukee's history and I'm glad I had the opportunity to learn and work with the assignment."

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FROM THE DIRECTOR: *Greg Jay*

What's a CCBLLR?

This may be an unwieldy acronym , but it represents a new and streamlined approach to community engagement at UWM—one that will create more opportunities for students, faculty and staff to make a difference in Milwaukee.

January 2013 brought the opening of UWM's innovative **Center for Community-Based Learning, Leadership, and Research**. Located in the UWM Student Union, the Center merges the former Center for Volunteerism and Student Leadership with the Institute for Service Learning, which was formerly housed within Cultures and Communities. This restructuring will create a "one-stop shop" for academic community engagement at UWM, making it easier for students to find the experience that best fits their learning goals and career ambitions.

< Dr. Laurie Marks, CCBLLR Director

Dr. Laurie Marks, Center Director, explains, "The new Center will provide more opportunity for students and faculty to engage in the Milwaukee community through partnerships with Milwaukee's non-profit organizations, while also creating a more visible culture of engagement and a network of engaged scholars and students on campus. Over the next two years we will be exploring how best to organize the activities of the Center and what key priorities it will focus on."

Cultures and Communities students and faculty will still work closely with the Service Learning office, now relocated to the Center's expanded space in Union WG28. Service Learning students will find there information on how to continue with their community-based learning once the semester ends, connecting with other organizations and agencies or even arranging to stay with the one from their class. Students who come into the Center to volunteer will see that they may also get academic credit in the future by signing up for a Service Learning course.

The volunteer and leadership programs at the Center will be better coordinated with the Cultures and Communities Certificate Program. Community partners will find it easier to collaborate with UWM, since a single phone call will get them information on a variety of options for finding resources and working together. Faculty who teach community-engaged courses will discover a strengthened and expanded structure of support for instructional activities. Research shows that students who are active in community engagement and in leadership programs express more satisfaction with their college education and improve their academic outcomes.

Greg Jay
(gjay@uwm.edu)

Mexican immigration, health subject of Tenorio presentation

UWM's Cultures and Communities (C&C) Program is committed to fostering civic engagement and scholarship by supporting all staff as they pursue professional development opportunities.

Last spring, C&C staff member and Multicultural America 150 instructor Ramona Tenorio presented at the conference *¡Salud! Beyond Deficits and Paradoxes in Mexican Immigration and Health*, sponsored by the City University of New York Institute for Mexican Studies at Lehman College. A Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology, Tenorio researches transnational socio-medical networking and healing practices among diasporic Latinos in the U.S.

She joined other nationally recognized experts on Mexican immigration and health to explore the health disadvantages and advantages of the U.S. Mexican population. One of the goals of the conference was to break new ground in research and analysis in those areas.

Tenorio is interested in understanding how socio-medical networks are formed and maintained. Such networks allow for the transnational flow of personnel, equipment, and supplies to support lay healing traditions under the radar of the U.S. biomedical health care system.

"Without the financial support from the Cultures and Communities Program, attending the conference would not have been possible," she said. "At the conference, I was able to engage at the public policy level with local and national leaders on immigration and health."

Assignments for Jay's students included finding and analyzing primary sources like letters sent to Groppi, some of which were critical of a priest taking on the role of a civil rights activist. After identifying materials that interested them, the students were asked to reflect in writing, and orally, on the issues involved. "Learning to work with primary documents in Milwaukee's history empowers people to have their own opinions," Jay said.

For some UWM students, the visits to Riverside University High School were their first direct exposure to cultural diversity. As student Nicole Hutchins commented:

> "The experience that I have had at Riverside High has given me a different perspective on the cultural differences in the inner-city school. The first thought I had going into the school was the feeling of being a minority. In my life, I have always been in the dominant culture, but when I stepped into Riverside for the first time, it was obviously not the case. I did not feel comfortable or uncomfortable. It was just very different from what I have grown up with and what I have always been used to."

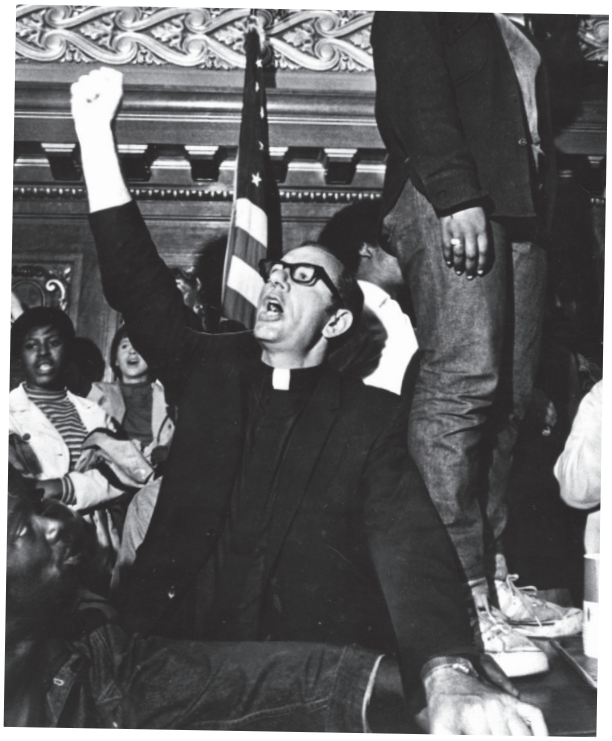
The UWM students also read and discussed poems from Margaret Rozga's book *200 Nights and One Day*. Rozga is Groppi's widow from after he left the Catholic priesthood. Once the UWM students were familiar with the website and the poems, they shared their insights with their cohorts at Riverside. Jay said there was a "vocabulary gap" between the UWM and Riverside students – the high school kids didn't always understand words like "boycott" and "sit-in" because such social and racial history isn't taught in general social studies classes in public schools.

Here is UWM student Karli Bryant's take on the project:

> "The first day we were put into groups (with the Riverside High School students), the conversation was forced and the meeting was awkward. However, after a few conversations with my group we blend well and have conversations that inform me of their city and their life. With the talk we had about the housing in Milwaukee, I was better introduced to the neighborhoods here. I enjoyed learning about their lives outside of school and being raised in an urban area and how that differs from my upbringing."

Fishman's high school students also attended a session of Jay's class on the UWM campus, which focused on exploring the question, "What is social justice?"

Moved by what they learned throughout their work with the UWM class, the Riverside students composed letters to President Obama nominating Groppi and Phillips for the Medal of Freedom.



Father James Groppi, civil rights activist >

The March on Milwaukee Civil Rights History Website supports understanding of the struggle for racial equality by helping users discover primary sources and other educational materials from the collections of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries and the Wisconsin Historical Society.

The digital collection includes the papers of individuals representing a variety of positions on the civil rights issue, photographs, unedited footage from news film archives, and oral history interviews capturing the recollections and perspectives of individuals who participated in the movement.

The collection also includes contextual materials, such as brief explanations of relevant people, places, events, and organizations; a timeline; a bibliography of relevant published sources; and maps highlighting important locations.

The materials reproduced in this digital collection are only a selection of the primary sources documenting Milwaukee's civil rights history held by UWM and the Wisconsin Historical Society.

www.marchonmilwaukee.uwm.edu

Learning about cultural identity from some very young teachers

"What am I thinking? I thought to myself as I drove to La Escuela Fratney that Wednesday morning. I really do love kids, but it's not like I am responsible to any. …Now I have to be responsible to some kids I never even met. What If they don't like me?"

But Dan, who was worried that the kids might not accept him because of racial or cultural differences, needn't have been. A student in Melissa Schoeffel's Cultures and Communities English class, he and his classmates were welcomed by the K-5, first-grade and second-grade children they would be working with for their Service Learning assignment.

Last spring, Schoeffel, a senior lecturer in English at UWM, proposed the idea of her students connecting with youngsters at the school on a storytelling project. La Escuela Fratney is a Milwaukee Public Dual Language School. The school focuses on social justice and offers a curriculum "designed to meet the needs of young learners preparing for life in a multicultural, multiracial society"—a perfect fit for a Cultures and Communities class.

Both groups of students benefited from the project—the UWM students learned first-hand about how identity and attitudes toward similarities and differences between people develop. The Fratney students got a chance to work with older "buddies" on a video project that allowed them to share their stories and see themselves starring in a video. The experience also gave Schoeffel's students an opportunity to navigate in a new environment, since they often come from non-diverse communities and schools.

The UWM students were challenged to think about storytelling in the context of multicultural America. And what better way to explore storytelling than with young children! Students worked with small groups of children to write personal stories and to think about the different facets of storytelling, including why we tell stories, what they say about our lives and the people around us, how a story progresses, and what makes a story memorable.

Each session at La Escuela Fratney had an established goal for the UWM students, but many felt they accomplished much more than the syllabus prescribed: "Throughout this experience, though very short, I feel as if I've only gained, " said one of Schoeffel's students, Teresa. "I was the only white person in my group. I didn't mind this at all because I got to listen to their stories of how they grow up at home and I loved every second of it."

Students were encouraged to stimulate conversations among the young kids about what makes us all alike and different. "Young children don't necessarily categorize in the way an older child or adult might," Schoeffel said. "They don't as much have cultural baggage yet."

The UWM students found that when the children talked about each other, they didn't talk about appearance: they talked about playing with each other. As Teresa put it, "These kids don't care what you look like, who you are or where you come from. All they care about is who is going to share their crayons or who is going to play army with them later." Many were also impressed that the children could think and speak so fluently in more than one language.

Schoeffel said the experience helped her students break down stereotypes and confront their feelings. Some went in with fears, particularly those who had grown up in very different types of communities. "They walk into the school a lot of times with a heightened sense of their own privilege; walking into what they understand to be a diverse setting. They're more nervous… 'I have to go to this "inner city" school and who knows what's going to happen.' "They came away with a greater understanding about many issues of multicultural diversity, including privilege and how it relates to cultural identity, she said.

After several sessions with the kids, the UWM students returned to La Escuela Fratney to share the digital stories they compiled from photos, drawings and interviews collected from their young partners. This experience, more than anything, forged memories of relationships that will last long after the course grades are in or the stories themselves are forgotten.

Said Dan, "I don't think the kids thought I was privileged because I was white, but I was [privileged] because I got to share their time! I left a lot at the doors of the school, mostly fear (of the unknown). What a ride it has been. From wondering what the heck I was doing to looking forward to being with these kids has been a trip I am so grateful for taking."

CUP grants build relationships with community partners

Building collaboration between campus and community is a mainstay of the Cultures and Communities Program, and perhaps is nowhere more evident than in the work made possible by our Community University Partnership (CUP) grants.

Community organizations and UWM groups are invited to apply for the 2013-14 CUP grant competition. The grants support limited term projects and events that promote partnerships between UWM and the diverse communities it serves.

Since 1999, over 65 CUP grants have been awarded for projects that span the disciplines and reach into many of Milwaukee's neighborhoods. CUP grant collaborations emphasize cross cultural literacy, local/global perspectives on social and artistic issues, the relationships of science to culture and society, environmental initiatives, gender issues, community development, immigration issues and religious pluralism. They also offer service learning and other community engagement opportunities to UWM students.

All applications that meet grant criteria will be considered, however funding priority will be given to those which work toward creating healthy communities in the City of Milwaukee. For example, projects may address such issues as health disparities, healthy aging and improvements in quality of life which respect the environment.

An informational workshop will be held on Tuesday, April 2, from 10-11:30 a.m. in Room 320 of the UWM Union, 220 East Kenwood Boulevard and on Wednesday, April 10 from 1-2:30 p.m. at the Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee, 2819 W. Highland Boulevard. Registration is requested and is available online www.cup.uwm.edu/informationsessions.cfm

For more on the grants, including guidelines and an archive of awardees, visit www.cup.uwm.edu, or contact Dr. Cheryl Ajirotutu, 414-229-5960; yinka@uwm.edu.

Congratulations to the 2012-2013 CUP Grant Award Winners!

Having Our Say: Healthier Homes and Babies – Dalvery Blackwell, African American Breastfeeding Network of Milwaukee and Betty Koepsel, UWM College of Nursing

The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in the United States – Janan Najeeb, Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition and Abbas Sarour, UWM Muslim Students Association

Translating the Evidence-Based Chronic Disease Self-Management Program into Community Action and Community Based Capacity Building – Patricia McManus, Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin, Inc. and Fang (Alice) Yan, UWM Department of Community and Behavioral Health Promotion

Hmong Women's Conference on Historical Trauma – MayTong Chang, Hmong American Women's Association and la Xiong, UWM Counseling Psychology Student Association

CULTURE Club: Cultural Understanding and Leadership Training United in Real-world Environmentalism – Jamie Ferschinger, Urban Ecology Center and Ms. Dana Kaleta, UWM Quest Project; Trio and PreCollege Programs

(Re)generating American Indian Partnerships Between Home and School – Amy Tromp, Indian Community School of Milwaukee and Jeremy Garcia, UWM Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Journey House Lego Robotics Program – Cherise Meyers, Journey House and Maria Hamlin, UWM School of Education

Connecting University Students with the Milwaukee River Greenway Coaltion – Ann Brummitt, Milwaukee River Greenway Coalition and Ryan Holifield, UWM Department of Geography

For more on all of the projects, go to
www.cup.uwm.edu

Middle school children participate in the Journey House LEGO Robotics program with UWM student mentors. The project is a CUP grant recipient.

Choreographing new steps in community engagement

"UWM is a place where I found a terrain…to develop myself as a human being, as a mentor, as a choreographer, as an artist. The imprint and the legacy that UWM has are cherished by this community."

- Simone Ferro

Since its inception more than a decade ago, Cultures and Communities has been collaborating to build a diverse and engaged faculty and has been instrumental in bringing innovators like Simone Ferro to campus.

Ferro, now chair of the Department of Dance in the Peck School of the Arts, came to UWM in 2001 with performance credentials from all over the world. A native of São Paulo, Brazil, she had a distinguished professional career as a soloist with dance companies in Brazil and Switzerland before completing graduate work in dance at the University of Iowa.

She has collaborated extensively with local dance, theater and opera companies and is a strong advocate for Milwaukee and the Midwestern dance community.

Her dance pieces–often dealing with racism, women's identity, alienation, and community identity–provide both artistic and pedagogical engagement of dancers in broad social themes. Since 2004, Ferro has travelled regularly to Brazil with her husband and research partner, Meredith W. Watts, to document and research the traditional *Bumba-meu-boi* folk festivities in the Northeastern state of Maranhão.

"We brought a remarkable person here with perspectives on global dance and the arts," said Greg Jay, director of the Cultures and Communities Program. "She has embodied many of our goals, including creating interdisciplinary collaborations across campus and advancing community engaged scholarship."

Working with former dance department chair Marcia Parsons, Ferro helped develop and for many years taught "Rituals and Cultures", a non-performance class which enlarged general education requirement offerings in dance. She also helped to create a position in world dance.

In a stand-out partnership, documented in the spring, 2012 issue of the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, Ferro worked with the Walnut Way Conservation Corporation, to create dances based on oral histories gathered from neighborhood residents. Their stories were collected by UWM anthropology students under the supervision of Cheryl Ajirotutu, an associate professor in Anthropology who is also associate director of Cultures and Communities. The collection of the histories themselves was an element in a larger, multi-year partnership between UWM and Walnut Way that focused on broad efforts to reclaim the neighborhood's vibrant history and culture.

Ferro's work was performed by her UWM students at the Walnut Way community center as well as at several local schools and on campus. "What evolved," wrote Ferro in the article on the project, "was a rich multigenerational, multiracial interaction between dances and the community members whose stories were expressed through dance."

Photo Caption: UWM dance students perform a work choreographed by Simone Ferro. The work was based on stories of migration to Milwaukee told by residents of the Walnut Way neighborhood.

Simone Ferro, Chair, Department of Dance, Peck School of the Arts

Photos by Meredith Watts

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