

IN THIS ISSUE

2: UWM PAGE Fellow Named

3: Portrait of an Artist

6: Become a Friend of CC

Bricks, Mortar and Social Justice: Lessons Learned in New Orleans

“We challenged ourselves to create our own definition of social justice and to lay out our own theory and a set of guidelines for how architects can use their skill set to foster social justice in the 21st century.”



The late Professor Harry Van Oudenallen (seated, center) gathers in New Orleans with students from UWM and several other universities during a service learning program on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

In the fall of 2009, the late and much-loved Professor of Architecture Harry Van Oudenallen led his first group of students to New Orleans as part of UWM’s program on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina—a journey that would challenge their thinking about architecture and urban planning.

As a laboratory for an architecture “studio” course, post-Katrina New Orleans offers up a powerful setting for teaching and learning about race, poverty and urban policy. In fact, that is the goal of the UWM in New Orleans program, which provides students from a number of disciplines short residencies that combine class work with service learning.

In his course description, Van Oudenallen said, “The studio is predicated on the idea that extended, intense student site investigation is best served when the sites

are challenging, when the program has a strong social component and when the student’s senses are at full throttle, allowing them to comprehend the seemingly incomprehensible.”

During that trip—the first of three to date—Van Oudenallen’s students looked at opportunities for rebuilding in the devastated Lower Ninth Ward. First, they connected with the community, interviewing former residents and meeting with neighborhood leaders. They walked the city for a sense of its look and feel. They learned about Gulf culture and climate. And they exchanged ideas about return and restoration with students from several other universities as they carefully examined the complex natural, social and economic forces that laid waste to the lives of so many.

The course culminated in the creation of a master plan and site designs, which today are in the hands of Ward leaders.

The following year, a group of 25 students returned to New Orleans with Van Oudenallen and Professor Arijit Sen on the first leg of a traveling design studio class course focusing on rebuilding and

Continued on page 5



FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Greg Jay

Advising changes at CC

What do students need to know? There seem to be as many answers to this question as there are experts to ask. The traditional Liberal Arts curriculum still has many advocates, for it offers knowledge and skills flexible enough to deal with the amazing pace of change in our globalizing and digitalizing world. Yet other new areas call out for deserved attention, from Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies to curricula focused on the environment, technology, health care and new media arts. Students feel the pressure to pursue a course of study that "leads to a job," but also want to grasp the fundamentals of core areas such as physics, mathematics, philosophy and art history (to name a few).

Given this shifting landscape and these competing claims for attention, students need a strong advising system to help them negotiate the many pathways leading to the baccalaureate. The structure of our Certificate Program is itself useful to many undergraduates, since it maps out coherently their selection of required General Education courses. But even then, students often have questions about which courses to choose, how these fit with their major and how this all helps prepare them for the world after college. At Cultures and Communities, we have restructured our advising components in order to provide students with more assistance in making smart decisions.

CC invites students to bring us their questions. As Senior Director, I will meet with students to discuss their plan of study and their choice of courses. I welcome their calls and email, as well as inquiries from academic advisors on campus. Students who are



curious about the program or who are considering a formal declaration of the Certificate can work with Letters and Science certificate coordinator Kate Powers (*left*), who is happy to help (powersk@uwm.edu; 229-6686). Kate is a new ally for our team and already has made a terrific

contribution in managing our growing number of students and classes. We also benefit from the advising expertise of Susan Fields in African American Student Services, who can be reached at fields@uwm.edu or 229-4195.

Together with the rest of UWM's extensive network of advisors and counselors, the CC staff looks forward to assisting students in the design of their 21st century education.

Greg Jay
(gjay@uwm.edu)

UWM doctoral student named PAGE fellow

I was led to writing through my community work and I owe a huge debt to the community that I come from, for nurturing my voice in many ways.



Ching-In Chen, a UWM doctoral student in creative writing, has been named a Publicly Active Graduate Education Fellow (PAGE) by Imagining America, a national organization committed to engaging artists and scholars in public life. Chen was one of just eleven graduate students selected for the PAGE fellowship, which fosters public

scholarship in the arts, humanities and design.

Chen, who has a strong history of integrating her community engagement with her academic work, exemplifies the goals of the fellowship and of Imagining America (IA).

IA's UWM chapter was established in 2009 with leadership from the Cultures and Communities Program and the Center on Age & Community.

Chen is the author of *The Heart's Traffic* (Arktoi/Red Hen Press, 2009) and as she calls herself, "a multi-genre, border-crossing writer." The daughter of Chinese immigrants, she is a Kundiman and Lambda Fellow and a member of the Macondo and Voices of Our Nations Arts Foundations writing communities. She is a graduate of Tufts University and earned an MFA in Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts from the University of California, Riverside.

As a community organizer, Chen has worked in the Asian American communities of San Francisco, Oakland, Riverside and Boston, as well as helped organize the third national Asian Pacific American Spoken Word and Poetry Summit in Boston. She is also the co-editor of *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence within Activist Communities* (South End Press, 2011) and *Here Is a Pen: an Anthology of West Coast Kundiman Poets* (Achiote Press, 2009). Her poetry has been featured at poetry readings across the country and has won several honors.

"My commitment to my community work has always fed my writing, but I think that the way that it has done that has changed as I've matured as both a community organizer and a writer," she says.

"I was led to writing through my community work and I owe a huge debt to the community that I come from, for nurturing my voice in many ways. I do feel, however, that there is no one way to be a socially engaged poet, and I'm interested in new ways of being just that in the world. To me, that means giving back to my community in whatever ways I can."



Artist Raoul Deal with neighborhood youth and a mural installed in the Walnut Way community garden. The mural was created as part of the Watershed: Art, Activism and Community Engagement project.

Raoul Deal: Portrait of an Artist

Raoul Deal is a senior lecturer and artist-in-residence for the Cultures and Communities Program. Here he shares his thoughts on art, community building and social change.

You define yourself as a community artist. What do you mean?

I like art that makes communities strong. While it might be said that this is true of all art, it can't be true for all sectors of society, since not everybody has access to art and its institutions. As a community artist, that is the conversation I want to engage in. How can art be used as a tool for social change? What happens to art when communities matter, and what happens to communities when art matters?

I saw how consumerism propagated unhealthy cultural values among these young students and I saw their fury against an unfair social condition reflected in their behavior at school.

You came to Milwaukee after a professional art education in Mexico. How did your experiences there influence your emerging identity as an artist?

I lived in Mexico for ten years and did my graduate work there. I began my career as an art educator, first at the Universidad Veracruzana and later, as an instructor in a rural arts development project called "Taller de Creación." Children from the village in which we were working were asked to interview their parents and grandparents and bring back stories to tell. Through the oral

histories they collected, the children were able to piece together a long-lost creation tale. The project became more than just an art workshop; it became a forum where children developed a strong sense of cultural identity.

My experiences in the Taller de Creación introduced me to the power of art as a tool for community building, and they shape my approaches as an artist and an educator to this day.

As an art specialist and a substitute teacher for the Milwaukee Public School, you've said you had some eye-opening experiences.

As a fluent Spanish speaker, I was often sent to English as a Second Language classes and to schools that had large Latino populations. I saw how the "American Dream" was in full view, but very much out of the reach of most students. I saw how consumerism propagated unhealthy cultural values among these young students and I saw their fury against an unfair social condition reflected in their behavior at school. But I also found that some students who were difficult to manage in the classroom were thrilled when I called them in as helpers during recess. Many found an outlet in art class that they did not have in their other classes.

You were the recipient of a Community University Partnership grant from the Cultures and Communities program.

Yes, the grant supported the development of a course called Multicultural Installation Art as well as an art exhibit mounted in partnership with the United Community Center's Latino Arts

Continued on page 4



A Walnut Way resident models a T-shirt designed for the Watershed project.



Neighborhood youth, led by Deal, participate in a silkscreen workshop in the Watershed project.

INC. I taught the course in my studio where students worked with me on their own installation projects addressing issues of cultural identity.

Based on this experience, I became Artist-in Residence for the Cultures and Communities Program, and as such, I continue to involve my students in community art projects. As we explore and interact with residents and institutions in different neighborhoods and learn about the lives and personal experiences of those who live there, the students often become engaged not only as artists but also as citizens.

How did your work with Walnut Way, an organization representing one of Milwaukee's oldest African American neighborhoods, influence your thinking about making community art?

When I first began working with Walnut Way, I was asked to make artwork based on interviews of neighborhood elders conducted as part of a service learning project. I was intrigued, in part because of my experiences in the "Taller de Creación" in Mexico, which also utilized oral histories. Working with the same themes that the service learners had used in their oral history projects, I created artwork for the Walnut Way Neighborhood House. It was partly through a shared passion for working for social justice, and the belief that art should be integral to that process, that I became friends with many of the Walnut Way neighbors.

Community art works best when artists take the time to build relationships with individuals and institutions in the neighborhoods where they are working. This means that the commitment goes beyond the life of the project and the scope is larger than the art itself. It also requires thoughtful listening to community partners as they speak about their vision.

Those observations seem to be typified in a recent project that also involved Walnut Way.

Yes, the Watershed: Art, Activism, and Community Engagement project that I co-created with Nicolas Lampert, an art instructor here, aimed to draw attention to water issues in Milwaukee and beyond with silkscreen workshops for children, neighborhood art projects and an exhibit at UWM.

Sharon Adams, Walnut Way Director, gave voice to what became our guiding theme for the silkscreen workshops. She said that when she returned to Walnut Way after living outside of Wisconsin for many years, she discovered that very few of the neighborhood children had been to the lake. They wouldn't know, she explained, that when we swim in the ocean it connects us to our common humanity—a larger world. And "access", she said, "leads to stewardship." So that phrase became the focus for the Walnut Way workshops. I took participants to photograph and draw along the lake, and they created silkscreens based on these images. The prints were then incorporated into a mural now installed in one of the neighborhood gardens.

What motivates you to continue making art rooted in the community?

Visual art has the special power to give form to our imaginations. In communities where there is no art, it's hard to imagine a better world. Those voices are stifled and we are weaker as a society. I have seen the change in neighborhoods such as Walnut Way and at the United Community Center, where art is valued, and integral to life. These are the stories that inspire and drive me to continue to work with art in community settings.

Read more about Raoul Deal: Portrait of an artist at: cc.uwm.edu/news/raouldeal.cfm

New Orleans continued

social justice. “My students are learning to be socially conscious,” Sen said. “I’m trying to help them understand how to build, when to build and the politics of building.” His students enthusiastically took up that banner, with one group declaring in their design report: “We challenged ourselves to create our own definition of social justice and to lay out our own theory and a set of guidelines for how architects can use their skill set to foster social justice in the 21st century.”

“It struck me...that one of the things we can do as a positive contribution in New Orleans is teach.”

The class sparked lively debates, according to graduate student Deepika Srinivasan. “It was an eye-opener for all of us. It was really uncanny to be there,” she said, recalling the striking image of an endless field of tall grass populated by a lone house—the still barren landscape of the Lower Ninth Ward—yet framed by the skyline of downtown New Orleans. “There were many questions raised about historical and contemporary disparities and about whether we were encouraging people to live in environmentally dangerous places.”

Among the products of that course was not only heightened awareness of the cultural and political contexts in which all architects and planners ultimately work, but also designs for a new Katrina Memorial, requested by residents, which will be presented to the New Orleans City Council.



A design for a bridge, gathering space and memorial to the victims of Hurricane Katrina created by students in Van Oudenallen's New Orleans course.

Building on Van Oudenallen's legacy, students traveled to New Orleans in October to explore the politics of urban disaster. They continued to learn how histories, culture, tradition and the voices of citizens can be incorporated into their design process. And this year, they had the benefit of working with New Orleans high school youth who offered their perspectives on understanding the community. At the same time, UWM students connected with the high schoolers to help with some of the technical aspects of preparing for college. “It struck me,” Sen said, “that one of the things we can do as a positive contribution in New Orleans is teach.”

For more about the UWM in New Orleans program, please check neworleans.uwm.edu

To learn about a new interdisciplinary research track called “Building-Landscapes- Cultures,” jointly offered by UW-Milwaukee and Madison on the physical, cultural and social aspects of the built environment, go to blcprogram.org

CUP grants build relationships with community partners

Community organizations and UWM groups are invited to apply for the 2012-13 Community-University Partnership grants. The grants support limited term projects and events that promote partnerships between UWM and the diverse communities it serves.

CUP grant collaborations emphasize cross cultural literacy, local/global perspectives on social and artistic issues, the relationship of science to culture and society, environmental initiatives, gender issues, community development, immigration issues and religious pluralism. They also focus on providing service learning and other community engagement opportunities for UWM students.

All applications that meet these criteria will be considered; however, funding priority this year will be given to grants that emphasize creating healthy communities in the city of Milwaukee. For example, projects may address such issues as health disparities, health education, healthy aging and improvements in quality of life that respect the environment.

Informational workshops for prospective applicants will be held this spring on and off campus. For more on the grants, including workshop dates, guidelines and past awardees, check www.cc.uwm.edu/cup, or contact Dr. Cheryl Ajitotutu, 414-229-2298; yinka@uwm.edu.

Become a Friend of Cultures and Communities!

Your charitable gift helps the Cultures and Communities program to promote diversity and civic engagement by:

- Bringing noted authors, artists, educators and community leaders to campus for important public events.
- Providing scholarships for programs like UWM's Winterim in New Orleans, which offers students from a variety of disciplines research and service learning opportunities.
- Strengthening partnerships with local non-profit organizations where service learning students learn first-hand about problems related to social justice, the environment, education, immigration and other critical issues facing the community.

YES, I would like to be a Friend of CULTURES AND COMMUNITIES

Names(s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please accept my gift of \$ _____

Check payable to the UWM FOUNDATION
(Memo: Cultures & Communities Fund 2000)

MasterCard VISA _____

Account Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Please return this form to:

Office of Development – Ann Marie Santora, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413.

Your gift is tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Thank you for your support!

[LNEWSL]

Institute for Service Learning earns grant support

The UWM Insitute for Service Learning recently received two grants that will focus on mentoring and career development for middle and high school age youth.

The Institute for Service Learning (ISL) has been selected for funding by the University of Wisconsin Program Innovation Fund. This institutional fund encourages collaboration between UW-Extension divisions, the UW Colleges, UW institutions and/or community partners. ISL's project is entitled "You Are Here: Creating a web-based online map to guide youth-focused career development in the southeastern Wisconsin water industry." Fifty eighth-to-twelfth graders enrolled in Waukesha or Milwaukee County 4-H programs will work with UWM service learning students to develop a web-based guide to engage youth in careers in the water industry.

The collaborative AmeriCorps*VISTA grant held by the Institute for Service Learning, the Volunteer Center of Milwaukee and Lead To Succeed has been renewed for a second year. Administered by

Wisconsin Campus Compact and the Corporation for National and Community Service, the grant provides manpower and support to the three recipient organizations. The VISTA volunteer will work with area non-profits and businesses as well as UWM service learning student mentors on programs that foster civic engagement and job skills development—with a focus on careers in the water industry—for Milwaukee and Waukesha area high school students of diverse backgrounds.

In addition to ISL, project partners include: CommUNITY Connections Consulting, LLC, 4-H Youth Development Milwaukee & Waukesha, The Milwaukee Water Council, UWM-School of Freshwater Sciences, UW-Whitewater, UWM School of Continuing Education, Great Lakes WATER Institute WATER Education Outreach and UW-Parkside.

For more information contact Dr. Julianne Price, Director, Institute for Service Learning, 414-229-2348, ISLinfo@uwm.edu .

Contact Cultures & Communities

Cultures & Communities UW–Milwaukee Holton Hall G36 2442 East Hartford Ave. Milwaukee, WI 53211

Tel: 414-299-5960 uwm.edu/cc Deborah Fagan, Editor dfagan@uwm.edu