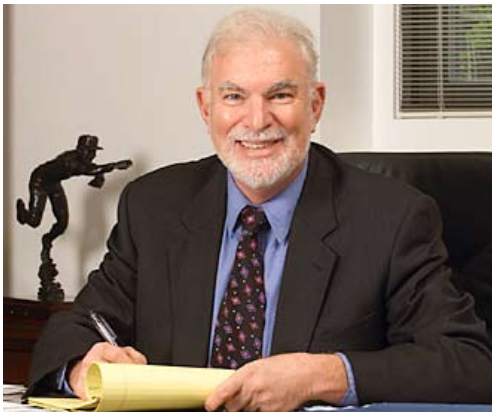


# Building BRIDGES

At Chico State

A newsletter celebrating diversity at Chico State and in us all + Fall 2007



Chico State President Paul Zingg is on board for a diverse university.



Ballet Folklorico Mexico Lindo dancer, one of the many acts at the Multicultural Night event.



Uraci Mathews and Erica Flores, two Cross Cultural Leadership Center employees.

## Diversity efforts vital to president

By Jackie Donnelly

Colleges and universities around the world have one common goal: commitment to success in learning.

In order to better achieve this goal, Chico State is making efforts to increase diversity and raise awareness of its importance to help students feel like they are at their home away from home.

Since President Paul Zingg's arrival in February 2004, significant efforts have been made to make Chico State a place where all students want to be; whether people come from the Bay Area, Southern California, across the nation or abroad. Many colleges seek to make campuses more diverse because it helps students prepare for the work force upon graduation.

"Diversity is critical to a quality education," he said.

Zingg's hard work is paying off slowly. He has been named to the American Council on Education's Commission on Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Equity and has played an active role in recruiting students from different backgrounds. The result is a 25 percent increase of minority applicants this year compared to fall 2006.

"Diversity enables us to be a better and more interesting place," Zingg said. "It certainly prepares our students, in particular, for the world beyond Chico

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**"Diversity enables us to be a better and more interesting place."  
-Zingg**

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State and the world beyond the North State."

As Chico is one of the least diverse regions of the state, change can occur in both small and big ways to reflect the cultural differences of Chico State students.

The university could have a variety of cultural food available to students on campus and sports such as cricket and hockey, said Vishal Joshi, a computer science graduate student. This will help open people's eyes to the cultures around them.

"All students should get together and share their culture so we can

[click to continue to page 4](#)

## VIEW MORE STORIES IN THIS ISSUE

Diversity Corner .....	2	Diversity in Many Shapes .....	4
Cross Cultural Leadership Center .....	2	Multicultural Night .....	5
Not Your Average Joe .....	3		



## DIVERSITY CORNER

By Tray Robinson,  
Diversity Coordinator

*"We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color."*

*-Maya Angelou*

Imagine if we lived in a homogeneous environment where everyone was the same, and there were no differences in physical appearance, thought, language, sexual orientation or faith - a world where there was no acknowledgement or celebration of our individual or collective identity.

Chico State's mission statement and strategic plan defy such a mentality with hopes of providing our students with an educational experience, both curricular and cocurricular, which encompasses a multicultural perspective. If our students graduate from this wonderful institution without the tools to both interact and function in a diverse society, we have failed them.

## Makeover breathes life into center

By Amanda Dugan

Most students don't think about the Multicultural Center on a daily basis. Malcolm J. McLemore, a fourth-year student from Tacoma, Wash., described it as, "a place you walk by either to get a job or a mocha at the coffee shop."

To get more students to think about diversity and create an active dialogue, Chico State is transforming the Multicultural Center into a more dynamic place called the Cross Cultural Leadership Center.

The center's role on campus is to provide students who come from more diverse cities to feel comfortable and get academic assistance.

Charles Carter will be heading the project as the director of the CCLC and envisions the center as a mini-version of the student union, he said.

The center is a discussion place and promotes cross-cultural awareness, diversity training and opportunities for students to educate each other on different political, social and cultural issues, Carter said.

"Our focus is to develop a relationship across culture lines so that people feel that anybody can come in there and be welcomed," Carter said. "They have an opportunity to gather regardless of



Students using Multicultural Center (L to R) Malcolm J. McLemore, Charlenne Valere and Ebhodaghe Esoimeme.

what or who they represent."

The CCLC will open in Meriam Library Room 172. Cultural organizations like the Pan African Union, American Indian Club and Movimiento Estudiantal Chicano de Aztlan, better known as MEChA, will also have offices in the center.

Student advisers will be available to help student organizations flourish and promote diverse programs, Carter said. The center will have computers, Internet access, couches, meeting rooms and resources for students to use.

"We want the Cross Cultural Leadership Center to be a model," Carter said. "Chico State values diversity and will work to the end of this earth to empower the multicultural nation."



Chico State students (L to R back row) Sierra McQuiston-Lopez, Erin Coady, Breezon Ware, Ebhodaghe Esoimeme, Malcolm J. McLemore, (L to R front row) Charlenne Valere, Giavonni Blake and Amy Lewis.

## Not your average Joe celebrates diversity in Chico

By Sean Duchala

A casual stroll and twinkle in his eye generates youthfulness when Joe Person Sr. walks by. His soft speech projects wisdom, and his experiences have led him to a genuine understanding of the world.

Throughout his 78 years his eyes have seen many things change in society for African-Americans, and most of those changes were because of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The amount of work Person put into a three-year project to honor King would seem overwhelming to a person fresh in the work force, let alone someone in their late 70s.

Person lead a group that convinced the city to name a street after King and construct a monument in his honor. As chairman of the Chico Community Coalition, Person spent countless hours planning and creating a way to celebrate diversity in the community.

The coalition is composed of community members who volunteer their time to create positive change in the community. The coalition struggled to find a proper way to honor King, Person said. It took the leadership of Person to unite the group and focus its energy in the right direction.

Chico State English Professor Lynn

Elliot contributed to the efforts and witnessed Person's planning strategies.

"He was the central spokesperson," Elliot said. "He put so much time and effort into it...Joe did great things for Chico."

Initially, the coalition wanted to change the name of a street downtown, but because many of the street names have historical importance to Chico, the task proved impossible, Person said. The coalition, the Chico Area Recreation and Park District, and the Chico City Council eventually came to an agreement on a site for a monument in honor of King.

They also agreed to officially change Whitman Avenue to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway.

"Dr. King was one of the two greatest people in this century," Person said, adding that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the other. "It means something to be a part of it."

Once the Chico Community Coalition decided on its vision, Person was left with a laundry list of tasks to make this vision become a reality. Monuments are not cheap, so Person began the process of fundraising. The coalition conducted petitions for the monument and sent letters to all of the people who signed them, Person said.

"This is how we received almost one-third of our funds," Person said. "One woman came to us at the organization and handed us \$5."

The responsiveness from the community exceeded Person's expectations, he said. People contributed what they could, and in the long run every little bit



Person visits his contribution to the community.



Person reunites with his dream, the monument of King.

helped.

Person was in the restaurant business for the majority of his life, and barbecuing is a passion of his, he said.

With Person behind the grill, the coalition held barbecue dinners at the Neighborhood Church of Chico, the Trinity United Methodist Church and the Dorothy Johnson Center. These dinners helped raise the rest of the money necessary to pay for the monument.

On Feb. 19, 2007, Person stood in front of a large crowd at Community Park and unveiled the statue of King. He also announced the official name change of Whitman Avenue to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway.

Determination, passion and family kept him going through those years of work, he said. Now that his mission is complete, he is looking forward to having some time to relax.

"It took two or three years out of my life, but I'm not complaining," Person said.

## Diversity includes many shapes, sizes, backgrounds

By Jackie Donnelly

If students at Chico State were asked about diversity, many would think of racial or ethnic differences.

But it extends to much more than that, said Lauri Evans, Disabilities Support Services coordinator.

“Our understanding of diversity on this campus is not just limited to race or economic income or socio-economic status,” Evans said. “It includes disability, sexual orientation and so many other things that make us diverse, because it is not a color issue, it is a perspective issue.”

Blindness, deafness and physical limitations are also qualities of diversity. A lot of misunderstanding and social isolation happens when people see someone in a wheelchair or someone who is deaf, she said.

DSS helps students with disabilities to overcome barriers that their disability creates. It also promotes awareness and provides education about the need for students with disabilities to achieve the same academic and personal goals as any other student.

A study conducted by DSS showed that one in 11 Chico State students reported having a documented disability.

One tool that raises awareness and creates opportunities for students with disabilities to interact with other students is the use of special events.

“In the past, there has not been a lot of opportunity for people with different backgrounds, different ethnicities or different perspectives to interact,” Evans said.

One event to encourage this interaction was a Disability Simulation Fair held Oct. 4 in the Bell Memorial Union Room 210. The interactive fair gave students the opportunity to experience what it’s like to have a disability.

One man sat in a wheelchair in the George Petersen Rose Garden and tried to move about in the gravel, Evans said.

This showed him the difficulties of having a disability that requires the use

of a wheelchair.

Events such as this encourage the community to become comfortable with people with disabilities and accept diversity within our society.

Students with disabilities are no different than any other student. One of the most important ways to help others

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“...it is not a color issue, it is a perspective issue.”  
-Evans

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become more aware of the issues that relate to people with disabilities is education, said Laura McLachlin, a professor in the recreation and parks management department.

“As a society, we need to adopt an attitude of inclusion whereby all people have equal opportunity to employment, education and recreation,” McLachlin said.

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## Diversity efforts: Zingg highlights campus awareness

*continued from page 1*

connect and share knowledge,” Joshi said.

Chico State hosts special events that do just this.

Conversations on Diversity occur from noon to 1 p.m. every other Wednesday. The event has a different theme or focus each year, and this year the focus is how students can deal with hate and fear.

The overall goal of Conversations

on Diversity is to learn from each other’s differences. These events increase awareness about specific topics such as racism, sexism and ignorance within the community.

While Chico State offers such events, Zingg highlights that there is much more to the university’s diversity efforts.

“It is the programs we bring to Chico Performances, plays that our fac-

ulty decides to produce, the list of guest speakers and visitors that come to the campus,” Zingg said.

The faculty and staff at Chico State greatly support efforts toward diversity on campus and throughout the community, he said.

“We want Chico to be a place where all students feel they can succeed and particularly be comfortable,” Zingg said.

## Multicultural Night embraces traditions worldwide

By Sean Duchala and Amanda Dugan

In the Bell Memorial Union there wasn't an empty seat in sight for the ninth annual Multicultural Night. As fluorescent images of the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben and the Egyptian pyramids projected on the walls, ethnic sounds and dance filled the BMU auditorium with their presence.

The event, sponsored by Associated Students and the Multicultural Affairs Council, was a showcase of cultures from around the world featuring dance, poetry and music. It was similar to a talent show but without the element of competition.

"The focus is to expose the campus and community to other cultures and other traditions for other cultures to appreciate," said Amber Harris, the commissioner of Multicultural Affairs.

The dance segment of the night was highlighted by the Ballet Folklorico Mexico Lindo and Chico State Capoeira.

Brilliantly colored dresses lit up the stage as the Ballet Folklorico performers twirled to mariachi music. As the second dance began, the women were joined by men wearing vibrant traditional garments. Feet flared as the dancers



Ballet Folklorico's second performance sends the audience into a twirled frenzy.

exhibited displays of speedy footwork, shuffling across the stage.

As the mariachi music faded to silence, the sound of a Brazilian atabaque drum pulsed as the Chico State Capoeira took its position on stage. The performers encouraged audience members to clap to the beat, helping to provide an authentic atmosphere. An on-stage battle ensued with performers mixing aspects of dance and martial arts together.

Drew Calandrella, vice president for Student Affairs, and wife Aziza both enjoyed the variety of dance performances and were surprised by the large turnout of people.

"We are enjoying it a great deal," Calandrella said.

Inspirational poems, ranging in topic from immigration across borders to inner-city youth overcoming adversity, touched each person in attendance.

Another poem took a different approach to a love conflict as Jorge Acosta described emotions from a male's perspective. Spoken in Spanish, the emotion in Acosta's voice and body language captivated the crowd.

A skit entitled "Boyz II Men" explored the transformation of three black males from different parts of the United States and how they grew from youth to mature men.

Heads bobbed to the different cultural rhythms that were displayed in each performance. The music accompanying the Chico State Afro-Caribbean dance class invoked emotion from every beat of the drum, chant and cowbell. The music portrayed the spirit of



Chico State Capoeira martial art dancers show off their skills.

struggle, work and inspiration.

Through their performances, students shared pieces of their culture with the audience at Multicultural Night.

"Some people may not have the opportunity to study abroad or travel places," Harris said. "They can actually get that here at Chico State."

The evening was a learning experience for every culture. It provided students and community members with a chance to explore and identify with other cultures from around the globe.

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