

Building

# BRIDGES

At Chico State

A newsletter celebrating diversity at Chico State and in us all • Fall 2008

## Diversity grows despite challenges

By Rachel Christie

Even before Sandra Flake, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, came to Chico State more than a year ago, both she and the university were working hard to promote diversity.

Chico State's commitment to diversity efforts was one of the major appeals for Flake, who has spent her career working with students of all demographics at other universities.

"The endorsement of diversity at Chico State is not just a message but an action," Flake said.

The dedication to creating awareness and appreciation of diversity stems directly from President Zingg and trickles down through the faculty, staff and students.

The commitment from the administration is stronger than at other universities, Flake said.

However, creating a campus where diversity is embraced and flourishes comes with obstacles.

A major challenge that universities face in terms of diversity is "making sure that it is always present," Flake said.

Flake is responsible for implementing the President's Strategic Plan for

the Future. Diversity plays a key role in the plan, and the administration places a high value on enriching the education experience. Tactics to do this include promoting study abroad, enrolling

**"The endorsement of diversity... is not just a message but an action."  
-Sandra Flake**

international students, and promoting international studies.

Flake also plans to hire faculty and staff from varying demographics and experiences. Universities are especially challenged to make sure that students and staff of various backgrounds view higher education as a viable career opportunity.

There are many career choices that are more lucrative, but working at a university is very rewarding, Flake said.

The personal reward of working with diverse students has been an influential part of Flake's career. She began her career working at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee as a faculty member, teaching English in the Equal

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Sandra Flake, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.



Multicultural and Gender Studies hosted the presidential debate.



[Click here to view a performance from Chico State Multicultural Night.](#)

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

*This column is designed to showcase student work that celebrates diversity and raises questions about our world.*

### *The Dawning of a New Day* By Malaysia C. Anderson

As I stand here today  
I want to tell you that everything in life will be okay  
That all you want will come your way  
And that even when times are hard, there's going to be a brighter day  
As I stand here  
I want to tell you that you will conquer all of your fears  
And that, for each of us, success is near  
As I stand right here on this imaginary stage  
I want to tell you that we're just turning a page  
In the book called life  
And that we'll arise from the oncoming strife  
But as I stand and look out at all of you  
I realize that what I want to say may not necessarily be true  
Our individual actions will determine which path we take  
And that is not my, nor anyone else's decision to make  
I can't do the thinking for you  
Because that task has been especially placed upon you  
I don't want to lie and say that life won't be a fight  
That everything will be all right  
And that someone will be there to comfort you through the night  
Because I just might be wrong  
What I will tell you to do is to be strong  
And when every fiber of your being feels like giving up  
Hold on when there is nothing left to do but hold on  
Because quitting, quitting is never the answer  
And whether you want to be an astronaut, garbage man or a go-go dancer  
It's not going to be easy  
Because this world that we live in, believe you me  
Does not give out freebies  
Always, Always stay true to your self  
Regardless of anyone else  
And let no one steal your heart's joy  
Because it is precious and not a child's play toy  
We all have the ability to achieve  
Despite what others may believe  
Each one of us can succeed  
Whether it be slow, or with great speed  
Now you may never see me again  
But that's okay  
Because when my face is gone from your mind  
It's my words that will hopefully stay  
Remember this moment as, the dawning of a new day  
In spite of what others will say

## Emerging collaboration gets off the ground

By Jamie Kim

Not even a year has gone by, but the Multicultural Community Collaboration Committee — a new partnership between Chico State faculty members and professional leaders in Butte County — is already leaping toward progress.

Kui-Hee Song, associate professor in the social work department and leader of the Multicultural Community Collaboration Committee, describes the purpose of the collaboration as a way to promote social and cultural integration of ethnic minority communities in Butte County.

"Right now, it's a lot of networking and linking to existing community agencies," Song said. Such agencies include the Hmong Cultural Center, African American Family Service Center, Native American Federal Labor of Indians Agency, and the Butte County departments of Behavioral, Social and Employment Services.

The Multicultural Community Collaboration Committee is already working on planning the first Multicultural Community Collaboration Festival, scheduled for May 2009, Song said.

The main objective of the one-day festival is to showcase each ethnic minority group, Song said. There will be an opening keynote, a poster session of community service agencies, art, and music and dance performances. Additionally, healthful eating habits will be promoted by a presentation of healthy ethnic food preparations.

The long-term goal of the Multicultural Community Collaboration Committee is to create the Multicultural Community Collaboration

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## Academic program offers new points of view

By Rachel Christie

The Center for Multicultural and Gender Studies (MCGS) offers an academic curriculum that challenges students to put what they are learning into practice through discussions, community service, and activism.

Dr. Tracy Butts, director of the Center for MCGS, has taught courses in African American literature, English, and multicultural studies since arriving at Chico State in fall 2001.

"This is a major that gets students to think about who they are and where they are in the world," said Butts.

Courses in multicultural studies, women's studies, managing diversity in organizations, and sexual diversity offer the opportunity for students to learn about U.S. culture from a global perspective.

One goal of the program is to stop ignorance and misconceptions.

"We often think that diversity only matters to people of color," Butts said.

But the center works to support the notion that diversity benefits

everyone and individuals are all intertwined culturally.

"You can't hold a person down without holding yourself down," Butts said.

The program has been evolving at Chico State for more than 40 years. It currently consists of two options within the major and eight minors.

Currently, there are 29 students majoring in MCGS.

One of the most popular areas of study within the program is women's studies, which focuses on the idea that not all women are the same.

"We try to see that our students recognize that there is no such thing as the generic woman," said Elizabeth Renfro, a women's studies professor.

MCGS also offers students many opportunities outside of the classroom. The faculty of the program are involved with student organiza-

tions like the Associated Students Women's Center, where many serve as unofficial advisers.

Students are required to complete an internship focused on service or activism, Renfro said. Students intern with organizations like Rape Crisis Intervention, Planned Parenthood, and The Chico Boys and Girls Club.

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**"You can't hold a person down without holding yourself down."  
-Dr. Tracy Butts**

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"We see our internships as being about volunteerism and service, and that is part of our commitment to diversity," said Renfro

An important part of MCGS courses is how the concepts and ideas relate to life outside the classroom.

"We deeply and sincerely believe that the more you learn about the diversity of the human experience, the better citizen of the world you are," Renfro said.

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## Flake works to implement administration's plan

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Opportunity Program. Flake's efforts dramatically increased the retention rate of African American and Hispanic students.

Students of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds bring varying perspectives that enrich the classroom experience, Flake said.

Later, Flake worked with southeast Asian students at the University of Minnesota on a student retention program, which placed students

in classes according to skill levels. This program featured a curriculum tailored according to students' specific needs.

The University of Minnesota continues to use many of the ideas that Flake helped implement. The retention program still exists today, under the title Commanding English.

Flake's long experience and appreciation for diversity has been a pivotal part of her life.

"Diversity is part of how we define ourselves," Flake said. "We live in a diverse world, and we need to embrace it."

Interacting with people of different backgrounds is important to Flake. Those experiences allow her to learn from others and continue to be a student herself.

"I want to leave a legacy of a university that is comfortable and accepting of diversity," Flake said.

## Celebration promotes acceptance of differences

By Anna Heidecker

Hispanic, Chicano, Mexican, Xicano, Latino, Mexican-American — all unique subgroups of individuals acknowledged during Hispanic Awareness Month.

The Chico State Office of Diversity, in conjunction with Chico State, hosted an array of programs during September and October, showcasing different elements of Hispanic culture.

“[Hispanic Awareness Month] is an opportunity to spotlight the history and contributions to our society, culture and way of life Hispanics have provided,” said Dr. Chela Mendoza Patterson, director of the Educational Opportunity Program.

Realizing the differences among subcultures is vital to understanding the Hispanic culture as a whole.

“We’re not all this cookie cutter version of one stereotype,” Patterson said.

It is important to recognize that there are differences in geographic areas, economic, and education attainment levels, Patterson said.

Highlighting the complexities of

each subgroup was done through many different means, including musical entertainment, comedy, educational conversations and film.

Susan Green, professor of Chicano studies and history, attended Conversations on Diversity.

The program series gave Hispanic students an opportunity to feel in-

cluded on a campus where the vast majority of students are white, Green said.

“It’s important for students to think of the Hispanic experience as the American experience rather than something foreign or something different,” Green said.

Even though America is not a homogenous country, change rarely takes place without resistance.

While there has been a desire to repress the diversity of the United States, the forces of diversity will chal-

lenge that, said Paul Lopez, professor of sociology.

“This country is becoming much darker racially, and this is a global issue,” Lopez said. “As Mexico and Latin America continue to develop economically, the surplus will only continue to migrate north.”

The current demographic picture

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“[The recognition] of the contributions of Latinos... has long been overdue.”  
-Paul Lopez

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of Hispanics in the United States (47 million) is hard to miss on its own, and future predictions of Hispanics being 102 million by 2050 will only further change the racial and ethnic picture in the United States, Lopez said.

“[The recognition] of the contributions of Latinos to the United States has been long overdue,” Lopez said. “Americans need to make it a priority to learn more about their southern neighbors.”

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## Community group seeks social integration

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Center on campus.

Aside from organizing, coordinating, and seeking resources and funds to further support the inter-professional collaboration, the center will work to increase emphasis on diversity in undergraduate and graduate programs, Song said.

“A lot of ethnic minorities are segregated from mainstream society,” Song said.

In Butte County, about 15 percent of the population is ethnic

minority groups.

“We have not acknowledged or recognized their existence and presence,” Song said. “It is important for the professional human service field to be aware of and sensitive to cultural values, practices, behaviors, and attitudes for effective innovation and services.”

In order to provide the most effective services, the organization will direct outreach efforts to ethnic minorities in the community, Song said.

By working on “cultural competency” policies, procedures, and services of various agencies and organizations, the center plans to welcome more diversity into the Chico State and Butte County communities.

For more information about the Multicultural Community Collaboration Committee, please contact:  
Kui-Hee Song, PhD,  
Associate Professor  
ksong@csuchico.edu  
530-898-5590

## Student organization finds its place on campus

By Jessica Mindt

Respected, connected, and affirmed. These are the words that Program Director CC Carter lives by each day as he walks into the new home of the Cross-Cultural Leadership Center (CCLC) at Chico State.

Meriam Library, Room 172 is the newly-renovated space for this well-known campus organization. With a name change, new furniture, and a fresh coat of paint, this student center welcomes all students through its efforts to build a strong Chico State community today and for the future.

On a campus that is filled with numerous places to socialize with friends, meet new people, or study, students coming or going from class each day can now easily access the CCLC.

"The CCLC recently had our grand opening for the new location," said Erica Flores, CCLC program coordinator. "This was a historical moment for us, our campus, and our community. The gala spoke volumes to all of us that have invested in this new direction."

The CCLC first opened in fall 2007. It was previously located

in the University Center near Sylvester's Café. Prior to 2007, the CCLC was called the Chico State Multi-Cultural Center.

Diverse student organizations provide a chance for all students to find a group to connect with. Affiliating with groups is how students identify themselves, whether by joining social or cultural organizations.

CCLC Program Director Carter and his team have created a place at Chico State that welcomes students of every culture and ethnicity to take part in its programs and opportunities.

While the CCLC is a new center and has a new location, the CCLC's mission is not a new idea. The center is a place for students to get involved, have engaging conversations, and find a place to feel accepted.

"Every day students walk through this door and you can see in their eyes and through their actions that they want to be connected, they want to be a part of what goes on in here," Carter said. "We are creating a structure that will include our para-professional interns and our student volunteers in a way that can progressively bring impact to the world."

Funded by the University and the Associated Students, the CCLC provides couches, study rooms, and both PC and Mac computers for students to utilize daily. The walls are covered in artwork and creative displays of diversity and culture throughout history. Flores even contributed



CCLC Director CC Carter interacts with students in the new CCLC.

to the center with her paintings of Anne Frank and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that hang on the walls.

Jayne Jones, a new student to the center this semester, always feels welcome in the CCLC.

"I think more people would come here if they knew about the CCLC and knew they could hang out here whenever they want," Jones said.

Jones wants to become a role model for other students who know nothing about the center or diversity issues.

What started as Carter's and Flores' vision for diversity at Chico State years ago is now a reality.

"We now have doors to walk through," Carter said. "Our home here on campus provides a way for us to create a much-needed community that takes all of us to build. This is what we hope people will take from this center- it is about building community, having conversations with each other, and creating a lasting change."



A sign welcomes students to the new location of the CCLC in the Meriam Library.

## Faculty seek connection with potential students

By Jamie Kim

College is a time when students can explore diverse subject matters, experience new things, and meet people from all walks of life.

In order to foster these elements, many Chico State faculty and staff members work to create a vibrant environment that enables students to grow.

“Education is better when students come from different backgrounds,” said David Waddell, professional-in-residence in the journalism department. “It improves the conversation.”

Each semester, Waddell travels to diverse high schools and community colleges in California to build relationships with potential Chico State students.

Maintaining these connections and supporting students through the transition into college is a vital component of such outreach efforts.

“When students first get here, we’re kind of their first point of contact,” said Shannon Douglass, outreach and retention coordinator for the College of Agriculture.

Aside from traveling to high schools, college fairs, career nights, and community colleges to talk to

students about the opportunities for careers with a degree in agriculture, Douglass helps students with everything from deciding which courses to take, searching for loans, finding internships, and hunting for jobs in the agriculture field.

It is important to give students the support that allows them to become part of Chico State, Douglass said.

Paul Villegas, director of the Math Engineering Science Achievement Program (MEP) believes that supporting students through matriculation is a key to retaining students who “become active members of a learning community.”

In addition to providing financial support, academic advising, and tutoring for students, MEP has distributed the most scholarship money from a single source in the history of Chico State.

The scholarship, called the Computer Science Engineering Technology Award, is funded by the National Science Foundation.

“We want everyone to be part of what we’re producing here,” Villegas said. One requirement for the scholarship application is to demonstrate a financial need, which allows many first-generation students from diverse ethnic backgrounds to qualify.

Another method in promoting a diverse campus population is reaching out to specific



MEP students work together during a tutoring session.

cultural organizations.

Gary McMahon, director of the Business Resource Center at Chico State, travels to the Mooretown Rancheria in Oroville to work with three tribes to create an early college program at Oroville High School.

“The Mooretown tribe has 60 students in college,” McMahon said. But only one of those 60 students chose Chico State as their college.

McMahon plans to find out what Chico State could have provided those students who chose other universities.

“When I go over there, I’m showing them that somebody at Chico State cares,” McMahon said. “A diverse student population creates the rhythm of our university.”



Paul Villegas, Gary McMahon, Shannon Douglass, and Dave Waddell reach out to prospective students.

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**WRITING AND EDITING**  
Christine Amorose, Rachel Christie, Anna Heidecker,  
Jamie Kim, Lori Mankin, Jessica Mindt, Emily Whitehead

**DESIGN AND PRODUCTION**  
Rachelle Baratto

**PHOTO CREDITS**  
Laura Brown

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**  
Tray Robinson, Diversity Coordinator

Please contact Tray Robinson at [TRobinson@csuchico.edu](mailto:TRobinson@csuchico.edu)  
with any questions or comments.