



# The Community College HUMANIST

A Tri-Annual Publication of the Community College Humanities Association

## Fall Regional Conference Highlights

Plan now to attend your regional CCHA conference! Pre-registration discounts and conferences rates on hotels won't last much longer. See you there!

### Central Division

The Central Division has reduced its price and cut one day out of the schedule. The conference is now scheduled for Oct 11-12, 2002 and the registration fee is \$75.

For that extremely reasonable price, attendees receive two breakfasts, two luncheons, and an evening reception. The two keynote speakers are Dean Phillip R. Certain of the University of Wisconsin--Madison, and Agate Nesaule, author of *A Woman in Amber*.

Session topics include:

Exploring the Occult in the Humanities  
Postmodernism and Indeterminate Problems  
Jewish Culture  
Chinese Film and Culture  
The Ethics of Sustainability  
Writing on the Boundary

The conference will host a special plenary session to discuss the issues of building and maintaining CCHA membership.

The deadline for hotel reservations (at the special conference rate) is Sept. 19th. For more information, visit the CCHA website: <http://ccha-assoc.org>. Pre-registration discounts and conferences rates on hotels won't last much longer. See you there!

### Southern Division

The Southern Division's conference will be in historic Charleston, South Carolina, Oct.31-Nov. 2, 2002. Keynote speakers include Harlan Green, Archivist for the Special Collections at the College of Charleston, and Rosemary Brana-Shute, Professor of History, College of Charleston. In addition, two post-conference tours of Charleston's historic district have been scheduled. Session topics include:

History, MERLOT, the Classroom and Online Instruction  
How to Create a Competitive Literary Magazine  
Poverty and the Power of Knowledge  
Bubba to Buddha: Finding the Hero Within  
Cuba Here, Cuba There: Conflicts in Cuban Fiction

The pre-registration conference rate of \$125.00 for CCHA members is due by or before Oct. 10, 2002. Registration includes a reception, a luncheon, a continental breakfast, and refreshments at the conclusion

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## New Summer Research Seminar at Library of Congress

The Community College Humanities Association, in partnership with the American Historical Association and the Library of Congress, has received funding from The Ford Foundation to hold a Summer Research Seminar from July 6, 2003 to August 1, 2003 at the Library of Congress on "Trans-Oceanic Exchanges."

Twenty community college faculty members will be competitively selected to participate, pursuing individual projects that explore topics in the study of trans-oceanic exchanges. The major topic areas include, social and political organization (littoral societies vs. national authority over seas; the relationship of ports to one another as well as to their hinterlands; informal maritime communications; the gender division of labor in trans-oceanic exchange; the emergence of a politically conscious Black diaspora), economic implications (regulation of trade, currency, and migration; transgression of such regulations; origins of 'globalization' in trans-imperial networking of colonizers and colonized); culture (seaside sites of hybridization; ports, beaches, tourism; religions as sponsors of trade; hybridization of rituals); environmental and scientific issues (effects of climate and weather patterns on trans-oceanic exchange; ecology; biological exchanges).

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## From the Editor

*The Community College Humanist* is seeking reader contributions. Consider the following:

Brief book reviews: What DID you read last summer?

What books are you piling up now for spring break or next summer?

Brief description of a classroom strategy that worked.

Faculty achievements (come on, brag! or brag for someone else!)

News stories

Guest opinion columns

September 11th: One year later

Include your name, address, phone number and your title and college. *The Community College Humanist* reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, style and space.

Send contributions to Dr. Stacey Donohue, Editor, *The Community College Humanist*, Humanities Department, Central Oregon Community College, 2600 NW College Way, Bend, OR 97701 or via email at sdonohue@cocc.edu.

## Teacher Preparation Project in High Gear!

Initiatives to build collaboration between humanities faculty and faculty teaching education courses are actively underway at the fourteen community colleges participating in CCHA's *Advancing the Humanities in Teacher Preparation Programs at Community Colleges* project. Supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the project's goal is to strengthen the role of the humanities disciplines and humanities faculty in community college programs for future teachers.

### Action Plans Come Alive

At this point in the two-year project, participating college teams have made signifi-

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## Guest Editorial: How Can We Promote the CCHA?

Robert Sessions  
Professor of Philosophy  
Kirkwood Community College

In our CCHA Central Division we are suffering a declining membership. Why is this decline occurring, and what can we do about it? And how worried should we be?

From talking with my colleagues at Kirkwood Community College and with other CCHA colleagues around the country, I believe there are multiple causes, and that we are in for a rather long-term struggle for members that will require some changes in how we operate.

A half decade ago we had a fairly strong Iowa state contingent at CCHA biannual meetings; and many of my Iowa CCHA colleagues also attended regional and national meetings. Today Kirkwood is virtually the only Iowa school represented at our regional or national meetings. Furthermore, whereas we used to bring ten or a dozen faculty and administrators to regional meetings, this year I had to work very hard to convince three or four colleagues to attend. Why our decline?

One contributing factor is economic. During the last half of the 1990s the Iowa state coffers were so full our legislature, in its infinite wisdom, decided to give nearly a billion dollars back to taxpayers. During the past two years nearly every state agency and program has been cut substantially because of state budget shortfalls. Last year Kirkwood had three rounds of state imposed budget cuts. During the fat 90s many of our faculty could get school support for attending two conferences per year; now we are down to one...at most.

We have also had a substantial change of the guard at Kirkwood. Most of our CCHA regulars have retired and our recent humanities hires are reluctant to join CCHA. And while the travel budget is one factor, I believe other factors are more important.

Many of my new colleagues want to be active in their primary disciplinary organizations and they view CCHA as an interesting but secondary enterprise. If something has to give, they would omit CCHA rather than the MLA, APA, AAR, or AHA.

Most centrally, I believe my colleagues are hesitant to join CCHA because they are not convinced that we are a top-notch professional organization. They believe that they will hear more stimulating, rel-

evant, and in-depth presentations and discussions at their discipline-specific conferences than at CCHA.

Given these perceptions and realities, what can we do about falling CCHA membership? For one thing, I think we can do a better job of selling ourselves. While there have been mediocre sessions at CCHA conferences, I believe the quality of presentations has improved over the years to the point where many discussions and papers would stand up nicely with what one can hear at single discipline conferences. Furthermore, at least I have found, on balance, that CCHA conferences have more material that is relevant to me professionally than I typically find at the APA. Perhaps most significantly, the networking with colleagues I have done through the CCHA has been more valuable to me than contacts I have made through philosophy conferences.

I also believe that we could do much to make our conferences more attractive to prospective members. With some effort we could deal with budgetary concerns by contacting colleagues at nearby schools and offering to car pool and to share accommodations, at least for regional meetings. We can be sure that everyone knows they are encouraged to submit proposals for presentations and that they understand how helpful and non-threatening CCHA presenting is. We can organize our conferences to maximize discussion time so that presenters have significant time to get responses to their ideas. At the same time we can strive to improve the quality of the presentations by insisting that only high-quality proposals be put on the program.

Finally, I believe we could take a cue from our social science colleagues and regularly poll our members (and prospective members) about what they would like to see on our programs. I realize this suggestion, like others I have made, will require added effort by current CCHA members, but given our current down cycle I believe such efforts are exactly what is needed. Organizational memberships often ebb and flow and I believe our current drop in members reflects more a convergence of factors than the death knell of our organization. I see this as a time of rebuilding CCHA by making our events more attractive to prospective members (especially to younger faculty), by improving our efforts to reach out to our colleagues, and by significant improvements in our communications within and without the organization.

## “Crossing Borders” at the Library of Congress: Research Seminars for Community College Faculty

Emily Sohmer Tai  
Professor of History  
Queensborough Community College

In July of 1999, twenty-nine community college faculty from institutions across the United States traveled to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. to take part in a ground-breaking research seminar entitled “Globalizing Regional Studies: Crossing Intellectual, Institutional, and International Borders and Strengthening Area Studies through World History.” Two years later, in July, 2001, a second seminar, “Explorations in Empire: Colonialism, Imperialism, and Post-Colonialism,” would be hosted at the Library for twenty participating community college faculty.

Both seminars, together with a third, scheduled to be offered at the Library of Congress in July of 2003, have been the fruit of a partnership forged by the Community College Humanities Association with the Library of Congress, the American Historical Association, and The Ford Foundation. This unprecedented four-way alliance has been aimed at integrating faculty at America’s community colleges into The Ford Foundation’s visionary research and funding initiative, “Crossing Borders: Revitalizing Area Studies.”

“Crossing Borders” was launched as a Ford Foundation project in 1997 to increase support for scholarly teaching and research that moved beyond the “area studies” that became the norm in American education during the second half of the twentieth century. “Area studies” has organized courses of study and research as particularized investigations of specific regions, languages, and time periods within the boundaries of such traditionally-conceptualized disciplines as literature and history. Yet, if American students are to be adequately prepared to negotiate the challenges of a “dramatically changed,” “increasingly interconnected world,” as writers at the Ford Foundation have put it, architects of Ford’s “Crossing Borders” initiative believe it vital that academic research and training venture into previously neglected areas of cross-disciplinary research, and more fully consider aspects of world history and culture. The purpose of the “Crossing Borders” project has accordingly been to encourage research that not only creatively merges methodologies utilized in the humanities with those of the social sciences, and forges beyond tradi-

tional “borders”.

It quickly became apparent to those at the highest levels of Ford’s “Crossing Borders” initiative that any effort to reconfigure American education would need to involve faculty teaching at the nation’s community colleges, where, in the field of history alone, nearly 50% of all U.S. students complete disciplinary requirements for undergraduate degrees in the Liberal Arts. “Globalizing Regional Studies” and “Explorations in Empire” were conceived as seminars in which community college faculty would come together with scholars in the field of world history from the nation’s most distinguished research institutions, to exchange ideas, receive guidance, and be allowed time many might otherwise have been hard-pressed to find in full teaching schedules, as they pursued research and worked to develop new curricula in the fields of world history, literature, and culture. The content and design of these seminars were conceived by staff and scholars affiliated with a number of professional associations, particularly the American Historical Association and the World History Association, and by leaders, such as Jerry Bentley, Professor of History at the University of Hawaii and editor of the World History Association’s scholarly publication, the *Journal of World History*, Arnita Jones, executive director of the AHA, Carolyn Brown and Les Vogel at the Library of Congress, and David A. Berry, executive director of the Community College Humanities Association.

Faculty participation began with a competitive application process coordinated by the Community College Humanities Association. Community college faculty were invited to propose projects relevant to the seminar themes, that would yield scholarly papers, course development, and/or community education in issues related to world history, culture, and global interaction. (In 1999, the Catholic University of America hosted seminar participants; in 2001, George Washington University.) Seminar funds also defrayed the cost of books, while the American Historical Association coordinated the additional distribution of articles and pamphlets on an extensive and rigorous reading list that participants were asked to complete before their arrival.

Once in Washington, seminar participants spent mornings applying their readings in lively lecture and discussion ses-

sions, led by Jerry Bentley and a distinguished community college faculty member (Charles Evans, Northern Virginia Community College, “Globalizing Regional Studies;” Nadine Hata, El Camino College, “Explorations in Empire”), and joined additionally, each morning, by different expert faculty guests, who spoke on such topics as Environmental History (John McNeill, Georgetown University, “Globalizing Regional Studies,”), World Migration (Patrick Manning, Northeastern University), the Mongol Empire (David O. Morgan, University of Wisconsin-Madison, “Explorations in Empire,”), or Gender in History (Margaret Strobel, University of Illinois-Chicago, who discussed varied aspects of gender in world history as a speaker at both seminars.) Each of the guest speakers who conducted morning sessions offered a broad introductory overview to one aspect of research and teaching in world history and culture that could provide a conceptual framework for faculty looking to bridge the gap between the focus of area studies, and the broader sweep of a global curriculum. Afternoons and evenings were spent pursuing independent research within the rich and varied collections of the Library of Congress, and as visiting scholars at the host university. Seminar participants were expected to produce one article-length discussion of their research of publishable quality, and were expected to return to their home campuses and communities prepared to disseminate information based upon their research and seminar interaction.

“Globalizing Regional Studies” and “Explorations in Empire” brought together community college humanists engaged in a wide spectrum of projects—from studies of women in Iranian culture and the labor movements of south America, to the British experience in colonial India; from post-colonial literature and film, to the history of slavery in the Caribbean, and the legal histsicipants in both seminars have been uniform in praising the intellectual energy that arose from interchange with visiting faculty and with one another, and the way in which the associations formed in these seminar weeks enriched scholarship, teaching, careers and professional fellowship. “The content of the courses that I teach has been expanded in some way by each of the presenters,” commented Jane England, a professor of his-

## Crossing Borders, continued from page 3

tory at Denton, Texas, who came to study the role of media images in supporting U.S. imperialism in the Philippines at the "Exploration in Empire" seminar. "The entire experience infused new life into my course content and continues to inspire my intellectual and professional activities." "I worked harder in those three weeks than ever before...often falling asleep after one," commented Bryan Hull, a professor of English and Modern Languages at Portland Community College in Portland, Oregon, who came to the seminar on "Globalizing Regional Studies" to study international film as representative of the "tensions and contradictions that exist in a global arena." "One of the most positive aspects of the seminar," Hull added, "was to work with a group of...fellow participants concerned about global issues." Carol A. Keller, assistant Professor of History at San Antonio College in Texas, who came to "Explorations in Empire" to create a website tutorial on the Mongol Empire, also praised the exchange with other seminar participants, commenting, for example, upon the "long-term benefits" her teaching in the field of American history derived from exposure to the research that George Edwards, professor of English at Tarrant County College, and participant in both seminars, presented on Zora Neale Hurston. Closing presentations in which each of the seminar participants shared their findings were, Keller believed "among the highlights of the seminar."

Scholarly exchange at seminars seeded further collaborations and even friendships among seminar participants. Susan

"... "Crossing Borders" ... has afforded an unprecedented opportunity to exceed intellectual boundaries and soar to new heights."

Mary Piering  
Pikes Peak Community College

A. Fisher, who came to "Globalizing Regional Studies" to study contemporary women's writing in a global context has collaborated with three other members of her seminar, Jacqueline Ellis, Maryam Habibian, and Emily Tai, on conference panels and publications, to present her continued work on global women's writing, even though Fisher's career has recently taken her to a new position at Medgar Evers College, City University of New York. "Globalizing Regional Studies...got me back into my research, and I have continued to be productive ever since," Fisher says. And Fisher is one of several who reported significant professional gains as a result of her seminar involvement. Fisher was one of nine "alumni" of "Globalizing Regional Studies" who was invited

to participate as a commentator on sessions in a subsequent phase of Ford's "Crossing Borders" project, a three-day interdisciplinary congress, "Interactions: Regional Studies, Global Processes, and Historical Analysis," held at the Library of Congress February 28-March 3, 2001. The research pursued by John Ricks, Division Chair of Social Sciences and Education at Middle Georgia College, on water scarcity and global competition for water at the seminar on "Globalizing Regional Studies" has led to invitations to speak at civic clubs, and even to appear on local television. Mary Piering's research on post-colonial literature at the seminar on "Explorations in Empire" enabled her to secure grant funding to establish a lecture/discussion series on the literature and film of the Indian subcontinent at her institution, Pike's Peak Community College in Colorado Springs. And it is Piering who sums up the seminar experience for many, including this writer: "The month-long opportunity to think, read, and deliberate with access to the Library of Congress collections was a rare and wonderful experience," Piering writes, praising faculty organizers, David Berry, Jerry Bentley and Nadine Hata, for demonstrating "an exemplary commitment to community college faculty." For faculty participants at the Library of Congress seminars, the Ford Foundation's "Crossing Borders" projects has afforded "an unprecedented opportunity to exceed intellectual boundaries and soar to new heights."

## Teacher Prep, continued page 2

cant progress on activities in the Action Plans they developed with their assigned mentors at CCHA's National Teacher Preparation Conference held last March in Washington, DC. These include developing linked courses and learning communities for humanities and education courses, developing recruitment materials for high school students and incoming freshman, establishing Future Teachers Clubs that emphasize the humanities, and creating humanities modules to incorporate into education courses.

The teams have also been preparing for site visits this fall from their mentoring teams. Mentoring services from faculty at community colleges with existing teacher preparation programs are a key component of this CCHA project. The site visits provide significant opportunities for mentors to address

administrators and faculty on the critical role community colleges must assume in preparing the country's future teacher corps.

The project stresses the importance of providing prospective teachers with strong backgrounds in the humanities.

Upcoming project activities also include teacher preparation presentations at CCHA's regional conferences and preparations for the second national conference to be held March 7-8, 2003 in New Orleans, LA.

### Future Opportunities

CCHA is submitting a proposal to NEH to conduct a second round of Advancing the Humanities in Teacher Preparation Programs at Community Colleges. If your college is interested in applying to participate (pending proposal approval), email Diane U.

Eisenberg, project co-director ([eaconsul@erols.com](mailto:eaconsul@erols.com)) requesting an Application Form.

For copies of CCHA's recent Special Issue of *The Community College Humanist* devoted to teacher preparation in the humanities, email LeaLea Boze-Cale, project assistant, ([ccha1123@aol.com](mailto:ccha1123@aol.com) or [ccha\\_org@msn.com](mailto:ccha_org@msn.com)).

## Plan Ahead: OAH Annual Meeting

2004 OAH Annual Meeting  
Marriot Hotel, Boston, Massachusetts  
March 25-28, 2004

The 2004 Organization of American Historians convention program will be organized around the theme of American Revolutions. That choice is informed both by the location of the meeting in Boston, the epicenter of the movement for American independence; and by its occurrence on the fiftieth anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. The use of the plural "Revolutions" in the conference theme is intentional. The incoming president, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, and the program co-chairs expect the program to explore a wide variety of political, social, cultural, intellectual, economic, diplomatic, military, technological, and environmental transformations in American history--as well as movements that sought and failed to bring about such transformations. We also expect the program to examine counter-revolutions and anti-radical backlash and to include sessions and papers that emphasize continuity, challenging the "revolutionary" character of particular moments, movements, or trends in American history. Finally, we welcome sessions that explore the relationship of the United States to various sorts of revolutions in the rest of the world, as well as those that examine revolutions in the interpretation of American history. In this spirit, the committee invites proposals for panels, workshops, roundtables, and performances, on-site and off-site.

In addition to proposals that explore the conference theme, we welcome submissions that explore other issues and themes in American history.

Complete session proposals must include a chair, participants, and, if applicable, one or two commentators. All proposals must include five collated copies of the following information: (1) a cover sheet, including a complete mailing address, email, phone number, and affiliation for each participant; (2) an abstract of no more than 500 words for the session as a whole; (3) a prospectus of no more than 250 words for each paper or presentation; and (4) a single-page vita for each participant. Proposals sent with fewer than five collated copies will be returned. No email or FAXed proposals will be accepted.

We also welcome volunteers to act as chairs or commentators to be assigned by the program committee.

All proposals must be postmarked no later than **15 January 2003** and sent to:

2004 Program Committee  
Organization of American Historians  
112 North Bryan Avenue  
Bloomington, IN 47408-4199

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### New Summer Research Seminar, continued from page 1

The Co-directors of the seminar are Jerry Bentley of the University of Hawaii and Nadine Hata of El Camino College, and the research director is Lester Vogel of the Office of Scholarly Programs at the Library of Congress. An impressive group of visiting scholars will lead seminar sessions, including Karen E. Wigen, Duke University; John E. Wills, Jr., University of Southern California; Karen Ordahl Kupperman, New York University; Peter Wood, Duke University; Colin Palmer, Princeton University; Alan Karras, University of California at Berkeley, and John R. McNeill, Georgetown University.

If you are interested in learning more about the 2003 Summer Research Seminar at the Library of Congress and/or receiving an application, please contact David A. Berry at 973 877-3577 or e-mail at [dberry6@earthlink.net](mailto:dberry6@earthlink.net). **The deadline for receipt of completed applications is Friday, December 13, 2002.**

## Women Writers' Website Seeks Contributors

The E-Journal *Women Writers* is seeking book reviews and critical essays on/about women authors as well as fiction and poetry by women writers.

*Women Writers* has been online for over one year, and in that time has received critical acclaim from visitors around the globe. The site features critical debate about women authors, and provides a forum for publication for new contemporary women writers.

Check out the site at: <http://www.womenwriters.net> before submitting samples. Length may vary, though most are between 200 and 1500 words. Submissions that make use of Internet resources will be particularly well-received.

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## Digital Publications Library Available

The League for Innovation in the Community College's Digital Publication Library, developed in partnership with Lulu Press, is comprised of the most critical and important publications published by The League. The subscription-only Library includes significant topics such as leadership, distance education, technology in education, as well as other topics critical to success in today's community college environment. With noted writers and educators such as K. Patricia Cross, Mark David Millron, Cindy L. Miles, Gerardo E. de los Santos, Alfredo G. de los Santos, and Terry O'Banion, this publication's package provides your institution with instant online access to a wealth of vital and timely information. Users can download and personalize material via notes and highlights, even creating their own individualized study resource or guide. For more information, contact David Spain, DPL Project manager, at (919) 678-9900, x114, or visit the website: <http://league.lulu.com/about.html>

## More Fall Regional Conference Highlights

### Southern Division, continued from page 1

of the conference. The conference will be held at the Charleston Premiere Riverside Hotel (register by Sept. 27th, 2002 for conference rates).

For more information, visit the CCHA website and follow the links to the Southern Division: <http://www.ccha-assoc.org>

### Eastern Division

New York City is the venue for the Eastern Division conference, Oct. 24-26, 2002. Keynote speakers include media studies scholar Sut Jhally, whose talk is titled "The Media & the New Racism: Why America Can't Think Straight About Race"; poet and educator Marie Ponsot, whose talk is titled "A Walk on the Bridge: The World of the Scholar and the Community at Large"; and journalist and professor Donna Gaines, whose talk is titled "From Streetmart to Booksmart: How Community College Education Saved My Life." Session topics include:

- Vive la Resistance! Collisions of Class and Culture within the Community College Classroom
- Chicks in Confinement: Cinematic Images of Incarcerated Women Caught Up in the Web: Digital Debates and Dialogues
- How Are We Doing? Obsessing over Assessment
- Collision of Cultures: September 11, 2001, through the Eyes of Community College Students

The pre-registration conference rate of \$190.00 for CCHA members is due on or before Oct. 1st. The conference will be held at The New Yorker Hotel: let them know you are a CCHA member and your rates will be \$169 for double occupancy, \$189 for triple occupancy.

For more information, visit the conference website: <http://www.ncc.edu/dptpages/english/conference.htm>

### Southwestern Division

"We Love to Tell the Stories: Sharing the Humanities" is the theme of the Southwestern Regional conference, which will be held at the Arlington Resort Hotel

and Spa in Hot Springs, Arkansas, Oct. 31-Nov. 1st. The keynote speaker is Dr. Elliot West, Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Arkansas and a specialist in the social and environmental history of the American West. Friday's luncheon will feature John Two-Hawks, a unique musical performer. Session topics include:

- Ties That Bind: Teaching the Connection Between the U.S. and Cuba  
"The Home Boys Are Here!"--African American Baseball and legend in the Arkansas Delta  
Let's go to the Movies: Music of the Silver Screen
- 9/11: Cultures Collide and the Stillness of the Humanities  
Incorporating Human Rights Education into the College Curriculum  
The Art of Experience: A Chinese Approach to the Fine Arts

The pre-registration conference rate of \$150.00 for CCHA members is due on or before October 11th, which is also the deadline for the hotel conference special rate of \$69/\$79.00. For more information, visit the CCHA website and follow the links to the Southwestern Division: <http://www.ccha-assoc.org>

### Pacific-Western Division

The theme for the Pacific Division conference, Nov. 21-23, 2002, is "Rewriting the City: Complex Histories, Contested Memories." Several speakers are scheduled: devorah major (lower caps are intentional), San Francisco Poet Laureate; Joseph Rosa, San Francisco MOMA Architectural Curator; Juana Alicia, muralist; Carey Perloff, Director of the American Conservatory Theatre; and several prominent Bay Area filmmakers who will show their films and explain how they can be used in humanities courses.

Special events include an architectural tour with Paul Duscherer; a tour of the San Francisco City College Diego Rivera mural and library facility; and an American Conservatory Theatre presentation of *Lackawanna Blues* by Ruben Santiago.

The pre-registration fee is \$150.00 for CCHA members, and the conference will be held at the Westin St. Francis in downtown San Francisco for the excellent rate of \$139.00 a night. For more information, visit the CCHA website and follow the links to the Pacific-Western Division: <http://www.ccha-assoc.org>.

## Join CCHA at the MLA and the AHA

CCHA sponsored events at the:

### MLA Conference

New York City, December 27-30:

- ◆ Saturday, December 28 - Special Tour  
**Metropolitan Museum of Art**  
Fifth Avenue and 81<sup>st</sup> Street  
**Meet at 5:00 p.m.**  
followed by dinner  
(\$70 - limited to 20)
- ◆ Sunday, December 29 - Panel Session  
**"Outerboroughs: Teaching Language and Literature,"**  
1:45 p.m. -3:00 p.m.

Moderator: Geoarg Scheper, Community College of Baltimore County (MD)

Presenters:

- **"Literature for the Dominican Community in the Bronx"**  
Marianne Pita and Sharon Utakis  
Bronx Community College (NY)
- **"Living in a 'Mixed Salad': Outerborough Student Ethnographies"**  
Christine Atkins and Elizabeth Counihan  
Queensborough Community College (NY)
- **"Teaching and Learning from Non-Traditional Students"**  
Susan Jacobowitz  
Queensborough Community College (NY)

### AHA Conference

Chicago, IL, January 3-5, 2003:

- ◆ January 3 - Panel Session  
**"Rethinking Cities and Public Spaces"**  
2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Chicago Hilton - Private Dining Room 2

Moderators: George L. Scheper, Community College of Baltimore County (MD)  
David A. Berry, CCHA Exec Dir, Essex County College (NJ)

Presenters:

- **"The City and Subversive Activity"**  
Jan Ziegler  
Black River Technical College (AR)
- **"Jim Crow and the Evolution of the Black Community in Dallas"**  
Curtis Thomas  
Richland College (TX)
- **"City Planning in Philadelphia"**  
Madeline L. Cohen  
Community College of Philadelphia (PA)

## Not What I Had in Mind

*This article originally appeared in The Chronicle of Higher Education, April 19, 2002.*

By CHRISTINE RAUCHFUSS GRAY

It took me about three years to get over my resistance to teaching at a community college. After the anxiety and genteel poverty of plowing through graduate school and the dissertation, I had sworn to myself that my student loan would be paid off by the salary I would earn from a position at a research university.

I was not about to hand over my teaching experience and scholarly expertise to the students at a two-year college. Once sequestered at a research university, I would, in my fantasy, have a relatively manageable schedule: I would be assigned a teaching load of two courses a semester. I would continue my research in African-American drama before 1930, attend conferences, hold intense discussions with my students, and eventually direct dissertations.

But what is the old saying? Man plans and God laughs. Such was my situation, nearly eight years ago now, when God laughed.

A friend had told me about the opening. I needed an income while I wrote my dissertation. The college, only 12 miles from my house, had a good reputation -- for a community college. It would be a temporary position, I thought. My colleagues who had ventured to universities in Ohio, Utah, and California would understand that my teaching at a community college was only for the money and only for a year or two. Besides, I was tired of being a gypsy scholar, teaching at various institutions to pay off that student loan. So I applied.

Because I didn't give much thought to what the search committee thought, I was calm and collegial during the interview. Consequently, the interview went very well. One interviewer, I remember, asked if I would leave the college once I had completed my doctorate. Because I needed money, I lied, assuring him that I had always dreamed of teaching at a community college. My plan, however, was to take those three letters -- Ph.D. -- to a "real" institution.

When the English department offered me the position, I immediately called several of my former graduate professors. Although wary and a bit protective of his junior scholar, my dissertation director advised me to consider my sense of the department and the people with whom I'd be working. He also suggested that I think about the quality of life I would have off campus. The main advantage was that I would be able to remain in Baltimore, a city in which I had become very comfortable. Searching for a university position would almost certainly mean I would have to move.

Other professors, however, told me directly that, if I took the position, I would have to explain at job interviews for university positions why I had been at a community college. Three years tops, I was told, was the length of time I should stay at a two-year college before I would be discredited by those working in my research area.

I had heard horror stories about working at a two-year college: I would live in servitude, teaching five sections of composition each semester to weak and indifferent students, sitting on numerous committees, and fighting off administrative interference in the classroom. I would have to be on campus five days a week, for nearly eight hours a day. My life would resemble that of an office worker.

It took only a year at the college to prove my expectations false. Although I did, and still do, have a five-five teaching load, it has not been the horror I anticipated. Granted, it can be intense, but I've become used to it. I've never been assigned to teach five composition courses in one semester; in fact, no one in our 20-member department has. Instead, I request, and usually get, my ideal schedule: two sections of developmental writing, two sections of writing about literature, and one section of descriptive grammar. No class has more than 20 to 25 students. Although I do spend a considerable amount of time marking papers, I am rarely on campus more than five hours a day.

My students also are not what I had expected. Some are the first in their families to attend college; some take two buses to campus after arranging caregivers for children and elderly parents. Most of them work to pay their tuition. If they drive, their cars are most often paid for with salaries from fairly menial jobs. Few are soft or spoiled by wealthy parents. Several are poor. Some are pregnant and unmarried; others have parents or partners in prison. One is a nightclub stripper. Academically they range from those who were Advanced Placement and honors students in high school to those who are still mystified by commas, let alone semicolons. Most are bright, good-natured, curious, and eager to learn. They seem driven in a way that I did not find in students at universities where I taught as an adjunct.

As would be the case with a position at any institution, I suppose, committees are a part of the package. I've found the ones I serve on, however, to be purposeful. Stuff does seem to happen as a result of committee work: students are tracked for their progress, outcomes assessments have been put into place, the Writing Center has been strengthened, the administrative structure has been revamped.

"At times my students ask why I am teaching at a community college when I have a doctorate.

That question troubled me for several years. Now I ask them, Why shouldn't I be?"

Christine Rauchfuss Gray  
Community College of Baltimore

In the classroom, I do have autonomy. The department chairman does not monitor us; instead, he assumes that we are experienced teachers who know what we are doing. In disputes with students, he sides with the instructors.

In several ways, teaching at a community college differs from a university. We are hired for our ability to teach, to engage, to challenge -- not for our skill in research. When my book, Willis Richardson, *Forgotten Father of African-American Drama* (Greenwood Press, 1999) was published, the American Library Association wrote that it was an "outstanding academic book." My salary increase that year, however, was based more on my teaching evaluations and service than on my scholarly achieve-

Continued from page 7  
ments.

Speaking of salary, mine is, I think, very good and comparable to that of colleagues at universities.

I learned that I had been awarded tenure when a colleague congratulated me in the hallway one afternoon. I had no hand-wringing to endure.

My initial fear that my colleagues would be mediocre dissolved in my first few weeks at the college. Then and now, they are involved in completing dissertations, presenting papers at national conferences, and writing books and articles. I've found a truly collegial atmosphere, one without competition, departmental backbiting, and politics.

All is not rosy, of course. The college's library is not designed for scholarly research, at least not in early African-American drama. The Library of Congress is, however, only 35 miles away. Recently I was invited to be a member of a seminar at the National Endowment for the Humanities, where I will have a study carrel for 16 months. And I also have access to the library at the Johns Hopkins University, which is only seven blocks from my house.

Another downside is that I am not able to select the texts for my courses; instead, the department's textbook committee chooses five or so books from which we then choose our composition texts and literature anthologies. Occasionally, I would like to teach an upper-level elective course. Aside from the grammar course, all of the classes I teach are required, so at times students seem to resent having to take the class.

Perhaps the greatest conflict for me personally was how my colleagues in my discipline would regard me. Before my first semester at the community college, I had had a paper accepted for presentation at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association. I attended the conference as a faculty member of the community college. I vividly recall covering my badge with a scarf during the entire conference. When some fellow research-

ers contacted me about what I was doing, I waffled, quickly dismissing my job at the college as temporary.

Over the past eight years, my dreams of teaching at a university have diminished. I realize that I am now, for the most part, out of that loop. But if by some miracle I were suddenly offered a teaching position at a research university, would I seize it?

I think not. At my community college, I realize daily, at times hourly, the immense importance of working with my students. I have learned that in many cases, they depend on the college to give them hope for a future, to add a structure and stability to their lives, to allow them to see that a change in their lives is possible. I see now that community colleges are not competing with universities or trying to be pseudo-universities; community colleges and universities are different animals, serving different populations and having different purposes.

It turns out I'm committed to the mission of community colleges and was all along. Through them, education is possible for those who might not otherwise attend college because of finances, poor academic performance, overlooked abilities by former instructors, and low self-confidence. Rather than theorize on race, class, and gender discrimination as I did in graduate seminars, I now encounter daily victims of it. Rather than leading a graduate seminar, as I had once dreamed of doing, I am in the trenches, and my work is valuable to me personally and, I believe, to those who enter my classes each day.

At times my students ask why I am teaching at a community college when I have a doctorate.

That question troubled me for several years. Now I ask them, Why shouldn't I be?

*Christine Rauchfuss Gray is an associate professor of English at the Catonsville campus of the Community College of Baltimore County. She earned a Ph.D. in 1995 from the University of Maryland at College Park. She recently paid off her graduate-student loan.*

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