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Fall 2005

## Difficult Dialogues Proposal

Clark University

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# Difficult Dialogues

Dialogue is a conversation in which people think together in relationship.

— William Isaacs

## Difficult Dialogues Proposal Clark University

As presented by Clark University to the Ford Foundation, in the fall of 2005.

### *Encouraging Discourse Across Differences*

*Difficult Dialogues: Encouraging Discourse Across Differences*, submitted jointly by the International Development, Community, and Environment (IDCE) Department and the Higgins School of Humanities at Clark University, builds on Clark's characteristic strengths and educational orientation to create a *culture of dialogue* on campus. The program will encourage and facilitate conversations across differences in religion, political orientation, gender, culture, race, class and ethnicity-within and beyond the classroom-ensuring a climate of academic freedom. Clark's *Difficult Dialogues* will be a series of trainings, curriculum development and public events that will provide experiences of and develop tools for effective dialogue. With the support of the University administration, this will become an ongoing initiative within Clark's undergraduate program and may become a model for similar academic institutions. Given the University's commitment to these aims, our faculty resources and our scale as a small research university in a city of great diversity, we are well-situated for the *Difficult Dialogues* program to have a significant impact on our campus and beyond.

## I. The Problem

How can a university overcome the obstacles present in today's academy and society to engender the kind of open, thorough and respectful dialogue about difficult issues essential to the maintenance of a democratic society?

As exemplified by its motto, "Challenge Convention. Change the World," Clark University has long espoused values of engagement, asking difficult questions and engendering dynamic change through critical thinking. The University sees itself as a place that takes these issues seriously and has made specific efforts in these directions. For example, this year Clark trustees, faculty and administration recommitted to three signatures that drive the Clark undergraduate experience:

Make a Difference using Clark's intellectual capital to understand and address problems in the local and global communities.

*Learn through Inquiry* committing to hands-on learning and problem solving by working through real problems, mastering modes of inquiry and acquiring the knowledge required to ask and answer important questions.

- *Experience Diverse Cultures* integrating the richness of many cultures into campus life and the student experience.

Implicit in the signatures is a commitment to an education that, through critical thinking and diversity of exposure, prepares students to effectively negotiate a world rife with differences. For example, in the 2005-06 academic year the Dean of the College has launched a yearlong forum on the Iraq war and is focused in the choice of speakers as well as the nature of the events, on ensuring diversity in the discussion.

Despite Clark's commitment to and framework around these goals, conversations with faculty and students reveal a reality quite different from our stated intentions. Too often, important dialogues simply are not taking place. A few departments within the University (including IDCE) have engagement with contemporary issues as a core value and consciously practice open approaches to dialogue, both in the classroom and in the larger community. However, our initial research suggests that many Clark faculty and students shun controversial topics altogether ("everyone I know avoids confrontation," one senior reported). In the University, as in our culture as a whole, uncomfortable issues and realities are being avoided—we divert our eyes and, therefore, our minds. Under these circumstances, the vital practices of discernment, critical thinking and free academic inquiry are threatened; in its extreme forms, this climate of avoidance can constitute a false reality.

Another problem, common to many universities, is apparent as well—the emergence of a "standard point of view" and the concomitant denial and inadvertent muffling of alternative views. Students speak of experiencing an implicit bias in a professor's approach to subject matter in class—however, neither the bias nor the perception of it is discussed. With these and other obstacles to a thoughtful and informed exchange of ideas and viewpoints, dialogues involving differences have become increasingly rare.

We find that faculty and students at Clark lack skills for engaging in controversial discussion. One department chair, well-versed in these issues, noted that "the faculty need serious help in facilitating these dialogues. I am not sure that I myself know how to initiate them, engage them—what is the faculty role in the discussion? How can we participate without dominating or overly influencing the direction of the discussion? Faculty development is essential." In addition, many faculty lack experience in facilitating difficult and potentially volatile processes which can involve dealing with more than intellect alone.

Fear is also a factor—including a fear of appearing foolish or ignorant, of confrontations becoming emotional, of offending or transgressing a boundary of political correctness, fear of losing the safety of long-held beliefs and of reprisals due to power inequities. Students report, and many faculty concur, that "people are shut down; the climate is hush, hush" and express disappointment at not finding the levels of engagement they expected at college. In addition, fears are highly personalized for the students who, like those in a recent Grinnell College survey

(Carol Trosset, 1998), often think that personal experience is the only source of legitimate knowledge, implicitly devaluing critical thinking and a process of dialogue.

Whether arising from fear, avoidance, denial, lack of critical thinking or from reluctance to engage in difficult dialogues in an environment ill-prepared for genuine discussion (a viewpoint held by several international faculty)—silences such as these undermine the basic premises and values of a liberal education. The implications are potentially wide-ranging—from an increasingly stagnant intellectual climate where educational experiences are divorced from thorny contemporary problems, to a retreat to the cultures of disciplines with the scope of classroom activity relatively circumscribed.

These silences occur in the widening gap between the content of our communal discourse and the realities of our political, economic and social world. We believe that this problem has become systemic and indicative of what is happening not only at Clark, but in contemporary American education as well as in public discourse across the United States. However, Clark is a revealing case study, given its explicit values, its progressive history and its workable size; as such it can serve as a model in this regard.

Clark as a community is a microcosm of a number of unspoken tensions across differences that exist in the United States and in the world. As in many universities, Clark faculty and students represent a wide range of nations, ethnicities, races and social classes. Spiritually, some are eclectic or agnostic, while others are faith-based; many are progressive in their politics, though there is a growing minority of conservatives. The University itself is in a wider urban community of diversity, in a neighborhood of immigrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America in an old New England industrial city. In its own nature, Clark is well positioned to consider the complex challenges we face in "sustaining informed political and civil discourse" in the nation.

With the aid of this grant, we will examine and engender the kinds of dialogue critical to a vibrant educational environment as well as to a democratic society. We will develop among the community of faculty and students the skills to facilitate and participate in open, honest exchange and respectful expressions of differences. We will step outside accepted norms of political correctness, institutional and individual, to foster creative opportunities of genuine dialogue and "a stream of meaning flowing among and through and between us" (David Bohm, *On Dialogue*, 1996), making Clark's *Difficult Dialogues* initiative a program that will impact the entire campus community.

We will encourage the awareness of and develop the skills for this *culture of dialogue* through three steps: 1) faculty development; 2) expanded curriculum including first-year seminars, existing courses and new courses that engender dialogue; and 3) a pilot year-long *Difficult Dialogues* Symposium, including public conversations and faculty-student workshops on such topics as terrorism and civil liberties, the relationship between fundamentalism and secularism, diversity and money, religion and government, dialogue itself, etc. These three steps will enable us to develop a compelling model for encouraging *Difficult Dialogues* that can be adapted more broadly.

## II. The Process to Date

### *Higgins-IDCE Partnership*

The *Difficult Dialogues* initiative will be a timely expression of the Higgins School of Humanities' commitment to addressing difficult contemporary issues through the humanities. The project will also reinforce IDCE's commitment to social and environmental justice issues in the context of community-based development. This exciting partnership of IDCE and the Higgins School of the Humanities will provide a dynamic and synergistic environment for *Difficult Dialogues*.

The diverse faculty of IDCE, a broad interdisciplinary program with more than 40 affiliated social scientists and scientists, will join the Higgins School, with its 45 arts and humanities faculty across five different departments; together they represent nearly half of the entire Clark faculty.

### *Building on a foundation*

The *Difficult Dialogues* program builds on Clark's values and the successful practices for challenging convention and confronting controversial issues followed within IDCE. For three decades IDCE faculty members have worked with colleagues and grass-roots activists beyond Clark's campus in communities in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America to address issues of environmental and social justice.

Graduate students and faculty have used their knowledge in conflict mediation and peace building efforts in Somalia, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Liberia. International development students transformed theory into action as facilitators in difficult conversations within the Somali community in Lewiston, Maine and with that city's officials. In Worcester, internships and classes bring Clark students into contact with inner city high school students, residents of low-income neighborhoods and refugees seeking political asylum. For example, the IDCE class "Local Action, Global Change" places undergraduates in nonprofit agencies across Worcester, such as Centro las Americas, to better understand and help resolve the real-life problems of city residents. Clark's commitment to acknowledge and respect differences through community outreach has resulted in Clark being named as one of 81 "Colleges with a Conscience" by the Princeton Review and College Compact (March 2005).

In its exploration of alternative approaches to environmental, economic and social challenges for contemporary development, IDCE lives up to Clark's motto. The department trains practitioners to challenge existing economic, social and political organizations to empower people in disadvantaged communities in cities in the United States as well as rural villages in the developing world.

The Higgins School of Humanities is the largest and most consistent public outreach program in the University, through its lectures, exhibitions, concerts, films and symposia. The School has increasingly emphasized the role and importance of the arts and humanities in addressing contemporary cultural issues. Recent Higgins School programs have addressed issues of difference and the importance of dialogue. For example, last spring's program, *On the Open Space of Democracy* (with writer Terry Tempest Williams and artist Robert Shetterly), espoused

"engagement, a firsthand accounting of what one sees, what one feels, and what one thinks, followed by the artful practice of expressing the truth (Terry Tempest Williams)." This fall, a series entitled *Discussion is Essential* includes visits from scholar Ilan Stavans ("czar of Latino culture in the U.S. ") and Emmy award-winning journalist and filmmaker Anisa Mehdi; it features scholars and artists concerned with the complexities of contemporary communication. In addition, the Higgins School's *African American Intellectual Culture* lecture series, now in its tenth year, has long been an important campus forum. Theatre faculty from the Higgins School partner with IDCE faculty in developing "role playing" models for creative exchange across differences.

Our *Difficult Dialogues* initiative will couple IDCE's successful approach in fostering inclusive dialogues that challenge convention with the Higgins School's commitment to increasing awareness and its ability to reach ever greater numbers in the Clark and Worcester community.

### *Proposal development*

In April 2005, Higgins Director Sarah Buie and IDCE Director William Fisher solicited input from a group of Clark faculty to examine the problem of *Difficult Dialogues* on campus. More than 20 faculty members responded and have been kept informed about this proposal's development. A steering group of ten, representing a range of disciplines and interests, laid the groundwork for the initial proposal in a series of brainstorming sessions.

In late August and September, an expanded faculty steering group of 14 participated in work sessions to better articulate the problem and to develop specific recommendations for a finalized *Difficult Dialogues* program of faculty development, expanded curricula and University-wide programming. The diversity and enthusiasm of this faculty group highlights the strong grassroots base on which Clark University will build its *culture of dialogue*.

At the beginning of the Fall 2005 semester, this faculty steering group informally queried students on their experiences of dialogue and the discussion of controversial topics at Clark. The startling discovery of the many "silences" around controversial issues on campus—silences not only among students, and between students and faculty, but also among faculty members—shifted and expanded the focus of the program.

Potential consultants to the project were researched and contacted, including the Public Conversations Project (Watertown, MA), the Ashland Institute (Ashland, OR), the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (Northampton, MA), the Public Dialogue Consortium (San Francisco, CA) and the Study Circles Resource Center (Pomfret, CT).

Throughout the development process, a group of administrators (including the President, the Provost, the Dean of the College, the Dean of the Graduate School, the University Advancement Office and others), as well as a larger group of faculty, were kept abreast of the progress of the proposal. A recent meeting with the Dean of the College and the Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate School underscored the close alignment of this project with collective goals for the institution and they gave the proposal their strong support.

### III. Process going forward

This jointly sponsored program will be housed at the Higgins School of Humanities at Clark University. Professor Sarah Buie, Director of the Higgins School, and William Fisher, Director of IDCE, will be in charge of the project. Faculty from a range of departments, including Humanities and IDCE faculty members and affiliates, will be involved, as will graduate students in associated departments. (All Clark faculty who are interested may be considered for participation.) Higgins School administrative assistant Lisa Coakley will coordinate the practical aspects of planning and implementation of the *Difficult Dialogues* program.

### IV. Goals and Specific Objectives

Clark's *Difficult Dialogues* program has two achievable and far-reaching goals:

1) to develop the skills of dialogue—awareness of and techniques for constructive and honest engagement across controversy—among faculty, students and administrators; and 2) to create a *culture of dialogue* where those skills are practiced and developed in respectful, safe settings. Creating a *culture of dialogue* represents a true culture change across the university where many have lately remained silent. Clark's compact size allows the possibility for the *Difficult Dialogues* initiative to have a transformative effect institution-wide.

## Goal I: Skills and approaches for engaging in difficult dialogues

We live in a culture where public discourse generally assumes that "discussion is war" (Lakoff and Johnson). In contrast, genuine dialogue requires an attentive and thoughtful meeting of the participants. It assumes their willingness, baseline skills and at least a provisional equality. In particular, we believe that *critical thinking* and *engaged listening* are fundamental skills of dialogue that can be learned.

*Critical thinking* has become a catch phrase for much of what liberal education values and espouses. Some educators define it in terms of "inquisitiveness with regard to a wide range of issues," "honesty in facing one's own biases, prejudices, etc.," "processes of reasoned inquiry" or "prudence in suspending, making or altering judgments." Others develop rubrics composed of stages and components. All university faculty practice such skills in disciplinary contexts, often in very sophisticated ways. With the help of consultants and resource people from within and without the university we will transform and expand faculty skills and awareness—beyond the disciplinary context to pressing public and personal issues.

*Critical thinking* work will emphasize the analysis of the complexity of issues and the ability to sort through that complexity to come to a different understanding. Sessions will consider why people make the decisions they make, their guiding beliefs and assumptions as well as their reasons to keep silent. Understanding power relations will be another key component, since

difficult dialogues are infused with power dynamics across the issues of race, class, gender, politics and religion as well as others.

*Engaged listening* is also crucial to dialogue and is a learnable skill. In *engaged listening* a participant suspends assumptions, sets aside the impulse to react and refute, allows the other's words to settle in their own form. Engaged listeners may note commonalities and watch for paths toward agreement rather than rebuttals. Through the faculty development process and the Symposium, we intend to improve the capacity of faculty and students to practice *engaged listening*, and thus to listen effectively. In particular, we will examine what engaged listening requires, identify the obstacles that prevent it and use training techniques to practice new skills.

Even with the best skills, however, genuine dialogue is not always possible since dialogue requires willing partners. Therefore, a subordinate purpose of our work will be to identify when conditions for dialogue are present or absent and to train participants to recognize dialogue opportunities. We expect in this process to develop a model for the "necessary conditions for genuine dialogue" that can guide this portion of our work.

A series of faculty development sessions, in which difficult dialogues will be both modeled and practiced, will deepen faculty awareness and abilities in these areas and will allow them to incorporate both practice and teaching of these "skills of dialogue" into their new and current classes.

For the faculty, students and the community as a whole, our objectives are to:

- Create a pedagogy of dialogue for faculty through trainings, workshops, symposia
- Raise the questions and problems around the issue of dialogue, as well as issues (of power, presumption, political correctness, cultural climate, among many others) that discourage it
- Encourage and develop the skills and appreciation of suspending assumptions, critical thinking and respectful exchange
- Encourage and develop skills for the process of genuine listening
- Provide opportunities to engage in effective dialogue about difficult issues.

Expected changes include improvement in the skills, awareness and experience of genuine dialogue among Clark faculty and students, including conflict mediation and negotiation skills that will extend beyond the classroom into their interactions with the local, national and international community.

*Direct beneficiaries:*

- Twenty faculty members who participate in the faculty development process to gain skills of engaging in dialogue
- The 100 to 200 students who participate in *Difficult Dialogues* courses (new first-year seminars; new approaches brought to existing courses.)
- The 20 faculty and 150 to 200 students university-wide who work together in small groups as part of the *Difficult Dialogues* Symposium.



## Goal II: A culture of dialogue on Clark's campus

We seek to create a climate of genuine dialogue—a space for exchange and exploration of differing ideas, values and points of view. Physicist David Bohm characterizes dialogue as a practice in which we suspend assumptions and go into the whole thought process as to an empty space, where nobody is trying to win (*On Dialogue*, 1996). His view resonates with Clark's mission statement: "intellectual growth must be accompanied by the development of values, the cultivation of responsible independence, and the appreciation of a range of perspectives." These basic aspects of liberal education will not be possible unless a climate of dialogue exists on campus and in our society.

Through *Difficult Dialogues* faculty development, expanded curriculum and the year-long *Difficult Dialogues* Symposium, we intend to create new opportunities and settings for dialogue—where we are all asked to suspend our assumptions, hear a variety of points of view, think through issues critically, together, and learn and practice skills of listening. As one senior faculty member explained, "The settings need to have integrity, so that students can commit something of themselves and ultimately develop and come to understand their own values and perspectives." We need to acknowledge that not all topics or circumstances may be appropriate for dialogue, for an individual or for a group.

In this *culture of dialogue*, Clark students and faculty will enhance their skills to address sensitive topics and challenge convention, not only on campus, but also in settings where open discussion among all stakeholders is critical. Expected changes include a more stimulating intellectual climate, increased relevance of educational experience to contemporary issues, an increasingly interdisciplinary culture and greater voicing of dissent. Our objectives are to develop, among a substantial part of the Clark community, the skills and shared experiences needed to engender a cultural shift, allowing for:

- Increased intellectual engagement and open discussion
- An increase in safe, open settings and for a candid dialogue from varied perspectives, assumptions and beliefs
- Breaking through the accepted norms of political correctness, institutional and individual, in relationship to conflict and controversy.

*Direct beneficiaries:*

- The 150 to 200 students and 20 faculty university-wide that will be exposed to the symposia and new *culture of dialogue* on campus.

*Indirect beneficiaries:*

- The entire Clark campus
- The public who attends the programs related to the public.

# V: Activities to be carried out

A 24-month pilot project will create a solid foundation for a set of curricular initiatives and programs to continue beyond the grant period. The work will take place in three phases.

## **Phase I** *Spring 2006*

### **Baseline assessment of the problem**

#### **Planning for faculty development and *Difficult Dialogues* Symposium**

We will make a systematic baseline assessment with current freshman and sophomores to determine the characteristics of the problem more specifically. This survey will help us clarify the nature of our campus culture in regard to dialogue by identifying controversial topics that the Clark community avoids, where and why silences occur and whose voices remain unheard. Planning for faculty development and new expanded curriculum will take the results of the survey into consideration.

In ongoing discussion with the initial faculty steering committee and an expanded group of interested faculty, planning will focus on the Fall 2006 faculty development program with resource consultants, a selection of faculty participants and a kickoff public event. Planning will also begin for the *Difficult Dialogues* Symposium of public conversations, weeklong seminars and faculty-student workshops to be held in 2007.

## **Phase II** *AY 2006-07*

### **1. Faculty Development** *Fall 2006*

A group of 15 to 20 faculty members will participate in a semester-long development program. In seminars with invited resource experts, faculty will define issues, heighten their own awareness and develop skills in the area of dialogue, with special focus on its application to working with students. Faculty will be selected to participate by their stated interest in developing a new first-year seminar, introducing *Difficult Dialogues* issues into an existing curriculum, creating a new course or teaching in the symposium program. Participants will attend biweekly workshops on the tools of dialogues by outside experts. These resource consultants may include the Public Conversations Project, The Ashland Institute and/or the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. In addition, part-time IDCE faculty members and mediators Donna Hicks and Diane Chambers will consult with the group.

### **2. Expanded Curriculum** *AY 2006-07*

Growing out of the work of the faculty development program, our curriculum expansion will include:

- Development of four to six new first-year seminars for the class entering in Fall 2007, bringing the focus of dialogue to bear on a range of subjects to be initiated by faculty based on their own interests and work
- Integration of heightened *Difficult Dialogues* awareness, methods and processes into six to eight existing courses in Spring 2007 and AY 2007-08
- Development of new courses (i.e. on the theory, historical and social analysis of conflict resolution, or on methods and processes of conflict mediation).

Graduate students from IDCE interested in and trained in conflict mediation will be included in all these processes. Following the first round of teaching new and revised courses developed around *Difficult Dialogues* issues, a team of participating faculty will develop a set of curriculum materials to be made available to all faculty as well as to other academic institutions.

### **Phase III** (*Spring and Fall 2007*)

#### ***Difficult Dialogues* Symposium**

A faculty steering committee will design a *Difficult Dialogues* Symposium, which will serve as a pilot for an ongoing program for undergraduates. With an innovative structure aimed at building and intensifying community, the program in this first year will be offered for credit to between 150 and 200 undergraduates. Program components will include:

- Teams of faculty and graduate students who will guide workshops of 15 to 20 students through shared readings and experiential learning to engage in dialogues around sensitive and controversial issues; to encourage openness, meetings will take place in settings and at times outside the standard class schedule.
- Six major weeklong events/seminars to focus on timely polarizing concerns, one local, one national and one international each semester (e.g., immigrant rights, pro-choice and pro-life issues, or the creation of a Palestinian state). These seminars will be centered on public conversations with outstanding scholars, activists and artists or on dialogues between two or three scholars representing divergent views; participants will be asked to model engaged listening and dialogue. Other potential conversation topics include: terrorism and civil liberties; the relationship between fundamentalism and secularism; diversity and money; religion and government; and dialogue itself, to name a few.
- During the week visiting scholars will meet informally with the student groups and will offer a large public event on their topic as well.

The emphasis in the *Difficult Dialogues* Symposium will be on 1) encouraging vital intellectual engagement and open discussion, 2) developing the skills and awareness of genuine dialogue and discourse, including modeling of engaged listening and discussion by visitors, faculty, graduate assistants and others, 3) developing skills in mediation, and seeing across differences toward what is common, and 4) removing the pressure of conventional classroom performance norms so students can participate honestly and without fear of being graded. Student evaluation will be based on written assignments and on a required project in the second semester, designed and executed by students individually or in teams. For these projects, students will involve

themselves in a local or national issue requiring a *difficult dialogue* and will work on developing bridges across differences.

## VI: Institutional Support

The Clark administration has given us strong support for the development of this program; we have discussed the project thoroughly with Dean of the College, Doug Little, and Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Nancy Budwig. Clark's in-kind contributions include: salary and benefits for the principal investigators' time, partial salary for a project coordinator, graduate student tuition fellowships, initiatory event support, symposium support, plus the costs of publicity, publications and office supplies/copying. Funds from both the Higgins School and IDCE will be earmarked for the project and other departments, including the Office of the President, the Dean of the College, and additional academic departments, will contribute to sponsorship of public events. In total, Clark will be committing approximately \$350,000 of in-kind contributions to the *Difficult Dialogues* initiative.

## VII. Evaluation

In spring 2006, we propose to undertake a systematic baseline assessment of student attitudes to determine the characteristics of the problem more specifically. Survey questions will be added to a student life survey that is administered every spring (see specifics in Phase One, baseline assessment). Planning for faculty development and new expanded curriculum will take the results of the survey into consideration.

A second survey containing similar questions will be conducted in Spring 2008 and will be administered to the same students surveyed in the spring of 2006 in order to measure changes in these students' willingness to engage in dialogue on difficult issues and to take part in the assessment of increased discussion. We will hire a consultant to develop these survey questions.

Faculty teaching the new and revised *Difficult Dialogues* courses will develop a shared set of goals related to discussions of difficult issues. Discussions of these shared goals will be facilitated by the project leadership; assistance in assessing progress toward identified goals will be provided by Clark's Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.

Survey questions concerning *Difficult Dialogues* issues will be added to the current cycle of recurring faculty surveys. These questions will be adapted from the student surveys.

## Conclusion

A grant from the Ford Foundation will enable us to examine and engender the kinds of dialogue critical to a vibrant educational environment as well as to a democratic society. We will develop among the community of faculty and students at Clark University the skills to facilitate and participate in open, honest exchange and respectful expressions of differences. We will step outside accepted norms of political correctness, institutional and individual, to foster creative opportunities of genuine dialogue. We invite your support of this effort.

## **Budget**

Please find the project budget attached. Our request for \$99,990 from Ford will cover costs in the areas of honoraria and consultants, salaries, and indirect costs.

Resumes of the principal investigators (attached)

## **Project Leaders**

Professor Sarah Buie, Director

Higgins School of Humanities

Professor William Fisher, Director

Department of International Development, Community & Environment (IDCE)

## **Faculty steering committee**

Kiran Asher, Assistant Professor, IDCE; Parminder Bhachu, Professor, Sociology; Miriam Chion, Assistant Professor, IDCE; Joe deRivera, Professor, Psychology and Director, Peace Studies Program; Patty Ewick, Professor of Sociology and Department Chair; Odile Ferly, Assistant Professor, Foreign Languages and Literature; Wes Gadson, Director, Center for Academic Advancement; SunHee Gertz, Professor, English; Fern Johnson, Professor, English; Dianne Rocheleau, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Geography and Director of Women's Studies; Walter Wright, Professor of Philosophy; Srinu Sitaraman, Assistant Professor, Government