

Levan Center Director's Report  
11/18/10

FALL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS:

*Scheduled Events:*

Flex Workshops: The Center gave two flex workshops during the week before classes: Ethics and Teaching, with Rene Trujillo and me, and Creating a Philosophy of Education, which I gave. We had 20 for the first and 16 for the second. I'll be giving the second one again this spring for new and all faculty.

Ethics and Leadership Presentation: On September 10<sup>th</sup> I gave a presentation on Ethics and the Craft of Leadership to the District Leadership Academy and in January will give it again for District presidents, vice presidents, deans, and center directors, and others.

Great Books Seminars: We were scheduled to give a St. John's style seminar for interested Presidents Scholars, but because the newsletter did not come out on time we will attempt to do it in the spring. The topic is the Plato's Apology and Aristophanes' play Clouds, and English Professor Ann Tatum and I will facilitate the seminar. Enrollment is limited to fifteen students and the Center will buy the books and provide coffee and water. If successful, the Center will offer one or two seminars each semester.

Humanities Book Discussion Group: The book for this fall is Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities by Martha Nussbaum, along with Victoria Mora's lecture, A Modest Proposal in Favor of Inefficient Education, published by the Center. On Friday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, fifteen faculty and staff will meet in the Center to discuss the book.

Moral Education at BC: On Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, the Center presented a seminar for twenty to twenty-five faculty and staff on the issue of moral education at BC. Psychology Professors Lora Larkin and Tom Vasile, and Philosophy Professor Matt Morgan gave presentations and led the discussion.

Norman Levan for the Humanities Visiting Artist: On October 4-6, Brendan Bannon an internationally known photographer was on the BC campus visiting numerous classes, doing a photo essay of Bakersfield, and giving an evening public lecture and presentation in the Center before a full house.

Poetry and Place: On Tuesday evening, October 12<sup>th</sup>, the Center, as part of Literary Kern Week, presented a reading of poems about Bakersfield and Kern County. Local poets Don Thompson, Nancy Edwards, and I read and discussed their poems to about thirty people. The Bakersfield Californian ran a fine piece about this event and Brendan Bannon's visit.

Central Valley Philosophy Association annual Colloquium: On Saturday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, from 9 to 2, the Center hosted the CVPA's annual colloquium. Before about sixty in attendance, three papers were read and discussed. The Center also hosted a lunch for attendees in the Renegade Room. People came from as far away as UC Merced, which brought ten faculty and students. One of the papers given by Reggie Williams, Chair of the BC Philosophy Department, is a paper he presented at a conference this

summer at Oxford University, supported by his receiving a Levan Center Summer Grant. The three papers will be available on the Center's website. Using this event as a model, the Center hopes to host other conferences related to the humanities.

Politics and Ethics Panel Discussion: On Wednesday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, Bakersfield Californian columnist Lois Henry, KCCD Board member and former county supervisor Pauline Larwood, and BC Professor of Political Science, Steven Holmes discussed the relevance of ethics to the personal lives of politicians, to their political activities, and to political campaigning. The public panel discussion was attended by about eighty people from campus and the community.

Fall Faculty Colloquium: On Friday Morning November 5<sup>th</sup>, Reggie Williams was honored for his scholarship and presented a new paper on Racism, Sexism, and Misogyny. As usual, a light lunch was provided. The Center will publish his paper. The Colloquium, for the campus community, was well attended by at least 50 faculty, staff, and guests.

#### *Programs:*

Humanities Essay Scholarships: ten essays were submitted by first year honor students. The Committee is reading the essays and the winning students will be notified in early December.

Levan Summer Grant Recipients (Levan Scholars): All three scholars submitted reports that were accepted by the Committee and all three have or will give campus presentations regarding their summer projects. Reggie Williams has given his campus presentation. To BC faculty and students, Jeannie Parent will give several slide presentations of her summer Fulbright Study Project in Vietnam and Cambodia and will lead the Humanities Book Discussion Group in a discussion of a book on Vietnam. John Giertz will give a seminar on his work on student perceptions of how religion is presented in the classroom.

#### SPRING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS:

##### *Scheduled Events:*

St. John's/ Norman Levan Center for the Humanities annual seminar and public lecture: On Wednesday, March 2, Mike Peters, the President of St. John's College will give an afternoon seminar for faculty and an evening public lecture on Thucydides account of the Peloponnesian War and Just War.

Reading the Classics: The Center will sponsor a public dramatic reading by the BC Drama Department. Begun last year, this is to be an annual event and this spring's play may be *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Becket.

Faculty Colloquium: The spring Faculty Colloquium will be held probably in late April.

Student Seminars: Two student seminars will be offered this spring. The first on the *Apology* by Plato and Aristophanes' play *Clouds* will be on February 8, 15, and 22. Ann Tatum, BC Professor of English, and I will give that one. The second on Machiavelli's *The Prince*, will be on March 8, 15, and 22, and will be facilitated by Erin Miller, BC Professor of History, and me.

The spring Humanities Book Discussion Group will read a book about Vietnam. The discussion will be late in the semester.

Moral Education: A follow-up seminar on this topic, focusing on specific applications to the classroom will be scheduled this spring as a flex workshop.

Women's History Month: The Center will collaborate with BC's Women's History Month and More Committee to present a panel discussion featuring Dr. Patricia Jennings from Cal State East Bay. She is a sociologist working in the field of reproductive technologies and social inequalities. The panel will consist of her, a BC ethicist, and a BC biologist. The Center will pay for transportation and an honorarium.

Andrei Codrescu: The Center is co-sponsoring with CSUB and KMC a visit by NPR commentator and writer, Andrei Codrescu. The day's events will be held at KMC in the morning and at CSUB in the evening. The Center will be acknowledged in the publicity for the event.

Zen Cartoons: Richard Collins, the new CSUB Dean of Arts and Humanities, may present a lecture on Zen Cartoons, using cartoons from Tricycle and The New Yorker.

Same Sex Marriage and Equality: Using Reggie Williams' soon to be published paper on that topic, the Center may sponsor a panel discussion.

#### *Programs:*

Essay Scholarships: The spring Humanities Essay Scholarships will be awarded for outstanding transferring and returning students.

Faculty Summer Grants: Faculty summer grants for scholarship and creative work will be awarded.

St. John's Seminar Fellowship: At least one Levan Fellowship will be awarded for a faculty member to attend the summer seminar series at St. John's College.

#### ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE VISIT

This summer I, along with Dr. Levan and friends, visited St. John's College for a week to attend one of their summer seminars to see how they are conducted. The experience was very valuable and will be put to good use in the Great Books Seminars for President's Scholars, and the Center will sponsor a fellowship for a faculty member or two to attend the summer seminar program for a week.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Several issues have come up with regard to the use of the facility and will be discussed below. In addition to planning events and programs, the Director's responsibilities now include managing the use of the Center.

#### DIRECTOR'S SCHOLARSHIP/CREATIVE WORK

My proposal to present at this fall's Community College Humanities Pacific-Western Conference was accepted, but I decided not to go because of the cost. The Conference theme was Mythologies: Sacred Stories and False Stories in the Humanities and my presentation was The Serpent in the Garden: The Bible for Unbelievers. The CCHA PW president recommended it to the CCHA national director for the 2011 national conference. If accepted I'll attend that meeting to give my presentation and talk about the Center.

Levan Center Director's Report  
4/25/11

SPRING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

*Scheduled Events*

Flex Workshops: The Center gave two workshops the week before classes: Moral Education at BC, with Matt Morgan, Lora Larkin and me, and Creating a Philosophy of Education, which I gave. Attendance at each was good.

Ethics and Leadership Presentations: In January I gave a two-hour presentation on Ethics and Leadership at a District workshop for presidents, vice presidents, deans, directors, and District staff. On February 26<sup>th</sup> I gave a short talk on the same subject at the SGA Future Leaders Conference.

Great Books Seminars: Ann Tatum and I gave a seminar on Who is Socrates?, which was attended by five students. Erin Miller and I were to give one on Was Machiavelli Machiavellian?, which had too few students to go. There were very successful and lively discussions in the Socrates Seminar. I'm working with the Dean's office to improve the sign-up procedure, and look forward to the Seminars growing and becoming a permanent part of the President's Scholars Program at BC. This coming year the Socrates Seminar will repeat and the Machiavelli Seminar will be offered. In fall 2012 and spring 2013 there will be two new Seminars, and the four will alternate years in the future. In addition to providing books, the Center will award \$50 book scholarships to those who complete the seminar.

Humanities Book Discussion Group: The book for this spring is *The Sorrow of War* by Bao Ninh. The group was full and the discussion was introduced and facilitated by Jeannie Parent, a Levan Scholar who was awarded a Fulbright-Hayes Group Project Abroad Grant to Viet Nam and Cambodia for summer 2010. The group met in the Center Seminar Room from 10:30 to noon on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Center co-sponsored nationally known writer and NPR commentator, Andrei Codrescu, who gave an evening lecture at CSUB on February 21<sup>st</sup> and a talk at KMC on the morning of February 22<sup>nd</sup>. The evening lecture was "Whose Global Village? Reflections on Power and Imagination in Today's World," and the morning talk was "Posthumans: Are They Us and if So, What Are We Going to Do When We Are Immortal?"

Norman Levan for the Humanities/St. John's College Annual Lecture: On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Michael Peters, the President of St. John's College, gave a lecture titled Democracy and Empire: Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian War*. The lecture was well attended and videotaped to be put on the Center's website; the lecture paper has been published by the Center.

"Zen Cartoons." A Public lecture in the Center by Richard Collins, Professor of English and Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities at CSUB. He has published poetry and articles on Zen art, literature, and film. The lecture was very well attended.

"Feminist Politics and the Market in Human Eggs." The Center co-sponsored with BC's Women's History Month Committee this lecture on March 24<sup>th</sup> by Patricia Jennings, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Services at CSU East Bay. The lecture was well attended.

On March 25<sup>th</sup> the Center is sponsoring a seminar for faculty on the issue of teaching students about cultural representations of reproductive choice. The seminar was held in the Seminar Room of the Center from 10:30 to noon.

On April 6<sup>th</sup> the Center co-sponsored with the Library two talks by author Manuel Munoz, who discussed his life, his writing, and his new novel *What You See in the Dark*, which takes place in Bakersfield. Munoz was born and raised in the valley near Fresno and has written two short story collections about that area. Both the morning and afternoon sessions were close to being full and were outstanding, with excellent questions from the students present.

The spring Faculty Colloquium was held from 10:30 to 1 in the Center's Seminar Room. The honored speaker is BC Emerita Professor of English Helen Gordon who spoke on the mysteries connected with Shakespeare's authorship. She has researched and presented on this issue. The colloquium was excellent and well received.

The second annual Reading the Classics was at 7 p.m. on April 13<sup>th</sup> in the Center's Seminar Room. This was a lively public dramatic reading by BC's Drama Department of *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett, described by the New York Times as "One of the masterpieces of the century." As with the previous year's Reading the Classics on *Antigone*, this one was videotaped to be put on the Center's website.

On April 27<sup>th</sup> Levan Scholar John Giertz gave a seminar on religion in the classroom.

#### *Programs:*

Humanities Essay Scholarships: 48 students were eligible for these scholarships of at least \$1,000. In early March these students were sent letters inviting them to submit essays and the due date for the essays was April 1. Ten essays were received, and the committee will meet at the end of April to determine the awards.

Levan Summer Faculty Scholarship Grants: April 1<sup>st</sup> was the due date for these scholarships. In early February Grant information was sent to all faculty members, and I have spoken to the Academic Senate about the Grants and gave a workshop on March 10<sup>th</sup> in the Center for those interested in applying. Five grant proposals were received, and the committee will meet at the end of April to determine which proposals will receive grants.

Levan Summer Fellowships to the St. John's College Summer Classics Seminars. St. John's College is working with the Center to accommodate one of our faculty members each summer at this program on the St. John's campus in Santa Fe. To begin with the fellowships will be offered to the faculty members who are facilitating the Great Books Seminars for President's Scholars so they can experience the St. John's approach to conducting their seminars. This summer Ann Tatum will be attending. Both St. John's and the Center will provide financial assistance to the faculty member who attends.

*Publications:*

The Center has published three lectures: *A Modest Proposal in Favor of Inefficient Education* by Victorian Mora, Dean of St. John's College, the First Annual Levan Lecture; *Racism, Sexism, and Misogyny* by Reggie Williams, Professor of Philosophy at BC, the fall Faculty Colloquium; and *Democracy and Empire: Thucydides' The Peloponnesian War* by Michael Peters, President of St. John's College, the Second Annual Levan Lecture. A previously published work, *Chasing the Wind: A Meditation on Wisdom* by Jack Hernandez, the first Faculty Colloquium, is also available. Information about these publications will be on the website and they will be sent to those request them.

FALL 2011 EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Programs:

Flex Workshops (to be determined).

Humanities Book Group.

Great Books Seminar for President's Scholars: Was Machiavelli Machiavellian?

President's Scholars presentations: I'll give two presentations on ethics to the President's Scholars, one at the boot camp on August 11 for new President's Scholars and a longer one later in the semester for all President's Scholars.

Humanities Essay Scholarship (for first-time students).

Guest Scholar: Lilly Hirsch, a musicologist who has written both about a Jewish orchestra in Nazi Germany and on the use of music in criminal justice.

Vocational Education and the Humanities Forum: I'm in discussions with Sandra and Greg to organize a district-wide forum on vocational education and the humanities.

Community Classics Seminars: I've been talking to various people and gathering names of community members to send information to about Seminars on the Classics, East and West. The seminars will be free and limited to about 15; will be two hours long, probably in the evenings, with light refreshments; and the readings will be short and sent to participants well in advance. These seminars will be modeled on the St. John's Summer Classics Seminars and Norm's colloquia, with the discussions focused on the readings and facilitated by me (and perhaps another faculty member) to begin with. To begin with there will be one seminar each semester and, possibly, one in the summer. The success of the seminars depends on the list of name gathered.

One Book, One Bakersfield: I'm on this committee and may plan an event in connection with the book being read: *Wes Moore's The Other Wes Moore*.

SPRING 2012 EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Visiting Scholar: Ron Kean, John Gerhold, and I are planning a visit by distinguished and 10-time Emmy award winning composer Bruce Boughton, who will visit classes and other events for the public and Bakersfield educators.

#### FINANCES

As part of a generous new trust to BC, Dr. Levan has increased the endowment for Center programs by two million dollars, for a total of three and a half million dollars.

#### ADMINISTRATION

The website is to be upgraded to link to Center event videos like the annual Levan Lecture and Faculty Colloquia.

A policy regarding food in the Center has been established

A leak in the ceiling of the Seminar Room has been repaired and small improvements are in the works.

Campus groups are using the Center.

#### DIRECTOR'S SCHOLARSHIP/CREATIVE WORK

The Anglican Theological Review has accepted another poem, "This Mountain," for publication.

On April 30, I'm going participate in a poetry reading at Russo's Books.

In October of this year, I'm going to attend the Community College Humanities Association national conference to give a presentation on the Center along with two other public community colleges that have humanities institutes. I've also submitted a proposal to discuss teaching the Bible as a part of the humanities.

Levan Center Director's Report  
November 2011

FALL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

*Scheduled Events*

**Open to the Public (free with free parking)**

"Find Your Own Voice." On Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, poet Jayne Cortez gave three poetry readings and discussions at 10 a.m., 2 p.m., and 7 p.m. At least 150, including many students, attended her exceptional presentations.

"Should We Ration Healthcare to the Elderly." On Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, Dr. David Goldstein from the Keck School of Medicine at USC gave the first Norman Levan Center for the Humanities and Keck School of Medicine at USC Public Lecture. With at least 100 in attendance, the Center was full for this first in what we hope will be an annual fall lecture. This lecture was videotaped and we hope to have it captioned and linked to our website. There are a few DVDs available, as well.

"Was the Civil War Inevitable?" On Wednesday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, BC Professors Paul Beckwith, Michael Harvath, Ishmael Kimbrough, and Erin Miller presented a panel discussion, each exploring a different aspect of this topic, followed by a Q and A session. Again, the Center was full for this event.

**Events Restricted to Various On and Off Campus Groups**

President's Scholars Boot Camp Ethics Presentation: Representing the Center, I gave an Academic Integrity workshop for the President's Scholars on August 10<sup>th</sup>.

Great Books Seminar for President's Scholars: On Tuesdays September 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, and October 4<sup>th</sup> nine Presidents Scholars attended a two-hour seminar on Machiavelli's *The Prince* (books are provided). Erin Miller and I facilitated this seminar and the students met a President's Scholar requirement and received a \$50 bookstore gift card.

Community Classics Seminar: On Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, the inaugural seminar for community members met from 6 to 8 p.m. to discuss Machiavelli's *The Prince* (books and light refreshments are provided). Thirteen community members attended and Erin Miller and I facilitated a very lively discussion of this classic.

Humanities Book Discussion Group: On Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 to noon, 17 faculty and staff will meet to discuss Sissela Bok's *Exploring Happiness*. I'll facilitate the discussion and light refreshments are provided.

Humanities Off the Hill: I've begun discussions with Vernon Valenzuela, Director of the new Vets Center and Kimberly Trujillo of the Kern County Sheriff's office about holding humanities book discussion in the Vets Center and a local prison. It looks like these will begin after the new year.

*Programs*

Humanities Essay Scholarships: 34 first-semester students were eligible to compete for these scholarships. We received xxx essays, which the Committee will read and award scholarships by the week of December 12<sup>th</sup>.

## SPRING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

### *Scheduled Events*

#### **Open to the Public (free with free parking)**

Dr. David Smith, Bakersfield native and founder of the Haight Ashbury Free Clinic will give a public lecture in late February on a topic related to drug addiction and the right to treatment.

Annual Norman Levan for the Humanities/St. John's College lecture to be given by the new dean of St. John's College, Walter Sterling. This lecture will be given on Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.

Democracy and Disaster Panel Discussion: the Center is working with the Kern County Library to secure a California Reads: Searching for Democracy Grant. The book is *A Paradise Built in Hell* by Rebecca Solnit. BC professors Lora Larkin, psychology; Rene Trujillo, philosophy; and Ann Wiederricht, history will be the panelists. The book discusses how we respond to disasters, namely are we selfish or caring, and the panel will discuss this issue.

Reading the Classics: in March the drama department will present the annual Reading the Classics. This year's dramatic reading will be Shakespeare and the King James Bible.

#### **Events Restricted to Various On and Off Campus Groups**

Faculty Colloquium: On March 9<sup>th</sup>, Jeannie Parent will give a presentation based on her Fulbright Study Grant to Viet Nam and Cambodia. The presentation will be followed by a lunch.

Great Books Seminar: in February/March, the President's Scholars will be invited to join a Great Books Seminar on Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. The Seminar is limited to 10 and will follow the format of the fall Seminar. Ann Tatum and I will facilitate.

Community Classics Seminar: in March or April, community members will be invited to join a Community Classics Seminar on Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. The Seminar will be limited to 10 and will follow the format of the fall Seminar. Ann Tatum and I will facilitate.

Humanities Book Discussion Group: In April the Humanities Book Discussion Group will meet to discuss *A Paradise Built in Hell*. This group is limited to 15 faculty and staff.

Visiting Scholar: On April 27<sup>th</sup>, Composer Bruce Broughton will give a morning presentation to faculty and staff and an afternoon workshop for students. He is a well known composer for television and film.

Humanities Off the Hill: the Vets Center and prison book groups should be formed.

I'll work with Levan Scholars, faculty who received 2011 summer grants, on their campus presentations.

Ethics and Leadership Workshop: Representing the Center, I will give a workshop on Ethics and Leadership to the District Leadership Academy for the second year.

Ethics and Teaching Flex Workshop: Rene Trujillo and I will give a flex workshop on Ethics and Teaching, which we also gave last year. The workshop will be held in the Center.

### *Programs*

Humanities Essay Scholarships: eligible students will again be invited to participate in this scholarship program.

Faculty Summer Grants: On February 1<sup>st</sup> the announcement for summer 2012 grants will be sent to all full-time faculty. Up to five grants will be awarded.

St. John's Summer Fellowship: similar to last year, a faculty member who has helped facilitate the Great Books Seminar and Community Classics Seminar will be offered this fellowship to take a Summer Classics Seminar at St. John's College to observe how their seminars operate because ours are modeled after theirs.

### PUBLICATIONS

The Center will publish Dr. Goldstein's lecture on "Should We Ration Healthcare to the Elderly."

### ADMINISTRATION

Last summer all three ceiling projectors were stolen. Because of security concerns, only the center projector has been replaced with a more secure mount.

The request to change the Center's Occupancy limit is in the works.

Dick Holden is working with Michael McNellis to improve our website, e.g. add links to our videos and publications. Michael has done an outstanding job of creating and maintaining our website, and next year Dick will take over from him as Michael concentrates on his doctorate work.

### DIRECTOR'S SCHOLARSHIP/CREATIVE WORK

I've been invited to be an Associate for the new CSUB Institute for Religion, Education, and Public Policy.

The Anglican Theological Review has accepted another poem, "Samson, Old" for publication.

My poem "Job's Wife" is to be published in the newest edition of *Voices of Wisdom*, a popular introduction to philosophy textbook.

A Levan Lecture sponsored by the St. John's College Graduate Institute is in the works: I'll give the lecture sometime during the Summer Classics weeks at St. John's.

Although, I had an academic presentation accepted for this fall's Community College Humanities Association national conference, I did not attend because of the cost to the Center and because a joint presentation describing the work of the Center was not worked out.