The Center for Multicultural Education (CME) provides a variety of programs, activities and services for students, staff and surrounding community members. These multifarious events and resources offer opportunities for individuals and groups to understand and appreciate the culturally diverse landscape of our country.

In 2012-13, we had a series of events that dovetailed with the initiative of Reaching for Higher Ground and its theme about the current state of the American Dream. Two law professors, a civil rights icon, a film series and book selections all weighed in on the validity of that dream today. It was fascinating – especially to be able to have the Cornerstone class members experience a visit from the author of their main text to the Cedar Valley. What follows is a summary of the major work the CME accomplished during the 2012-13 academic year.

### INTRODUCTION »

The Cornerstone class offered as its common read the book “The Warmth of Other Suns” by Isabel Wilkerson. We co-hosted the author for an evening of story-telling and wisdom on Wednesday, Aug. 22. “The Warmth of Other Suns” follows the life of three southern African Americans who migrated to the North during various decades of the 20th century. The book shares the collective experience of racism in a post-slavery society and the pursuit of the American Dream by three main characters. Wilkerson conducted more than 1,000 interviews to create this book, which captures the rich history of our nation that so often gets omitted from classroom education. More than 700 people were in attendance to hear Wilkerson’s presentation.

### LECTURE SERIES »

Isabel Wilkerson

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Julian Bond

On Wednesday, Sept. 5, we hosted the renowned young leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and national statesman, Julian Bond. He joined the UNI community to discuss whether the ideal of the American Dream remains valid and attainable by all. Bond provided insight into his perspective by recounting his experiences as an activist for the desegregation of public accommodations and for the right to vote. Many in attendance enjoyed his anecdotes about Martin Luther King, Jr. – especially Bond’s reporting that he is one of only a few students who took a college course under the famous advocate of nonviolence.

Cathy Areu

Cathy Areu is the founder of “Catalina,” a magazine featuring Latinas. As our guest speaker for Hispanic Heritage Month, on Thursday, Oct. 4, 2012, Areu shared with the students of the Hispanic Latino Student Union and other members of the UNI community about her challenges in college. She shared that there was little support from her parents in her pursuit of higher education. What drove her toward success in journalism, she averred, was her need to tell uplifting stories of Latinos in the United States. Following the event, there was a reception where students had the opportunity to meet her. She thoroughly enjoyed her experience at UNI.

Richard Thompson Ford

Author of the book “Rights Gone Wrong: How Law Corrupts the Struggle for Equality” and Stanford law professor Richard Thompson Ford discussed how anti-discrimination law works in the United States. In Lang Hall Auditorium, on Tuesday, Oct. 23, 2012, he discussed several national cases on such laws have been interpreted regarding gender-neutral bathrooms, discounted admissions fees for “Ladies’ Night” at night clubs and the Brown v. Board of Education case. Ford also indicated a need to shift our focus to public policies designed to promote equality overall, and to encourage the government and employers to change their day-to-day practices that are still structurally discriminatory.

Jonathan Poullard

The CME partnered with the Department of Residence to provide diversity education for resident assistants and housing staff. Jonathan Poullard is the dean of students at the University of California, Berkeley and conducts diversity and social justice training workshops around the country. In his lecture, on Friday, Nov. 9, 2012, Poullard encouraged student participants to share their personal stories as a means to learn more about interconnectivity with their peers. The following day, he held a workshop for students on the Multicultural Competence Model, during which he discussed the basics of awareness, knowledge and skills. The students also participated in groups as they discussed biased behaviors on campus, how to be an ally and what things impede their ability to be an effective ally.

Randall Kennedy

In conjunction with the Annual Conference of the Waterloo and Cedar Falls Commissions on Human Rights, we featured Randall Kennedy, professor of law at Harvard University, as the keynote speaker on Thursday, Feb., 28, 2013. Kennedy is author of the book “The Persistence of the Color Line: Racial Politics and the Obama Presidency.” During his address, he discussed race and its intersection with electoral politics in the United States. Specifically, he shared how race had a significant impact in the 2008 elections. He referenced the controversy over Rev. Jeremiah Wright and Obama’s much-heralded speech on race in America.
HEREANDNOW THEATER
HereandNow Theater is a multicultural performance group based in California. The group utilizes mixed media in all of their performances, such as dance, song, music, video, poetry and storytelling. On Friday, April 19, 2013, in Lang Hall, the group explored the challenges and struggles of underrepresented populations as well as the intersections of identities. One segment, “Mother Tongue,” primarily focused on the experience of Asian Americans. Other themes addressed were pregnancy, family, puberty, friendships, relationships, cultural pride, migration and being bilingual.

MUSCATINE ARTS TRAVELING EXHIBIT OF McKENNEY AND HALL PORTRAITIS
During the month of November, we hosted the Muscatine Arts Center’s traveling exhibit of McKenney & Hall portraits. These portraits depict the indigenous heritage of eastern Iowa and western Illinois, specifically of the Sauk and Fox Indian tribes. They are part of a collection of 120 images lithographed after their original oil paintings, which were first housed in the Smithsonian Institution. In 1865, there was a huge fire and many of the original portraits were destroyed—leaving only the hand-colored lithographs of the actual appearance in cultural dress of various prominent American Indian leaders of the time.

WELCOME BACK BBQ
As another summer hiatus came to an end, the annual Welcome Back BBQ, held on Monday, Aug. 20, 2013, marked the beginning of another academic year. The warm smell of food on the grill and music in the air brought great joy to students and staff alike. Close to 600 participants joined us in this CME tradition as we welcomed old and new students to UNI. The great weather provided students the opportunity to play outdoor games and dance off any first-day-of-school anxieties. It was a great start to what would be an excellent year at the CME!
GALLAGER-BLUEDORN PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
This year, we co-sponsored with the GBPAC three special events. In September, “Ballet Folklórico de México” exhibited a colorful and lively array of traditional dances from various regions of Mexico. The next month, the New York-based quintet Imani Winds entertained the audience with their Afro-Latin tunes. Finally, comedian Gabriel Iglesias made us burst with heavy bouts of laughter soon after spring break.

MLK DAY OF SERVICE
At UNI, the national theme for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday is “A Day ON, Not a Day OFF.” Each year, the Student Involvement Center gathers volunteers for their Day of Service community event. On Monday, Jan. 21, 2013, the CME director gave a presentation to a group of 70+ students titled “Will the Real Martin Luther King, Jr. Please Stand Up?” Blackwell emphasized Rep. Shirley Chisholm’s old saying that “service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living here on Earth.”

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS
Throughout the academic year, we collaborated with multiple multicultural student organizations and contributed advice and dollars to their programming endeavors. From large social activities to educational events, we assisted these groups with budgeting, logistics and contract negotiations. Throughout the spring semester, we worked with the Hispanic Latino Student Union in their planning for their annual celebration, the Latino Ball. In addition, we also helped various projects with the Black Student Union, including Black History Month and the Big Bang end-of-the-year event.

SPOKEN WORD EVENTS
In 2012-13 we held multiple spoken word events. On Tuesday, March 26, 2013, the CME hosted UNI professor Vince Gotera who provided insight into his experiences growing up in the Philippines through folklore stories and poetry. We also featured local poets. On Saturday, April 6, 2013, Jerica Crawford, a UNI senior, performed original poetry pieces from her forthcoming book, “Poetically Speaking: Finding Life Through Words.”
For October’s book discussion, we featured Richard Thompson Ford’s “Rights Gone Wrong: How Law Corrupts the Struggle for Equality.” Audience participants were able to ask him about his ideas and thoughts on current issues in the United States regarding racial and gender inequality as well as his views on the American Dream. Other books discussed were: “A Chance in the World: An Orphan Boy, A Mysterious Past, and How He Found a Place Called Home” by Steven Pemberton; “Latinos in the New Millennium” by Luis R. Fraga; “Severed Treaty” by Tom Stohlgren; “My Song: A Memoir” by Harry Belafonte and/or “Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land” by Joseph Lowery; and “The Tanning of America: How Hip-hop Created a Culture That Rewrote the Rules of the New Economy” by Steve Stoute and/or “One Day It’ll All Make Sense” by Common.

The CME continued its partnership with the Reaching for Higher Ground initiative as we discussed “The Search for an American Dream.” Our collaboration, along with others, produced an array of programs in which participants engaged in dialogue on what the American Dream means, or should mean, today. The CME, jointly with the Rod Library, hosted an outstanding documentary film series as we continued to explore the various perceptions of the dream of people in America. The following films were included in this year’s series: “Children in No Man’s Land”; “Maid in America”; “Capitalism Hits the Fan”; “Shellmound”; “Up From the Bottoms”; “Holding Fast the Dream”; and “A Hard Straight.”

We foster success in racial and ethnic minority students, contribute to the cultural competence of all students and promote an appreciation of diversity in the university community.

**We do this by:**

- Providing programs and services that contribute to success for racial and ethnic minority students.
- Encouraging racial and ethnic minority students to become fully engaged in campus life.
- Producing programs and activities intended to raise awareness and appreciation of diversity across the campus, and to increase the cultural competence of all students.
- Providing educational resources for faculty and staff regarding racial and ethnic minority issues;
  — and —
- Maintaining a facility environment that conveys appreciation for the cultural traditions, expressions and perspectives of racial and ethnic minorities.
Collaboration has been a staple feature of the CME for countless years, and this one was no exception. All of the major events we primarily sponsored were cooperative affairs, some of which included off campus entities.

**Our on-campus collaborators included, in part:**

- College of Education
- Women’s and Gender Studies Program
- Hispanic Latino Student Union
- Reaching for Higher Ground
- Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center
- Student Involvement Center
- Darwin Week
- Black Student Union
- Rod Library
- Department of Residence
- Cornerstone

**Our off-campus collaborators included, in part:**

- Muscatine Arts Center
- HereandNow Theater
- Waterloo Commission on Human Rights
- Black Hawk County NAACP
- Peace and Justice Center of the Cedar Valley
- Jubilee United Methodist Church
- University Book and Supply
- Cedar Falls Mennonite Church
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