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. What follows is a summary of the major work of the CME during the 2011-2012 academic year.

**FRIDAY FUN NIGHTS PROJECT**

During this academic year, we implemented a new monthly program called "Friday Fun Nights." This program began through discussions about the need to have alcohol-free, alternative programming on Friday nights for students. Occurring on the last Friday of every month, the events were of an artistic and cultural nature. Our first event was an Open Mic Night. Over 30 students were in attendance and numerous student performers sang, played musical instruments, or danced. Another successful event hosted at the CME was the showing of the film "La Mission" with a great discussion about the struggles that LGBT persons of color experience.

**CME MONTHLY BOOK CLUB**

The CME Book Club expanded its offerings this year, adding two books to its traditional list of seven titles. As a result of the visits of journalist Ellis Cose and TV personality Touré, the CME incorporated their most recent literary works. Both sessions were very well received by our participants and produced a great discussion about race and politics in today’s society. Other books read during the year were: “Becoming King: Martin Luther King Jr.” and “The Making of a National Leader” by Troy Jackson; “Ingratitude: The Debt-Bound Daughter in Asian American Literature” by Erin Khuê; “Multicultural American Literature: Comparative Black, Native, Latino/a, and Asian American Fictions” by Robert Lee; “Black in Latin America” by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.; “No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington” by Condoleezza Rice; “Sonia Sotomayor: The True American Dream” by Antonia

**WELCOME BBQ**

This year, the annual Welcome BBQ served over 600 students. With staff, relatives, friends and other community members, the final numbers approximated 700. As the smell of the grill-cooked burgers and hotdogs wafted through the air, the students enjoyed themselves dancing the late afternoon and early evening away, as well as watching some of their peers sing songs to the crowd and perform spoken-word pieces. The Welcome BBQ 2011 had its largest attendance to date with students stopping through for some fun in the late summer sun.
For the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration, the CME hosted Ellis Cose, author of the book “The End of Anger: A New Generation’s Take on Race & Rage.” Cose facilitated a lecture about race relations in the United States. He discussed what progress and setbacks people of color have since the Civil Rights Movement era, while sharing his thoughts on the works of King. Following the lecture, he took time to meet with attendees during a book-signing reception.

**Felipe Luciano**

Felipe Luciano, a community activist and media personality figure, was the CME’s guest lecturer for Hispanic Heritage Month in 2011. He gave highlights on the history of the Spaniards, conquering and colonizing the lands in Latin America, as well as other Europeans colonizing the New World. In this discussion, he mentioned the horrors that the Spaniards put upon the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean and of South America in the name of Christianity. One of Luciano’s points was that in order for us to progress as a community and to create meaningful change for the future, we need to study our own and others’ personal cultural histories and heritages.

**Ellis Cose**

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**Touré**

Social commentator, Touré, visited the UNI community on April 11, 2012, after the release of his latest book, “Who’s Afraid of Post-Blackness: What it Means to be Black Now.” His visit was highly welcomed by UNI multicultural students, as well as faculty, staff and community members. Earlier in the day he attended the session of the CME Book Club, whose members plus various others from on and off campus were thrilled to have a conversation with him on a more intimate basis. In order to elucidate further his perspective on race, Touré used the homicide of the Florida teenager, TrayVon Martin—prompting much impassioned discussion among the participants.

**Marian Wright Edelman**

The founding President of the Children’s Defense Fund, Marian Wright Edelman
Wright Edelman, graced us with her presence and spoke about the high proportion of children living in poverty in the United States. She shared disaggregated statistics of those living in poverty, as well as the unfortunate circumstances children whose parents are incarcerated. Martin Luther King, Jr. played a significant role in her life; after exploring impoverished communities in the Mississippi Delta with Senator Robert Kennedy, she suggested to King about building a movement to address U.S. poverty and, thus, the Poor People’s Campaign was born. She discussed the cradle-to-prison pipeline by emphasizing the many ways children of color are funneled into the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

**Stephen Carter**

Stephen L. Carter is a professor of law at Yale Law School and author of the book, “The Violence of Peace: America’s Wars in the Age of Obama.” During his visit at UNI, Carter shared his opinions on the planning and thought processes behind the U.S. government leadership and the role they play in warfare. Carter makes the claim that much of the foreign policy of our country scarcely changed after the ascension of Barack Obama to the U.S. presidency. Because of the ten-year anniversary of September 11, Professor Carter mainly focused his discussion on the U.S. military’s infiltration of Afghanistan and Iraq.

**Louisa Thomas**

Louisa Thomas is the author of “Conscience: Two Soldiers, Two Pacifists, One Family—a Test of Will and Faith in World War I.” She gave a keynote address and subsequently participated in a panel discussion with various members of the UNI and Wartburg academic communities. The topic revolved around the peaceful resolution of conflict.

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**Other Cooperative Ventures**

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**Marjorie Cohn**

Another great lecturer sponsored by the CME was Marjorie Cohn, a professor of law at Thomas Jefferson School of Law. Cohn is also a former president of the National Lawyers Guild. She started her lecture with a review of the Bush administration—specifically, the incident in Abu Ghraib. American soldiers had captured several Iraqis and put them through a variety of dehumanizing torture tactics, which the government kept referring to as advanced interrogation methods. The news of American soldiers utilizing torture, including water boarding, was known worldwide when pictures from the prison camp were leaked to the public. Cohn then went on to give a definition of torture. It is illegal, and some of it is happening within U.S. borders.

In conjunction with the College of Education and the
various races, cultures and ages—providing us with a great representation of the Cedar Valley community. The project was displayed at the CME during the spring 2012 semester.

Waterloo Public Schools, the CME hosted a video conference with Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles E. Ducommum Professor of Education at Stanford University, and author of “The Flat World and Education: How America’s Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future.” In the summer of 2011, Darling-Hammond was a guest at the Education Summit of the current Iowa governor. Although her experience is primarily with the K-12 system in general, she addressed concerns of racial discrimination and equity throughout her talk. An advocate of multicultural infusion into the curriculum, she also stressed the importance of using expert classroom teachers as mentors of teachers that need further skills development, as well as less seasoned instructors early in their careers.

**UNI MUSEUM**

In the spring of 2012, the CME partnered with the UNI Museum to host the exhibit “RACE: Are We So Different?” The exhibit was created by the American Anthropological Association with assistance from the Science Museum of Minnesota. The biological, social and political contexts of “race” were on display. A section of the exhibit had portraits of the “Hapa Project” in which photographer Kip Fulbeck displayed pictures of multiracial persons and how they view their own identities. In order to get the UNI and Cedar Valley community excited over the RACE exhibit, the CME and the UNI Museum partnered to create a mini-exhibit called “What Are You?” project. Numerous volunteers from the community as well as UNI students and staff participated in the project. The display ranged across various presentations and workshops hosted by UNI faculty/staff and local community leaders. Among the presenters were: Matt Nuese, UNI Career Services Office; Dr. Mark Grey, UNI professor in Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology; and Akela McDonald, Wheaton Franciscan Health Care.

**MULTICULTURAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP RETREAT**

This year’s Multicultural Student Leadership Retreat was held on Saturday, Sept. 17, 2011. This program has allowed our department to encourage multicultural students at UNI to be more active within their campus community by providing leadership opportunities and workshops for them. In addition, this program allows the students engage in dialogue about their identity, as well as social justice and community building. The theme was “iLead: from vision to action” in which we discussed some of the basics of leadership and how to create change in our communities. Students also had the opportunity to have a dialogue about their multicultural identity and their experiences being a multicultural student at UNI.

The students spent the day participating in various presentations and workshops hosted by UNI faculty/staff and local community leaders. Among the presenters were: Matt Nuese, UNI Career Services Office; Dr. Mark Grey, UNI professor in Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology; and Akela McDonald, Wheaton Franciscan Health Care.
CONFERENCE ROOM COMPLETION
The CME conference room was under construction the previous academic year. However, the spring 2012 semester brought to us the completion of the CME conference room. A 12’ Herman Miller Eames Conference Room Table now graces the center of the room flanked by 12 Chadwick mesh conference chairs. A 60” plasma Smart TV has been installed on the east wall with several ports for multimedia. A designated area for a webmaster has been completed. In addition, mini blinds have been installed for privacy when needed. The book cases/credenzas from the CME lobby area have been repurposed in the conference room as well. Numerous cultural artwork and artifacts are on display in the conference room; in particular, reframed vintage prints of civil rights leaders by artist L.B. Williams complete the space while reinforcing the mission statement of the CME.

RE-DECORATING THE CME LOBBY
During the spring, the CME staff reflected on how to make the CME a more welcoming space for students. After much deliberation, we made some decorative changes. The book cases/credenzas were removed to open up the space. The furniture was placed in a way to encourage interaction with others. Lamps were purchased to create a cozy and warm feeling with softer lighting. In addition, we added plants around the lobby area to provide a pop of color, as well as to refresh the area.

WHAT WE DO
The CME staff engages in a number of activities that are unseen, yet characterizes a central part of the department’s core functions. We see students on a regular basis to listen to their joys and concerns and to refer them to resources to help them achieve their myriad and sundry goals. Much of this type of advising and directing is done informally and often spontaneously, for our doors, so to speak, are always open and we are quite approachable in our overall endeavor to serve students.

Hence, in addition to the structured programming, services and activities we perform as part of our mission, we assist the retention efforts of the university in numberless ways through passive, unplanned, and informal conversations with students as well as through dialogue with faculty, staff, administrators and community members that occur routinely.

THE CME MISSION
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;
- Maintaining a facility environment that conveys appreciation for the cultural traditions, expressions and perspectives of racial and ethnic minorities.
HERITAGE MONTHS
One vehicle by which we seek to enhance the cultural competency of students is through observing nationally established heritage months that highlight accomplishments and issues related to traditionally underrepresented categories of people. In many ways, these periods of time, though understandably meaningful and still important to maintain, have paradoxically restricted some of the important work we do. Many people who are aware of these designated month-long celebrations have become inured to them so much so that events which include an ethnocentric focus outside the parameters of the appointed time often are perceived as out of place or unusual. This common misconstrual of the incipient intention or motivation for these observances sometimes makes it challenging to develop programming that does not fit into such narrow configurations.

The CME will continue to work with student populations to support and foster heritage month events. However, we will increasingly look to providing programs and planning activities of a culturally diverse nature throughout the academic year that no longer surrender or succumb to the hackneyed paradigm. Besides, many renowned persons of color increasingly frown upon receiving the majority of their invitations to speak or perform during the month their particular racial or ethnic group is showcased. Certainly, their expertise should be appreciated year-round and not be relegated to the confines of a given month. Hence, our schedule will become more fluid and not pigeon-holed into stereotypical commemorative periods.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS
Developing programs of a sociocultural nature has been an intransigent bugaboo in many ways. Students easily plan and implement social activities such as parties and other get-togethers that have no appreciable educational content. Furthermore, they frequently suggest popular entertainers such as actors, comedians, and musicians/vocalists to invite to campus—personalities and events that are usually cost prohibitive for the CME! This year, for example, Touré is probably the only invitee who approximated a pop icon.

We are considering reinstituting our cultural study tours, which combine the educational and the social in meaningful contexts and juxtapositions. Alumni of UNI, who return or communicate by email or social media, frequently remark that their participation in one of our cultural trips was a signature moment for them as an undergraduate. Finding the best time frame and the most cost-effective traveling schedule will be a priority over the next couple of years with the goal of reprising the trip in the spring of 2014.
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