From the Director...
On behalf of the IRC, welcome to the new semester. The university is abuzz with activity and changes. The IRC has likewise been active on many fronts: research, training, collaboration, and advocacy. We are especially proud to announce the redesign of our webpage, under the guidance of our staff member, Dr. Marcela Castro. Please visit us and see for yourself (www.asu.edu/irc). Our newsletter is also reformatted so that we can feature in greater depth the different programs at the Center. International and national connections are highlighted in the current issue. Our next installment will describe our community connections. We welcome your feedback on our ongoing programming, as well as our web, electronic, and text communications. And as always, we invite you to actively promote a society where all individuals and groups are respected and empowered.

—Dr. Delia S. Saenz

Murphy co-facilitates Apartheid Dialogue with Archbishop Desmond Tutu

South Africa commemorated the 10th anniversary of its Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) by convening the Memory, Narrative, and Forgiveness Conference at the University of Cape Town in November. Scholars and practitioners representing 21 nations were in attendance, as were members of the South African community. ASU had a visible presence at this international conference, with the IRC’s Teri Murphy co-facilitating two conference sessions involving victims and perpetrators of the Apartheid era. One session, co-facilitated with Nobel Laureate Desmond Tutu, brought together women from both sides of the conflict, who spoke about their common pain from losing husbands and sons during the violence that had transpired. An experienced and exceptional practitioner in the area of conflict transformation, Murphy helped guide the dialogue participants through the processing of strong, raw sentiments and through discussion of social healing. The dialogues were witnessed by conference attendees and were also televised to a national audience.

The international conference encouraged reflection on the TRC, an internationally acclaimed national project that attempted to bring historical enemies together to build a new society. One of its goals was to pursue a form of justice that reconciles communities rather than punishing former offenders. One decade beyond an era of gross human rights violations, the healing and transformation continue. Keynote addresses were delivered by Dr. Vamik Volkan (two-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee) from the University of Virginia, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and conference organizer Dr. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela from the University of Cape Town, who reminded attendees that “... if the right conditions are created, one can have dialogue with one’s enemies. That is the gift that South Africa can share with the world.”

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National discourse on diversity in higher education a key goal for Diversity Scholar Series

In partnership with the Mary Lou Fulton School of Education, the Center hosted Dr. Patricia Gandara as the Fall 2006 IRC Diversity Scholar. Gandara, who leads the Education Policy Studies emphasis at the University of California-Davis, is a nationally renowned scholar in the area of access to higher education for low income and minority students. Her evening keynote address was based on her research project, Fragile Futures: Risk and Vulnerability among Latino High Achievers. The following day, she led two workshops for ASU faculty, graduate students and support staff interested in exploring the implications of her research findings for their own work at ASU. One workshop addressed new empirical directions in this area; the second focused on institutional service delivery related to the recruitment and retention of high-achieving underrepresented students in higher education.

Now in its fourth year, the IRC’s Diversity Scholar Series continues to bring nationally and internationally-recognized scholars, experts, and policymakers to ASU to provide awareness and understanding in the areas of diversity, multicultural and social justice research, policy, and pedagogy to ASU. Building on the traditional visiting scholar model, the series includes practical, small group working sessions in addition to the keynote, in order to engage ASU faculty, staff and students in applying the guest’s expertise to their own ongoing work.

The IRC selects Diversity Scholars in partnership with different academic units across the university, thus creating opportunities for engaging discipline-specific discourse on diversity, access, and justice. Previous scholars have represented disparate disciplines such as Mathematics, Anthropology, and Psychology. The ultimate goal is to have institutional academic and support units understand and promote diversity in campus life, teaching, and research.

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South Africa: A Continuing Collaboration

Murphy has been conducting work in South Africa for 10 years and has developed collaborative relationships with the academic and public policy community of South Africa. She maintains strong partnerships with former Commissioners of the TRC, government officials, NGO leaders, members of the religious community, and with South Africa’s premiere academic center, the University of Cape Town. Her expertise in the areas of conflict transformation and her connection to South Africa were key to her hire at the IRC wherein one of our goals is to understand the dynamics of intergroup conflict and effective models of conflict resolution. To date, numerous faculty, students, and staff have benefited from Murphy’s ongoing professional relationships in South Africa.

In 2005, she hosted several ASU faculty and staff on a 10-day tour of South Africa in an effort to advance international institutional partnerships across disciplines. Among those in the group were Marie Provine (Director, School of Justice and Social Inquiry), Joel Gereboff (Chair, Religious Studies Dept.), David Jacobson (Director, Global Studies Center), Art Hinshaw (Director, Sandra Day O’Connor Law School Mediation Clinic), Mirna Lattouf (School of Interdisciplinary Studies), and Nancy Crocker (Director, Service Learning Program). In the past 4 years, Murphy has also led groups of students from these departments to South Africa during summer session to foster an understanding of government and non-government programs, and to experience the living conditions of the country’s citizens. For many students, the 5-8 week intensive session is transformational. They learn the skills of dialogue, community building and sustainable partnering across immense race and class divides that still exist. Students from Business, Philosophy, and the Barrett Honors College have also participated. Two alumnae, Eric Lind (Philosophy & Religion) and Erin Torkelson (Literature) have made return trips to South Africa as Fulbright Scholars. Another student, Grace Chang, has just finished a 5-month internship at the University of Cape Town, following her summer session experience.

This year, Murphy will continue her work on behalf of ASU’s IRC through both the summer intensive session with students and through collaboration with UCT’s Psychology Department. The latter will involve the establishment of a difficult dialogues program, modeled after IRC’s programs and Murphy’s past work in this area. Significant divisions and offenses remain deeply rooted in the social fabric of the post-Apartheid community. Murphy will partner with members of UCT’s Graduate Humanities Department to launch a process that will create a safe and welcoming environment for people across the divide to begin meaningful dialogue. The effort will be highlighted at a UCT academic conference next November. The Intergroup Relations Center is pleased to lead this effort and the continued collaboration on behalf of the ASU community.

Teri Murphy can be reached at the Center, and at teri.murphy@asu.edu. For more information on the summer program, visit www.asu.edu/ssc/abroad/summer, and select South Africa.

Diversity Scholar Spring 2007

Our featured speaker this semester is Dr. Cornelia Porter, PhD, RN, FAAN, who is being co-hosted by the College of Nursing & Healthcare Innovation. Porter is Professor Emeritus in the School of Nursing at the University of Michigan. She is the former Dean of the College of Nursing at Florida A & M University, and the former Director of the American Nurses Association’s Ethnic Minority Fellowship Program. A pioneer in her field, Dr. Porter brings a wealth of research experience and direct practical application around issues of race in nursing. She is the author of “Race and Racism in Nursing Research—Past, Present and Future” and the co-editor of Eliminating Health Disparities among Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the United States.

Porter’s keynote address, Race and Racism in Nursing Research: Are They Necessary?, will speak to race as a socio-political concept in relation to health disparities among different ethnic/racial groups. Porter will also address race, racism, and social justice within the broader contexts of nursing education, practice and research. The keynote address will be held March 26 at 6 pm at the ASU Phoenix Downtown campus, in NHI 348 (third floor of the Nursing Building). A reception will precede the address and the university community is invited.

The following day, Porter will lead two workshops, also at the Downtown campus. Session 1, focused on research, addresses the multiple perspectives that exist about how race, racism, and discrimination contribute to health disparities and how they should be studied. The focal points of this critical discourse are nurse researchers’ investigative approaches and the various methodological challenges presented by the complex and subtle nature of contemporary racism and discrimination. Session 2 examines service delivery and education, and the relationships among cultural competence, contemporary aversive racism, and social justice. Registration is required for the two workshops (space is limited).

If your unit is interested in co-hosting a future Diversity Scholar from your discipline, or you have questions about the series, please contact Dr. Lori B. Girshick. For additional information on the Series, visit the IRC website (www.asu.edu/irc) and select “Faculty/Staff.”

Watch for our next E-News issue in late March 2007, focusing on community connections!