



Bonner Center for Character Education
and Citizenship

ANNUAL REPORT: 2001

The Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship in the SOEHD was formed in 1997 to promote character education in the Central Valley through providing nationally recognized speakers for the Fresno area, forums on character education and professional ethics, small grants for local public schools and teachers, materials and other professional resources for review, and coordination for a variety of character award programs.

Major Accomplishments for 2001

1. In 2000 the Bonner Center sponsored the SOEHD Maxim Identification Contest. As a result 12 maxims reflecting the spirit of education were selected, framed and hung around the Education Building. The contest was such a success that the Dean has asked it be re-done, this time focusing on a broader multicultural inclusiveness. Representatives of both Hmong and Hispanic student organizations have been contacted to suggest maxims from their cultures which will then be framed and hung on the walls of the Education Building.
2. Research is continuing on a statewide evaluation of applications for California's Distinguished Schools Award. The research is in its second year and involves university faculty in Fresno and St. Louis and two doctoral students. The task is to look for a relationship between the implementation of character education programs in exemplary elementary schools and academic achievement in those schools. It is expected that the research will be completed by June 2002. Funding from the John Templeton Foundation in Radnor, PA supports this project.
3. Research is continuing on the creation of an assessment system for measuring the professional ethics of prospective teachers as they progress through the teacher preparation program. The research design is adapted from the University of Minnesota Dental School and CSU Fresno is the first program in teacher education to attempt such an assessment. Assessments in four areas will be created: moral/ethical sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation and moral implementation. Our intent is to assess students at the beginning of their training program and again at the end. An emphasis on professional ethics will comprise part of the training given to each candidate. The research is being partially underwritten by the law firm of Hager, Trippel, Macy and Jensen.
4. More faculty are participating in professional ethics initiatives. For example:
 - a. Nine faculty representing several specialties presented ethical dilemmas for discussion and resolution at the 17th Annual Conference on Character and Civic Education in April 2001.
 - b. Faculty are being actively recruited to present ethical perspectives from their disciplines at the 18th Annual Conference on Character and Civic Education in April 2002.
 - c. More and more teacher education programs are including ethical components in their ongoing teaching. The Early Childhood Education Program cohort was the first to initiate this curricular emphasis. At least two other cohort groups have asked to participate.
 - d. The Kremen School of Education and Human Development, under the leadership of the Dean, revised its mission and vision statements during 2001. Attention to professional ethics is now part of the official vision, mission and goals of our School.

5. Drs. Pam Lane-Garon and Jacques Benninga have proposed a symposium for the annual meeting the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), the professional body representing all Colleges and Schools of Teacher Education. The symposium is titled, "Preparing Ethical Educators for Classrooms and Schools" and includes representatives from the University of Minnesota, Boston College, The John Templeton Foundation and CSU Fresno. We propose to document through our presentations, papers and discussions a variety of efforts that enhance the ethical dispositions of teacher candidates at universities around the country.
6. Jacques Benninga, a member of the AACTE sub-committee 'Teacher Education as a Moral Community' has received approval to begin work on a national award to recognize promising practices in professional ethics in teacher education. If approved, that award may be awarded as early as 2003 or 2004.
7. The Character Education Partnership (CEP), a national organization devoted to teaching and modeling of positive character traits in our nations schools, is initiating a new project.
 - a. Preparing Teachers to be Educators of Character aims to identify innovative practices, influence teacher education programs and make character education an integral part of the undergraduate and graduate training of teachers and educators.... [The project grew out of] our national survey report, Teachers as Educators of Character: Are the Nation's Schools of Education Coming Up Short? Findings say there is strong support for teaching character education in K-12 schools. Yet, only 13% of deans are satisfied with their university's efforts to prepare our nation's future teachers. We will build on this research to help change the practices of our schools of education.
8. Dr. Pam Lane-Garon was featured in Central The Fresno Bee on September 10 for her work with the Unified School District. She has been training students in schools in CUSD to become peer mediators, students helping others resolve conflicts.
9. The 17th Annual Conference on Character and Civic Education was held in April 2001 with over 700 prospective teachers spending the day in workshops related to their civic and character education responsibilities.
10. The 14th Annual Virtues and Character Recognition Awards were presented at the Conference on Character and Civic Education to 12 Central Valley Middle Schools. A grant from The Fresno Bee allowed us to give each winning school a cash award of \$125.00. The Fresno Bee was a co-sponsor for the award.
11. Our speaker for 2001, Dr. Darcia Narvaez of the Notre Dame University did not come to Fresno due to the September 11, 2001 tragedy.