



Bonner Center for Character Education  
and Citizenship

## **ANNUAL REPORT: 2003**

### **Purpose of the Bonner Center**

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, materials and other professional resources for review, and coordination for a variety of character award programs.

### **Administrative Housing of Ancillary Unit**

The Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship is an authorized Ancillary Unit of the CSU Fresno and the KSOEHD. Dr. Jacques Benninga is its director and Dr. Pam Lane-Garon is its Associate Director. The Center's activities are guided by an Advisory Board composed of KSOEHD faculty, public school personnel from Fresno and surrounding counties and a representative of the Bonner Family Foundation.

### **Highlights of significant activities 2003-2004:**

1. The booklet, Practices of Teacher Educators Committed to Character was published by the national character education organization, The Character Education Partnership (CEP) in early 2003. Based on a national survey, the CEP identified three exemplary universities. CSUF was one of those.
2. The Bonner Center staff worked with the California State Department of Education in preparing the application for the 2004 California Distinguished School Award. This year the award application contains stronger language related to character education. Standard 6 of that application contains the following wording to which applying schools must respond: "How does the culture of the school promote positive character traits and good citizenship and support non-violent conflict resolution?" To achieve maximum points on this standard, schools must make a "strong case" for a systematic character education approach that includes adult modeling, curriculum integration and school policies.
3. A university committee was appointed by President Welty in February 2003 to examine the feasibility of establishing an honor code/honor system at CSUF. Jacques Benninga was elected chairperson of this committee. In Spring 2003 the committee studied the issue and in Fall 2003, in conjunction with the Center for Academic Integrity at Duke University, a questionnaire was sent to all CSUF students (approximately 21,000) and faculty (approximately 1100). Results were tabulated and evaluated and used by the committee to draft recommendations to President Welty and the Academic Senate. The committee expects to finish its work in May 2004.
4. The Ethics Project, headed by Pam Lane-Garon, continues its assessment and curriculum development work. The Early Childhood Education Multiple Subject Program served as experimental group for the pre/post assessment and curriculum project designed to address issues of ethical preparation as defined by a four-component theoretical model. Also participating in the project are faculty and students of Option IV and EHD 50. Study results have been submitted for publication by Dr. Lane-Garon. Drs. Abramson, Macy, Shelton and Lane-Garon presented Ethics Project curriculum and study findings at the California Association for Education of Young Children in San Diego.

5. In January, 2004 many of the CSUF Ethics Project faculty facilitated a three hour ethics education workshop for Central Valley Early Childhood Educators. The project was in collaboration with Fresno City College Instructors and funded by CARES.
6. Pam Lane-Garon led the KSOEHD faculty in an hour-long exercise at the 2003 KSOEHD Annual Fall Faculty Retreat. Desired dispositional characteristics of teachers were generated at that time in the context of case/ethical dilemma analyses.
7. The Mediator Mentors program, developed by Pam Lane-Garon, reached the 1,000 mark. One thousand students have been trained in conflict management skills since 1998. Programs are active in Fresno, Central and Hanford Unified schools.
8. For contributions to Education, Dr. Pam Lane-Garon was awarded the Jan and Bud Richter Award for Excellence in Education for KSOEHD Faculty in April 2004.
9. The 2004 Virtues and Character Recognition Award process completed its 17th year. Correspondence was sent to each school district in Tulare, Fresno, Kings and Madera Counties announcing the award and asking for participation. Bonner Center Advisory members were requested to help identify possible qualifying schools. Fourteen elementary schools were awarded at the 20th Annual Conference on Character and Civic Education on April 21, 2004.
10. Dr. Tom Lickona of the SUNY Cortland campus was the keynote speaker at the 20th Annual Conference on Character and Civic Education. In addition, Dr. Lickona participated in a panel discussion on character education moderated by Dr. Don Wise and including Dr. John Cruz (Fowler Superintendent), Ms. Stacy Dunncliff (Principal of Reyburn Intermediate School) and John Forenti (Tulare County Office of Education).
11. The Bonner Center has established a relationship with John Minkler of the Fresno County Office of Education that we hope to expand. Dr. Minkler has started the Civic Education Network for Region 7, an organization that seeks to promote character and civic education and service learning in K-12 schools.
12. We have added Dr. Walt Buster to our Advisory Committee and hope that through him we can establish working relations with the Barsch Center for Character Education at Fresno Pacific University.

### **Sources of Funding:**

The major and consistent source of funding is received from the Bonner Family Foundation of Fresno, CA. Ms. Kaye Cummings is its Executive Director and a member of its board, Ms. Dorothy Rohlfing, sits on the Bonner Center's Advisory Committee. Other sources of funding have included: The John Templeton Foundation, the Law Offices of Hager, Trippel, and Macy, the California Geographic Alliance, the Tulare County Office of Education and the Fresno Bee

### **Space and Equipment Utilization:**

Space for the Bonner Center's growing collection of related books and materials is provided by the KSOEHD and located in INTERESC, 4th floor of the Education Building.

## Goals and Objectives 2004-2005:

- We're working with John Minkler and the FCOE to host and provide a home base for a Region 7 Civic Education Council to promote collaboration with K-12 schools, higher education, youth leaders, parents, community organizations, business leaders and government agencies.
- We will plan for the 21st Annual Conference on Character and Civic Education and the 18th annual character awards to schools. We will invite another national figure to be the keynote speaker (and then to consult with us on our research).
- We will continue to research and look for outlets for funding and to publish our research on character education, professional ethics and university honor codes.
- Our work continues on the research projects, material collection, and web site updates (<http://csufresno.edu/bonnercenter/bonnercenter/bonner.htm>).
- We hope to work on evaluation criteria for a rubric to assess character education at the high school level. Several members of the Bonner Center's Advisory Committee have expressed interest in this work.
- CSUF has initiated a major fund-raising campaign. An idea was proposed for a Center for Professional Ethics that has generated interest on the campus and was recently voted as a top priority. The Bonner Center's staff hope to be involved in conceptualizing this center.
- Susan Schlievert and Jacques Benninga are meeting with the local Public Radio station to look at the feasibility of writing 90-second programs related to ethics through Aesop fables.
- Jacques Benninga is on sabbatical for Spring 2004, during which time he hopes to engage in several research projects related to character education in public schools.