



## **Bergen Community College Proposal to the Bildner New Jersey Campus Diversity Initiative**

### **I. Project Overview**

Bergen Community College requests a partnership with the Bildner New Jersey Campus Diversity Initiative to further develop its Center for the Study of Intercultural Understanding (CSIU) to a state of full maturity and institutionalization. The Center learned a great deal from the challenges it faced in its first year, and with new leadership in the second year, and a focused mission and set of goals, CSIU was able to gain substantial support on campus and in the community. As described in the 2003-04 Annual Report, it successfully conducted a number of college-wide and community events, and underwent a strategic restructuring from which it has benefited greatly. While adhering to the spirit of CSIU's original plan, the Center has focused on broadening and deepening campus and community participation, and organizing itself in a way that would facilitate such greater involvement and the achievement of its goals.

CSIU is now poised to effectively assist the College and the residents of the North Jersey region in better using their remarkable diversity to improve education and overall quality of life. The Center is also eager to collaborate with the other participants in the Bildner NJCDI. As the Center moves toward year four, and with the assistance of the Bildner Family Foundation, it wishes to further refine that basic vision, and add additional personnel to assist with assessing and communicating its impact. This

next level of development will be phased in over the next eighteen months. The three main and immediate goals of the Center, all aligned with the core value of learning, correspond to CSIU's three new advisory subcommittees: Curriculum & Teaching, Co-Curricular Programming, and Community Engagement & Training. Much of the work of these committees will involve collaboration between faculty, between CSIU staff and community members, and between Student Life and the academic divisions. Our President, Interim Academic Vice President, and Vice President for Student Services have all participated in the development this proposal, and are eager to support the Center as it matures. In addition to allocating resources from their specific areas, all have pledged to serve as stewards of the Center as it engages in new faculty development initiatives, new directions in co-curricular coordination, and more extensive community outreach and partnerships.

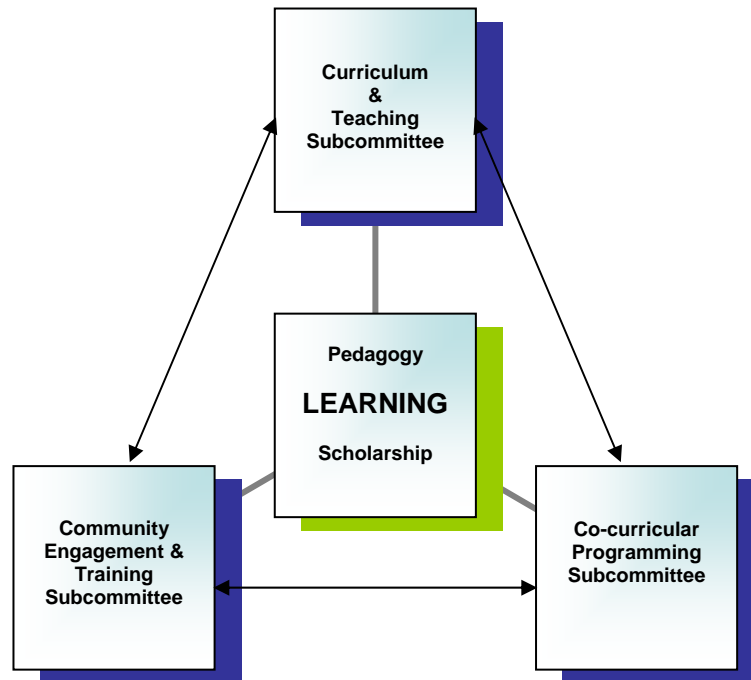
To meet these goals, Bergen Community College requests an investment from the Bildner New Jersey Campus Diversity Initiative in the amount of \$75,000, to be used over the next three semesters. Combined with College resources, grant funds will support Center staff time, faculty development initiatives, training, conference attendance, meeting expenses, knowledge base and web development, advertising and promotion, and outcomes assessment. The support will accelerate the Center's development in ways that we anticipate will attract future sponsors and supporters.

## **II. Goals and Objectives**

At the heart of CSIU's mission is the task of exploring communication and understanding across cultural divides. CSIU construes the notion of culture broadly, and as varying with such factors as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and religious belief. In alignment with College's educational mission, this translates into facilitating the creation of related learning experiences in the classroom, in the variety of co-curricular activities on campus, and in the Center's community outreach

efforts. Mindful of the potential hazards of promising big and specific end-results in a short time frame, we propose instead to continue to build structures and processes designed to move toward systemic institutional and community change, with the three advisory subcommittee structure serving as the backbone of the organization, and with frequent assessments of our progress along the way. (In Figure 1 below, the arrows indicate lines of mutual support and enrichment.)

**Figure 1**



Accordingly, CSIU's goals and objectives through Spring '06 are as follows:

**Goal 1:** To expand the use of diversity as an educational resource in the classroom

Objectives:

- To coordinate a Teaching Circle and Seminar in Diversity Studies
- To offer faculty stipends for participation in the above, as well as for developing independent diversity-oriented course materials

**Goal 2:** To align and plan relevant co-curricular activities with classroom activities, in the interest of maximizing learning in each

Objectives:

- To establish a Co-curricular Liaison for each academic division, to better integrate ongoing co-curricular activities
- To host an interdisciplinary Diversity Scholar/Artist for a series of lectures and workshops, with curricular tie-ins developed

**Goal 3:** To become a resource for community members and organizations seeking to engage in intergroup dialogue

Objectives:

- To develop a web-based knowledge base of diversity resources and local organizations
- To partner with community groups in their efforts to promote intergroup understanding and dialogue

**Goal 4:** To expand the skill set and leadership abilities of Center staff, subcommittee members, interested faculty, and community advocates

Objective:

- Organize an on-campus “Train-the-Trainer” workshop in prejudice reduction and intercultural sensitivity

**Goal 5:** To expand overall collaboration with Student Life diversity initiatives

Objectives:

- With the Office of Student Life, sponsor and coordinate “Café Bergen” multicultural coffeehouses
- Support and increase faculty participation in the “All Together Different” weekends

**Goal 6:** To create assessment research tools and other mechanisms for enhancing and demonstrating the Center’s impact

Objectives:

- To establish an Assessment Research Assistant who can focus on evaluation processes
- To develop multiple qualitative and quantitative methods as part of a feedback loop for future improvement

**Goal 7:** To raise the overall visibility of the Center, and better communicate the Center’s impact to its stakeholders

Objectives:

- To establish a Communications Assistant who can focus on raising awareness about CSIU
- To overhaul and update the CSIU website
- To establish a twice yearly newsletter called “The Contact Zone”
- To develop a modular promotional folder/brochure to attract potential community sponsors

As the Figure 1 suggests, a number of these goals and objectives are highly interrelated. For example, the training in Goal 4 will clearly support Goals 1, 2, 3, and 5. See Section IV below for more context and a more detailed discussion of these activities.

### **III. Project Description**

#### **a. Center Staff**

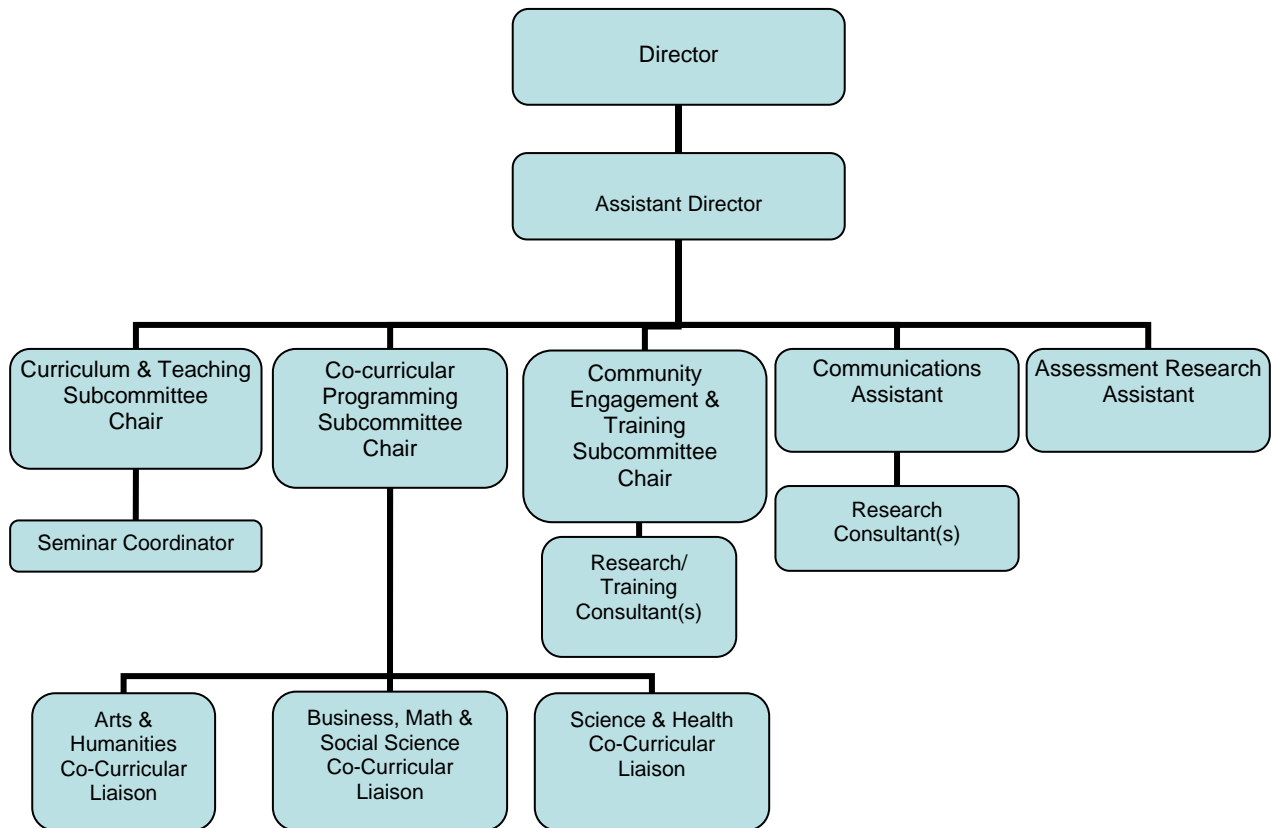
Recognizing the importance of time on task, our plan involves the giving of incentives and compensation to a larger set of individuals, thus increasing the amount of work that can be accomplished, and the pool amongst which labor can be divided. (See Figure 2 below for the proposed organizational structure.)

- The CSIU Director will provide overall leadership and center coordination, and will report directly to President Winn
- The Assistant Director will provide support to the Director, as well as focus on meeting and specific program logistics
- Subcommittee Chairs will be responsible for facilitating and overseeing initiatives in their respective areas
- Working with the Curriculum & Teaching Subcommittee Chair, a Seminar Coordinator will coordinate the SP '05 Teaching Circle and subsequent (FA '05—SP '06) Seminar in Diversity Studies
- Working with the Co-Curricular Programming Chair, three divisional Co-curricular Liaisons will serve, in part, as interfaces between the academic departments and diversity-oriented clubs and/or Heritage Week committees. Liaisons will identify and

develop one to two potentially interdisciplinary programs around a guest lecture or performance. Programs will involve course materials development and, if possible, a pre-lecture faculty development seminar involving the guest speaker.

- Also working with the Co-Curricular Programming Chair and the Office of Student Life, Café Bergen Coordinators will develop and host quarterly multicultural coffeehouses.
- Working with the Community Engagement & Training Subcommittee Chair, one or more research consultants with the necessary expertise will advise on the development and implementation of workshops and training sessions.
- Working with the Center Director and Asst. Director, a Communications Assistant will assist in the creation of a twice-yearly newsletter (“The Contact Zone”), and a brochure/informational folder, and will assist in the revamping and maintenance of the CSIU website.
- The Communications Assistant will be supported by one or more research consultants who will advise on, and help develop, the website’s “knowledge base” of resources and regional organizations.
- Working with the Center Director, an Assessment Research Assistant will work with faculty and other Center staff (including the Communications Assistant) to develop research projects that document the impact of the Center’s activities. This may include conventional quantitative evaluations of activities as well video and other portfolio materials. Needs assessment will also be a part of the assignment.

**Figure 2**



**b. Faculty Development Initiatives**

In a survey done in fall 2003, over 70% of teaching faculty expressed a desire to learn about how they can better include diversity issues in their courses, and similarly over 70% reported that they want to learn how to teach their disciplines in a multicultural classroom. In Spring 2005, we propose to run a semester-long Teaching Circle on teaching pedagogies and practices related to diversity education. This past semester, the Curriculum & Teaching Subcommittee sponsored a discussion of Mary Louise Pratt's "Arts of the Contact Zone," a text which examines how we communicate and learn, and teach and govern in places—classrooms and colleges, street corners and political forums—where disparate people come together (in both mutually agreed upon or, more often, forced, unequal ways). Building on the general interest generated and specific questions raised in this seminar, Teaching Circle participants will engage in discussions of how they teach, encourage, and utilize diverse opinions and methodologies in their classrooms.

During the 2005-06 academic year, we will extend the reach and scope of the Teaching Circle by offering a year-long Seminar in Diversity Studies. In addition to readings and conversations related to classroom practice, discipline-specific approaches and interdisciplinary methodologies, participants will identify and develop capstone projects designed to illuminate and/or serve particular diversity-related scholarly, instructional, co-curricular or student service needs and interests at the College.

From spring 2005 through spring 2006, we propose to offer stipends to develop curricular materials for specific intercultural communication-related courses, areas and student cohorts. Examples might include: course-specific workshops for adult learners, sessions and materials on cultural and ethnic sensitivities within classroom and college environments, curriculum outlines and assignments for courses like WRT 101-N (dedicated for international student cohorts).

### **c. Co-Curricular Coordination**

BCC is fortunate in its ability to bring a wide and diverse array of cultural programming to campus. With a few notable exceptions, though, current co-curricular coordination with classes is sparse and largely ad hoc. Formal and informal assessments we have done indicate a need and a desire for more co-curricular materials, direction and support. These recent strategic planning efforts, as well as actual committee functioning, thus dictate recasting the Arts & World Languages Subcommittee as a Co-Curricular Programming Committee. This will expand involvement to potentially any discipline, and give a more focused charge to the group. Our divisional Co-Curricular Liaisons will facilitate working relationships between the event planners and instructors, assist in gearing program content to the curricular needs and interests, develop and disseminate materials (e.g., event details, short lesson plans, and discussion questions developed in conjunction with the presenters), and, when feasible, coordinate a pre-event faculty development meeting so that faculty can more fully integrate these events and activities into their curriculum. We expect these steps to ensure good attendance, raise the use and application of the events, and hopefully encourage a move toward explicitly inter-cultural themes.

An annual Guest Diversity Scholar (beginning in the '05-'06 academic year), modeled on the very successful visits by James McBride and the authors featured in the College's Literary Arts Series, will involve both lecture/performance as well as workshops with students and faculty. Our co-curricular liaisons will work to establish college-wide involvement and facilitate the collaborative development of specific assignments geared to the scholar's visits. Finally, and likely as part of our "Come Share Our Wealth" partnership, we will endeavor to have the visiting scholar give a popular lecture geared toward members of the community.

#### **d. Community Outreach and Partnerships**

Over the last eighteen months the Center has developed strong bonds with several community organizations that share our mission. These include the Bergen County Human Relations Commission, the Cultural Competency Taskforce of the Partnership for Community Health, and the Bergen County YWCA Racial Justice Committee. In addition, our Community Engagement & Training Subcommittee, comprised largely of community members, includes representatives from local religious and civic organizations. Recent discussion of needs with the subcommittee revealed that the community would benefit from CSIU offering practical workshops and training opportunities in intercultural competence, or enriching their existing diversity practices by sharing recent work in diversity scholarship. These needs will shape the development of our workshops, and also provide an additional rationale for creating a knowledge base on the CSIU website.

These needs also underpin a formal partnership we would like to establish with the above-named organizations to coordinate two types of activities. Both will be under the heading “Come Share Our Wealth.” The first is a quarterly diversity lecture or presentation. The lecture will be intellectually oriented, but marketed to the general community. The second is a response to our highly diverse—but also highly balkanized—local communities, and will involve creating multicultural community events centered on the theme of multiculturalism’s enhancement of quality of life. The events will be funded by contributions from each of the sponsors, and it will be a great way to raise awareness about CSIU in the community.

#### **e. Coordination with the Office of Student Life**

In the last several years, the Office of Student Life has played a major role in promoting and enhancing campus diversity. Since the student (in her many incarnations) is at the center of the College’s and the Center’s concerns, CSIU will seek to strengthen its relations with Student Life. Center staff will continue to assist with, and give greater support to, the popular “All Together

Different” Diversity Weekends, and study the feasibility of developing a one-day on-campus version of the workshop for students and members of the college community who cannot commit to a weekend long retreat. CSIU will assist in the recruitment of new faculty participants, and will continue to assist with the annual World Week celebration by coordinating activities aligned with the Center’s mission.

The popular Café Bergen Multicultural Coffeehouses draw on the talent of our diverse student body and local community to expose the audience to a wide range of cultural expression. Café Bergen Coordinators will continue to work with the Office in developing and promoting these evenings.

#### **f. Training**

As we look to the future, the Center recognizes the need to develop a training and leadership development mechanism for new faculty and staff. Although there are a number of possibilities, one very likely candidate to assist us with this endeavor is the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI.org), which now has numerous higher education campus affiliate chapters. Among the other possibilities, the Center will explore the feasibility of becoming an NCBI Chapter. Such a training mechanism would clearly have an impact on each of the Center’s initiatives.

#### **g. Assessment Research**

The Center is well-placed to integrate with, and support, an emerging institutional assessment plan that recognizes that a good deal of learning occurs outside of the classroom, and that the classroom, in addition to Student Life, is an appropriate place to

work on students' affective development. The student Core Competencies approved by the Faculty Senate in May 2003 include Civic Responsibility, Interpersonal Skills, and Personal Skills, all of which are central to developing intercultural understanding. An Assessment Research Assistant will work with the Center Director, Asst. Director, subcommittee chairs, and interested faculty and staff to develop model assessment tools and practices appropriate for diversity education, both in the classroom and the co-curriculum. These tools will both help the Center and the College improve what it does, and form a significant part of larger case for future support and development of the Center.

#### **h. Communication**

The informal assessments done as part of recent strategic planning efforts indicate that CSIU needs to do more to get the word out about what it does and why it matters. Though anecdotal evidence suggests that most people in the campus community are aware of what CSIU is, we wish to go further and make our functions and activities highly visible, both on campus and in the community. In order to do this, multiple media are necessary, hence the website revamping, and establishment of print newsletter and modular promotional brochure. The modularity of the brochure will allow us to update parts of it as the Center continues to change and develop. In conjunction with the College's Media Services, we will also explore the production of a CSIU informational video that would include student and community member testimonials about Center activities.

#### **IV. Action Plan with Timeline**

Our first step, in **Spring 2005**, will be to fill the staff positions we have created, and provide orientation. We expect that most of these positions will be filled by current subcommittee members, and thus that activities can begin in a relatively short time span.

- Center website upgrade has begun, and newsletter work can begin immediately, as can the development of an assessment plan.
- A short list of prospective consultants has been created, and we are ready to use their services.
- Meetings of the Teaching Circle will be advertised and scheduled immediately.
- Guidelines and deadlines for the Course Materials Development stipends will be drafted and distributed.
- We will begin a weekly, informal brown-bag lunch meeting, to enhance communication and continue to build community. Some weeks will involve discussion or presentations on specific topics, and others will be left open for free discussion.
- Some co-curricular coordination has already begun, for lectures taking place in April. Planning for the fall semester will also begin.
- Café Bergen coffeehouses will proceed as in the fall semester.
- We will identify and recruit a Guest Diversity Scholar for '05-'06 academic year.
- On February 26<sup>th</sup>, in conjunction with the YWCA Racial Justice Committee, we will host a one-day Racial Understanding and Diversity workshop
- In May, Center members are scheduled to conduct a cultural proficiency workshop for the Bergen County Department of Human Services.
- We are currently studying the feasibility of hosting, this spring, a three-day “Train the Trainer” workshop by the National Coalition Building Institute, and then subsequently starting an NCBI chapter at the College. If we cannot find an appropriate date for the spring/early summer, we will consider a fall date.

- We are currently working with community partners to plan “Come Share Our Wealth” community events for later this spring, and then next fall and spring.

By June, we hope to have laid all of the new groundwork, and to be ready to implement the programs that will begin next September.

In **Fall 2005**, the year-long Seminar in Diversity Studies will begin. We expect that the coordinator of the Spring '05 Teaching Circle will coordinate the Seminar as well, and that recipients of the Course Materials Development stipends for the previous semester can serve as a model for, and perhaps inspire, some of the larger Capstone Projects for the seminar. Other major activities include:

- The year’s Guest Diversity Scholar will be announced.
- A second round of Course Materials Development Stipends will be announced
- Co-curricular projects developed during the previous semester will be implemented
- Toward the middle of the semester, a second edition of “The Contact Zone” newsletter will be distributed.
- The Community Engagement and Training group will continue partnering on prejudice reduction workshops, the annual County “Day of Harmony” event, and “Come Share Our Wealth” initiatives.
- Based on the previous semester’s experience, our consultants will help us further fine-tune our communication and knowledge resources.
- By the end of semester, a modular CSIU brochure will be completed.
- Applications for additional grant funding and requests for sponsorship opportunities will be ongoing
- In accordance with the assessment plan developed in Spring '05, ongoing evaluation of our work will occur.

In **Spring 2006**, the first round of Seminar Capstone Projects will be completed and submitted, and a second, follow-up seminar will be planned for the following academic year. Ongoing subcommittee efforts will continue, and the Center's training efforts should be in full swing by this point. All of these efforts will be showcased as we communicate our impact to the College, our local community, and our neighboring colleges and universities.

## **V. Project Evaluation**

CSIU will continue the practice of constructing a self-critical year-end annual report that is based on the Center's goals and objectives. The development and use of additional, more specific assessment tools and processes will make the report all the richer, and will form part of a larger assessment plan. In alignment with the College's larger effort to assess learning outcomes in the classroom and co-curriculum, we anticipate that the Teaching Circle and later Seminar in Diversity Studies will spawn new classroom and co-curricular research projects that, in addition to documentation of our community outreach efforts, will help demonstrate the Center's impact.

## **VI. Sustaining the Center when Grant Funds Cease**

CSIU emerged from a commitment to campus diversity that has been developing over a twenty year period. With a September 2001 contribution from the BCC Foundation Board of Directors, and a critically important investment from the Bildner Family Foundation, BCC formally established the Center as a living memorial and a catalyst to enhance intercultural understanding and intergroup working, learning, and living relationships. Even when we were unable to continue participation in the Bildner NJCDI, the BCC Board of Trustees and the administration demonstrated their commitment through provision of operating funds, facilities,

and released time for Center leadership. Furthermore, Bergen faculty, staff, and students continued to freely contribute their own time, energy, and resources to sustain and further develop the College's diversity initiative. While we still have much work ahead to realize our goals and vision, it is now clear that the College's commitment has become a part of the institutional landscape, and that the Center will continue to succeed and flourish. Toward this end, we are working on a development plan to secure the Center's future through diversified fundraising that will include:

- Continued in-kind operating support from the College
- BCC Foundation, faculty, and staff contributions, which currently amount to \$15,000
- Expanding membership on the advisory subcommittees to include county residents who can provide philanthropic leadership for the Center (including local foundation directors and donors)
- Potential future membership dues
- Potential earned income from cultural competency development consultations and training programs to be developed for county agencies and school districts as well as local business and industry
- Support from local foundations and corporate and business sponsorships, including naming opportunities, for specified conferences, seminars, and community events
- NEH and other government grants
- In-kind and cash contributions from religious organizations, associations, unions, and individual benefactors
- Potential special fundraising events, annual benefits, and matching gifts