



Montgomery College Montgomery County
MARTLAND

**THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY
AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE**

PROGRESS REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Community Leadership Development and Public Policy at Montgomery College is a resource by which the College is meeting its obligation to students, faculty, staff and community-at-large to serve as an intellectual, social, and cultural force. The Center is addressing significant responsibilities mandated by the Board of Trustees, Office of the President, the Council for the 21st Century and the community by providing a mechanism for collaboration in offering a Leadership and Democracy Education program, working and learning from the establishment of a network of local, regional, and national partners to provide grass roots leadership education, community empowerment and service.

Through the three component programs of the Center¹, it has begun to be a teaching entity for students and citizens, establish a means to identify issues of concern to various constituencies, and bring broad groups of citizens together to enhance leadership skills. The Center has served as a facilitator for dialogue on very difficult and sometimes, troubling issues impacting our community and nation.

The Center has begun to enhance the democracy through leadership education for those working as volunteers or as individual citizens to improve our community.

This document reports the practices and impacts of the Center's work during the period from February 19, 2002 to April 21, 2003.

DEVELOPMENTAL OVERVIEW

The Center is charged to create and operate a 21st Century community leadership development and public policy practice within the College and among individuals and institutions of the community, as well as the community's untapped capacities to enhance

¹ The Robert E. Parilla Community Leadership Development Program, Public Issues Forums and the Public Policy Institute.

civic life. The Center is a Board of Trustees, Office of the President, College, and community wide program to monitor and address a public trust that community members have traditionally placed in higher education's responsibility. This trust is to provide ways for restoring and renewing the civic life, of a modern democracy.

The community members of the Council for the 21st Century understood this as a meaningful, necessary, and an appropriate responsibility to expect from their *community's* College. Subsequently, the Center's practice is accountable for operating programs that will be inclusive, in a safe, open, and neutral environment. The whole capacity of the center is to study with others through College public scholarship with community public scholars based upon a participatory research practice. This practice is directed at strengthening the public life responsibility everyone in the community has if we expect a democratic order to govern the relations among us.

The Board of Trustees and the Office of the President expressed a more specific set of expectations to guide this general responsibility in the following way.

The programming should create a supporting environment to examine issues of public policy, social justice, cultural, and intellectual concerns:

1. Provide a safe, open neutral site for these difficult discussions and seek widespread participation
2. Periodically assess if programs and services meet the needs, interests, and challenges of the community
3. Find ways to call greater attention to the College's role as a leader in artistic and cultural life of the County
4. Create a new public image through public relations and advertising efforts and a comprehensive calendar of events; and

5. Encourage greater College/community partnerships to participate in issue and group-based civic and community programs and service projects

The overarching recommendations of the Council's report mandate the College:

7. Facilitate better public understanding of what we are and what we do through increased communication and outreach
8. Inspire intellectual excitement in the College and the community through mutual engagement
9. Convene and facilitate community dialogue on social, political, and economic issues

A YEAR OF STUDY AND IMPACT

The Center established two overarching questions for this year's work.

STUDY QUESTION 1

When a higher education institution accepts the responsibility to discover and develop with the community its untapped capacities to enhance civic life, what is the potential impact?

1. ENGAGING INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Center's role draws inspiration from and contributes uniquely to helping complete the spirit of *endless possibilities and changing lives* while meeting the institutional goal of being the *community's College* in a rapidly changing complex milieu.

The practice of relating to people without an agenda or a preconceived notion for peoples' roles in the community, other than, to study together about their public life interests and concerns through a balanced inclusive approach has the noticeable effect of promoting access to the College. It also provides the College a unique opportunity to learn from and with the community. The Center provides the opportunity for community members to engage their

community's College without needing an a priori relationship such as learner, consumer, constituent, service provider, client, customer, minority for example, or a privileged status of wealth, organizational affiliation, family status, and education.

Individuals with public life concerns and interest areas from both the greater and College community find the Center an accessible means to deepen and broaden their understanding about these concerns and interests. The study areas of the Center's Public Policy Institute and the College's academic fields are also informed through this exchange with public scholars.

2. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

The Center's staff and faculty collaboratively engage with individuals and programs to develop critical linkages and work toward reciprocal understanding about addressing issues of public policy and leadership within the community. This collaboration provides almost limitless possibilities to develop a meaningful public life in a modern democracy. It is also an ever-evolving college to global network of study about the changing nature of community leadership development and public policy. These collaborations have taken the form of College, county and local, state and regional, and national initiatives. A few examples of each are listed below:

Montgomery College:

Public Issues Forums

The Center has conducted the following National Issues Forums in the *Montgomery County region*:

Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do?

Violent Kids: Can We Change the Trend?

Public Schools: Are They Making the Grade?

Terrorism: What Can We Do Now?

News Media and Society: How to Restore the Public Trust

These forums were conducted as part of the Leadership and Democracy Education program, in-class forums at Montgomery College, community forums at Montgomery College, public libraries and other community facilities.

LEAD: Leadership in Equity, Access and Diversity Council²

The Center is an organization member of the Council. Membership in the Council provides a linkage to a variety of campus community partners for programmatic collaborations. The Center staff moderated the National Issues Forum *By the People: Americans' Role in the World* for members of the LEAD Council and members of the Montgomery County Commission on Human Rights. The purpose of this forum was to continue our participation in the data collection process for this particular forum to share with the Kettering Foundation and the *By the People* Project (see below). For the participants from the LEAD Council and the Commission on Human Rights, the forum had the added advantage of demonstrating deliberative dialogue as a relationship for bringing people together around difficult and sensitive issues.

Scholar in Residence Program with the Center

The Center has initiated a program for College and community members to be a Scholar in Residence with the Center. This opportunity was granted to two College faculty who engaged the programming of the Center during this year. Dr. Sally

² Leadership for Equity, Access and Diversity (LEAD) is Advisory Council to the Office of Equity and Diversity. Its membership organizations include: the Academic Assembly, Campus offices of Student Life, the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Center for Community Leadership Development & Public Policy, Disability Support Services, the Diversity Management Institute, the Office of Human Resources, the Paul Peck Humanities Institute, International Education Programs, the Office of Equity and Diversity, Staff Senate, and Women's Studies.

Rogers, Professor of Sociology and Ms. Toni Forcino Business/Science, Math/Technology.

Service Learning Initiative

Work with the “service learning” initiative with the College’s Center for Teaching and Learning is particularly meaningful as a way to monitor community interests and concerns through various ways of inquiry and seminars among the students engaging the service learning in their various courses. Furthermore, it is a means to develop interest and participation in the Public Issues Forums programming.

County and Local:

Leadership and Democracy Education Program

The Center’s Leadership and Democracy Education Programs are to cultivate grass roots leadership skills of youth in Montgomery County, Maryland and the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan region. The program is a continuation of the work begun in the 2001-2002 academic year between the Center and Roberto Clemente Middle School (RCMS). The Center is working with the RCMS staff, administration, and with approximately 55 select students. The students are also the national student participants in the annual *A Public Voice* taping held at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The forum practice and *A Public Voice* experiences are so well received by the RCMS parents, the PTA, the school faculty, the students, and the school and MCPS administrators that there is unanimous support to continue and expand the practice at RCMS.

During the 2002-03 academic year the school administrators decided to take an ambitious course and teach the entire study body deliberation as a critical thinking skill and tool for leadership development. The school administrators and students chose the issue book entitled *Violent Kids: Can We Change the Trend?* The plan is to first teach the eighth grade students, next the seventh grade students, and finally the sixth grade students. (See also *A Public Voice*).

Macklin Business Institute's Ethics in Business Symposium

The Center participated in the Symposium through Professor Starr serving as the moderator. The symposium keynote speaker was Thomas Donohoe, President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Montgomery County Commission on Women

The Center is assisting the Commission with updating its 1997 report on the Status of Women of Montgomery County. Through the Center the College has assigned a MC faculty member to begin the research process in acquiring more recent data for this project. This project is still in progress.

Montgomery County Commission on Human Rights

Representatives of the Commission contacted the College to partner in facilitating an interfaith dialogue in the County. The Center is a member of the College planning team which includes the Office of Equity and Diversity and the Diversity Management Institute. The project is a screening and discussion of the documentary film, **Muhammad: The Legacy of a Prophet** produced by Montgomery County resident Alex Kronemer. The film was nationally broadcast on PBS December 2002. There will be an interfaith panel to address and engage the audience in dialogue, and a question and answer period. The panelist included: Lobna Ismail, President, Connecting Cultures, Moderator, Dr. Suheil Badi Bushrui, Center for International Development and Conflict Management, Baha'i Chair for World Peace, University of Maryland; Rev. Lincoln Dring, Associate Pastor, Hancock Presbyterian Church, Hancock, MD; Former Director, Montgomery County Community Ministries; Imam Yahya Hendi, Muslim Chaplain at Georgetown University, Islamic Society of Frederick and the National Naval Medical Center; Alex Kronemer, Creator and Co-Producer, *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*; and Rabbi Warren Stone, Rabbi of Temple Emanuel, Kensington, MD; President, Washington Board of Rabbis.

The program was held May 4, 2003 in Globe Hall on the Germantown Campus. The project is under the Co-sponsorship of the Montgomery County Human Rights

Commission, Office of Human Rights, and Montgomery College and held in conjunction with several community- based organizations.

Montgomery County Commission on Aging

The Commission's task force for retreat planning contacted the Center's Community Leadership Development program to assist with designing and facilitating a retreat curriculum for the Commissioners that would begin to develop a participatory research issue framing critique and community inclusive way of engaging in the work of the Commission. This is also a work in progress.

Montgomery County Executive's Committee for a Memorial to the Victims and Heroes of September 11, 2001

The Steering Committee of the National Capital Region Public Issues Forums, The Center for Community Leadership Development and Public Policy at Montgomery College, and co-sponsored with the Montgomery County Libraries offered six issues forums on *Terrorism: What Should We Do Now?* These forums were planned and conducted in conjunction with the Montgomery County Executive's Committee for a Memorial to the Victims and Heroes September 11, 2001. These forums were part of a tribute to the eleven Montgomery County residents lost in the tragedy of that date. The Office of Institutional Advancement (Media Relations) prepared a press release to announce the series of forums in several local and regional newspapers.

These forums were an outgrowth of the Center's role as education advisor to the County Executive's committee. The forums were a means to bring people together to engage in a civil conversation about a very troubling and difficult issue confronting our nation and community. Also, the forums provided a means to introduce citizens to a different way of addressing difficult issues through deliberative dialogue, a model with potential to reduce some of the risk factors leading to the events of September 11, 2001.

The Center continued to play an active role as advisors in helping the Committee select artists to create a permanent memorial to the people lost September 11, 2001. The memorial will be in place at the end of August 2003.

Wheaton/Aspen Hill Neighborhood Issues Framing Initiative

In the Wheaton/Aspen Hill area of the County there are growing concerns about what to do with the youth population of that community. The community's challenges center around the proposed construction of a recreation center for the community's youth. There are some opposed to this, others in favor and other who are uncertain of whether this will address their needs. The Center has been involved in helping to identify issues and frame the issues in a deliberative format and forum so that community members can discuss the policy direction they will follow.

African American Employees Association

October 10, 2002, the Center was honored as the recipient of the Montgomery County African American Employees Association *Community Empowerment Award*. "In recognition of outstanding volunteer community service to improve the quality of life and empower others." The award was a result of the center's work with schools and communities in Montgomery County, Maryland.

State and Regional:

Penn's Landing Project

The University of Pennsylvania Public Policy Institute, School of Fine Arts, and the Philadelphia Enquirer requested the assistance and expertise of the Center staff to serve as moderators for a group of Philadelphia citizens discussion about future development possibilities of the Penn's Landing site in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. For thirty years residents, politicians and developers have struggled to find agreement for uses of this site. An issue framing session was held to bring all interested and affected parties together to deliberate the site's future.

Furthermore, the Center's staff gained valuable insights about local issues framing through this experience. These insights will be incorporated in future experiences of Public Policy Institute seminars and the practices of the Community Leadership Development program.

The Maryland Community College Activities Directors Association and the Association of College Unions International-Region 4

The Center was invited to make a presentation to the Maryland Community College Activities Directors Association (MCCADA) and explain the value and benefit of issues forums and deliberative dialogue to its membership and student leaders. Mr. Jim Walters, Director Student Life, Takoma Park Campus and a member of the Center's Administrative Steering Committee served as liaison between the Center and MCCADA.

Based on this presentation and during future program planning meetings of the Association of College Union International-Region 4 (ACUI),³ Director Walters returned to the Center with a request to design and present a program of issues forums to demonstrate the value of deliberative dialogue to college professionals and student leaders.

The conference was held in State College, Pennsylvania on the campus of Pennsylvania State University (PSU). Five National Issues Forum topics were chosen for this workshop: *Racial And Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do?*, *Terrorism: What Should We Do Now?*, *Violent Kids: Can We Change the Trend?*, *From Welfare to Work: Who Should We Help and How?* and *Protecting Our Rights: What Goes on the Internet?* The site of the forums was the HUB-Robeson Center on PSU's campus.

³ ACUI's Region 4 includes Maryland, Northern Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. At this conference, Baltimore City Community College and Prince George's Community College had very large delegations. The conference drew from a large number of colleges and universities.

Democracy Collaborative

The Center is participating as a partner with the University of Maryland's international consortium, The Democracy Collaborative. The partnership contributes to the Center's role as a nexus for community leadership development and public policy studies. It deepens the contribution of the College for its responsibility for being an engaged higher education institution that is preparing students not only for careers and professions but also, for engaged citizenship.

Alternative Economics

The Democracy Collaborative network connection has helped the Center link the College faculty and community interests about the role of economics in a democratic society. The Center has taken the initiative to explore with the Democracy Collaborative network ways of engaging the larger community.

National:

Public Policy Institute: *Communities Finding Common Ground For Action*

The Center's first Public Policy Institute (PPI) was conducted over a three-day period at Montgomery College's (MC) Gaithersburg Business Training Center (the Workforce Development and Continuing Education division of the College). The PPI was open to anyone who wanted to attend from anywhere in the U.S. The participants were from the metropolitan Washington, D.C region. The participants (36) included representatives from Roberto Clemente Middle School (RCMS), one University of Virginia (UVA) student; community activists from Wheaton Hot Spots and Mid-county Initiatives, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Collaboration Council, Montgomery College and other citizens. Also, there were several observers from Montgomery College. Participants for this first PPI were largely identified through the Center's burgeoning network of community contacts. The purpose of this PPI was to teach participants how to convene and moderate deliberative forums in their schools, communities and places of work.

The PPI was conducted by a national faculty of Dr. Virginia York of Gulf Coast Community College, Dr. Leon Hellerman of Hofstra University and Dr. Alfredo Carrasquillo-Ramirez of the University of the Sacred Heart in Puerto Rico. Also, the Associate Director of the Center, Dr. Robert Walker, assisted the national faculty in conducting the workshop. His assistance and experience were invaluable since one of the scheduled national faculty could not attend due to medical reasons.

National Issues Convention: *By The People: Americans' Role in the World*

The MacNeil/Lehrer Productions Co. along with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting created a sixteen-month program entitled *By The People* to capture the voices of citizens in the United States regarding "*Americans' Role In the World*". The program started with the National Issues Convention (NIC) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the live videotaping and broadcast of a television program produced from the NIC.

The NIC constituted bringing together in Philadelphia 344 citizens who are eligible voters and selected by the Survey Research Center at the University of California at Berkley. These citizens were a statistical representation of the U.S. They were randomly divided into 24 small groups for deliberation of the issue "*Americans' Role in the World*". The University of California at Berkeley had the responsibility of administering the questionnaires to the forum participants. The deliberative poll questionnaires were created by the Center for Deliberative Polling at the University of Texas at Austin.

Professor Nathan Starr was asked to serve as a moderator for one of the 24 small groups. Ms. Michelle T. Scott and Dr. Robert Walker served as faculty in a seminar for youth who were engaging ideas about the nature of politics, how to convene public issues forums, and how to judge the results together. Furthermore, they served as moderators for a concurrent session with these youth in the deliberation of *By the People: Americans' Role in the World*.

This type of collaboration work contributes to the knowledge base of the Center and helps strengthen the local to global interdependence the College and local community have regionally.

The Harwood Institute

The Harwood Institute is a national research and community building organization. The Center is involved in collaboration with the *Institute* and the Kettering Foundation to gain knowledge and understanding about the way citizens nationally are talking about *News Media and Society: How to Restore the Public Trust*. The Center staff and members of the Center's National Capital Region Public Issues Forum Steering Committee served as moderators for forums within the region and provided an analysis of this issue. This is the beginning of further work on the role of the media in a modern democracy.

A Public Voice 2002 - "*Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do?*"

The Center has an unsolicited proposal agreement with the Kettering Foundation to prepare local students and students from Roberto Clemente Middle School (RMCS) to participate in *A Public Voice*. *A Public Voice* is a Kettering Foundation and Corporation for Public Broadcasting program. The subject of the 2002 *A Public Voice* was "*Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do?*" The Center staff and faculty along with the students, administrators, and faculty of RCMS traveled to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Dr. John Cavanaugh, program director of the Kettering Foundation addressed students during the breakfast seminar. The panel members for the 2002 broadcast included:

Mr. Ward Bushee, editor of the Cincinnati Inquirer

Ms. Linda Chavez, columnist and Fox News contributor

Rep. Elijah Cummings, 7th Congressional District (Baltimore), Maryland

Mr. E.J. Dionne, columnist, Washington Post

Rep. Kay Granger, Fort Worth, Texas, former mayor, Fort Worth Texas

Mr. Richard Harwood, The Harwood Institute

Dr. David Mathews, CEO, Kettering Foundation

Mr. Marc Racicot, Chairman, Republican National Committee, former Governor of Montana

Dr. Barbara Reynolds, syndicated columnist and minister

Professor Roger Wilkins, George Mason University, author *Jefferson's Pillow*

Rep. David Wu, Portland Oregon, U.S. House of Representatives

After the broadcast, the students had a luncheon presentation and Q&A with Rep. Elijah Cummings and Mr. E.J. Dionne. Students were engaged in conversations with both Rep. Cummings and Mr. Dionne. They represented their school commendably and through careful and thought provoking questions and comments. Upon return to RCMS, the students wrote letters of thanks to anyone involved in the program. They chose to address their letters to Dr. Cavanaugh, Rep. Cummings, Mr. Dionne and the Center administrators and faculty. The student letters reflected considered thought and critical thinking.

A Public Voice 2003 - Terrorism: What Should We Do Now?

This forum, *Terrorism: What Should We Do Now?*, was held on March 20, 2003 to prepare RCMS students to participate in *A Public Voice* at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on April 30, 2003. In attendance at the forum were RCMS students and parents.

The group was composed of 37 RCMS students, one parent, one teacher, an assistant principal and five Center staff and faculty. Dr. John Cavanaugh, Program Director-Kettering Foundation greeted the group upon arrival. Then we were escorted into the Edward R. Murrow Room in the National Press Club for a continental breakfast. The RCMS students were joined by a group of students from Sumpter County, South Carolina also participating in the Kettering youth component program for *A Public*

Voice. While eating the group was introduced to two Russian dignitaries a member of the Moscow, Russia Duma and a Russian cosmonaut who served on both the Mir and International Space Stations. Both were open to questions from the students.

The panelists for this year's broadcast were:

Mr. Frank Sesno – host

Ms. Alison Bethel, *Detroit News*

Mr. Charles Bierbauer, University of South Carolina, School of Journalism

Rep. Marsha Blackburn, Tennessee

Mr. E.J. Dionne, *The Washington Post*

Dr. Richard Harwood, The Harwood Institute

Dr. David Mathews, President, Kettering Foundation

Rep. Anne Northup, Kentucky

General Dennis Reimer (ret.), Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism

Sen. Jeff Sessions, Alabama

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, Michigan

Sen. John Sununu, New Hampshire

The panelists discussed the approaches presented in this particular forum as well as the citizen responses from people across the U.S. The form participants from across the U.S. reflected similar tensions to those experienced in the forum at Clemente and other forums the Center has convened in Montgomery County.

Following the taping of the program, Ms. Alison Bethel, Mr. E.J. Dionne, and General Dennis Reimer came back to the Edward R. Murrow Room and engaged the students in a question and answer period. Most of the students expressed concerns regarding the perceptions of others towards the U.S, i.e., why do they hate us so much. The students were polite and well behaved. The RCMS assistant principal addressed the group expressing appreciation to the Kettering Foundation and Montgomery College for allowing this opportunity to their students and the benefits deliberative dialogue created in helping develop higher-level critical thinking skills. This was followed by a lunch provided by the Kettering Foundation.

STUDY QUESTION 2

When a higher education institution accepts the responsibility to discover and develop with the community its untapped capacities to enhance civic life, how would it be organized?

ADMINISTRATION and ORGANIZATION OF THE CENTER

The Center applies the same practices to its operational style as it does to engage with others, this maintains the integrity and effectiveness of the Center among the College and the College's outreach partners. The Center is charged to operate in a way that will recognize what is sound practices from the past while also recognizing the changing and challenging landscape toward leadership and public policy development of a modern society. Perhaps, at this time the most challenging is the increased dependence we have as a society for specialization and the subsequent fragmented distribution of knowledge to be integrated in order to understand the whole.

The administration of the Center faces this by employing a "distributive leadership" practice, taking advantage of the collective knowledge of its Administrative Steering Committee, the Colleges faculty's public scholarship, and the community faculty of public scholars. This form of leadership is inclusive, participatory research inquiry based, outcomes assessable, and deliberative in decisions about whom is accountable, responsible, consulted, and informed in each engagement to ensure the success of its work.

This has the benefit of developing a mutual exchange of needed information among the Center staff, greater community, and College community about what is valuable, of interest, and of concern. By respecting the self-interests of all, the Center creates a safe, inclusive, open "public" space to do the work of the communities together.

The Center continues to have success with its current organizational practice of the three operating programs that are unique windows for harvesting and strengthening the untapped civic life of the community yet each one is interdependent with the other. The people we engage with the Center feel comfortable, respected, and supported around their interests regardless of whether they see their work as leadership development, public policy, or providing the occasion for people to meet as community members and engage the public's business.

The emphasis on participatory research inquiry based, outcomes assessable, and deliberative decision-making process maintains a dynamic operating structure and function for the Center and its work.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the Center has established a unique public trust service role in the name of the College and community collaboration.

The Public Issues Forums and Public Policy Institute have begun to establish a community practice of programming that supports an environment for examining issues of public policy, social justice, cultural, and intellectual concerns. It provides a practice of a safe, open, neutral site to engage difficult discussions and seek common ground for actions.

Our young people who have engaged in National Issues Forums with the Center are able to find more civil ways to address issues where there are different views in tension. The school administration has alternative ways to work with them, instead of punishing, or suspending them. We can suggest an approach they are familiar with and they know works.

School Administrator, MCPS

The Robert E. Parilla Community Leadership Development program is developing as a meaningful community leadership practice in the community.

We are asking your help to moderate our Retreat, because several different people in the community suggested the Center.

Commissioner, Montgomery County Commission on Aging

We have been looking for a way to do this work in the community for a year or so and really appreciate the support from the College.

Commissioner, Montgomery County Human Rights Commission

Through the Center, the College is engaged and part of the community's public life, and helping to solve the kinds of problems that affect us all and require all of us to be a part of the solution.

I wasn't aware the College had such a program, I have appreciated the help with my project and was not considering MC as a choice for my son until I connected with the Center. There is a lot going on, here.

Community Scholar