

# VOICES



A Publication of the Commission for Social Justice Educators

## A Message from the Chair

By: Kristi Lonardo Clemens



Hello Commission Members!  
I hope your academic year has gotten off to a great start. I am still adjusting to the “term” system here at Dartmouth College, as opposed to all of my years at institutions on a “semester” system. It makes me more mindful to be inclusive of all of our cycles and schedules!

How wonderful and yet how challenging language can be! Working with students as they navigate their changing perspectives on identity, inclusion, and the language therein, we are regularly reminded of the power of language.

And for us, as administrators, advisors, faculty and beyond- how do we continue to challenge ourselves?

How can we be assured that our colleagues are holding us accountable to the values we espouse and that we are able to hold ourselves accountable? Through all of our years of education, both formal and informal, we have accepted that we are never done learning. Yet it can be difficult in challenging economic times to continue our education formally through an advanced degree, or by attending national conferences.

FALL 2009

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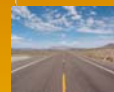
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In the realm of social justice education, sometimes dialogue is the best teaching tool, but with campus responsibilities increasing in the light of staff reductions, finding that time and energy to dialogue may not be possible.

The Directorate Body and I have discussed this challenge at length, and hope that you will take advantage of some of our offerings to keep yourself energized and current.

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## A message from the CSJE Chair,

Kristi Lonardo Clemens

*Continued from pg. 1*

Now more than ever, we urge you to attend or initiate a “Meet-up” in your area. Josh Walehwa and Erica Geers, our Regional Programming Coordinators, have been working hard with other CSJE members to cover many areas throughout the country. Keep an eye on our listserv for meet-ups in your area, or if you are feeling the need to dig into an issue with some colleagues, please be in touch with them to help you plan. Information on upcoming meet-ups is also available in this newsletter and on our website.

If you are unable to travel, Robbie Routenberg (Institute Coordinator) has started a program called “Dial-A-Dialogue”. The first call took place on October 14, and it was a great conversation. If you have content suggestions for this program, please be in touch with Robbie!

Finally, you will start to see some heavier content here in “Voices”. We feel a responsibility to the field to continue to sort out some issues on facilitation, education, and navigating the complex world that our campuses can feel like. We are lucky to have some great scholars in the field who work closely with our commission, and we are happy to give them the opportunity to share their perspective and good work. If you have feedback on any newsletter pieces or would like to contribute, please feel free to contact me or our newsletter coordinators, Heather Wilhelm and Dre Domingue.

I wish you all the best, and thank you for your continued involvement with and support for the Commission.

Best Regards,  
Kristi Clemens  
kristi.l.clemens@dartmouth.edu

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## What are we Doing? Social Service or Social Change?

By Stephanie Bondi



*Photo compliments of: <http://philanthrobuzz.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/social-action.jpg>*

I wanted to write a piece for the Commission for Social Justice Educators newsletter because I hear student affairs professionals and students talking about social justice with energy and enthusiasm, but I wonder, when we talk about social justice what does that mean? And how do we do it? I’m still struggling to figure out some answers towards those ends, but I recently read a piece by Paul Kivel (2007) titled, “Social Service or Social Change?” that got me thinking about these questions in a new way. I wanted to put this out for others to ponder along with me.

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## What are we Doing?

(Continued)

When I think about student affairs and higher education, I think about my many caring friends and colleagues who commit long hours towards educational and co-curricular goals. I'm guessing many people reading this newsletter fit this description. In his article, Kivel (2007) challenges us to consider whether these long hours we work are indeed moving us toward social justice. If we are listening to minoritized students, helping them navigate the system, coaching and mentoring, and supporting them as they struggle to survive *is that social justice?*

Kivel argued that social *change* requires challenging those in power and often results in contentious relationships with those on our campuses who make decisions. Personally, I find it much easier to develop relationships with students and support them as they develop their personal and social identities than to ruffle the feathers of those who pay my salary. But, if I only engage in supporting students in this way is this enough for me to call myself a social justice advocate? What ends come from my being supportive but not challenging the status quo?

### Some Examples from Student Affairs

I asked those questions as if there were simple answers, but of course there are not. Part of the complexity of wanting to be involved in social justice work is the relationship between social service and social change. Let me explain further. Some social services originated from more radical efforts to make change. Radical efforts often garner the attention of institutional officers, like a Dean of Students, who grants the protesting group(s) some attention. For example, protesters may indicate that persons are being minoritized based on their sexuality and that the campus needs to address this inequity. In response to

**In his article, Kivel challenges us to consider whether these long hours that we work are indeed moving us toward social justice. If we are listening to minoritized students, helping them navigate the system, coaching and mentoring, and supporting them as they struggle to survive *is that social justice?***

enough pressure, the campus may allocate resources such as a meeting space and/or staff time to support these minoritized persons. When the institution grants these resources, they are sending a message that they have responded to the protests, which often give them some goodwill from the public, but they also have power to control these resources. Since the institution controls the resources, the institution controls the way that the resources are used. For example, the director of the multicultural center wants to continue to receive the same amount of funding from year to year, so in order to protect the resources granted by the institution, the director has to choose wisely about challenging the status quo, even if it is causing oppression to students.

What about another example—in the Student Disabilities Services office, much time is spent working with students to secure their documentation of disabilities so they qualify for accommodations. What if instead staff in Student Disability Services spent all of their time working with faculty to change the way they approach teaching and evaluation of learning? Staff could facilitate training on Universal Design principles and work one on one with faculty to improve the accessibility of their classrooms. In this way, little by little, classrooms would become more accessible and fewer and fewer accommodations would be necessary. In this effort towards social change,

Continued...

## What are we Doing?

(Continued)

staff would be addressing some of the root causes of oppression and challenging the status quo. Although more and more Universal Design is being introduced on campuses, this type of approach is not common. Why is that the case?

### Why is Change Difficult?

Kendall (2006) believed that we are focused on attending to individuals because we are taught to focus on them. But, also, let's face it...it's easier than challenging the dominant way of doing things. When I was reading Kivel's piece, it made sense to me that social service is a good thing, in that it helps people who are hurting. But, we must remember people are hurting because our institutions and systems continue to hurt them. So, by helping them through the system, we're doing a service, but the system will continue to go on hurting them and others who follow.

Kivel (2007) contends that it is often by design that social change is so difficult. The ruling class has a history of creating positions or services they can control. They create services that appear to address social issues but that are limited in effectiveness so that the people do not have enough power to rise up and challenge the ruling class. These services are often effective for a few people. This is intended to show that if you work hard and play by the rules, you can be successful; it keeps hope alive and keeps people off the backs of the ruling class.

Additionally, well-meaning individuals are often co-opted by the ruling class when they are hired into institutions. The institution may present a rosy picture of what it wants to achieve in the beginning, but ultimately, the individual may find there are so many rules and regulations restricting them that they cannot do social change work from within. They may find that "their work has to be developed....to meet the guidelines and approval of the ruling class and its representatives" (p. 139).

Throughout his piece, Kivel (2007) presented a number of questions designed for us to use to think more deeply about how we fit into this complicated puzzle.

*What are the historical roots of the work that you do? What were your motivations when you began doing this work? Are there ways through your role(s) you have come to enforce the status quo or train young people for their role in it?*

Continued...

## DID YOU KNOW...



This article will be the focus of our next Dial a Dialogue!

**Call into the next 'Dial a Dialogue' Phone Institute!**

Following every CSJE newsletter, a 'Dial a Dialogue' Institute will be held, offering an opportunity for extended conversation on one of the newsletter topics.

When: Jan 13<sup>th</sup> @ 12-1 EST

The topic will stem from an upcoming newsletter article entitled, "What are We Doing? Social Service or Social Change?", with author Stephanie Bondi facilitating.

Questions? Contact:  
Robbie Routenberg  
[Robinrr@umich.edu](mailto:Robinrr@umich.edu)

To access this event, dial:  
(218) 339-2500 Access Code:  
148331#

## What are we Doing? (Continued)

*Is the primary goal of the work you do to help people get ahead or to help them get together? How do you connect people and nurture and develop leadership skills in the people you serve? How do you ensure that they represent themselves in the agency and other levels of decision-making that affect their lives? Do you provide them not only with information related to their own needs, but also with information on how the larger social/political/economic system works to their disadvantage? Does the work you do contribute to ending oppression?*

### Doing Change Work

How do we know if we are doing social change work? Kivel (2007) said we cannot know this alone or through people telling us we are doing a good job. We need to analyze how our work affects those at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy and create systems of accountability for ourselves. We need to think about the possible impact of our work on communities we serve in five or ten years.

These concepts have generated more questions than answers for me. However, I welcome the opportunity to have a way to think more critically about my work and life. The questions provided have moved me along in this journey, and I hope that you will go on a fruitful journey as well.

### References

Kendall, F. (2006). *Understanding White privilege: Creating pathways to authentic relationships across race*. New York: Routledge.

Kivel, P. (2007). Social service or social change. In INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Eds.), *The revolution will not be funded: Beyond the non-profit industrial complex* (pp. 129-149). Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

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*Stephanie Bondi is a research assistant at Iowa State University where she is a PhD candidate in the Educational Leadership and Policy program. She currently serves as the Vice Chair for Member Services for CSJE. Contact Stephanie at: [sbondi@iastate.edu](mailto:sbondi@iastate.edu)*

## Go There! Talk - A Monthly Conference Call Lasting One Hour.

The next call is scheduled for November 30th at 12pm PST, 1pm MST, 2pm CST, 3pm EST.

I don't facilitate the conversations or guide them in anyway. I just provide the space to have an open dialog. I do provide at least conversation starter to get things rolling. This "starter" is usually from the news that I have seen in the last month. Thus far, we have discussed sun down towns, race in politics, terrorism, immigration, etc. These conversations have been prompted by televised interviews, commercials, and published news stories. - Jessica Pettit

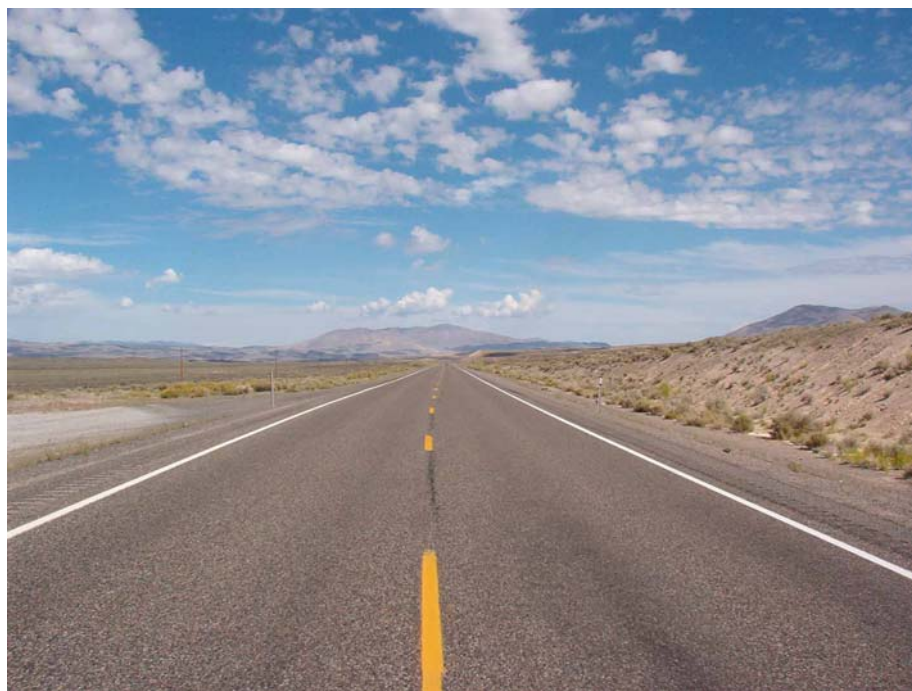
To Join In:

- Dial-in Number: 218-826-1300
- Bridge Number: 461468

Join the Facebook page for Go There!

<http://www.facebook.com/search/?q=go+there&init=quick#/group.php?gid=30276282321&ref=ts>





## Would They Still Have Written If They Knew I Had To Go Home And Tell My Wife?

By: Art Munin

February 12, 2009 was my five year anniversary for being a social justice and diversity educator. Of course, I had always been an advocate for justice, but five years ago I made it a formal responsibility. I developed several curriculums, posted my website, and printed business cards. I could not remain passive in this struggle and hoped to use my skills and abilities in service to the movement.

In many ways I have been successful and have thoroughly enjoyed conversing with people throughout the U.S. While it has not always been easy, it has been rewarding to be part of the movement. However, the incident that prompted this article was more negative than I had ever previously experienced.

The workshop I am most known for is entitled "White Privilege 101." The goals are to

expose and debunk the various historical and contemporary myths that have garnered Whites undue privilege. This is a tough presentation, one that many people can find personally challenging. But, through conversation and patience, I have seen an incredible potential for growth in people. While it can be difficult, many are willing to grapple with this topic and find ways to deal with their cognitive and affective triggers that impede justice. Like many times in the past, I was recently booked to give this workshop. However, this opportunity brought me a brand-new experience.

Approximately a week prior, I learned that a White Power website was informed about this event and posted all of the details about this workshop including my picture.

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# JustConnect: Social Media for Social Justice

By: Robbie Routenberg and Jimmy Brown

As higher education professionals, we are constantly trying to find new and innovative ways to engage our students in learning. In the age of technology, where most students are spending a great deal of time on the internet, questions are being raised about how to more effectively use these resources to reach students.

This fall, students at the University of Michigan will have the opportunity to join a new online community dedicated to fostering and strengthening their understanding of social justice. JustConnect, a social media site designed by UM students and staff, will help students engaged in social justice work and connect with other students around similar projects. The site allows current and former members of these programs to connect and engage with each other, find resources related to social justice, and maintain ties to organizations or programs in which they have been involved.

Similar to Facebook or MySpace, students are invited to create their own profile and join groups based on their involvement on campus. The groups include both the curricular and co-curricular aspects of student life. Within these groups, students may post events of interest, reflections of their experiences, or project ideas that they are trying to get started.

"I am really excited about the opportunity for the UofM social justice community to have a space to come together. JustConnect helps students share resources and build coalitions. At the same time, JustConnect strengthens our individual student organizations. In organization-specific groups, we can post ideas and reflections--the stuff that really fuels our work," says Holly Frei, an undergraduate student member of JustConnect.

JustConnect was conceived during the summer of 2007 as students connected to The Program on Intergroup Relations and the Ginsberg Center for Community Service & Learning expressed the need to be able to connect with alumni members to better understand how they can maintain their commitment to social

justice after graduation. Coincidentally, both alumni of IGR (Program on Intergroup Relations and SERVE (of the Ginsberg Center for Service Learning) expressed the need to have a greater connection to their formative social justice experiences, to be able to connect with old friends, find new collaborators and continue critical conversations about social issues not easily found in 'the real world'.

This year, with the assistance of grants from the University of Michigan, JustConnect has been able to expand beyond the IGR and SERVE boards to incorporate a wide variety of student affairs units and curricular programs. "JustConnect gives the College of Engineering a chance we haven't had before - to link our students with others in important social justice conversations and actions. The collaborations that JustConnect offers are really exciting!" says Jennifer Wegner, a representative from the College of Engineering, a new collaborator on the site.

The grants have also allowed JustConnect to become a more vibrant site, incorporating more modern technological features.

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The screenshot shows the JustConnect website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a user account link. Below the navigation bar, the main content area features a welcome message, a section titled "University of Michigan Students In Action!" with a photo of a group of students, and a section for the "3rd Annual Global Awareness Fair". A sidebar on the right lists "Popular Topics" and "New Members!" with profile pictures and names like Luke Metzner and Malinda Matney.



## Would They Still Have Written...

(Continued)

It still mystifies me as to why this occurrence popped up their radar since I have given this presentation on countless occasions in the past. But, regardless of the reason, they saw my work as an opportunity to further their own agenda. Underneath the posting was a community comment board which had many virulent and divisive posts. Some of these posts attacked the material but many others were personally directed towards me.

The following day I checked my email and discovered that someone copied me on a 'Letter to the Editor' sent to a local newspaper. The letter was directed again at my workshop but this author took another angle. He used quotes from the Bible in a perverse attempt to purport that the Word of God dictates that "Whites are the favored beings and those of African descent are beasts". This use of the Bible was a disgusting display of hatred.

I wish I could say, at this point, that this story was over. I forwarded all of these materials to the group hosting the workshop so they could be prepared for whatever or whomever should walk through the door. Unfortunately, they too had received negative messages with one email in particular causing significant concern. My host could have simply forwarded me this email to share the information. Instead she called me personally so that I could be on the phone with someone when I learned what was written. I will forever be grateful for this act of humanity. The email she received was hateful, degrading, racist, homophobic, and threatened my safety. To say the least, I was shocked. This email was, by far, not the worst thing that has ever been sent to anyone. Nonetheless, being a first-time recipient, it was more emotional than I would have anticipated.

I talked about the comment with my host and helped with their plans for the event. I then processed with my friends, working my way through the initial emotions of fear, despair, and anger. But, what I kept coming back to was one question – How was I going to tell my wife about this? Now, let it be known, my wife is the coolest person on the planet. However, I cannot think of anyone relishing having to tell their partner something that will leave them afraid and powerless. I knew she would still want me to do the workshop and that her support would be unwavering. But, I also knew that from the moment I got on the plane to the moment I returned, this email message would be burned into her mind.

The workshop went well. Several people attended in hopes of disrupting the event to no avail. A community of allies and activists ranging in age from 13-80 showed up in support and helped quell the disturbances. While the event was stressful, it was also beautiful to watch. Nevertheless,

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## Would They Still Have Written...

(Continued)

when I returned home, I began to process what this experience meant to my justice work.

Of course I will not stop, but I am now wiser. I do not understand the thought process of a person who, in anonymous cowardice, employs racist and homophobic rhetoric in wishing for a person's harm. But, I do know that such people's hatred blinds them from seeing humanity. They fail to see my partner and loved ones surrounding me. They fail to understand that their hatred only fuels my desire for justice. And finally, they fail to grasp why I will never return their hatred. They want to manipulate my emotions and make me into just another cynical bystander. For me to fall into such hate warps my identity in their reflection. I simply refuse.

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Art Munin is the Assistant Dean of Students at DePaul University. All comments and questions should be directed to: [amunin@depaul.edu](mailto:amunin@depaul.edu)

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## Annual Intergroup Dialogue Institute at The University of Michigan has Record Attendance

By: Monita Thompson, with assistance from Joseph Person

In July the 3rd Intergroup Dialogue Institute was hosted by the University of Michigan's Program on Intergroup Relations (IGR). The Institute is held annually in Ann Arbor to disseminate the intergroup dialogue (IGD) pedagogy of the program to prospective Universities. Institute participants learn the theoretical principles of the IGD Program, attend lectures and small-group workshops, and sample various dialogue exercises and ways of

incorporating dialogue techniques in co-curricular environments.

Intergroup Dialogues are face-to-face, facilitated interactions between students of different social identity groups that explore issues of identity, difference, privilege, power, and oppression. Usually comprised of 12-16 participants, dialogues are based around social identities such as race, gender identity, sexual orientation,



social class, ability status, nationality and religion.

Institute participants included Student Affairs staff and faculty from sixteen Universities. Student Affairs representatives

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## JustConnect...

(Continued)

One vital part of JustConnect will be its StoryPort functionality. These group pages will carry lively personal narratives about students' social justice experiences. It will allow students to share reflections on community work and its relationship to academic pursuits using multimedia story blogs and student portfolio materials. The StoryPort will invite students to dialogue about ethics, social responsibilities, and cultural competencies - interactions that often lead to transformative learning and meaning-making. Curricularly, this will allow JustConnect to be used as part of a capstone course; students enrolled in the IGR capstone course have been required to utilize it as a space to document and share their experiences

within the program and the University.

Our hopes in building this new site are to help students make connections between the work they are doing within and outside of a classroom setting and to make collaboration efforts easier on a large university campus. Additionally, with a target audience of both current and graduated students, we aim to sustain the investment we've made in enrolled students throughout their lives as alums. By using technology as a platform, not only are these hopes easier to reach, but it is also likely that students will actually use it. We've heard many students express excitement for this social-justice-based online community space, mentioning that they can imagine checking the site daily and contributing to the conversations and resources being shared there.

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*Jimmy Brown is The Associate Director of Student Activities and Leadership at The University of Michigan.*

*Robbie Routenberg is The Program Manager, The Program on Intergroup Relations at The University of*

**"JustConnect gives the College of Engineering a chance we haven't had before - to link our students with others in important social justice conversations and actions. The collaborations that JustConnect offers are really exciting!"**

### **There is another meet-up scheduled in November at the University of Iowa in Iowa City!**

**Anyone who is interested in social justice issues is welcome to attend!**

"At our last meet-up, we spent some time getting to know other in the region, who were able to attend. We also discussed issues we face on our campuses. Finally, we talked about how we go about addressing social justice issues on our campuses. Overall, our goal with the meet-up is to meet others in the region, build community, and have opportunities to connect about specific issues we face." - Stephanie Bondi

The next meeting is scheduled for:

- Friday, November 13, 2009 @ 2:00-5:00 p.m.
- University of Iowa, Iowa City
- Multi-Purpose Room, Currier Hall
- Contact: Stephanie Bondi ([bondist@yahoo.com](mailto:bondist@yahoo.com)) with questions.

## Annual Intergroup Dialogue Institute...

(Continued)

were the majority of the attendees, but there was strong presence from faculty with backgrounds in Social Work, Sociology, Psychology, and Education. Those in attendance had a wide range of goals, from informational for those less familiar with IGD to those with specific needs on how to create an intergroup dialogue program on their campuses.

Despite the economic turmoil of the past year and limited travel budgets across campuses, the Institute had a 30% increase from the previous institute. "I think this speaks to the strong demand for these types of programs in campuses across the country," said IGR Co-Director Kelly Maxwell. "The demand is certainly there for schools to address social justice issues through Intergroup Dialogue; and there's also an eagerness for school officials to engage in these types of conversations themselves."

Founded in 1988, The Program on Intergroup Relations mission is to "pursue social justice through education." The Program views intergroup dialogue courses and the co-curricular program CommonGround as the heart of its offerings. One of the distinguishing features of the University of Michigan's Program is the role of undergraduate students as dialogue facilitators; "It's been among the most rewarding things I've done in college," said student facilitator Ani Toumajan during the institute student panel.

The schools that attended included: Baldwin-Wallace College, Broward College, Carleton College, Dominican University, Eastern Michigan University, Georgia State University, Hamline University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis,



Michigan Technology University, Princeton University, Sinclair Community College, University of Arizona, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Michigan-Dearborn, University of Pittsburgh, University of Texas at Austin.

The next Intergroup Dialogue Institute is scheduled for June 16-19, 2010 in Ann Arbor, MI. For more information, go to [www.igr.umich.edu](http://www.igr.umich.edu).

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*Monita Thompson is the Director of The Program on Intergroup Relations, The University of Michigan: Ann Arbor.*

*Joseph Person was the Institute Coordinator for this Intergroup Dialogue Institute.*

### Want to get involved?

### Consider writing for the next CSJE newsletter!

Research Briefs • Opinion Pieces • Program Reviews  
Book Reviews • Effective interventions • Self reflections • New insights or learning

Contact: Andrea Dre Domingue at [andread@educ.umass.edu](mailto:andread@educ.umass.edu) or  
Heather Wilhelm at [Heather.Wilhelm@uconn.edu](mailto:Heather.Wilhelm@uconn.edu) for more information.

**Submissions for the Winter 2010 edition are due: January 15, 2010**