

BUILDING bridges



FALL 2006

Inequality Conference Emphasizes Need for University and Community Collaboration to Address Regional Challenges

On May 11th-12th 2006, the UCI Community Outreach Partnership Center sponsored a provocative conference, "Inequality: Southern California's Major Fault Line." The conference featured keynote addresses by Harvard Professor William Julius Wilson and University of Minnesota Law Professor Myron Orfield.

Professor Wilson's address, "Bridge Over the Racial Divide: Rising Inequality and Coalition Politics Reexamined," called for a political constituency of working and middle class Americans to combat the eroding strength of the nation's equalizing institutions, including public education, unions, and political structures that promote the interests of ordinary families. Professor Wilson's lecture attracted a diverse audience of over 300 attendees, including faculty and students from throughout Southern California, elected officials, policy analysts, and community leaders.

Myron Orfield's remarks focused on Southern California's growing trends of socioeconomic disparity and demographic shifts and their impact on local economies. Professor

Orfield argued for a regional agenda that would increase government efficiency and make the best use of limited resources.

Workshops on economic, education, labor, social and public policies, and regional problems, examined how unequal-

ity is structured and challenged across different arenas. Each session included a combination of academics and community practitioners and was organized to provide participants with "real world" and scholarly perspectives on these issues. The conference helped to build new networks of groups and individuals who are doing work to challenge growing inequality in the region.

An edited volume based on conference proceedings is in the works.



*Conference
Keynote Speakers:
Harvard Professor
William Julius Wilson,
and Myron Orfield,
University of Minnesota
Law School*



Bus Tour Explores Orange County Community Building Efforts

The "Changing Face of Orange County Bus Tour," took place this September. The tour, sponsored by COPC and the UCI Department of Planning, Policy, and Design, introduces new graduate students in urban planning to the dynamics of change in Orange County communities. This year's tour examined community building activities in the cities of Fullerton and Anaheim.

In Fullerton, students met with Joey McKellar of the Orange County Congregations Community Organization (OCCCO). OCCCO is a faith-based, community organizing project of the Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO). Mr. McKellar described an OCCCO campaign in Westside, Fullerton, to organize

Continued on page 3

COPC Community Scholars Initiative Highlights Civic Mission of Graduate and Professional Education

With limited resources and staffing, Orange County community agencies work tirelessly to help families find shelter, affordable health care, food to feed their children, and jobs. The COPC Community Scholars Initiative understands the important role these agencies play in providing a “safety net” to those in need, and adds value to these efforts by emphasizing the role of civic responsibility in graduate and professional education.

The COPC Community Scholars Program provides support to Orange County community-based organizations, by:

- ❖ conducting research that helps to inform community outreach and organizing activities;
- ❖ providing technical-assistance (e.g. grant writing, program evaluation, etc.) which builds organizational capacity;
- ❖ promoting activities that emphasize connecting graduate and professional training efforts to community development and capacity building efforts in Orange County.

Examples of these efforts include our grant writing course which began in 2005. This course teaches students about grant making by having them develop actual proposals for Orange County community agencies. In the past three years this class has produced several funded proposals which have provided important support to Save Our Youth (SOY), a teen after-school center, Share Our Selves (SOS), a community free clinic, and the Urban Land Institute of Orange County (ULI-OC). Funding for SOY helped support a program on teen obesity and nutrition, assisted efforts by SOS to expand their mental health services, and afforded ULI-OC the resources they needed for a project that will look at how design and development efforts can be used to improve health education campaigns.

Our Community Scholars Program also supports local organizations through research. Each year, top UCI graduate students in the Department of Planning, Policy, and Design, are selected to conduct “client-based professional reports” which address an informational need as identified by our community partners. Community Scholars then work with a faculty advisor and the client over a nine-month period to complete the project.

COPC Community Scholars for 2006-07 are Anna Brendle, Fareeha Kibriya, and Cassandra Kifer. Ms Brendle is working on an evaluation project for the Neighborhood Housing Services of Orange County, while Ms. Kibriya and Ms. Kifer are conducting community need(s) assessment studies. Ms. Kibriya is working with a group of residents from the Pico-Lowell neighborhood in Santa Ana, who have started a consumer cooperative as an economic development strategy to achieve greater economic independence. Ms. Kifer is assisting MIKA Community Development Corporation, a Costa Mesa organization that is working to establish a new job center that will emphasize employment support activities including work place development training, English courses, and job placement.



Anna Brendle



Fareeha Kibriya



Cassandra Kifer

COPC Receives “Good Neighbor” Award

Neighborhood Housing Services of Orange County (NHSOC) held its 29th annual Awards Banquet on May 18th, 2006, and presented COPC with its “Good Neighbor Award.” The award recognizes COPC for “outstanding commitment and service to the community.” COPC Director Victor Becerra and Executive Director Kris Day accepted the award on behalf of our university and community partners.

LA Times Grant to Support New COPC Tutoring Project

COPC has received a grant from the Los Angeles Times Holiday Campaign Fund. This grant was made in support of COPC’s new After-School Community Tutoring project. This project will offer after-school tutoring in math, science, and English to middle and high school students from the Newport-Mesa Unified School District.

Ernesto and Socorro Vasquez Gift Anchors COPC Civic Engagement Activities

A generous gift from Ernesto and Socorro Vasquez is supporting COPC community service efforts by undergraduate and graduate students at UCI. Mr. and Mrs. Vasquez are both members of the UCI Foundation. Mr. Vasquez is a Founding Principal in the firm McLarand, Vasquez, Emsiek, and Partners, and a member of the UCI Department of Planning, Policy, and Design Community Advisory Committee. COPC is most grateful to Ernesto and Socorro for their generosity and support.

BUS TOUR

Continued from page 1

tenants living in dilapidated apartment complexes owned by absentee landlords. The campaign has persuaded city officials to increase code-enforcement of these properties.



Orange County Congregation Community Organization representative Joey McKellar talks to bus tour participants about community building efforts in Fullerton.

Mr. McKellar also described how leadership development and organizing efforts in the Richman neighborhood of Fullerton have produced fundamental neighborhood improvements, including the expansion of a community center, construction of a new community clinic, and the addition of traffic signals and park lights. These gains have improved neighborhood safety, promoted greater recreational activities, notably a youth soccer league, and helped strengthen efforts by the Valencia Community Task Force to advocate for additional neighborhood reforms.

COPC Director, Victor Becerra (middle) with Eric Altman, Executive Director, OCCORD (left) and Cesar Covarrubias, Senior Project Manager, The Kennedy Commission



In Anaheim, students learned about advocacy work being done by The Kennedy Commission around affordable housing for low-income workers (those

who work in jobs paying \$10 or less per hour), and coalition building efforts by the Orange County Communities for Responsible Development (OCCORD). OCCORD efforts are aimed at ensuring that local economic development initiatives include specific “community benefits” (e.g job development and training, affordable housing etc.) which reflect the needs of multiple community constituencies and a responsible use of tax payers dollars.

COPC Changing Face of Orange County Bus Tour participants include students and faculty from the Department of Planning, Policy, and Design.



**THE
CHANGING FACE
OF ORANGE COUNTY
LECTURE SERIES 2006-2007**

The Changing Face of Orange County Lecture Series provides a forum for the UCI and Orange County community to explore issues connected to demographic change, public policy, and urban planning.

WINTER

“Growing Together: New Strategies for Creating and Sharing Prosperity in California’s Regions”

Professor Manuel Pastor, Department of Latin American and Latino Studies and Co-Director of the Center for Justice, Tolerance, and Community, University of California, Santa Cruz.

When: February 28, 2007
Where: University Club, 801 E. Peltason Drive
Time: Reception 6:00 pm-7:00 pm, Lecture 7:00 pm-8:30 pm

SPRING

“Jobs and Economic Development in Minority Communities: Realities, Challenges, and Innovation”

Professor Paul Ong, Department of Urban Planning, UCLA School of Public Affairs.

When: May 9, 2007
Where: University Club, 801 E. Peltason Drive
Time: Reception 6:00 pm-7:00 pm, Lecture 7:00 pm-8:30 pm

Reception and lectures are free and open to the public. Please RSVP at copc@uci.edu. For more information call (949) 824-9337.

University of California, Irvine
Community Outreach Partnership Center
School of Social Ecology
202 Social Ecology I
Irvine, CA 92697-7075

Building Bridges
UCI Community Outreach
Partnership Center
University of California, Irvine

phone: (949) 824-9337
fax: (949) 824-8566
email: copc@uci.edu

COPC Staff
Victor Becerra
COPC Director

Kristen Day
COPC Executive Director

Student Assistant
Cecilia Preciado
Program Manager

In this Issue

- page 1** Inequality Conference Emphasizes Community Collaboration
- page 1** Exploring Orange County Community Building Efforts
- page 2** Community Scholars Initiative Highlights Civic Responsibility
- page 3** Awards and Support for COPC