

Virginia Tech Conductor

A GUIDE FOR OUR JOURNEY TOWARD EXCELLENCE, EQUITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

What do you think?

What diversity lessons have or have not been learned as a result of September 11?



The 9/11 experience, for all of its tragedy, got people thinking, discussing, and acting on many issues, including diversity, in ways

that may have never been encountered otherwise. Positively, New York, one of the most diversely populated cities in the world, seemed to unify around this experience and that feeling of togetherness rippled across our nation.

*Chris Helms, director
Student Athlete Academic Support Services*



To a degree, 9/11 positively altered diversity relations in American society, where all Americans now share a common ground like never before. Alternatively, 9/11 undeniably made some people skeptical of the international community, specifically Middle Easterners. In saying this, it appears our society has a great deal to learn pertaining to diversity issues and how we should manage our differences.

*Kimberly Strong, graduate student
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies*



We are still learning lessons from September 11th. I am optimistic, though, that some seem to have taken to

heart the lesson of the need for tolerance, understanding, and a mature world-view. I only hope this awareness will permanently improve behavior, culturally. My biggest fear is that the politicians are oblivious and will hinder this process as they influence our fate, nationally and internationally. Time will tell.

*Latanya Walker, counselor
Upward Bound*

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Two last names and campus climate -- pages 2 and 3

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Good News

Many voices heard, celebrated

by Barbara Pendergrass, dean of students, bpender@vt.edu

The Fifth Annual Celebration of Diversity was held September 11, 2002, in Burruss auditorium. As in the past four years, Nikki Giovanni's Hush Harbor Choir marched in singing an African chant, after the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets' Gregory Guard called the audience to attention. The approximately 2,000 audience members responded enthusiastically to the two-hour program, which featured a combination of 35 speakers and performances. President Steger made time in his busy schedule to be present for the entire event.

The Celebration of Diversity was created to increase awareness of the diversity within our student community. The tragedy of September 11, 2001, gave this year's program special meaning.



Black Greek Council at the 2001 Celebration of Diversity

September 11 taught us that we cannot be blind or indifferent to the differences that exist among us. We must seek to know and understand each other.

As was evident by this year's Celebration of Diversity, Virginia Tech is comprised of students representing a multitude of differences. Many of these students have joined with others who share similar interests or heritage and formulated organizations or fellowship groups. Each group has a distinct need and voice which needs to be heard. The campus community is enriched by what each group brings to the table.

Under the leadership of Rebecca Obeng, Multicultural Awareness Programs (MAPs), the sponsoring group, worked diligently to make this program as inclusive as possible. They wanted the program to be reflective of the campus. MAPs

issued the call for participation for this year's program in February. They are now gearing up to begin planning for the Sixth Annual Celebration of Diversity, which, if they follow their established protocol, will be Sept. 10, 2003, the second Wednesday in September. The group is open to input in selecting a day. They may be reached through Obeng at robeng@vt.edu.

Commission on Equal Opportunity, Diversity proposed

by Richard Comers, professor of electrical and computer engineering and Multicultural Fellow, and Benjamin Dixon, vice president for multicultural affairs

Over the last few years, a good deal of progress has been made on issues of diversity at Virginia Tech. Actions include the hiring of a vice president for multicultural affairs, Benjamin Dixon, the creation of a diversity strategic plan, the formulation of new faculty hiring procedures, and the update to the university strategic plan that was approved by the board of visitors in August 2001. Note that the update of the university strategic plan includes a commitment to diversify the faculty, staff, and student body, and to address related issues in programs, scholarship, and curriculum. While there have been some challenges to this progress, these are still accomplishments that are moving us in the right direction.

Others are noticing these efforts. A number of universities have asked for copies of our diversity strategic plan and a team from Auburn University recently visited Virginia Tech to learn more about our diversity initiatives as they begin to develop their own plans.

Yes, much has changed. But there is at least one very important matter that must be taken care of if we are to make the most of all our previous accomplishments. This matter involves inclusion in our university governance system a commission that can advise and help formulate policy on matters of equal opportunity and diversity. Efforts to create such a commission are underway this semester.

What will the new commission do?

The proposed new commission is called the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Its charge is to study, formulate, and recommend to University Council policies and procedures as they relate to the university's responsibilities for equal opportunity, affirmative action, accessibility, and compliance; diversity planning and evaluation; diversity training and education; assessment of institutional climate; and similar matters

of equity and diversity that affect the university. This commission is also charged to collaborate with other university commissions in order to address issues of diversity and equity as they relate to recruitment, retention, and advancement of faculty and staff members and students, particularly those from historically underrepresented groups. Other issues around which collaboration may occur are related to student life; academic policies and support; curriculum; research, scholarship, and creative activity; and outreach. Obviously, a responsibility of this commission would be to evaluate the university's efforts associated with the diversity strategic plan, to advise the administration as to ways of improving these efforts, and to formulate policies to achieve the

university's diversity goals. Clearly, this type of activity is best done at the commission level.

To help understand the need for this commission and some of the sticking points involved in its creation, it is

useful to understand how the proposal evolved. The idea for creating this commission came in the fall of 2000. At that time, the university had two advisory committees involved with diversity matters. These were the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Committee, an advisory committee to the university's EOAA Office, and the Advisory Council on Diversity and Multicultural Affairs (ACDMA), an advisory committee to the vice president for multicultural affairs. In the fall of 2000, both committees realized that they increasingly had overlapping agendas and concerns.

How was the proposal developed?

In the spring of 2001, a subcommittee made up of members from both of these committees was established to formulate a proposal to create a new committee that would effectively replace the EOAA committee and the ACDMA. The new commission would consolidate consideration of diversity and equal opportunity matters into one body and increase the visibility and attention to these concerns within the university governance infrastructure.

See Commission on page 2

Beyond sticks and stones

Names are important at a welcoming campus

On July 12, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ran an article on Virginia Tech's faculty search procedures. As an example of the university's lack of cultural awareness, the article reported that computerized personnel forms could not accommodate two surnames, which resulted in Hispanics having to change their names. At a Multicultural Fellows meeting this summer, Ray Plaza told us it had happened to him and we urged him to write about his experience for the *Conductor*.

Plaza has written a personal account of what happened and, more important, how he felt about it. We've all had encounters with bureaucracy and it would be easy to dismiss this as another such incident. But Plaza's experience is about climate. It wasn't simply a bad, frustrating experience; it was a lonely and excluding experience.

However, things do change — and already had before this summer. Rosie Higdon, senior human resources manager, reports (see "Update") that federal bureaucracy (including monetary threats for non-compliance) had also frustrated HR staff members. However, the forms are now more flexible.

As a final component of the Multicultural Fellows' attention to this particular issue that has made Virginia Tech's climate less than welcoming, Manuel A. Pérez-Quinones explains Hispanic names (See "Hispanic last names...") and provides suggestions on how willing and aware people can solve problems that could negatively impact any of us.

We celebrate the outcome and a job well done.

Viewpoint - What is in a surname?

¿Cuál es el significado detrás de un apellido?



Plaza

by Ray Plaza, residence director, Residential and Dining Programs, and Multicultural Fellow

I was beginning my third week at Virginia Tech when I discovered that the university had me listed as Raymond Linares. Who was Raymond Linares? My name is Raymond Plaza.

I had received word that my supervisor had been notified that something was wrong with my social security card, which read, "Raymond Vidal Plaza Linares." I tried to explain that in Puerto Rico (where my mom got our social security cards when we spent a year there in 1977) both parents' surnames are placed on the social security card. It is the custom in Hispanic/Latino countries for both surnames to be used as a means to recognize both families and as a way to track your ancestors.

It is the custom in the United States to use the father's surname as the primary last name. I have worked at the University of Florida, Metro-Dade County, and at Colorado State University without anyone ever having any problems or questioning my name as it appeared on my social security card.

I called the Social Security Administration regarding the problem and got two completely different responses. The university insisted that, either I had to have my social security card changed or that my employment records would be changed to "Raymond Linares." I made the decision to change my social security card because I was not going to assume a name that was not mine and that I did not identify with.

It may seem petty, but my name was and still is important to me.

I had to go to the Roanoke office of the Social Security Administration and ask for a corrected Social Security Card. I got a new card with the same number and the name "Raymond Vidal Plaza." Once I got my revised card, I had to go back to the university and provide them with proof of the change.

Today, I carry two social security cards: my original one and the one that I needed to keep my name as a university employee.

What is in a name? A lot.

Update

Rosie Higdon, senior human resources manager, employee administration, records, and HRIS, provided the following update:

"The university is constantly caught between the Internal Revenue Service and the Social Security Administration. Both branches of government have regulations requiring that payroll and tax records match in number and name exactly. There is a monetary penalty for each miss-match.

"The Banner payroll system has three fields for names. It can now accommodate first, middle, and surnames, any of which can have more than one name with or without hyphens.

"While the situation in Banner has been essentially corrected, Personnel Services and the Controller's Office staff will be sensitive to cultural differences and will accept any parsing of the name so long as the total matches what appears on the social security card."

Commission ...

Continued from page 1

By fall 2001, a draft proposal was created and revised based on comments gathered during multiple meetings of the EOAA committee and the ACDMA, as well as from comments gathered from designated constituency groups. The revised proposal was then passed by a unanimous vote of both committees.

It is important to note that, when one sets about to create a committee on diversity and equal opportunity, the committee needs to be composed of members from our diverse university communities if it is to have any credibility within both majority and minority groups. The lack of such diversity in membership is one of the weaknesses of existing commissions. To effectively collaborate with other university commissions, the membership also had to be selected in a manner that would aid in the collaboration. Creating the right mix and making sure diversity was reflected on the commission was not an easy task, and the subcommittee responsible for creating the proposal, as well as the full EOAA committee and ACDMA, spent much time debating how the commission membership should be assigned.

The resulting proposal was widely disseminated around the university in the spring of 2002. The proposal was published in the *Spectrum*, soliciting comments. It was sent to, among others, the Commissions on Faculty Affairs, Staff Affairs, Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs, and Student Affairs. It was also sent to the Multicultural Fellows, chairs of college diversity committees, and college faculty associations. All were encouraged to submit any comments they thought were appropriate.

To get the proposed commission formally approved, which requires a change to the University Council constitution, it had to be ratified by the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, and approved by the University Council. Both the Faculty Senate and the Staff Senate suggested

changes to the proposal that were incorporated in the proposal. The basic idea of having the commission seemed to have fairly wide support with all groups, including both senates. The sticking points that had to be resolved related to how the membership was to be selected and other matters of implementation.

Having approvals from both the Faculty and Staff Senates, the proposal was introduced to University Council at the end of the 2001/2002 academic year. A concern about the legality of the proposed selection process was raised at the last minute, triggered by a very recent directive from the Attorney General's office. This question involved whether it is legal to establish a commission within the university governance system that has designated seats for specific racial/cultural groups. This issue about membership could not be immediately resolved without further study, and a motion to approve the charge for the new commission ONLY was defeated. Some members were reluctant to approve the establishment of the commission without knowing how the membership question might be resolved. The constitution of the University Council does not allow proposals to be carried forward to the new academic year. The council's decision not to act on the commission meant that the process for reviewing, discussing, and approving the new commission would have to be completely restarted in the fall, or abandoned as a lost cause.

Fortunately, there were enough members of the university community who felt that the commission is not only the right thing to do, but that it is clearly necessary if Virginia Tech is going to be both effective and competitive in positively managing the increasing cultural, racial, gender, and other differences that enrich the community. Thanks to these people's good efforts, the legal issues have been resolved and efforts to create the commission are ongoing despite having to begin again.

What happens next?

The proposal will be submitted to the University Council for approval. It has been split into two parts — the resolution creating the commission, which requires a constitution change, and a resolution amending the bylaws that define the commission membership. Only very minor changes were required to the spring membership proposal to address the legal issues that had been raised. The revised resolutions have been submitted to the Faculty and Staff Senates; the senates must ratify proposed changes to the University Council constitution, which would be the resolution establishing the commission itself. The Faculty Senate approved the proposed commission at its August meeting. The bylaws change effectively implemented all of the Staff Senate's suggestions about how the membership should be selected; so, hopefully, the Staff Senate will pass the proposal as well. The resolutions will be introduced to University Council at its Oct. 7 meeting.

Two things should be immediately clear from the above. First, a lot of people have spent a good deal of time trying to make this new commission happen. It has been very carefully deliberated by the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, University Council, and anyone within the university community with an interest. Second, most people agree that this is an important commission to have.

The question is, given the above, why can we not reach closure on the membership issue? It has been debated enough! Given the current social, political, and economic climate, the university can ill afford to turn its back on an opportunity to both demonstrate its commitment to goals of inclusion and fairness, and to create a vehicle that will help the university achieve these goals.

Ironically, Auburn University, who is looking towards Virginia Tech for diversity "best practices," already has a commission similar to the one proposed for this community.

Hispanic last names: Why two of them?

by Manuel A. Pérez-Quiñones, assistant professor of computer science, perez@cs.vt.edu

One of the most misunderstood characteristics of Hispanic culture is the use of our last names. In the last 20 years, more and more Hispanics are being mentioned in the mainstream of American society. Names like Gabriel García Marquez and Arancha Sanchez Vicario are two names that get lots of press. Their last names, two in each case, are every now and then confused. In the very famous O.J. Simpson trial, his house help was accused of trying to hide her identity, because she appeared in different documents with different last names, a confusion caused not by her, but by the misunderstanding of her culture. This article hopes to explain this piece of Hispanic mystery.

Most Hispanic people use two last names? How can that be? How can you have two of the "last" thing? Well, in Spanish a last name is not called a last name (último nombre would be the literal translation of last name and it is meaningless in Spanish). In Spanish, the last name has a name of its own, it is called apellido. The proper translation to English is surname, a term that is seldom used in the United States. Surname (or apellido) does not mean "last." So, when you talk about someone's last name you talk about their apellidos (surnames) since there are two of them. The two surnames are referred as the first apellido and the second apellido. Also, we refer to our first name by just name, and the middle name is referred to as second name instead of middle. I will focus on the last name issues.

My first surname, Pérez is the first surname of my father and my second surname, Quiñones, is the first surname of my mom (usually called the mother's

maiden name in the United States). So, my apellidos are: Pérez Quiñones because...

My Dad: Pérez Rodríguez
My Mom: Quiñones Alamo
Yours truly: Pérez Quiñones

So, what happens when you get married? Nothing changes on the husband, and the wife usually changes her name as follows. Her first surname remains the same (her father's first), but her second surname often changes to that of her husband. Sometimes the word 'de' is added between the two surnames to indicate that the second surname is her husband's. To continue the example, my wife's surnames before we got married:

Her Dad: Padilla Rivera
Her Mom: Falto Pérez (no, she is not related to my Dad)
My Wife: Padilla Falto

After marriage, my wife's surnames would have changed to: Padilla de Pérez or just Padilla Pérez.

Me: Pérez Quiñones
My Wife: Padilla Pérez

In today's world, many women do not change their name for professional or personal reasons. In the case of our family, my wife still goes by her original surnames, Padilla Falto. It is interesting to note that either way, the woman in the marriage never changes



Yours truly

her first surname. My wife continues to be Mrs. Padilla whether she changed her second surname to mine (Padilla Pérez) or not (Padilla Falto). This is very different from the US, where if the change occurs at marriage, the woman assumes the husband's last name.

This presents yet another source of confusion. Because my wife is Mrs. Padilla, I am often called Mr. Padilla, which often makes me turn around and look for my father-in-law. However, it can be a source of fun at the expense of phone tele-marketers. When they call and ask for Mr. Padilla, I always tell them that he does not live at this address.

There is one more aspect to the surnames, namely what happens when we have children. Well, the whole circle of life begins again (literally). For example, our children's apellidos are: Pérez Padilla. And, as you can tell, we are back to the beginning of the explanation.

Me: Pérez Quiñones
My Wife: Padilla Falto
Our children: Pérez Padilla

Now you know that Gabriel García Marquez is the son of Mr. García and Mrs. Marquez, or more formally the son of Mr. and Mrs. García Marquez. And if you send a letter to the family of Arancha Sanchez Vicario, you would address it to the Sanchez Vicario Family.

In general in the United States, the family as a group is addressed by the last name of the husband. In Hispanic circles, the family is addressed by the combination of the first surname of each of the partners in the marriage, which is the same as the surnames of the children of the marriage. So, my family can be referred to as the Pérez Padilla's. This makes it clear that it is the family formed by the union of a Pérez and a Padilla, and it also differentiates it from my parent's household (the Pérez Quiñones) and my wife's parents household (the Padilla Falto's).

Another interesting effect of the two surnames is that in Hispanic cultures you do not see the "I" (first), "II" (second), etc. appending to a child's name. The child is automatically differentiated from the parent by the combination of father-mother surnames. So, even if my son was named Manuel, he would not have the same full name as me because it will include my wife's surname.

Hyphenated Names

You might have noticed that in many cases, a hyphen is added to separate the two surnames. This is done artificially to satisfy the strict implementation of software systems that assume that a space is not a legal entry in the last name field. This ignores people that have a last name with two words — typical in some cultures, and ignores cultures that use two surnames, as explained above. By the way, Hispanics are not the only culture that uses two surnames, there are other cultures that use a similar scheme. There are even other cultures that have other combinations of surnames.

So, to avoid confusion, a lot of Hispanics hyphenate their surnames, as I do with mine, Pérez-Quiñones. But this is purely to avoid many hours of frustration dealing with office personnel that insist that we do not exist in their computer system. This has happened to me at all three of the four universities that I have been affiliated with, either as a student or as a professor (and the fourth one was in Puerto Rico, where it would not be an issue). It has also happened several times when dealing with local government offices. But the worst of all is the marketing junk mail. I appear in junk mailing lists many times. I appear as Pérez, as Quiñones (with Pérez as the middle name), as Pérez-Quiñones, and other truncated variations (e.g. Pérez-Quiñon) because the combination of the two surnames is often too long for their computer systems to store the full surnames.

Suggestions to organizations dealing with Hispanics

by Manuel A. Pérez-Quiñones

The problems that the two surnames present to organizations dealing with Hispanics often resides in the human and social side of the computer-human work allocation. Sure, the computer systems need to be updated to be able to handle the two surnames, but that is not a technical challenge. It is very easy to update the software needed to store and process the two surnames.

However, the human side of the equation needs to be addressed. As we know, it is easier to update software than to update a person's misconceptions and understanding of the World's cultures. To make this understanding a bit easier, I have included here a few suggestions that span both sides of the human-computer work allocation.

- Listings ordered by surnames. Any time that name lists are printed, they need to be sorted by both surnames, not just one. Also, surnames should always be printed as Surnames, First Name (e.g. Pérez Quiñones, Manuel A.). That way it is obvious which are the surnames and which is the name and it avoids the continuing confusion of filing our materials under our second surname.
- Sorting by international order. The Spanish language has accents (see the first é in my first surname and ñ in my second surname). These need to be sorted properly when producing listings of names. Most computer software already handle sorting using "International character sets." This would put my name properly in the Pe group. The effect of not using the international sort is that I would appear at the end of the P's because the computer does not recognizes the é as a regular e, and sorts it after the z.
- Second surname sometimes is optional. The second surname is often treated much like the middle name is treated in the United States, that is it is formally part of your name but sometimes it is omitted. For example, if I walk up to a government office in Puerto Rico and say "My name is Manuel Pérez," they would look me up in the computer system and probably ask for my second surname just for confirmation purposes. Much like if a person here in the United States walks up to a teller and says "My name is John Smith" and the teller might reply "John A. Smith?" This means that office personnel need to be aware of this and not interpret it as a customer not being cooperative. Also, computer systems should be able to find my name from just entering Pérez as a last name, even if my name is stored with both surnames.
- Do not use the mother's maiden name for security purposes. Many corporations use the mother's maiden name as a security measure to confirm your identity. For Hispanics, this is not a secret. You know that my mother's maiden name is Quiñones. Corporations need to use some other piece of information as an identifying characteristic, in particular one that is not publicly available.

In closing, Hispanics represent a large minority group in the United States. By some estimates, Hispanics will become the largest minority group in the next 20 years. Furthermore, as a cultural group, Hispanics have been in North America since before the Thirteen Colonies were formed. So, it is safe to say that the Hispanic influence in the United States is here to stay. I believe that it is important that we try to understand some of the mysteries of Hispanic culture. It is only with this understanding that we will be able to create a healthier atmosphere for cultural diversity in U.S. organizations and society at large.

Making a difference

Working separately but with the common goal of increasing awareness of diversity in our community, two groups have developed programs that facilitate learning using different techniques. One uses discussion based on personal experiences and case studies while the other makes use of theater-derived techniques that require participants to physically as well as mentally perform exercises. Both of these programs provide an opportunity for university personnel to expand their appreciation of diversity at Virginia Tech.

Workshop responds to need for diversity awareness

by Alicia Cohen, assistant to the vice president for multicultural affairs

The Diversity Awareness Workshop was developed in response to a number of surveys conducted to determine perceptions of campus climate by the faculty, staff, and students. Ninety percent of the faculty and staff believe that diversity is good. Yet more than half of the members of every minority group report incidents of unfair treatment, while half of the members of majority groups believe the university spends too much time worrying about diversity.

For Virginia Tech to be a leader in education and research, the climate must be more welcoming for all. This will increase the recruitment and retention of the best individuals. A more positive climate with respect to diversity is beneficial to all who work and study at this institution.

Thus, the Diversity Awareness Workshop was initiated by a subcommittee of the University Committee on Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action and funded by the Office of the University Provost through an Affirmative Action grant. The subcommittee worked hard for two years to produce the workshop, which includes a video of Virginia Tech employees sharing their stories as well as a workbook full of case studies of real situations that have occurred at this institution. It is a powerful and enlightening workshop that deals with issues of sexual orientation, race, disability, ethnicity, regional origin, national origin, age, and gender.

A pilot of this three-hour workshop was conducted in the spring of 2002 and in August a group of individuals were trained as facilitators. The facilitators will work in teams of two to deliver the workshop upon request to departments, units, or other groups. It is the intention of the Diversity Awareness Workshop to provide the university community with a reality check, so that we can journey together toward a more welcoming community for all.

Individuals interested in having this workshop presented should contact Alicia Cohen in the Office of Multicultural Affairs, 231-1820 or acohen@vt.edu.

Diversity Training Laboratory enters next phase

by Drew Dowdy, theatre arts student

The Multicultural Fellows, with the support of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, began an initiative known as the Diversity Training Laboratory in the fall of 2000. The Training Lab was developed to provide the university a unique service by training participants in interactive performance techniques that facilitate analytical and complex discussions of multicultural issues. The emphasis is on the *interactive*, as these theater-derived techniques require participants to move around, to speak freely with one another, and to analyze ideas with nonverbal images. The ultimate goal of the Diversity Training Lab is to form a group of faculty, staff, and student trainers to offer specific ongoing workshops to many groups around campus and in the community.

The first phase of the program was completed this summer, after a series of workshops led by Ann Kilkelly to introduce the techniques to the Multicultural Fellows and invited guests. Kilkelly is a faculty member with the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies and also a Fellow. The aim of the second phase, which begins this fall, is to intensify the training, develop a wider constituency for the project, and design specific materials for trainers to use with specific groups – including online resources and a printed manual of techniques. At the end of phase two, the Fellows expect to have several trained facilitators and the capability of responding to student and faculty/staff groups who wish to address their community's issues in this fashion.

The training workshops offered use techniques drawn from several sources, including Augusto Boal's

Use inclusive language

As you speak and write, it's important to include rather than exclude. It may seem like a minor detail or an issue of "political correctness," yet it is important to make your language inclusive in order for everyone to feel welcomed. Just as it feels good to hear someone use your name, it also feels good to be included. Inclusive language sends the message that you value and accept all people.

Here are a few ways to ensure that your language is inclusive:

- If using names in examples or case studies, try to use names from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.
- Don't assume that everyone comes from two-parent households or has siblings.
- Use male and female pronouns interchangeably. When talking about someone in a position of influence (i.e. a professor or administrator), don't always use male pronouns. Conversely, don't always use female pronouns when referring to traditionally female positions (i.e. a nurse, a parent).
- Use examples from a variety of religions.
- Don't assume that all romantic relationships are heterosexual.
- Use examples from a variety of cultures.
- Don't just use student culture references (i.e. music, celebrities) for one age group if you are speaking with a mixed group. Nontraditional students may feel excluded if you do.

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Kilkelly

Theatre of the Oppressed, Michael Rohd's Theater for Community Conflict and Dialogue, and sociometric exercises developed by Kilkelly, Mady Schutzman, Jan Cohen-Cruz, and others. All of these techniques involve principles of community-based art making and are designed to listen to

communities and help them design ways to look at their own experiences and issues. To use Boal's term, facilitators and participants all become "spec-actors." Frequent and important topics addressed by these techniques include: sexual assault, sexual harassment, discrimination, race, racialization, and racism, community building, mental illness, alcohol abuse, and AIDS. Facilitators are not experts on these issues but are there to enable the group to use and express its own expertise. These workshops can be therapeutic, but are not therapy.

In the spring, the Multicultural Fellows, with the support of a Diversity Initiatives Grant awarded by the Office of the Provost, will sponsor a trainer-in-residence to conduct a multi-day workshop. Plans are underway to bring Jan Cohen-Cruz, a well known scholar and Boal trainer, and associate professor of drama at New York University, to Virginia Tech for this purpose. Cohen-Cruz will work with trainers, students, and other groups to finish the "training" phase for faculty, staff, and student facilitators. At least two public events will be produced, and Cohen-Cruz will be available for class visits and other activities, including consultation with the group of trainers.

Information about the dates and times of the upcoming training workshops will be made available soon. All members of the university and Blacksburg communities are invited to attend; participation in a previous workshop is not necessary. Anyone interested in attending a workshop or needing further information can contact Kilkelly or Drew Dowdy, the project administrator, by e-mail at DiversityLab@vt.edu.

About The Conductor

The Conductor is produced twice during the fall and twice during the spring semesters by the Multicultural Fellows and is published by the Office of Multicultural Affairs. All members of the university community are invited to contribute. Please submit articles to multicultural@vt.edu. Feel free to discuss a possible article with the editors or any editorial board member. Back issues are online at www.multicultural.vt.edu/conductor.html.

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