



Bonner Center for Character Education
and Citizenship

ANNUAL REPORT: 2002

Purpose of the Bonner Center

The Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship in the SOEHD was formed in 1997 to promote character education in the Central Valley through providing nationally recognized speakers for the Fresno area, forums on character education and professional ethics, small grants for local public schools and teachers, materials and other professional resources for review, and coordination for a variety of character award programs.

Administrative Housing of Ancillary Unit

The Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship is an authorized Ancillary Unit of the CSU Fresno and the KSOEHD. Dr. Jacques Benninga is its director and Dr. Pam Lane-Garon is its Associate Director. The Center's activities are guided by an Advisory Board composed of KSOEHD faculty, public school personnel from Fresno and surrounding counties and the Bonner Family Foundation.

Highlights of significant activities

1. Because of our efforts, the national organization which includes all colleges of teacher education, the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) now has a national award, the Best Practices for Professional Ethics in Teacher Education, that universities can apply for annually and if awarded, will be received at the association's annual meeting.
2. The national character education organization, the Character Education Partnership (CEP), published a booklet highlighting universities doing excellent work in character education. It's titled, "Practices of Teacher Educators Committed to Character" (February 2003). CSU Fresno (and its the Bonner Center) is one of three universities highlighted as models of good practice.
3. In 2000 the Bonner Center was awarded "The Golden Ruler Award" for excellence in character education by the International Center for Character Education in San Diego.
4. Over the years, the Bonner Center has received grants from The Bonner Family Foundation, The John Templeton Foundation, the Law Offices of Hager, Trippel, Macy and Jensen, the California Geographic Alliance, the Tulare County Office of Education and the Fresno Bee.
5. Pam Lane-Garon and Jacques Benninga have regularly presented their work to a variety of national conferences including the American Educational Research Association, the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education, the Character Education Partnership, the International Center for Character Education.

6. The California Distinguished Schools Award, the highest award for schools in California, now includes criteria for character education because of our efforts. No California school will be able to win that award without addressing character education in its curriculum.

7. We've become the hub for character education in the Central Valley, hosting the KSOEHD's Annual Conference on Character and Civic Education (now in its 19th year), sponsoring the Virtues and Character Recognition Awards (now in its 16th year), and the Youth Citizenship Awards (with John Minkler). We've increased CSUF faculty participation in the Character and Civic Education Conference, with 50% of the workshops last year and this year presented by our own faculty.

8. We've helped revise the mission, vision and goals of the KSOEHD to include attention to professional ethics in all our programs. Our students are formally inducted each semester into the teacher education program at a special ceremony, and several cohorts of students are going through a special character-infused program created by Pam Lane-Garon. And, significantly, President Welty has agreed to appoint a faculty commission to study the idea of an honor code for the entire university. Jacques Benninga has been appointed to that committee and is the group's convener.

Individually we've been hard at work as well.

- Dr. Jody Daughtry, member of our Bonner Center Board and coordinator of our Single Subject Credential Program (secondary education) reported at our October 2002 Advisory Board meeting that character education is now an established part of a unit in the social foundations classes for all prospective secondary teachers.

- Susan Schlievert, a member of our Bonner Center Board, reported in October 2002 that her EHD 50 students were regularly confronted with issues related to ethical behavior and that ethics discussion are part of that class. EHD 50 is a prerequisite class for all teacher education programs.

- We are working on the idea of a character education lesson to be required as a competency for all future student teachers in their initial student teaching experience.

- Pam Lane-Garon has received a variety of kudos for her work:
 - i. Herndon-Barstow Elementary School won the Golden Bell Award for a Collaborative Program from the California School Board for its Mediator Mentor Program which Pam coordinated.
 - ii. Research conducted on that program has now been published in Conflict Resolution Quarterly. The paper was written by Pam and principal Tim Richardson of Herndon-Barstow Elementary School in Central Unified.
 - iii. More than 190 Central Valley students and teacher have received conflict management skills training due to Pam's efforts. CSUF teacher education students are part of that training as well.
 - iv. Pam now works with Sanger Unified School District on its social development grant, a project to affect the lives of all its students.

- Jacques Benninga has advised several districts, including the Sanger Unified School District and the Nevada Department of Education on their character education grant applications. Both were awarded and were two of only 39 (out of 240 that applied nationally) to receive the Partnerships in Character Education Award from the U.S. Department of Education. This past semester, for the first

time, Benninga taught a course in the CSUF/UC Joint Doctoral Program on Moral Development and Character Education.

- Jacques Benninga and Phyllis Kuehn of CSUF and Marvin Berkowitz and Karen Smith of Univ. Missouri-St. Louis recently completed a three-year research project funded by the John Templeton Foundation to ascertain the relation of character education and academic achievement. The research will be published in the Journal of Research in Character Education (Summer/Fall 2003).

Sources of Funding:

The major and consistent source of funding is received from the Bonner Family Foundation of Fresno, CA. Ms. Kaye Cummings is its Executive Director and a member of its board, Ms. Dorothy Rohlfing, sits on the Bonner Center's Advisory Committee. Other sources of funding have included: The John Templeton Foundation, the Law Offices of Hager, Trippel, Macy and Jensen, the California Geographic Alliance, the Tulare County Office of Education and the Fresno Bee

Space and Equipment Utilization:

Space for the Bonner Center's growing collection of related books and materials is provided by the KSOEHD and located in INTERESC, 4th floor of the Education Building.