



Bonner Center for Character Education
and Citizenship

ANNUAL REPORT: 2009

Purpose of Ancillary Unit

The Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship was formed in 1997 at California State University Fresno to promote character education in the Central Valley of California by providing nationally recognized speakers, forums on character education and professional ethics, materials, research and other resources for review, orientation to professional ethics for pre-service and in-service teachers, 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, Tulare, Kings and Madera counties and a representative of the Bonner Family Foundation.

Major Accomplishments for 2008-2009

1. Twenty-four new scripts were written in 2009 for the 6th year of the KVPR (89.3 FM) series, "The Moral is..." narrated by Kaye Cummings. "The Moral Is..." is a series of short essays on current moral issues sponsored by the Bonner Center. Program scripts for the 6th season, 2009-10, were written by Jacques Benninga (Education), Alfred Evans (Political Science), Andrew Fiala (Philosophy) and James Walton (English). The program continues to be aired twice weekly on Sunday and Wednesday.
2. The class, Principles of Character Education was offered in November 2008 and again in March 2009. Dr. Hal Urban conducted both sessions in conjunction with Jacques Benninga and assisted by Jane Moosoolian. Approximately 225 students attended these classes.
3. The 25th Annual Conference on Character and Civic Education was held in April 2009. Fresno Pacific students and faculty joined our CSU Fresno students and faculty. Approximately 500 people attended. Dr. William Damon of Stanford University was our keynote speaker. His topic was related to assisting youth to find purpose and meaning in their lives (based on his recent book, The Path to Purpose).
4. The 22nd Annual Virtues and Character Recognition Program (2009) recognized 8 middle schools for exemplary character education programs, including four Tulare County schools and 4 Fresno County schools:

LOS TULES MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tulare City Elementary School District

AHWAHNEE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fresno Unified School District

SCANDINAVIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fresno Unified School District

MULCAHY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tulare City Elementary School District

LIVE OAK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tulare City Elementary School District

SEQUOIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fresno Unified School District

BAIRD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fresno Unified School District

RIO VISTA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Central Unified School District

5. Because of her successful work on the Bonner Center's grant with FUSD and her peer mediation work around the Valley Dr. Pam Lane-Garon is continuing to train school faculties and students. More than 1,000 student conflict managers from five Central Valley school districts convened on May 20 at the Satellite Student Union from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., where they were honored for mediating conflicts among peers through her Mediator Mentors program. That program is a nationally acclaimed university-public school partnership. This year, 30 university students were involved in the program with some coaching in training sessions held at Fresno State, and others spending the entire year on the campus of their selected school site mentoring young mediators

6. In February 2008, the Corporation for National and Community Service honored Mediator Mentors (and Pamela Lane-Garon, Director) with a Special Achievement Award at the American Council on Education (ACE) annual conference, part of the second-annual President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. Fresno State was one of two minority-serving institutions that won the distinction.

7. Jack Benninga was invited to a specially called panel at the Hoover Institution (Stanford University) in January 2009 to advise a group of Hoover scholars seeking to infuse principles of democracy and democratic understandings into the school curriculum. Others invited included professors from Clark University, NYU, George Mason University Law School, and Stanford.

8. Benninga continues his work on a national level. He has continued his advisory work for Character Counts!, and his membership on the Academic Advisory Panel at Stanford University's Center on Adolescence. He is an active member on the editorial board of the Journal for Research in Character Education. As well, Jack is a core member of the University's Ethics Committee, it's Honor Code Committee and recently he was elected chair of the Gender and Minority Equity Sub-Committee of the University's Athletic Committee. That committee monitors gender equity issues and reports directly to the University's Athletic Committee and to President Welty.

9. The Bonner Center continues its work on the Tulare County research grant. That project is an experimental research design seeking to determine the effectiveness of Character Counts! The Fresno Unified grant was finished in May 2008 after four years. Work is now underway to analyze the data and to begin the writing process.

10. The enforcement of Fresno State's honor code has been turned over to a University Senate sub-committee. This means it has been institutionalized. Every faculty member is required to include the honor code in his/her syllabus and to discuss the contents with students. The university has also established an ad hoc

Honor Code Committee chaired by Dr. Paul Oliaro, Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students. Jack is a member of that committee.

11. The furniture, particularly the books shelves, in the Bonner Center (4th floor of the ED Building) were replaced and many new materials and books were placed there in 2008. We've had a bit of a problem with missing materials and books and a decision was made that the materials were not to be check out without permission. Continual updating will proceed and missing materials/books will be replaced.

12. Jack completed the writing (with Susan Tracz) of a project analyzing what happens to exemplary character education programs in schools once school leadership changes. This is a major problem in education. The manuscript, titled "Continuity and Discontinuity in Character Education", will be a chapter in an upcoming book edited by Terry Lovat of the University of Newcastle in Australia and to be published by Springer Publishing.