

'BUILDING BRIDGES' — CSCC trio makes presentation

Three employees from Cleveland State Community College recently presented at the Community College Humanities Association (Southern Division Conference) held at the Read House in Chattanooga earlier this month.

CSCC, along with Chattanooga State Technical Community College, were host institutions for the conference with Spartanburg Community College and Northern Virginia Community College serving as sponsoring institutions.

The CCHA, founded in 1979, is the only national organization of its kind for humanities faculty and administrators in two-year colleges. It is dedicated to preserving and strengthening the humanities in two-year colleges.

Jean Crockett, associate professor of English; Cele Curtis, adult services coordinator; and Mary Evelyn Lynn, director of library services, gave a presentation at the conference. The presentation was "Building Bridges Between Humanities and Other Disciplines."

At CSCC, the PAGES book club is a part of an initiative which began the fall of 2004 that involved Crockett, Curtis, and Lynn. They formed the groups in order to enhance students' reading skills through a more relaxed approach and to build bridges between different groups, such as students, faculty, and staff in the process.

Crockett stated, "Because we had presented before, we were asked if we might be interested in doing a presentation about connecting the Humanities with other disciplines and across campus in general. PAGES does just that; it involves units within campus settings, as well as other disciplines."

They have met every semester with at least three separate groups, alternating types of



PRESENTATION — Three employees from Cleveland State Community College recently presented at the Community College Humanities Association Southern Division Conference held at the Read House in Chattanooga earlier this month. From left, front, are Mary Evelyn Lynn, director of Library Services, and Jean Crockett, associate professor of English, and, back, Cele Curtis, adult services coordinator.

selections in order to appeal to various target audiences and to increase campus involvement. Since its inception in 2004, the book club has offered 28 book sessions, with titles stretching from classics, such as Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" and Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird," to the quirky "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" by Douglas Adams and the poignant "The Memory Keeper's Daughter" by Kim Edwards.

The variety of titles has presented disciplines/units an opportunity to engage students, too. In the fall of 2007, PAGES offered four, instead of three

books, at the request of the history department and in conjunction with the college's 40th anniversary celebration. Honoring the World War II generation, the history department developed a conference featuring two books: "Wings of Morning" by Thomas Childers and "The Great Raid" by William Breuer. Both authors have close ties with the community of Cleveland. Both Breuer and Childers appeared on campus to celebrate their books and to comment on the significance of that war.

In this case, the PAGES groups were enriched by an opportunity to meet the authors

themselves; and this joint effort was made available to the whole community.

This past fall, the Michael Crichton book "Next" was requested by the Biology Department as an excellent one to prompt discussions current in the sciences.

"We have been very fortunate in that different disciplines and various areas of campus want to work with us on finding books they feel the students might enjoy reading," Crockett said.

"We had quite a few students tell us early on that they came to PAGES strictly for the extra credit, but kept coming beyond that because they wanted to

come. They truly enjoyed it. It is great to see students enjoying reading so much."

Lynn said, "At the conference, we gave an overview of the history of the PAGES program and the five years that it has evolved. We gave some assessment results of the findings that we were most surprised and pleased with, and we have been really impressed with the diversity of students on our campus that have enjoyed participating in this program."

According to Crockett, building a bridge between the literary world and the real one has been another important aspect of the program, encouraging participants to discuss real life connections. These sessions are not meant to be formal literary analyses, so much as opportunities to explore the writers' stories along with the readers' stories as they travel through the books.

Curtis said, "I cannot remember a time when I did not read. I have always enjoyed reading. To me, reading is magical. I'm truly one of those people who can be transported if I get into a good book. I'm no longer with you; I'm in that book. In the period from the book."

"It seemed to me that we had all of the right components for a good reading program. We have a library that is wonderfully attuned to what is current and an educated faculty who are interested in educating people not only inside the classroom but outside the classroom. What better way to engage students than with a program like this one?"

One of the major goals of PAGES was to encourage students to read books for pleasure; outside the realm of any classroom requirements; another goal was to offer students

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faculty, and staff the opportunity to share ideas in a setting that, while academic in one sense, was inviting and engaging, as well. These goals also supported Cleveland State's SACS Quality Enhancement Project, focusing on encouraging student involvement in the process, earning a commendation during the 2007-2008 Academic Audit last spring.

Crockett stated, "Overall, this program has embraced students from all backgrounds, ages, and interests, as well as all levels of the campus from hourly workers to administrators. We are very pleased with the success of this program. We are also pleased that this effort has now spread to one of our off-campus sites in Athens."

Other CSCC employees involved in the CCHA Conference include Scott Redmond, Program Chair, Fred Wood, Will Benson, Karen Dale, Debbie Felton, Julie Fulbright, Jayne Hasting, Alejandra Hoffer, Mark McLeod, Kelly Ormsby, Jana Pankey, Jane Puckett, Bryan Reed, James Silver, Ryan Thompson, Matthew Tolbert, Suzanne Wood, Larry Burns, Jennie Eble, Gayle Garner, and Neil Greenwood.

For more information on the CCHA Conference, visit the Web site at www.ccha-asso.org. For more information on PAGES, contact Jean Crockett at 423-472-7141, ext. 382.

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assessment results
Student involvement