West Spoke to Captivated Audience

The UWM Department of Multicultural Affairs along with Union Programming were proud to host Cornel West on October 18, 2002. Many thanks to our partners: UWM Sociocultural Programming, Harley Davidson, Midwest Express Airlines, UW System Institute on Race and Ethnicity, Project Equality, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, and UWM’s Equity/Diversity Services, The Milwaukee Idea, and Cultures and Communities for making the event possible.

More than 900 people were enthralled by one of the great intellectual geniuses of our time. Coming to us from Princeton University, West left the audience with a multitude of emotional responses to his interpretations of life, struggle, birth, and death. “If you haven’t loved, you have not truly lived, if you have not cried, you have not truly loved.”

Quoting Larmar Wilson of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on October 27, 2002:

While many enjoy prosperous lives, the reality of so many more is death, he continued, pointing to our home grown example of central-city anger gone mad. He acknowledged the beating of Charlie Young Jr. as “a gangster act” by boys and men who’ve grown up in “a hood,” a far cry from the “neighborhood” of love and correction that his generation recalls.

But no less gangster, he argued, are U.S. plans to “bully the U.N.” into war.

“Revenge is sweet,” West said, “but... adolescent.” As his lecture grew sermonic, evoking applause, laughter and tears, he noted that the fear permeating the nation since Sept. 11 is that which people of color always have known. “You can get bombed by thugs in the Middle East, and you gotta watch the police.”

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The Future of Diversity

IMR Forum on Education:
“Who Benefits From A Failing Urban School District?”

Mark your calendar for the first Institute on Multicultural Relations (IMR) forum scheduled for Wednesday, February 26, 2003 at 4:30 – 7:30 p.m. in the Golda Meir Library Conference Center, 4th Floor. The forum topic is based on a provocative question posed by UWM Distinguished Professor of Education Martin Haberman.

The rich dialog that will ensue promises to deliver an evening of very informative discussion and debate centered on an educational issue that is faced by many school systems around the country. The presenters are:
• Martin Haberman, UWM distinguished professor of Curriculum & Instruction
• Edgar Epps, UWM professor of Educational Policy & Community Studies
• Linda Sue Warner, chief executive officer of the Indian Community School, Inc.
• Carolyn Ealy, MTEC mentor and former MPS science teacher
• Luis “Tony” Baez, MATC provost and chief operating officer

A panel of experts including UWM Assistant to the Provost Enrique Figueroa, Milwaukee Urban League President and CEO Ralph Hollmon, and UWM Professor William Velez will react to the above presentations.

A second forum focusing on assessment as it relates to the “No Child Left Behind Act” is scheduled for March 13, 2003 in the UWM Golda Meir Library, 4th Floor Conference Center, at 4:30–7:30 p.m. For more information on these forums, please call (414) 229-5566.

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The Future of Diversity

The key to diversity strategies in the future must include a strong effort to retain employees, students, and customers of all racial/ethnic backgrounds. To do otherwise is expensive, wasteful of human talent and an endless exercise in spinning of the wheels. The article, “Colleges’ Retention of Blacks Dismal,” in the *Detroit News* (July 15, 2001) reminds us that college dropouts help to burden the tax payer: “In the long-run, however, the high African American dropout rate is costly for taxpayers, as well as for the students themselves. If they graduated at the same rate as their White counterparts, students of color would earn an additional $5.3 billion a year (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education)…..and the state would be getting an additional $1.9 billion in tax revenues for those college degreed, higher-paid workers.”

Universities, corporations, and governmental agencies have all developed recruitment strategies revolving around Affirmative Action at some time or another, yet few have developed action teams to create and implement aggressive strategies to retain multicultural populations (i.e., people of color, women, people with disabilities, and LGBT population). Institutional plans tend to encourage, even require widespread advertisement of employment or enrollment opportunities, fair searches and admission procedures so that hopefully those entering will represent diversity. The problem is that minimal to no institutionalized effort is devoted to nurturing, supporting, and advocating on behalf of employees and students so that they can be successful, happy, and promoted/graduated instead of leaving within two years of their start date.

According to an article from *Diversity Training Group* (2002), by the year 2050, the U.S. population will be almost 50 percent of color compared to the 1995 figure of 26 percent. What does that mean to the workforce? In terms of growth, Latino/a and Asian groups in the United States will be the fastest growing populations. The *Work Force 2000 Hudson Institute* reported that by the year 2005, which is just around the corner, 85 percent of those coming into our institutions for employment will be either people of color or women. Their market “spending power” figures are as follows:

a. Latinos/as - $170 billion/year  
b. African Americans - almost $300 billion/year  
c. Asian American (the fastest growing of the three groups) - only $100 billion/year  
d. Latino/a, African American, Pacific Islander and Native American combined - $600 billion/year.

As universities prepare students and themselves for a global economy, it is important to remove ourselves from our own comfort level and frame of reference; our diversity issues are not the issues of the world. If we are to be competitive, we need to move forward with realistic diversity and climate strategies so that we are more reflective of the international community and not just reflective of who is in our own backyard. Such strategies begin with plans to restructure attitudes and behaviors so that the environment is welcoming to all. Plans to successfully recruit and hire/admit beyond dominant culture, and most importantly a structure to address our greatest human resources loss, will prevent the early exit of a multicultural workforce or student/client base that is critical to our future growth and development.

The U.S. Department of Education statistics indicate that, 29-31 percent of African American and Hispanic students drop out of college during their first year of college, compared to 18 percent of European American students. Reasons include financial concerns (lack of financial aid), campus climate, recruitment from more selective schools, preparedness and family/work obligations. Addressing these reasons and retaining students would greatly increase the rate of success (i.e., graduation).

*The Dallas Chapter of the United Nations Association* in 1996 determined that proportionately, if the human population of the world was represented by 100 people in one room:

- 57 would be Asian  
- 21 would be European  
- 14 would represent all of North, Central and South America  
- 8 would be African  
- 70 would be of color; 30 would be white  
- 30 would be Christian; 70 would be Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, or other  
- 6 would own half of the wealth in the room  
- 1 would have a university degree  
- 50 would be nourished  
- only 30 could read

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**Congratulations to Assistant to the Provost Enrique Figueroa!** He was recently appointed by Governor Doyle to Wisconsin’s Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Board for a six-year term.