

Center for Urban Research and Learning

Information on CURL University/Community Partnerships



LOYOLA
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'Vaguely Reminiscent' and Much More: A CURL Graduate Fellow's Retrospective

By *Gerry Gorman, Graduate Fellow, 1997-98*
Ph.D. candidate in the Neihoff School of Nursing

Folk singer and satirist Charlie King once wrote a song entitled "Vaguely Reminiscent of the Sixties." In it he lamented that the media dismissed endeavors toward social change and grassroots political action as being "vaguely reminiscent of the 60's." A recent academic opportunity brought back similar memories of times more hopeful and idealistic. I refer to this past 1997-98 academic year during which I served as a CURL Graduate Fellow. It was more than just vaguely reminiscent.

It wasn't simply the abundance of blue jeans and corduroys, nor the long hair and graying beard ubiquitous to the CURL family. It was more the shared vision, the excitement over the possibility of change that recalled the era of the Peace Corps, Civil Rights and pride movements. Since this is the 90s, and we are serious academians, we titled this shared vision "collaborative research"; but it was still "power to the people" and we were talking *solidarity*.

I worked on the 'Cristo Rey project,' a collaborative endeavor between CURL, the Neihoff School of Nursing and Cristo Rey, the newly opened Jesuit high school in Pilsen. **Diana Hackbarth**, Associate Professor in the School of Nursing, secured funding from the Chicago Visiting Nurses Association endowment. The clinic is designed to meet the primary health care needs of the students and, possibly in the future, of the surrounding community as well.

The idea to approach CURL came from **Marcia Maurer**, Graduate Program Director. With the partnership formed, she encouraged me to apply as a Fellow. With my background in nursing and social services, Dr. Maurer thought she detected a probable match here. She is a woman of formidable intuition.

The fall semester blurred with activity: Meeting with potential community partners to establish a rapport; planning two large health fairs; running focus groups with students, parents and community representatives; and equipping the clinic. **Mary Kay Byrne**, a bilingual nurse practitioner, assumed directorship of the clinic. The clinic opened in January, 1998.

In the spring semester, services were extended to the nearby elementary school, St. Procopius and **Lucy Martinez-Schallmoser**, nursing school professor, assumed coordination of the project. While Mary Kay wrapped sprained limbs and counseled anxious students, the research team assisted her in several areas: Nutrition students taught dietary classes; we disseminated and tallied the results of a multi-level health needs assessment tool administered to the students; we gathered suggestions for current initiatives and future direction. All this in one breathtaking year.

The project benefited from the skill and talents of **Beth Ascher**, CURL Graduate Fellow and counselor at Cristo Rey. Three undergraduate Urban Semester students, **Katie Noonan**, **Aditi Kumar** and **Lorena de Anda**, brought their energies and creativity to the project's success as well. Aside from the project's unfolding, we also enjoyed the collaborative scholarship unique to CURL. On Friday mornings the CURL Graduate Fellows gathered for informal support and project updates, followed by more

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In This Issue . . .

Reflections on collaborative research are shared by CURL Fellows who work currently or have worked with the Center over the past year. They are: **Gerry Gorman**, Graduate Fellow; **Arthur Lurigio**, Faculty Fellow; and **Dana Rivers**, Community Fellow.

From the Director's Corner . . .

Here at the end of the 20th century, Chicago has become a global city. This does not mean that one can hear more languages spoken by the tourists on North Michigan Avenue, but it reflects Chicago as a player in international social, cultural, and economic networks. Part of the internationalization of Chicago is the result of our city being the destination of a broad range of new immigrants. Another aspect has been closer relations with other countries; merely connections facilitated by faster communication links mean that phone calls, faxes, and e-mails to cities around the world are as easy as calling Hegwisch or Rogers Park.

The Center for Urban Research and Learning has been influenced by this globalization. In recent months, we have strengthened connections with researchers and community leaders in our sister city, Birmingham, England. With the Policy Research Action Group (PRAG), we have hosted a delegation from El Salvador. Our model of collaborative research has attracted visitors from Australia, Germany, France, Italy, England, Argentina, and Denmark.

The Birmingham connection, initiated three years ago by the University of Birmingham and facilitated by the British Consul General's office in Chicago, has grown into solid relationships between researchers and community groups in the two cities. Since 1997, there have been six visits either way by faculty and community activists. In September, I spoke at the Annual Governing Meetings of Birmingham Settlement and Focus Housing. Over the next few months, CURL and Focus Housing will facilitate an international teleconference policy-making forum of low-income youth in Birmingham with counterparts in Chicago. CURL has invited Susan Spencer, Chief Executive of Birmingham Settlement, to visit Chicago next year to discuss family and child social welfare issues. Susan will also strengthen connections with Association House, Birmingham Settlement's sister settlement house in Chicago, both founded in 1899. Finally, a student exchange between Loyola and the University of Birmingham is being explored.

In September, CURL and PRAG hosted two faculty from the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA -- the Jesuit university in San Salvador) and six leaders of community organizations involved in community safety, housing, economic redevelopment, and working conditions. The project began five years ago with funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The purpose of the several trips to El Salvador has been to explore mutual interests in university/community collaboration in our two countries. The September trip was a success; we will continue to foster relationships between faculty and community leaders in both countries. See page 5 for more information about the visit.

Of course, CURL's international connections are not just the result of formal exchanges between countries, for we have worked with Chicago community organizations serving diverse immigrant populations including Vietnamese, Cambodians, Chinese, Ethiopians to Mexicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Bosnians. Whether walking along Argyle Street or 18th Street, Chicago's neighborhoods are international neighborhoods. CURL's international and local work in all Chicago's neighborhoods has and will continue to reflect this diversity. □

Phil Nyden



"Vaguely Reminiscent" Continued from page 1

structured seminars with the CURL staff, faculty, and community experts. Sustained by fresh bagels and flavored cream cheese, we sat side by side on the tenth floor of Lewis Towers learning from and building with each other.

In the sixties the budding counter culture was admonished that to fail to be a part of the solution was to remain bound to the problem. In his sermon at the Mass of the Holy Spirit in September, Fr. Piderit explored what lends distinction to Loyola's approach to education. He determined the essence of Loyola's approach to scholarship and service: to discover and become that which makes us more fully human.

So, while the nine months I spent with CURL were "vaguely reminiscent of the sixties," they were something else as well. They augured for what can be achieved when people from diverse backgrounds remain united in their efforts.

With karmic certainty, what goes around comes around. What might have been dismissed as anachronistic about CURL is what distinguishes it as visionary and exemplary of Jesuit education: Collaborative research, emblematic of the fullness of human potential -- and thus part of the solution.

As Charlie King would say, and maybe Fr. Piderit would concur, "Power to the flower people" and "Solidarity forever!" □

Participatory Evaluation from the Community Perspective

By Dana Rivers, Community Fellow and Director of the STRIVE Career Path Project

Since last January, a team of community practitioners and Loyola faculty and graduate students has undertaken an evaluation of the Career Path Project of STRIVE (Support and Training Result in Valuable Employees). Planning for the project began in late 1997 when STRIVE's Executive Director, **Steve Redfield**, approached CURL staff about evaluating this new component of STRIVE's programming. STRIVE is a non-profit organization with a mission to help chronically unemployed, low-income adults enter the workforce and build stable work histories. Since its inception in 1990, our agency has placed more than 1500 adults in employment, seventy-percent of whom remain in the workforce at least two years.

In 1994, STRIVE implemented the Career Path Project, a case management model that helps our graduates develop specific three-to-five year employment paths. With support from counselors, participants develop education and training goals that lead to permanent, full-time employment that pays a living wage and provides benefits and advancement opportunity. STRIVE's Career Path Counselors help clients create individualized plans that focus on a career path that provides each participant the opportunity for growth and long-term personal stability. The project also uses a sectoral approach to facilitate client's goal setting and planning activities and focuses on five industries that have growth projected over the next five years for jobs with decent pay. In each field, STRIVE identifies ways to combine work experience with schooling that would allow people to move, over time, from entry-level positions to careers.

Besides myself, the evaluation team includes faculty members **Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar** and **Christine George**, Community Fellow **Mike Rohrbeck**, Graduate Fellows **Mary Jo Bartl** and **Janine Weiss-Northcutt**, CURL volunteer **Katy Scott**, and Urban Semester undergraduate student, **Christine Kelly**. The team identified three key research and evaluation priorities: (1) To assess the effectiveness/efficiency of Career Path's service delivery (2) evaluate the significance of the Career Path's sectoral approach in locating occupations and (3) to evaluate Career Path client's use of the official "workforce development" systems, such as the City Colleges, One-stop centers and state unemployment offices.

The new collaboration between STRIVE and CURL has brought many opportunities for both partners. One in particular has been the award of a CURL Community Fellowship which has allowed me to experience research from both the university and community perspective. For me, it has eliminated the apprehension when programs are evaluated by outsiders. Because the team has worked closely with my staff, I see how comfortable they have become with new 'academic' terms and research methods. On the university side, the graduate and Urban Semester student have learned how services are delivered at the grassroots level.

Since February, the team has completed a work plan which was presented to the entire STRIVE staff in a full morning workshop. The team has completed an audit of all case files for completeness of data, the creation of a data analysis system for use in statistical processes, and the development of client surveys to probe key issues. Though all evaluation efforts are focused on the Career Path Project, STRIVE hopes that the final findings and outcomes of this research and evaluation can be applied to all aspects of its client services and utilized for capacity building and on-going evaluation activities with the organization. □



The Research Team: Dana Rivers, Community Fellow (center); Dr. Christine George (Sociology); and Mary Jo Bartl (Sociology)

Finding CURL Academically Stimulating

*By Dr. Arthur Lurigio, Faculty Fellow
Professor and Chair, Department of Criminal Justice*

On the tenth floor of Lewis Towers, CURL is a busy hub of research activity and a matrix of scholarship and community service. My formal contact with the center began with my serving on CURL's advisory board during its first year. At that time, I was intrigued with CURL's innovative philosophies about academic research, learning, and service. When I later joined CURL as a faculty fellow, I was quite proud of my track record as an applied scientist. Most of my research had involved programming in psychology and criminal justice. But I learned at CURL that my studies, albeit practical, have fallen far short of being truly collaborative. To CURL, collaboration means working with research constituents to set agendas for study and to generate empirical findings that lead to meaningful social and policy changes.

Like most of my colleagues, I was accustomed to being the authority, telling practitioners and service providers what problems they needed to study and how I intended to study them. At CURL, however, I witnessed the dynamic and exciting initiatives that can emerge from genuine partnerships with the community. In the CURL paradigm, the true experts include practitioners who confront social problems first-hand on a daily basis.

In a more collaborative environment, the social scientist's most important job is to assist practitioners in realizing that research can help them to answer more essential questions such as: "what works?", "how can we do it better?", and "how can we tell if we are doing a good job?" Practitioners understand accountability. What they often do not know is that research is the most valid way to demonstrate accountability. Non academics' ignorance about the scientific method results from scientists' failure to demystify the research process. My contact with CURL community fellows and students has forced me to communicate research methods in clearer, more compelling, and less arcane language. It also instilled a greater understanding of why the community looks askance at university researchers whose agendas are often self-serving and shortsighted.

CURL also educated me about topics and issues that were previously beyond my ken and research interests, including social activism, homelessness, unemployment, and hunger. Through its Friday Morning Seminars, the center offers a wealth of opportunities to learn about, discuss, and debate such topics in a lively and interdisciplinary forum. The seminars are attended by faculty, students, and community practitioners.

Through the Urban Semester program, a co-sponsored offering of the College of Arts and Sciences and CURL, undergraduate students are active participants in existing projects. In this way, the classroom is brought into the community and the community into the classroom. It emphasizes the importance of applying knowledge to advance social change. Currently, two projects affiliated with the Criminal Justice Department are linked to the Urban Semester. I am very pleased to work with CURL graduate and undergraduate students from other disciplines throughout the university on these projects. It gives me a chance to be exposed to their interests and perspectives and allows me to feel more like a member of the broader Loyola family.

I've found a CURL faculty fellowship to be a truly modest investment of time that reaps tremendous dividends in professional development and intellectual growth. □

New Faculty Fellows Announced

We are pleased to announce new Faculty Fellows to CURL. **Fabiola Varela-Garcia**, Assistant Professor, Department of Modern Languages, is currently at work with Casa Guatemala, a non-profit organization that offers education in native cultures and languages, Mayan and Spanish, as emigrants go through a process of integrating into North American society or of deciding to return to Guatemala.

Beginning in spring semester and continuing through the fall semester, 1999, three additional faculty will begin community/university collaborative projects. **Joy Rogers**, Professor, Curriculum, Instruction, and Education Psychology, will research access to the Chicago Public Schools for persons with disabilities. From the School of Social Work, **Maria Vidal de Haymes**, Associate Professor, and **Teresa Kilbane**, Assistant Professor, will evaluate a continuum of care program, a referral network for children in need of placement, for Catholic Charities.

Each faculty receives course reductions, arranged through the respective department, to devote time to research. To support other faculty inquiry, each department receives \$1,000 for research stimulation.

Salvadoran Collaborative Researchers Visit



Dr. Estela Canas (seen at left) and **Dr. Mario Dimas** (3rd from right) from the Universidad Centroamericana in San Salvador visited CURL in September. After a visit to a CURL collaborative project at Bethel New Life, the academics met with Loyola School of Business faculty, **Dr. David Merriman** (4th from right) and **Dr. Jill Graham** (far right). Here Dr. Canas illustrates wealth distribution in her home country. **Marco Tavanti**, CURL Graduate Fellow (2nd from right) served as translator.

Six additional Salvadorans were part of the week-long visit. The visit was organized by the Policy Research Action Group and its university and community members.

CURL Receives New Grants

To ensure continued university/community collaborative research at Loyola, CURL has recently received grants from the **Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation** and the **Annie E. Casey Foundation**. The McCormick award for \$775,000 is a four-year operational grant while the Casey Foundation grant of \$40,000 was awarded to **Bethel New Life, Inc.** for work with CURL on a community indicators project.

Notification of the McCormick grant was received this summer and represents continued support for CURL's model of collaborative research. The Center was created in 1996 with an initial endowment and operational grant of \$1.4 million from the foundation. Another major funder of CURL is the **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation** which awarded \$600,000 for a range of collaborative research support in 1997.

Last May, Bethel New Life, a community development and comprehensive social service organization serving Chicago's West Side, approached CURL to join as a university partner in a project to examine the selection process used to define community indicators such as economic security, quality of life, public participation, and ecological integrity. Research will continue through the spring semester with a final report due in June, 1999. The research team includes Bethel's staff, **Anita Jayaraj, Mary Nelson, Marcia Turner, Mildred Wiley, and Stacy Payton**. CURL's participants are **Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar** (Psychology), **Richard Block** (Sociology), **Dan**

Kruger, Graduate Fellow (Psychology), and **David Van Zytveld** and **Lin Von Dreele**.

The Center for Urban Research and Learning
Loyola University Chicago, Lewis Towers, 10th floor
820 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago Illinois 60611
Phone (312) 915-7760; Fax, (312) 915-7770
CURL Home Page: <http://www.luc.edu/depts/curl>

Philip Nyden, Director (312) 915-7761;

E-mail: pnyden@luc.edu

Lin Von Dreele, Associate Director and Editor

(312) 915-7762;

E-mail: lvondre@luc.edu

Louis Delgado, Policy Research Analysis

(312) 915-7763

E-mail: ldelgad@luc.edu

David Van Zytveld, Community Research Coordinator

Project Coordinator, (312) 915-8629

E-mail: dvanzyt@luc.edu

Kale Williams, Senior Scholar, (312) 915-7763

E-mail: kwilli5.luc.edu

Maureen Abraham, Administrative Manager

(312) 915-7760

E-mail: mabrah1@luc.edu

CURL Briefs

◆ **"From Welfare to Worse?"** documents the impact of welfare reform on children and families in Rogers Park, Edgewater, and Uptown. Completed in August, the research was conducted in the 1998 spring semester by the collaboration of **Organization of the NorthEast, Howard Area Community Center, and CURL**. The principal author of the report was **Denise Rose**, a 1997-98 Graduate Fellow (Sociology). **James Mumm**, an ONE organizer, also helped in the research and writing of the report. Urban Semester undergraduates who worked on the research team were: **Sarah Jane Knoy, Roberta Buchanan, Phil Nyden, Kim Ebert, Sheyanne Mooter, Suzanna Policarpio, Pada Imbrogno, Heather Meyers, and Brian Godlewski**. This is the second study completed by the collaboration, the first being **"Unraveling the Safety Net: 1997 and Welfare Reform."** Both reports are available free of charge from the CURL office. A third investigation is underway presently to gather data on those families and individuals who have had benefits cut or suspended.

◆ Senior Scholar, **Kale Williams**, and **Jacqueline Beale del Vecchio**, a 1997-98 Graduate Fellow (IPS/Social Work), are currently teaching a course entitled "World Hunger: Causes and Responses." Fourteen undergraduates are enrolled.

◆ **ChicagoServes**, the city's first large-scale searchable internet database, was launched officially November 12. Accessed at www.chicagoserves.org, anyone can search by type of volunteer opportunity and geographic location. There are over 1400 volunteer opportunities currently available. ChicagoServes is a collaborative

project, three years in the formation, of **Loyola/CURL, United Way, and AT&T**. For more information, contact CURL at 312-915-7760 or e-mail chicagoserves@luc.edu

◆ On October 19-20, the first biannual **Conference on Chicago Research and Public Policy** was hosted by Loyola. The co-sponsors of the conference were the Policy Research Action Group (PRAG) and the Urban University Collaborative, an informal affiliation of 12 directors of urban centers in the metropolitan area. There was an overwhelming response to the conference with 450 in attendance. Proceedings of the panels and plenary session are being prepared by **Doug Dobmeyer**, a CURL Community Fellow, and will be published by spring. The publication is made possible by a grant from **Fannie Mae Foundation**.

Financial underwriting came from each university, most particular Loyola, since plans call for each university to host in rotation. The conference was organized by **Asma Ali**, a CURL Graduate Fellow (Sociology), who worked with the Coordinator of PRAG, **Maureen Hellwig**. Congratulations to a great team!

◆ **David Van Zytveld**, Project Coordinator, has moved to full time staff. In addition to his duties of coordinating CURL projects, he co-teaches the Urban Semester course for undergraduates.

◆ CURL is now offering fellowships to undergraduates to work on collaborative projects. A \$500 stipend will be awarded.



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Chicago, IL 60611-2196