

American Democracy Project



September 2007

ADP NEWS

"We can talk or dream about the glorious schools of the future, or we can create them."
—Marilyn Ferguson

BARBARA BURCH, WINNER OF THE WILLIAM M. PLATER AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

AASCU is proud to announce this year's recipient of the William M. Plater Award, Barbara Burch, provost and vice president of academic affairs at Western Kentucky University (WKU). The award, given annually, is the first national award recognizing and honoring chief academic officers.

Throughout her career, Burch has worked to advance the civic mission of higher education through curricular reform and public advocacy, faculty development and recruitment, partnerships with community organizations and accountability for institutional citizenship.

Burch is one of a small founding group of chief academic officers of the American Democracy Project (ADP). Her campus participates in all ADP initiatives and has been selected as the lead campus for the Stewardship of Public Lands Initiative (aascu.org/programs/adp/initiatives/stewardship.htm). In addition, WKU is one of eight institutions chosen to initiate the Political Engagement Project with AASCU, *The New York Times* (nytimes.com) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (carnegiefoundation.org), and is also among the pilot campuses participating in the 7 Revolutions Initiative with AASCU, *The New York Times* and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (csis.org).

Under Burch's leadership, in 2006 Western Kentucky University was selected as one of the first 76 campuses nationwide to earn the Elective Classification in Community Engagement from

the Carnegie Foundation; WKU earned this classification in both of the targeted areas, Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships (carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/index.asp?key=1213).

She is a leader in promoting renewed focus on student learning through meaningful student engagement, and strongly supports general education programming that has increased attention to core learning and core values. She is active in international education by providing students a global learning context and promoting curricular internationalization and study abroad opportunities for students with attention to civic responsibility. She provides leadership for many significant partnerships advancing the university's mission and student learning. Examples include an innovative and relevant doctoral program in Educational Leadership.

She also is involved in creating success pathways for a seamless transition from high school to college in Kentucky by developing ways of linking universities and K-12 students, and by examining student success in the freshman year of college. AASCU salutes Burch's stellar commitment to civic engagement.

For more information about the William Plater Award for Leadership in Civic Engagement, visit aascu.org/programs/adp/plater/plater.htm.



CONSTITUTION DAY

- In May 2005, Congress passed a law requiring all federally funded higher education institutions to hold an educational program commemorating the signing of the U.S. Constitution. National Constitution Day is September 17, 2007 and although many campuses hold their activity on that day,

many have weeklong festivities, programs,



and campaigns. Constitution Day is an opportunity to provide students with a deep understanding of the history and principles behind the Constitution.

- *The New York Times* Knowledge Network website contains a planning guide, resources, and materials for creating and implementing a Constitution Day program or activity on your campus. The website is nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll-constitutionday.html. Other helpful websites can be found on the ADP website, aascu.org/programs/adp/initiatives/constitution.htm, and The Constitution Center at constitutioncenter.org/constitutionday/display/MainS/Home.
- Seton Hall Law School is organizing a Constitution Day program entitled, "Interrogation as a Means of Intelligence Gathering: the Constitution: the Criminal Justice Model and the National Security Model." The program will be simulcast to colleges and universities around the country on September 17, 2007. See <http://law.shu.edu/guantanamoteachin/>. This program will compare the Fifth Amendment and the international law issues that apply to the United States Constitution. Speakers will include: former counter-terrorism interrogators, lawyers from the Office of Military Commissions, and experts on international law, including United Nations representatives. The academic participants will include professors of constitutional, human rights, and international law. ADP member campuses are able to view the simulcast at a discounted rate of \$250. Visit <http://law.shu.edu/constitutionday/> for more information or contact Professor Mark Denbeaux at 973.642.8822 or denbeama@shu.edu.

- The American Democracy Project at Ramapo College of New Jersey first student essay contest entitled, "So, What AM I Doing Here?" centered on the purpose of a college education. Students were asked to write an essay based on one of two questions which asked students how civic engagement might be more effective in the undergraduate experience and how they would create a new public language to revive public life. Three winners were chosen. The college will recognize the winners formally during the fall events for Constitution Day. Below is an excerpt from the first place winner Steven Pardalis. His essay will appear in the *Ramapo News*, and have a link on *The New York Times* Knowledge Network.

The notion that civic duty can be taught in a classroom like when we are in elementary school must be thrown out the window. Civic duty does not exist merely in textbooks; it is a living, breathing entity that only takes place in the real world. Civic engagement is not driven by a sense of duty or seen as a requirement for democracy; it is fueled by passion, and that is what many students lack today. Until an individual draws up enough emotions to be passionate about an issue or passionate about spurring change or passionate about helping others, civic engagement will be nothing more than two words strewn together in the English language that represent a time long since past. But can a college promote passion? The answer to that question is also yes, and there are two important ways that a college can effectively promote passion and caring within its student body.

To read the entire essay, visit <http://ww2.ramapo.edu/academics/ADP/>.

- The American Democracy Project at A&M University Kingsville hosted their first event honoring Citizenship Day on April 14. A&M-K offered guidance and assistance to those becoming citizens. Thirty-five students, along with several immigration lawyers, volunteered their time to assist applicants in making the long naturalization process as uncomplicated as possible. Their work was recognized in the local newspaper, *The Caller Times*. For more information on this effort, contact Cecelia Aros Hunter, coordinator for the university's American Democracy Project. She can be reached at kacah00@tamuk.edu. To read the article, visit caller.com/ccct/local_news/article/0,1641,CCCT_811_5482312,00.html.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION SERIES

■ **Stewardship of Public Lands.** In late July 2007, 25 faculty members from 16 colleges and universities gathered in Yellowstone National Park for the third annual Stewardship of Public Lands Seminar, an initiative of the American Democracy Project. The weeklong seminar examined political controversies in the Yellowstone ecosystem over bison, grizzly bears, snowmobiles, and wolf reintroduction. Participants began by studying the science and history of the controversies, and later in the week, participants met with local citizens and stakeholders on all sides of the issues. The purpose of the project is examining how political controversies are resolved in a democracy, with particular emphasis given to the role of individual citizens in the resolution process. The goal of the initiative is to create a set of programs that highlight national and local examples of public lands controversies, enabling undergraduates to study political controversy and resolution, preparing them for lives of informed, active engagement.

If you are interested in attending this seminar plan to join us in Summer 2008 (July 28 – August 2, 2008) when we will once again return to Yellowstone, the world's first national park, to design more programs for engaging students. For more information, contact Cecilia Orphan at 202.478.7833 or orphanc@aascu.org.

■ **7 Revolutions**, an initiative preparing students to actively engage as thoughtful citizens in our rapidly changing world, is a collaboration of the Center of Strategic International Studies (CSIS), AASCU, and *The New York Times* Knowledge Network. Visit <http://forums.csis.org/gsi/?cat=26> for a podcast and forum on the 7 Revolution initiative.



■ **Electoral Voices.** The Pew and JEHT Foundation recently announced \$2 million in grants to improve U.S. elections. The funds are to help plan pilot projects in 2007 and 2008.



Participants in the 2007 Stewardship of Public Lands Seminar.

This project is part of a larger Pew initiative called Make Voting Work that is focused on improving the accuracy, convenience, efficiency and security of U.S. elections. Funds will be allocated mostly to election officials and academics studying election issues, diverse academic disciplines, private-sector companies with applicable expertise, non-profits and non-governmental organizations. For more information, visit the website or contact Scott Cody, Research Director, at scody@pewcenteronthestates.org.

■ **Electoral Voices.** Western Illinois University (WIU) will hold a mock presidential election in October. This mock presidential election will be modeled after two successful simulations that Rick Hardy, presidential elector in the Electoral College, held at the University of Iowa in 1976 and the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1988. This event, part of WIU's American Democracy Project, seeks not only to develop a better understanding of the election process for students, but also stimulate student involvement in American politics.

Students from many academic disciplines, as well as students in Western's First Year Experience, College Democrats, Republicans, College Greens, and Libertarians organization, will be involved. The Western Survey Research Center will evaluate and assess the simulation's impact on students' sense of civic engagement and the reactions from residents in the surrounding communities. Contact Rick Hardy for more information at RJ-Hardy@wiu.edu.

NEWS & NOTES

■ **November Fifth Coalition.** The American Democracy Project has partnered with Peter Levine and Harry Boyte of the November Fifth Coalition. The coalition is an emerging effort to change the way citizens participate in the governance of the United States. Named for the day after the 2008 election, the coalition aims to turn the 2008 election into a deliberation and debate about how to collectively mobilize the energies and assets of the entire society to address America's challenges. ADP has worked with the November Fifth Coalition in developing a Campus Conversations Toolkit, a resource for implementing a discussion series using newspaper articles as a medium for democratic dialogue. Campus Conversations, modeled after *The New York Times* 'Times Talk' series, aims to bring students and faculty together in a nonhierarchical environment to discuss pertinent issues of the day. To learn more about the November Fifth Coalition, visit novemberfifth.org. To obtain a copy of the Campus Conversations Toolkit or for more information contact Cecilia Orphan at orphanc@aacscu.org.

■ **National Youth Justice Alliance (NYJA) website nyja.org.** The National Youth Justice Alliance was created to teach some of the 100,000 young people incarcerated in juvenile detention facilities in America. With recidivism rates near 75 percent, the goal of the National Youth Justice Alliance is to use literacy as a weapon against recidivism. NYJA is looking for partners, innovators and educators as well as lesson plans, teaching materials, and educational resources for youth. Many organizations are addressing these same problems and NYJA is interested in partnering and sharing resources. For more information about how to help this national effort, contact Nisha Thakker at nisha@nyja.org.



CAMPUS NEWS

■ The University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF) hosted the 2007 ADP North Central Regional Conference. The conference, whose theme was "Spaces of Civic Engagement," took place

April 12-14. Nearly 60 faculty and staff from 12 institutions participated. The conference included four plenaries and four concurrent sessions. The keynote address was given by John Cronin, director of Pace Academy for the Environment and resident scholar at Pace University (N.Y.).



Additional speakers included: Don Betz, chancellor of UWRF; Greg Brock, senior editor of *The New York Times*; George Mehaffy, director of ADP; and Anne Colby, senior scholar at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The recent photographs of Wing Young Huie "9 Months in America: an Ethnocentric Tour" were exhibited during the meeting. Huie describes his work as a "dizzying mixture of socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural communities." He states his "work focuses on the submerged and hidden communities that exist mostly on the periphery of the prevailing cultural radar. What I want is to reveal not only what is hidden, but also what is plainly visible and seldom noticed." His photographs encapsulate the theme of "Spaces of Civic Engagement" and his work can be viewed at wingyounghuie.com. For more information about the ADP North Central Regional Conference, visit uwrf.edu/adp/conference/.

INTERNATIONAL

■ The Overseas Vote Foundation's (OVF) mission is to facilitate and increase the participation of American expatriate and military voters and their dependents in federal elections by providing public access to innovative voter registration tools and services. OVF works to make it easier for citizens residing around the world to remain active in the U.S. electoral process. The services include providing resources to citizens, simplifying the absentee voting process, and creating forms of communication to keep people aware of changes in the absentee voter world. Visit overseasvotefoundation.org/.



- The *Internationalist* is a politics and culture magazine dedicated to cultivating a generation of informed, globally-minded, optimistic young thinkers engaging in world issues. With over 150,000 magazines in circulation, it is widely subscribed by campuses including 150 of the nation's leading colleges and universities.

This unique publication encourages American students



and citizens to ask questions and educate themselves to the world outside their own. Contributors to this magazine include students, professors, authors, and policy experts.

UPCOMING EVENT

The 2008 American Democracy Project National Meeting will take place June 12-15, 2008, in Snowbird, Utah. Call for presentations will be sent out in October. This year's conference will continue working towards the vision of civic engagement at the core of institutional life and work. For more information contact Cecilia Orphan at orphanc@aascu.org.

The American Democracy Project is a multi-campus initiative that seeks to create an intellectual and experiential understanding of civic engagement for undergraduates enrolled at institutions that are members of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

The goal of the project is to produce graduates who understand and are committed to engaging in meaningful actions as citizens in a democracy.

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