Studying issues of race, gender
Founding director begins work to bring new center to reality

By Cathy Cockrell, Public Affairs
28 February 2001 | Berkeley, home of the country’s first ethnic studies program, will soon have the nation’s first academic institute dedicated to the study of both race and gender.

The Center for Race and Gender is scheduled to open this fall under the leadership of Evelyn Nakano Glenn, professor of ethnic studies and women’s studies. Glenn, who became founding director last month, is currently laying the groundwork needed to “bring this center into reality,” including staffing, budget, an advisory board and space.

“It’s time to do this,” Glenn said. “It fits in with a number of real issues (facing) the university” – among them “what our faculty is going to look like in 20 years.”

“The university is committed to leading the discussion on how issues of race and gender impact our campus and society at large,” Chancellor Berdahl said. “I am delighted that Professor Glenn has agreed to head up the center and look forward to its presence here on our campus.”

Berdahl has committed $100,000 per year for five years in funding for the faculty-directed center, which will serve as a campuswide resource for faculty, students and visiting scholars from a broad array of fields. The center will be structured in the manner of an organized research unit and report to the executive vice chancellor.

A committee chaired by Charles Henry, faculty equity associate and professor of African American studies, spent the 1999-00 academic year developing a proposal for the center. In its report, issued last April, the committee noted the unique role of California as the “homeland, refuge, temporary residence or workplace for people of many origins” now immersed in a global economy and as a “national testing ground for policy and for social movements.”

Glenn notes that in the three decades since the founding of the ethnic studies program, Berkeley scholars have made important contributions to the national conversation on race and ethnicity. Examples include Michael Omi’s work on race as a social construct (as opposed to a fixed biological reality); accounts of American history as a many-stranded, multicultural story, for which Professor Ron Takaki is best known; and the pioneering work of Barbara Christian, Elaine Kim and Norma Alarcon on literature by African American, Asian American and Chicana women writers.

As a continuation of that tradition, Glenn says she’s “very excited” about the Center on Race and Gender and its potential to address cutting edge themes — among them relations among various communities of color, transnational community formations, comparative multiculturalism, and intersections between race, gender and other axes of difference.
Evelyn Nakano Glenn

Aft er 43 years of transformative scholarship, Center for Race & Gender Founding Director, Professor Evelyn Nakano Glenn, retired from her faculty position last spring. Prof. Glenn’s fearless writing, multifaceted approaches to social justice research, and commitment to mentoring public intellectuals across disciplines continue to impact scholars and activists around the globe. With joint appointments in Gender & Women’s Studies and Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, Evelyn Nakano Glenn’s research has been instrumental in the development of the method and frameworks for the analysis of the intersections of race, class, and gender.

Prof. Glenn’s seminal work, Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor (2002), has been heralded as a brilliant synthesis of scholarship that uses critical race and gender analysis to propose more expansive notions of freedom and citizenship. Her research on Japanese American women’s domestic work as immigrants and as war brides has been a groundbreaking cross-disciplinary contribution. Her 2011 American Sociological Association Presidential Address, “Constructing Citizenship: Exclusion, Subordination, and Resistance,” deftly illuminates how innovative forms of political resistance are redefining the boundaries of race, recognition, and citizenship. Prof. Glenn’s teaching and research interests have focused on transdisciplinary methods, political economies within intersections of personal, public, and domestic spheres; the contested evolutions of immigration, nation, and citizenship; and the dynamic role of race and gender politics in making us who we are.

In addition to her many articles and edited works, Prof. Glenn is the author of the following influential volumes Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service (Temple University Press), and Forced to Care: Coercion and Caregiving in America (Harvard University Press). She is also co-editor of the volume, Mothering: Ideology, Experience and Agency (Routledge) and editor of Shades of Difference: Why Skin Color Matters (Stanford University Press).

Prof. Glenn’s preeminent works have received various awards and recognition throughout her career, including the UC Berkeley Chancellor’s Award for Advancing Institutional Excellence, the American Sociological Association Jessie Bernard Award, and the KQED Asian Pacific American Heritage Local Hero.

“So, what is the importance of the undocumented immigrant student movement to a sociology of citizenship? It is, after all, a relatively small and marginal movement within the overall context of U.S. society. I would argue, however, that it is precisely at the margins of society that we can most see the possibilities for change. Change almost always starts at the margins or the in-between spaces, not at the center.”

— Evelyn Nakano Glenn


The Insurgent Legacy of Evelyn Nakano Glenn

PROGRAM

12:00 pm

WELCOME

Dr. Hatem Bazian
UC Berkeley, Zaytuna College
Associate Director Alisa Bierra
Center for Race & Gender

PRESENTATION FROM
Assemblymember Tony Thurmond’s Office
District Director Mary Nicely

OPENING REMARKS
Prof. Paola Bacchetta
UC Berkeley

12:30 - 2:00 pm

ADVENTURES IN INTERSECTIONALITY
Moderator:
Prof. Ula Taylor
UC Berkeley

Speakers:
Prof. Elsa Barkley Brown
University of Maryland
Prof. Priya Kandaswamy
Mills College
Prof. Sara Clarke Kaplan
UC San Diego
Prof. Margaret Rhee
University of Oregon

2:00 - 2:20 pm

Excerpt from the documentary film
THE ITO SISTERS
Antonia Grace Glenn
Actor, Writer, Producer, Filmmaker and Scholar

2:20 - 2:45 pm - Break

3:00 - 5:00 pm

EDUCATION JUSTICE & INSURGENT CITIZENSHIP
Moderator:
Prof. Elaine Kim
UC Berkeley

Speakers:
Prof. Rick Baldoz
Oberlin College
Dr. Kevin Escudero
Brown University
Marco Flores
UC Berkeley
Prof. Nelson Maldonado-Torres
Rutgers University (via video)

3:30 - 6:30 pm

BOOK SIGNING
Eastwind Books

5:15 - 5:30 pm

CLOSING REMARKS
Prof. Juana María Rodríguez
UC Berkeley

2:45 - 3:45 pm

RADICALIZING CARE & LABOR JUSTICE
Moderator:
Prof. Charis Thompson
UC Berkeley

Speakers:
Linda Burnham
National Domestic Workers Alliance
Prof. Grace Chang
UC Santa Barbara
Prof. Annie Fukushima
University of Utah

3:45 - 5:15 pm

3:30 - 6:30 pm

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Eastwind Books