



# TALKING POINTS

Newsletter from the Office for Multicultural Affairs

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## Words from the Dean

Welcome! It is the start of another academic year, a time for new beginnings and renewed commitments. As the dean for multicultural affairs at Calvin College, I am excited to announce that the five-year review of the *From Every Nation* document was completed by the Multicultural Affairs Committee this past spring. As a result of the review, twenty recommendations for changes to the *FEN* document were passed on to Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees for approval, both governing bodies approved all twenty of the recommendations (see page 3 for a listing of key recommendations). I interpret the approval of the recommendations as a renewed commitment to racial justice, reconciliation, and cross-cultural engagement at Calvin College. This year my office and the Multicultural Affairs Committee will be working with various division heads, directors, deans, and department chairs to implement the recommendations. Armed with a renewed commitment to racial justice, reconciliation, and cross-cultural engagement, the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year is indeed something to be excited about.

-Michelle Loyd-Paige  
Dean for Multicultural Affairs

## Local Love for Culture

Check out how West Michigan is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

### Hispanic Festival

Sept. 10-11

Calder Plaza

Grand Rapids, MI

[www.hispanic-center.org](http://www.hispanic-center.org)

### Fiesta Mexicana

Sept. 17-19

Calder Plaza

Grand Rapids, MI

[www.mexican-heritage.org](http://www.mexican-heritage.org)

### Tulipanes Latino Art & Film Festival

Sept. 18-19

Centennial Park

Holland, Michigan

[www.tulipanes.org](http://www.tulipanes.org)

## Cultural Spotlight

### Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month is the period to recognize the contributions of Hispanic Americans to the United States and to celebrate Hispanic heritage and culture. The observation, started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week, was approved by President Lyndon B. Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15. September 15 was chosen as the starting point for the celebration because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. They all declared independence in 1821. In addition, Mexico, Chile, and Belize celebrate their independence days on September 16, September 18, and September 21, respectively.



El Vendedor de Alcatraces, Diego Rivera

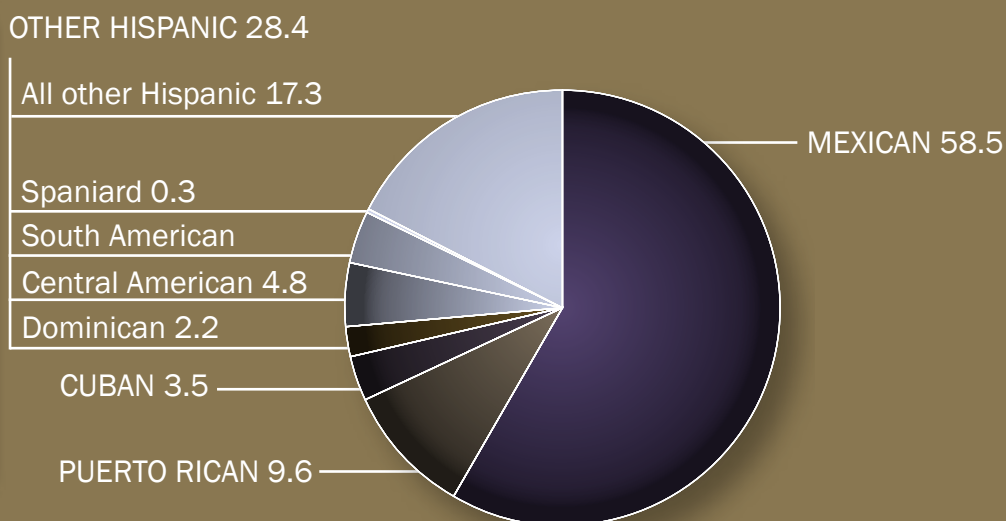
## Hispanics in the U.S.

In 2000 the Hispanic population reached 35.3 million.

More than three-quarters of Hispanics lived in the west and south.

Half of all Hispanics lived in just two states: California and Texas.

### Distribution of the Hispanic Population by Type: 2000



Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

# Headline News: Changes to FEN

A list of 20 recommendations were presented to Faculty Senate in an effort to improve the implementation of goals listed in the *From Every Nation* document and to advance multicultural efforts on campus. All recommendations were approved. Listed below are some of the key changes concerning Calvin faculty and staff.

1. Throughout the document, accountability agents were updated to ensure the appropriate entities oversee FEN goals. For example, the Professional Status Committee is primarily responsible for overseeing faculty efforts, the president is primarily responsible for overseeing efforts of senior-level administrators with faculty status.
2. All Calvin faculty and staff are required to participate in professional development opportunities that consider matters of race and ethnicity at least once every two years.
3. A new strategy will be implemented to focus on retention of faculty of color. The Academic Affairs Division will provide mentoring opportunities and regular climate surveys.
4. Retention is an additional focus in the student section of the document. The college is urged to develop a formalized strategy to improve retention and graduation rates of students of color.
5. "Campus Environment" is a new critical area to be addressed in the *FEN* document. This area will focus on campus aesthetics (artwork, food service), reconciliation and restoration (clear policies that affirm racial harmony and address racial incidents), and measurement and results (climate surveys, action plans for areas that lack progress).

## Upcoming Multicultural Events

Anti-Racism Caucus  
Discussion of *The Color of Fear*  
12-1:30 PM  
Meets every other Monday  
beginning Sept. 13 - Nov. 22

Racial Sobriety Group Discussion  
4-5 PM  
Meets every other Tuesday  
beginning Sept. 14 - Nov. 23

Fall Book Group  
*"A Credible Witness: Reflections on Power, Evangelism and Race"*  
by Brenda Salter McNeil  
12-1:30 PM  
Meets every other Tuesday  
beginning Sept. 21 - Nov. 30

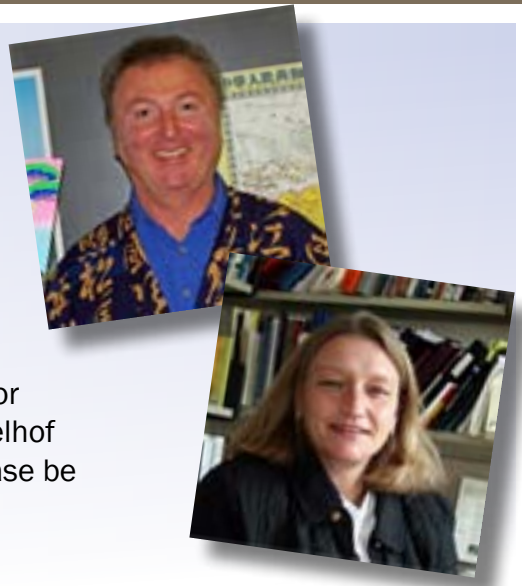
**GRCC Diversity Lecture Series**  
"Finding Reconciliation in an Era of Fear"  
Avraham Burg  
Peace activist, author  
September 29, 7 PM  
Fountain Street Church  
Free and open to the public

Conference on "Liberating the Curriculum: Diversity, Pedagogy, and Scholarship Across the Disciplines"  
Sept. 30 - Oct. 1  
Davenport University, free  
To register contact Claudia at [claudia.hohendorf@davenport.edu](mailto:claudia.hohendorf@davenport.edu)

*Lines: The Lived Experience of Race*  
A new ethnography devised by Stephanie Sandberg and Co.  
Sept. 30- Oct. 9  
Visit [Actors' Theatre Grand Rapids](#) for info.

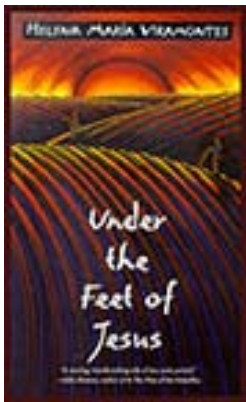
# FEN Teaching Award Winners

Congratulations to Professors Larry Herzberg and Lissa Schwander, the 2010 recipients of the *From Every Nation* Award for Teaching Excellence. Last April a reception was held in honor of their work in and outside of the classroom. As a member of the Asian Studies Program, Professor Herzberg is always eager to share his love of culture and passion for learning with his students. He is most often seen wearing a kimono and a smile. When not teaching in Jamaica for interim, Professor Schwander can often be found in halls of the Spoelhof Center engaged in deep conversation with social work students. Please be sure to congratulate them for this achievement.



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## I Read it in a Book Somewhere



A great way to learn about culture is through the gift of storytelling. Each month a different racial/ethnic group will be highlighted through a suggested reading. This month's suggestion came from Professor Linda Naranjo-Huebl. Learn more about Hispanic culture in *Under the Feet of Jesus* by Helena Maria Viramontes.

At the center of this powerful tale is Estrella, a girl about to cross over the perilous border to womanhood. What she knows of life comes from her mother, who has survived abandonment by her husband in a land that treats her as if she were invisible, even though she and her children pick the crops of the farms that feed its people...from the aging but iron-bodied man who reluctantly becomes the head of the family, even as dreams of his youth in Mexico are calling him home...and

from the endless highways and vast fields of California, where they travel and work together. But within Estrella, seeds of growth and change are stirring. And in the arms of Alejo, only a few years older than herself, they burst into full fierce flower, as she tastes the joy and pain of first love. Estrella begins to listen to her own inner voice in giving herself to that love. She comes to learn the value of life and discovers her own power to defy a system that would otherwise keep her down. Pushed to the margins of society, she learns to fight back and is able to help the young

farm worker she loves when his ambitions and very life are threatened in a harvest of death. Infused with the beauty of the California landscape and shifting splendors of the passing seasons juxtaposed with the bleakness of poverty, this vividly imagined novel, so observant and full of wisdom, is worthy of the people it celebrates and whose story it tells so magnificently. The simple lyrical beauty of Viramontes's prose, her haunting use of image and metaphor, and the urgency of her themes all announce *Under the Feet of Jesus* as a landmark work of American fiction.