

Conference focuses on racial borders

Panel offers a new perspective and reviews affirmative action

by G. Jaros
Oregon Daily Emerald

The violent conquest of America, anti-affirmative action legislation and welfare "schemes" to undermine black women are just a few of the topics to be discussed during a Friday conference.

"Border Lies: Race, Identity, and Citizenship" will examine theories of race, immigration policies that exclude minorities, ways in which women and minorities continue to struggle for equal rights and reproductive health policies affecting black women.

"What we are trying to do is look at the issues of race and get a new perspective on the issues around race by looking at what scholarship has to offer on affirmative action," said Sandra Morgen, director of the Center for the Study of Women in Society.

She said she believes people have "knee-jerk" reactions to affirmative action but seldom dig deeper to discover the facts.

"You hardly ever hear about the research," Morgen said. "Let's look at why we need affirmative action. Do we have continuing racial and gender discrimination? And if we do, we need to solve it."

The conference will have three keynote speakers and will bring together 13 research interest groups. The groups will comprise University faculty, graduate students and community members who are engaged in interdisciplinary research and collaboration on diverse topics related to the

'Border Lies: Race, Identity, and Citizenship'

Who: Presented by the Center for the Study of Women in Society
When: Friday, Feb. 12, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Where: Alumni Lounge in Gerlinger Hall

study of women, ethnicity and gender.

Speaker Dorothy Roberts, a law professor at Northwestern University, is the author of "Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty."

"Today, we're seeing a resurgence of policies that degrade black women's reproductive decision making," Roberts said.

Some of the topics that she will be discussing include: the use of Norplant, the long-acting contraceptive, in poor black communities; welfare schemes that seek to deter mothers receiving public aid from having more babies and the disproportionate punishment of black women who use drugs during pregnancy.

The second speaker is Patricia Penn Hilden, a professor of ethics at Berkeley and author of "When Nickels Were Indians: An Urban, Mixed-Blood Story."

"What I'm speaking about is 'how borders lie,' playing on the ambiguity of that formulation and discussing all the ways in which borders have been shifted, quite blithely, throughout the history of the United States in order both to obscure the real violent history of the U.S. and to preserve the over

culture's interests," Hilden said. She also will be talking about the borders "in minds and hearts" as well as in geography.

Lydia Chavez is an associate professor of journalism at Berkeley, author of "The Color Bind: California's Battle to End Affirmative Action" and the third keynote speaker.

She will discuss the role of women and the impact of immigration on the affirmative action debate.

Students who expressed interest in attending the conference talked about the need to be informed.

"As a child who grew up on the border in L.A. and San Diego, I'm interested in what's going on now," said undeclared sophomore Gerardo Ochoa. "I'm a mem-

WHITE WINTER WEATHER



Custodial service workers salt and clear the walkway leading to Carson Hall. The weather forecast for the Eugene/Springfield area said no snow is expected today.

Scott Barnett/Emerald

and Mia Tuan, assistant sociology professor.

"We'd like to see really interesting speakers presenting what they have to say and then talking with each other and the audience," Morgen said. "So this isn't, 'Go hear a big long speech,' but 'Come, hear various people in dialogue and be part of that dialogue.'"

The conference begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. in the Alumni Lounge of Gerlinger Hall and will run until 4:30 p.m.

The conference will be followed by a book signing.

Conference schedules can be picked up at the Center for the Study of Women in Society on the third floor of Hendricks Hall and in the Black Student Union, EMU Room 25.

ber of MEChA, and we have a lot of people coming in that want to know what's going on."

After the morning keynote addresses, there will be four separate round table discussions that include: "Affirmative Action and Beyond"; "Border Crossings: Subjectivity and Identity"; "Opening/Closing Borders: Immigration, Globalization, and Capitalism"; and "Decoding Citizenship and the Reproduction of Whiteness."

A panel discussion will be held later that afternoon called, "The (re) Imagined Community: Research and Policy Directions."

Panelists will be: Robin Morris Collin, law professor; Shari Huhndorf, assistant English professor; Lynn Stephen, anthropology and international studies professor;

Many campus Web sites remain inaccessible to the blind

Software that converts text to voice often can't read Web-site graphics

By G. Jaros
Oregon Daily Emerald

Wheelchair ramps, automatic doors and special parking places come to mind when thinking about disability access. Web site access, however, is often ignored.

James Bailey, the University's adaptive technology adviser, is working to change that reality.

"What we are trying to do in this office is encourage Web designs that work very seamlessly with the screen readers and also the Links users," Bailey said. Links is a special type of browser that is text-only and doesn't carry graphics.

The trouble with Web site graphics is that they are often un-

readable to blind users who rely on special software at home to convert text-based information to spoken words. When they come across a graphic that hasn't been made text-reader friendly, they get no information.

When staff at the Student Health Center were made aware of possible problems, health center Web master Dr. James Jackson began updating the 70-page Web site immediately.

"When visually impaired students come across a graphic, they don't know if it gives them information or not," Jackson said. "It could be a map or something that you need to click to go somewhere, so any graphic would have to have alternative information."

Jackson heard about a Web site named Bobby that is used to check Web page accessibility for blind users.

"What you do is go to the Bobby site with your Web page address and type it in," Jackson said. "The Bobby site then does an analysis of your page and tells you whether or not it meets the standards."

If a Web site's graphics are not accessible to visually impaired users, the Bobby site gives step-by-step instructions on how to bring the site up to par. Bobby is just one of many public service programs designed for this purpose.

Jackson wants more University Web masters to know about the Bobby site.

"I think this is not very well known, i.e., it's not something a lot of people think about," Jackson said. "But on campus, these official Web pages that give information should be accessible to all students."

Blind students agree that having access to the Web is important and

should be required of all official campus Web sites.

"Hell yeah, it's a good idea," said senior anthropology major Frederic Gauble, who is blind. "I haven't used the Web at all lately because of problems with my own computer, but if I'm paying a \$50-a-term access fee, I better have access."

Designing University Web sites to be accessible to students with disabilities is not required, according to Bailey.

"I doubt that most Web sites on campus are accessible," Bailey said. "It is not a policy requirement — not at all. I think that we want to encourage all official Web pages to be accessible, but it isn't policy."

The ASUO, Student Senate, Advocacy/Conflict Resolution and Oregon Daily Emerald Web sites all have accessibility problems, according to the Bobby system.

Web sites that were trouble-free included the University home page, the health center and the Knight library.

"I've never even heard of the Internet being accessible to blind people," said Student Senator Autumn DePoe, who made the Web site for the Student Senate.

The ASUO also was in the dark about access for the blind.

"I didn't know the Internet could be accessed by blind people, and I don't know how to make our site accessible," said ASUO Vice President Morgan Cowling.

Direct access to the Bobby site can be found at: <http://www.cast.org/bobby>

For more information, visit Academic Advising and Student Services at 164 Oregon Hall, or visit <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~atl/awp3.htm>

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