

Intellectual rationale

Energizing Humanities in California's San Joaquin Valley addresses a broad range of historical, literary, and performing arts topics promoting place-based pedagogy and cultural competency at Bakersfield College. Topics are drawn together through the concept of *energy humanities*. Energy, or “the property of matter...that is manifest as a capacity to perform work,” (Oxford English Dictionary) has a wide-reaching applicability to daily life. As a concept usually relegated to technological and scientific discourse, energy often stands apart from the cultural contexts in which it resides. Recently scholars have emphasized energy as a “perfect example of an issue that exceeds the traditional division of academic labor.” *Energizing Humanities in California's San Joaquin Valley* builds upon this work by engaging numerous voices responsible for fueling the rich cultures of the southern San Joaquin Valley. As oil pumpjacks dot the Antelope Plain and agricultural fields extend northward from Bakersfield through Delano, energy is being produced on multiple levels. Along with energetic production comes an equally rich cultural experience. Our project engages rich cultural experiences from interdisciplinary humanities perspectives, integrating diverse experiences explicitly into humanities curriculum. We will effect changes in humanities instruction by conducting year-long faculty cohort experiences. World class scholars who research within the field of California Central Valley studies will be brought to Bakersfield College, conduct faculty workshops, and offer public presentations on their research. A brief summary of each project year, the respective topics engaged, and its improvement of humanities instruction follows.

A region of diverse energy production, the southern San Joaquin valley has produced some of the most historically significant labor and civil rights movements, most notably the farm worker movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. Project year one, “Fields of Energy,” improves

humanities instruction by linking humanities faculty members with leading scholars who research the diverse and complex history of California agriculture. Knowledge of this history is crucial for making faculty more culturally competent in serving a diverse student body. By marshalling this rich cultural past, humanities faculty will effectively design place-based curriculum. While the topic has received scholarly attention, curricular implementation remains significantly underdeveloped. Project year two, “(Re)Energizing Narrative,” will bring into focus the cultural and literary resources of the southern San Joaquin Valley with special regard to localities served by the Kern Community College District. The goal will be the enrichment of humanities instruction through the exploration of narratives that reflect the region’s multiculturalism within the scopes of labor and production in local industry and the literary arts. The programming for this year will improve humanities instruction by: 1) encouraging book adoptions that include works by writers of local origin or whose identities and/or thematic content reflect local demographics, 2) improving faculty awareness of the student populations we serve, and 3) engage students by teaching local histories as presented in literary, scholarly, and auto/biographical texts while asking students to draw on their own personal experiences and narratives. Grant year three entitled “Listening to Cultures of Energy in the Central Valley,” will explore what sounds can tell us about the rich cultural and environmental hues that make up the greater Kern County area. Project events will occur over the course of two semesters, taking the form of an academic conference, with breakout groups for instructors to engage with speakers and assigned books. As part of year three, a theatrical production using student narratives will celebrate the culmination of the grant project and offer an example of the intersection between revised humanities instruction and cultural production.

Content and design

Energizing Humanities in California's San Joaquin Valley deals with a range of interdisciplinary topics related to place-based pedagogy and cultural competencies unique to the cultures and history of the southern San Joaquin Valley. The project's content explores new scholarship investigating the significance of California's farm labor history, the impact of place on narrative literary production, and the ways that place influences sound and the performing arts. Over three years, faculty cohorts will engage visiting scholars in common readings, participate in summer bridge programs with incoming freshman from migrant backgrounds, develop place-based pedagogies and curricular development, participate in a regional conference, and create student-led content for a theatrical performance based upon student oral histories. A more detailed overview of each project year follows, along with the main investigative questions explored during faculty cohort meetings.

“Fields of Energy: Unearthing Farm Labor Histories in the San Joaquin Valley”

Guiding Questions: *How has the cultural geography of the southern San Joaquin Valley shaped U.S. labor history? How did undocumented migrant workers impact Central Valley history? How did rural California's historic labor and civil rights movements impact public policy? How can place-based pedagogies invigorate humanities learning in rural California?*

Grant year one explores historical topics related to social movement history in the San Joaquin Valley with a focus on agriculture since the late nineteenth century. The agricultural history of the southern San Joaquin Valley is marked by dramatic growth in agricultural production over the course of the twentieth century. These so-called “Factories in the Fields,” to borrow the words of Carey McWilliams, were dependent upon a diverse migrant labor force. Scholars have begun uncovering these rich and diverse histories, noting the ways ordinary

Americans shaped labor, civil rights, public policy, and cultural histories. Faculty cohort meetings will engage common readings organized thematically into the following areas: 1) Growth of Agribusiness and Labor in California, 1900-1930s; 2) Citizen and Non-Citizen Labor in California Agribusiness; 3) Origins of California's Farm Labor Movement; and 4) Agriculture, Labor, and California Political & Economic Development. Visiting Faculty are published experts in the field, including: Gabriel Thompson, *The Social Arsonist: Fred Ross and Grassroots Organizing in the Twentieth Century*; Lori Flores, *Grounds For Dreaming: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the California Farm Worker Movement*; Dawn Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart: The Making of the Filipina/o American Community in Stockton, California*; and various scholarly journal articles by Todd Holmes and excerpts from his forthcoming book, *The Fruits of Fracture*. A humanities summer bridge project will conclude year 1. Visiting faculty Mario Garcia's *The Gospel of Cesar Chavez* and *Dolores Huerta: A Reader* will be assigned during summer bridge. These readings will be further contextualized through tours of sites related to farm labor history, including Forty Acres in Delano, California, and National Chavez Center in Tehachapi, California. Summer bridge participants will include cohort faculty members and recruited students from the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Migrant Program (approximately 15-20 students).

(Re)Energizing Narrative: Narrative of Place in the Southern San Joaquin Valley

Guiding Questions: *In what ways has the multicultural composition of the southern San Joaquin Valley shaped literary and cultural production in the region? How can humanities and arts instructors draw on local cultures and histories as a means of engaging students, and in what ways can the humanities classroom address individual experience while serving the group?*

How can we improve and promote cultural competency in the campus community through humanities instruction?

The second year will focus on the literary landscape of the southern San Joaquin Valley and how narrative is shaped by the multiculturalism of the region. To promote better understanding and representations of our student demographics in pedagogical practices, the year two faculty cohort will engage critical, literary, and nonfiction (biographical and autobiographical) texts, attend public speaking events featuring invited authors and scholars, participate in cohort workshops led by those invited speakers, and lead a summer bridge program. The programming will cover literary representations of agriculture and farm labor in California, California regionalism and Latina/o literature, Filipina/o and Asian American narrative in the Central Valley, and the use of locally sourced narratives, autobiography, and students' personal experiences to engage students and energize the reading and writing processes for them. Faculty participating in the grant cohort in this year will be expected to read the following texts in preparation for the year's speaking events and cohort workshops: *The Nature of California: Race, Citizenship, and Farming since the Dust Bowl* by Sarah Wald, *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, *Under the Feet of Jesus* by Helena Maria Viramontes, *Drive* by Lorna Dee Cervantes, *America Is in the Heart* by Carlos Bulosan, *A Village in the Fields* by Patty Enrado, and *Coming of Age in California: Personal Essays* and the article "A Regional-Ripple Approach to American Literature" by Gerald Haslam. The faculty cohort will also run a summer bridge program for 15 to 20 incoming Bakersfield College students from areas served by the college's Rural Initiatives Program. The five-day bridge program will be titled "Pen to Paper: Creative Life Writing & Archiving." Students will submit autobiographical narratives to apply.

Those selected will revise their stories to record and produce them as audio documentaries or for the culminating theatrical production.

Listening to Cultures of Energy in the Central Valley

Guiding Questions: *In what ways are the performing arts capable of shaping and being shaped by the politics of energy consumption and production in the Central Valley? How did the artistic aesthetics of Midwest “dust bowl refugees” harmonize with those living in the region previously? How do sounds, whether they are oral histories or music, reflect the intricacies of life in the Central Valley? How can theater be used as both an historical record and a form of activism?*

Grant year three will be divided between music and theatre. Part one, entitled “Listening to Cultures of Energy in the Central Valley,” will explore what sounds can tell us about the rich cultural and environmental hues that make up the great Kern County area. Recently, scholars and artists alike have found productive ways to consider how politics and histories of cultures can be examined through human engagements with and expressions of energy. Whether it is a series of songs written about the emerging early twentieth century Bakersfield oil industry or a collection of oral histories from agriculture workers from Delano, these sounds give shape to an area richly tied to energy. The events will occur over a three-day period, taking the form of an academic conference, with breakout groups for instructors to engage with speakers and assigned books.

Also during project year three, a theatrical production will be created from the collected testimonials/writings from the students participating in the first two project year’s summer bridge programs. Student’s music/sound design from the summer bridge programs will be utilized in the play production as well. The summer bridge students will have the opportunity to learn basic playwriting and acting skills, audition for an acting role in the production, or become a member

of the crew. The play will be adapted and directed by the Theatre faculty and performed at the Simonsen Indoor Performing Arts Theatre at Bakersfield College to conclude our symposium in April 2020.

Project personnel

The project directors are **Oliver A. Rosales**, Professor of History. **Andrew Bond**, Associate Professor of English, and **Josh Ottum**, Professor of Music. Each director will be responsible for supervising grant programming for one year. **Kimberley Chin**, Professor of Theater, and **Matt Jones**, Assistant Professor of Institutional Technology, will work as consultants and support during the summer bridge sessions and culminating conference and performance events. Several visiting scholars from institutions across the country will also participate as humanities advisors and consultants for faculty cohorts (see appendix for detail).

Institutional context

This project proposal fulfills the mission of the Kern Community College District “to provide outstanding educational programs and services that are responsive to our diverse students and communities,” as well as our Institutional Learning Outcome goal to “engage productivity in all levels of society--interpersonal, community, the state and nation, and the world.” By improving instructional capacity to service a diverse student body, humanities faculty will increase overall effectiveness by creating engaged and informed communities, both on campus and beyond. Traditional humanities curriculum at Bakersfield College generally occurs within the disciplines of History, English, and Philosophy. Our performing arts and new music program, however, also utilize humanities approaches. This grant will also strengthen our Career and Technical Education (CTE) faculty who utilize humanities approaches. *Energizing Humanities* overall will have wide appeal among a variety of academic disciplines. In terms of

institutional resources, Bakersfield college recently established the Norman Levan Center for the Humanities with a generous endowment from the late philanthropist Norman Levan. The Levan Center mission is to “provide programs that focus on and foster a greater appreciation of the humanities, explore the relevance of the humanities to the practice of medicine, examine and support ethical behavior in business and the professions, recognize and encourage scholarship and intellectual exchange among faculty and students, and involve the Bakersfield community in examining the importance of the humanities in the lives of people.” The Levan Center will co-sponsor many aspects of the grant proposal, including use of facilities, assistance with advertising, as well as sponsorship of the regional conference. The Levan Center also sponsors annual competitive applications from faculty working on humanities research up to the amount of \$3,000.00. *Energizing Humanities* will enhance our faculty’s utilization of the Levan Center’s resources in promoting public humanities projects within our service region. The History, English, and Performing Arts departments will house *Energizing Humanities* during the grant. *Energizing Humanities* will enhance instruction and improve student retention and success rates by introducing digital humanities pedagogy to both tenured and adjunct faculty. Matthew Jones, an Instructional Technology faculty member, will participate in building a digital humanities content to each summer bridge program.

Follow-up and dissemination

This project will enact a number of long-term impacts and deliverable outcomes. A series of evaluative activities will occur within and beyond the grant period to ensure sustained impact. During each project year, faculty will participate in two seminars per semester in addition to summer bridge projects during academic years 2018-19. Visiting scholars will host special learning seminars for participating faculty, as well as deliver public lectures on their research and

scholarship. We will conduct interviews with visiting faculty member to be archived and distributed through our project website. This digitization of programming will sustain our project's impact and promote public access to content within our service region and beyond. In Year 3, we will host a regional conference focusing on the topic of "Energizing Humanities Instruction" in the Southern San Joaquin Valley. The conference will feature a keynote speaker, as well as panel presentations by participating faculty cohorts related to curricular innovations using place-based pedagogies. The conference will be recorded by media services and archived on the project website. Following the conference, Bakersfield College will host a theatrical performance based on an original screenplay performed by BC students under the directorship of faculty member Kimberly Chin. The Levan Center for the Humanities will publish a special issue of the institute's journal, the *Levan Humanities Review*, based on the conference proceedings. To promote conference attendance and readership of the special issue, extended effort will be made to market the conference to our area high school teachers, specifically our Dual Enrollment faculty. Project directors will also work with education reporters from the *Bakersfield Californian* to cover public programming events during the grant period.

Evaluation

We will evaluate our project's impact in several ways. Project directors will develop bi-annual questionnaires for participating faculty, assessing each professional development segment during the grant period. Questions will include evaluation of the cohort experience, project directors, and visiting scholars. Data will be screened and sample participant testimonials advertised on our project website will recruit future cohort participation in Years 2 and 3. Short reflective writing will assess how participating faculty have shifted thinking about curriculum, pedagogy, and course content. Thirdly, we anticipate inviting community people to public

programming events and will have a separate category of questionnaires for these individuals. This information will be collated and shared with the public through our project website and monitored by how many hits the website receives.

Curriculum development is a significant evaluation of this project. Participating faculty will work with project directors to offer curriculum development workshops during our institutional FLEX week (professional development) each semester beginning in Year 2. These workshops will focus on revised humanities curriculum integrating place-based pedagogy from interdisciplinary humanities perspectives. Content for these workshops will be developed in consultation with project directors as a capstone project during the year-long cohort experience. These workshops are critical benchmarks for evaluating the impact of the grant project upon the institution's broader interdisciplinary humanities faculty. Each workshop can reach between 25-30 participants. Beginning in Year 3, a website will be developed to catalog oral histories and speaker presentations for each project year. This open digital space for community members will share stories sounding out experiences with energy production and cultural engagement. To sustain pedagogical innovation, lesson plans will be made available publicly through our online course management system, CANVAS. Lesson plans will be produced by participating cohort faculty through our biannual FLEX professional development workshops.