Unity lecture urges action on social justice

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

The university kicked off Black History Month, with the annual "Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Unity Lecture," on Wednesday, Feb. 5.

The lecture featured David W. Robinson-Morris, award-winning author of "Ubuntu and Buddhism in Higher Education: An Ontological Rethinking," delivered a thought-provoking keynote address.

"Over the bluntness of materialism and the rampant racism of white America, it was then his time when he reinforced his call for us to recognize and heal what he called our national soul sickness," Robinson-Morris said. "I joined him in this call today."

In his address, "A Time for Reflection & Action: MLK's Revolution of Values," Robinson-Morris urged attendees to not only reflect on MLK's impact, but to also take steps in advancing the fight for social justice today.

Students, faculty, staff and members of the general public gathered for an opportunity to honor and celebrate the legacy of civil rights activist, Martin Luther King Jr.

The scholar said that MLK would be disappointed in the acts of injustice that are normalized in today's world.

"I imagine Dr King would say 'this is not just,' in a moment when our community and our campuses are seeing heightened criminal decriminalization of people of the global majority, and an increase in discrimination and violence against trans, queer, gender non conforming peoples and so called, 'undocumented peoples,'" Robinson-Morris said.

Robinson-Morris also shed light on the rampant violence that harms communities.

"We and our children, our futures, are being murdered in the very places where we should feel safe," Robinson-Morris said.

Along with highlighting ongoing gun-violence, Robinson-Morris criticizes the contradictions in the actions of national leaders.

He emphasizes their failure to protect life despite claims of doing so.

"The seat of national power claims to be pro-life, but only failing to protect life, by altering the ways in which assault weapons can be purchased and by attempting to limit access to healthcare and vital services," Robinson-Morris said.

As Robinson-Morris delivered his message, many audience members said his words were a reminder that they are still fighting the same injustices that MLK faced.

Sports and exercise science major Rakeem Fuller, a sophomore, said that Robinson-Morris' call to action deeply resonated with him.

"The biggest takeaway I got was that we all need to create a revolution to restore the heart, mind, and soul of America," Fuller said.

To resist the oppression, Robinson-Morris said that more people pursuing higher education is a step towards a better future.

"Argued to be America's longest standing industry is higher education," Robinson-Morris said. "It shapes and develops the future mind and the leaders of the country."

Social work major Alexcia Murphy, a sophomore, said that she noticed how valuable the importance of higher education is since President Trump was elected into office.

"Trump trying to defund education, all results back to if you can control how someone learns you can control how one thinks," Murphy said.

As Robinson-Morris left the audience with food for thought about the political and social climate of today's world, he concluded with a moving quote from Martin Luther King Jr., urging immediate action for change.

"We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now," Robinson-Morris said. "In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late.



PHOTO | WADE BARRILLO

Author David W. Robinson-Morris, giving a keynote address at the annual MLK Unity Lecture on Feb. 5, in the Adanti Student Center Ballroom.



Audience members listening to Robinson-Morris' keynote address.

Ongoing search

Continued from Page 1

Throughout the semester, the process will undergo behind the scenes with members of the Search and Search Advisory Committees accessing candidates' resumes and related information.

The Search Advisory Committee will recommend candidates for initial interviews and nominate three of its members to join the Search Committee for these interviews.

From March 31 to April 11, the Search Committee, along with representatives from the Search Advisory Committee, are scheduled to conduct the first-round interviews virtually.

The campus community, including faculty, staff and students, are welcomed to join the presidential process during the on-campus open forums. They will have the opportunity to ask questions to the finalists and share feedback.

The process will conclude with a community announcement from the CSCU Chancellor on May 15, declaring the appointment of the president.

Throughout the search process, the university will provide regular updates on a dedicated search website, which can be accessed via the official university website's home page.

All members of the campus community are encouraged to actively participate in this important process, as it will help shape the future direction of the institution.

Students and staff explore multiculturalism

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

Given the university's diverse community, it is crucial to foster discussions that explore the wide range of identities and cultures on campus.

To spark conversation on how embracing different perspectives can enrich the community, the College of Education and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning welcomed Cathy Bao Bean, author of her memoir, "The Chopsticks-Fork Principle," for an engaging exploration of multiculturalism.

Held in Davis Hall, the lively discussion encouraged attendees to reflect on the power of cultural diversity, as Bean shared snapshots from her humorous memoir.

The writer uses humor as a way to connect and relay important lessons. Bean said that humor is a crucial tool to bridge gaps between people.

"To understand one's culture, you must understand their humor," Bean said.

In her memoir, Bean, who was born in China, recounts her journey of finding her true self, or selves, while raising her son William Boa Bean, in America.

The book can also serve as a guide to help individuals develop awareness of the diversity that not only surrounds them but is within themselves as well.

Marilu Rochefort, Assistant Director of the Office of Educational Services, said that Bean's presentation allowed her to feel validated in her experiences of navigating social enviornmens with her cultural identities.



PHOTO | BRIANNA WALLEN

Author, Cathy Bao Bean, reads a section from her memoir in Room 101 in Davis Hall on Feb. 7.



Marilu Rochefort, Assistant Director of Office of Educational Services and Kari Sassu, Director of the Center of Excellence for Teaching and Learning in Davis Hall's hallway.

"Being an individual who comes from a bilingual household and having immigrant parents, it validated the feelings that I had with having different personas in different situations," Rochefort said. "I realized it's okay to be a certain way depending on the group I'm with."

Bean highlighted that it is acceptable for people to have multiple aspects of their true selves.

"The idea of having only oneself is a very Western idea," Bean said. "We can have multiple realities and cultures."

Additionally, Bean criticizes the American education system for categorizing students and urging them to confine themselves to labels while pressuring them to discover a single "true" version of themselves.

Bean, who often used experiences with her Chinese American son, told the audience that even though her son said that Santa Claus does not exist, he still feels real to him.

"Children can have multiple realities and multiple fantasies," Bean said. "But if you keep asking them who's your best friend, who's your nicest teacher, you endure them to the idea that there's only room for one at the top."

The author also said that she encourages attendees to get to know others around them.

As Bean emphasized the importance of understanding and embracing diversity, she shared these wise words: "To be more comfortable in life, you have to know about multiple different cultures."

Other audience members viewed Bean's message as a way to generate a greater sense of self and connection with others.

Kari Sassu, Director of the Center of Excellence for Teaching and Learning, said overall she believes the discussion is a call to focus on the commonalities among people rather than what separates them. Especially at a time where divisions and conflicts are highly prevalent.

"Looking at commonalities can help connect us," Sassu said. "That's what helps us from feeling like imposters."