the center for
Contemplative Mind in Society

2015 Annual Report

Transforming Higher Education
through Contemplative Inquiry, Community, and Social Action
for a More Just and Compassionate World
Daniel Barbezat leads a reflective writing exercise at the 2015 Retreat for Educators. During the exercise, participants examined their aspirations and intentions for incorporating contemplative practices into their work in academia.

Contents

Introduction 3
Contemplative Education & Action for Social Justice 9
Creating Contemplative, Just Communities 16
Supporting the Development of Contemplative Approaches in Education 21
Envisioning the Future of Higher Education 29
Teaching Contemplative Practices 31
A Contemplative Inquiry: Clarifying and Connecting to our Intentions 35
Financial Summary 37
Our Staff, Board, and Advisory Council 39
Dear Friends,

Over our rich history, the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society has created and supported an extensive and close community of educational professionals in every sort of institution and from all aspects of higher education, each committed to examining the ways in which contemplative approaches transform teaching, learning, and action. Our programs each year affect hundreds of academics, administrators and staff, located in institutions across the globe, ultimately reaching thousands of students.

In 2015, we extended and deepened this work. We hope you enjoy reading about our activity over the past year and of our plans for the coming year.

With your help, we have brought into the center of our work a serious exploration of the ways in which contemplative experiences can aid us in realizing and responding to the myriad social justice issues affecting ourselves, our teaching and research, our institutions, and our society at large.

Last year’s conference held at Howard University marked a wonderful opportunity to deepen this exploration, and we hope to build on the momentum already begun. We are excited to continue supporting and advancing this work. As we face the many social and environmental issues that challenge us, we remain inspired by what is already happening in response and hopeful about the work to come.

In partnership with the Fetzer Institute, we are embarking on a three-part project to examine the ways in which we can best assess contemplative approaches, foster and sustain just, inclusive, and supportive communities, and explore the relationship between contemplative approaches and the future of higher education. These projects are fully described in this Annual Report.

Thank you for all the support in advancing our work. We are deeply grateful and honored to be working with you to create a more just and compassionate world.

May you be well.

Daniel Barbezat
Executive Director,
The Center for
Contemplative Mind in Society
and Professor of Economics,
Amherst College

Bradford Grant
President of the Board,
The Center for
Contemplative Mind in Society
and Professor of Architecture,
Howard University
The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (CMind) fosters a vision that is simultaneously bold, idealistic, and necessary: a vision of the cultural and institutional transformation of higher education and society.

We envision a world where educational environments support all students, faculty, staff, administrators, and surrounding communities in living in alignment with their deepest meaning, purpose, and values. We believe that contemplative practices are a means for this transformation: contemplative practices help us develop and deepen our inner lives, support us in making more conscious choices, and act in consideration of our intentions.

The Tree of Contemplative Practices illustrates some of the methods used in educational and organizational contexts.
Contemplative Practices in Higher Education

Develop Skills for Sophisticated Inquiry
Contemplative practices provide opportunities to broaden our awareness and open us to new perspectives and insights through close observation of inner and outer phenomena, such as our mental and emotional states, reactions, and biases.

Cultivate Resilience
Sustained, whole-hearted engagement with our inner lives and the wider world can be demanding as well as inspiring. Contemplative practices help us develop means of transforming difficulty, and are an important resource across campuses to address personal, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic challenges.

Explore Meaning and Purpose
Contemplative inquiry assists us in enriching our understanding of the material under study by connecting it to our deepened awareness of our own experience: education becomes a means of developing meaning, purpose, and agency.

Awareness in Action
Once we undertake an inquiry into what is meaningful to us, we can begin to act in ways that support, sustain and challenge that sense of meaning. Contemplative practices highlight and deepen awareness of the complex interconnectedness of us all, leading us to question and engage in work that considers the impacts of our actions on the world at large.
We envision an education that promotes the exploration of meaning, purpose and values and seeks to serve our common human future. An education that enables and enhances personal introspection and contemplation leads to the realization of our inextricable connection to each other, opening the heart and mind to true community, deeper insight, sustainable living, and a more just society.

Though powerful and vitally important, the conventional methods of scientific research, pedagogy, and critical scholarship need to be broadened. The experiential methods developed within the contemplative traditions offer a rich set of tools for exploring the mind, the heart, and the world. When they are combined with conventional practices, an enriched research methodology and pedagogy become available for deepening and enlarging perspectives, leading to lasting solutions to the problems we confront. None of these methods require an ideology or creed and each is available equally to all.

We envision higher education as an opportunity to cultivate a deep personal and social awareness in order to stimulate inquiry into what is most meaningful to us as interconnected human beings. We seek to recast the traditional foundations for education into a truly integrative, transformative, and communal enterprise that is wholly open and inclusive of all backgrounds and that cultivates each person in the fullest possible way.
2015: A Reflection

The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society continues to lead the movement to transform higher education through contemplative practices. As the field continues to evolve, so do we.

Over the past year, we have worked to cultivate just and compassionate communities that use contemplative approaches all across higher education. We are dedicated to developing and demonstrating many ways educational environments can be accessible and inclusive, where all can come together and learn from diverse experiences and expressions. Our core events and programs—conferences, workshops, retreats, resources, and the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE), a professional academic association—are growing. Increasing numbers of faculty, staff, administrators, and students from across higher education are coming to us to learn about contemplative practices and to connect with like-minded colleagues.

Membership in the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE) continued to rise in 2015, and we hosted our largest crowds to date at our two primary events, the annual ACMHE conference and the Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy.
The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education

The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE) is a multidisciplinary professional academic association established by the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society in 2008. As of February 2016, the ACMHE connects 800 educators, staff, graduate students, and administrators in 24 countries. The mission of the ACMHE is to advocate for contemplative practice in higher education; to encourage new forms of inquiry and imaginative thinking; and to educate active citizens who will support a more just and compassionate direction for society.

We established the ACMHE to address the growing momentum of our Academic Program after 10 years of administering fellowships and developing a community of contemplative educators, scholars, and administrators. Since its founding, we have increased the member resources and benefits to include access to a syllabus archive, a searchable member directory, recordings of talks on contemplative pedagogy, an email discussion list and newsletter, free access and manuscript submission to the *Journal of Contemplative Inquiry*, and discounts on events such as the annual summer sessions and national ACMHE conferences, such as our 2015 conference at Howard University, “Building Just Communities.”

An increasing number of members are using resources provided by CMind and the ACMHE to connect with others in their geographic region; some have hosted regional meetings or created virtual communities. We recognize the importance of fostering these regional connections and are working to provide more support to these emerging groups through the Building Contemplative Communities project, which was initiated in 2015.
Contemplative Education & Action for Social Justice

In 2015, we deepened our efforts to examine and support the ways in which contemplative approaches stimulate the wisdom and courage to face racism, bias, and intersecting forms of oppression; the inspiration to act with compassion and creativity; and the resilience to work for lasting change through difficulty.

Our extensive network of educators, administrators, students, and academic professionals across many disciplines and types of schools uniquely positions us to inspire conversation and motivate action. We are dedicated to advancing efforts in this direction.

Colleges and universities examine the values and priorities of society, yet they are also a means of either perpetuating or transforming the systems and ideological frameworks in which they exist. Our vision of transformative change holds contemplative methods as inseparable from anti-racism and anti-oppression work: as we develop ways of recognizing our inextricable interconnection with each other and our planet, we continually refine and deepen our ability to respond to these challenges.

Given the breadth of our organizational vision and commitment, it is especially important that we work to overcome the cultural and social constraints that limit access to our work. It is critical that we pay attention to patterns of representation and under-representation in our programs and higher education at large, and that we recognize contemplative practices based in diverse religious, spiritual, and cultural traditions.

Meeting on Diversity, Access, and Inclusion in Contemplative Higher Education

To face the challenges of living out a radically inclusive vision, how do we identify, maintain, and advance our understanding and expression of CMind’s core work as our community grows increasingly diverse? How can we support trust-building and connection among our constituents as we develop programs available to and resonant with all? And how can our work in higher education contribute to a deeper appreciation for diverse manifestations of sacredness in our lives?

Our efforts require us to gather the best information we can as we move forward. Prior to developing new programs, we must listen, especially to those who have been traditionally marginalized. We firmly believe that new programs which address true access for all must be co-created through opportunities to come together, speak, and listen with leaders experienced
in working across difference to foster transformative change, while our current programs need to be carefully examined to determine whether they, even subtly, replicate dominance and marginalization.

To this end, on April 16-18, 2015, we organized a gathering of faculty, staff, and administrators from colleges and universities across the US, as well as staff and board members of the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society.

The meeting, made possible with financial support from the Fetzer Institute, the Mind & Life Institute, and Kalliopeia Foundation, was a rich opportunity to discuss the ways in which our work can address suffering at not only the personal level, but also interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels, particularly through the issue of racial injustice. The meeting was facilitated by Rose Sackey-Milligan, co-director of C-Integral and former Director of CMind’s Social Justice Program (which ran from 2004-2009); Rose specializes in guiding difficult conversations concerning identity, diversity, and anti-racism. The intention of our extended time together was to listen and learn, providing time to share, speak, and co-create so that we can move forward together through a process of exercises and conversation.

Following the meeting, a steering committee was created, composed of a subset of the meeting’s participants, to provide guidance as needed for CMind’s initiatives. The committee continues to advise us on matters such as the design of the Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy, the formulation of the theme of the annual ACMHE conference, and ways to develop and enrich resources on contemplative practice and social justice for educators.
Concern: Feeling that silence and stillness are put forward as an assumed universal norm of sacred expression; feeling excluded due to a noticeable focus on “mindfulness” practices and a presumed shared vocabulary, indicating the need to expand the organization’s, and the community’s, held idea of “the contemplative.”

Suggestion: Demonstrate that contemplative practices are diverse and include the arts as many paths to the sacred (drumming, music, writing, poetry); conduct workshops or conferences on multiple ways of accessing the sacred.

Concern: Disappointment at the lack of participation in group discussions on issues of oppression and privilege.

Suggestion: Provide more training and resources to the community regarding issues surrounding anti-racism, privilege, and power.

Concern: Issues of class and hierarchy which are present in academia can be replicated at events and gatherings, and in selection criteria (for fellowships, etc.).

Suggestions: Encourage student presence at events; reframe “event scholarships” as grants or awards.

Meeting Participants

Nicole Anderson Cobb
African American Studies, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Daniel Barbezat
Economics, Amherst College; The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

Carrie Bergman
The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

Beth Berila
Ethnic and Women’s Studies, St. Cloud State University

Stephanie Briggs
English, The Community College of Baltimore County

Jennifer Cannon
Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Michelle Chatman
Initiative for Civic Engagement and Equity (ICE-E), The University of the District of Columbia

Veta Goler
Dance, Spelman College

Bradford Grant
Architecture, Howard University

Katja Hahn d’Errico
Social Justice Education, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Carolyn Jacobs
School for Social Work, Smith College

Vijay Kanagala
Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration, The University of Vermont

Miliann Kang
Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Rhonda Magee
Law, University of San Francisco

Juan Mah y Busch
English and Chicana/o Studies, Loyola Marymount University

Ram Mahalingam
Psychology, University of Michigan

Rebecca Ossorio
Education, University at Albany

Jennifer Palmer
The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

Glaisma Pérez Silva
Disability Services, Mount Wachusett Community College

Rose Sackey-Milligan
c-Integral
Focusing on Justice at the 2015 Summer Session

The Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy is an annual week-long intensive workshop guided by educators who are highly experienced with contemplative methods. The 2015 Summer Session, our 11th, was our largest yet: we received 169 applications, and had a group of 123 participants, presenters, and staff.

A focus on social justice issues was achieved through presentations such as Daniel Barbezat’s “Discovering Who Chooses: Contemplative Inquiry, Intention, and Action”; Paula Sager’s “Teaching, Learning, and the Practice of Embodied Relational Awareness: A Developmental Perspective on Social Justice in Education”; Stephanie Briggs’s “Be.Still.Move: Being Culturally Responsive”; Katja Hahn d’Errico’s sequence of introductory workshops for those new to contemplative education; and Sharan Strange’s “…We Are Each Other’s / Magnitude and Bond’: Poetry’s Empathic Urge.” And for many participants, Michelle Chatman’s presentation, “On the Mat: The Contemplative Ways in the IFA/Yoruba Tradition,” broadened awareness of rich contemplative practices beyond an “East-West” frame.

As we move towards grounding all of CMind’s events in deep and open engagement with social justice issues, we are constantly trying to learn how to make our events more conducive to supporting insight and healing to enable transformative change. We recognize the power of vulnerability and openness, the need for creating spaces for the “personal work” from which we engage with our “professional work,” and the need to deepen our own contemplative practices while opening to the breadth of contemplative expressions. The following quotations from the event evaluation responses speak to this multi-faceted challenge:

• “The discussions on race were exciting. Yes, they were difficult, but there was such compassion and honesty unlike what happens on my campus.”

• “[I]t fell somewhere in the middle between a spiritual retreat and an academic conference...I did open myself and felt vulnerable at times, but the need in the back of my mind to ‘be an academic’ and find ways to apply workshops insights into my work was always there. But this is part of my process, where I am still working on ways to bridge my spiritual and academic identities.”

• “I found that many of the sessions became highly emotional and personal. It is remarkable that people so quickly felt that they were in a safe place to ‘open up.’ Personally, I do not find it easy to do this at a session where I do not know the participants well. But I applaud others who are! … [T]he assumption that because we are all interested in [contemplative practice], we are all equally ready or willing to dive into the cauldron of the emotions, is the most difficult aspect for me.”
On Empathy

The closing lines of Gwendolyn Brooks’s poem “Paul Robeson” presents an apt conceptualization of empathy in the context of bearing witness. Anyone familiar with the figure of Robeson as activist, and not just singer and actor, would recognize the context of community and social justice implicit in the poem.

The modern concept of empathy is that of an unconscious merging of self and other, as the other’s experiences echo within us, feeling them as if they’re our own—and thus vicariously entering into another’s body and sharing their experiences. Our bodies “map” and respond to the emotional state of others. (e.g., Mood transfer via facial expressions and body language is so powerful that people doing it on a daily basis literally start to look alike.) — The Age of Empathy, Frans de Waal

“Empathy’s chief portal is identification . . . But, we have a hard time identifying with people whom we see as different or belonging to another group . . . If identification with others opens the door for empathy, the absence of identification closes that door . . . As Goleman notes, “Self-absorption kills empathy.” (de Waal)

What if we just “bore witness” and “sit with” what we see and hear? What if we simply “took into consideration” the “possibility” of something unfamiliar? Perhaps this might offer a different “view,” a different jumping off point towards “being” culturally responsive.


FREEDOM AND CONSTRAINT:
SOCIOLOGICAL MINORITIZATION,
CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES, +
SOCIAL CHANGE

→ COURSE DESCRIPTION

- INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLINE
- EMPHASIS ON IDENTIFICATION OF "INVISIBLE" FORCES CONSTRAINTING
  CHOICES/LIFE CHANGES
- APPROACH THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL
  PRACTICES OF MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

→ OBJECTIVES

- CRITICALLY EVALUATE & ANALYZE FREEDOM FROM SOCIOLOGIC PERSPECTIVE
- IDENTIFY US/GLOBAL FORMS OF OPPRESSION
- APPRECIATE AND LEARN FROM VIEWS OF OTHERS WHILE UNDERSTAND LIMITATIONS OF
  OWN VIEWS
- DEVELOP MINDFULNESS PRACTICES TO
  DEEPEN AWARENESS
  & UNDERSTAND (CORE VALUES, COMPASSION,
  CONNECTION TO OTHERS

TEXTS/READINGS:
- AMALIE GRACE
- (AMALIE GRACE)
- (FAITH FOR MEANING)
- (FAITH FOR MEANING)
- (VACLAV HAVEL)
The closing circle of the 2015 Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy.
On previous page: Notes for a presentation by a participant in Katja Hahn d’Errico’s workshop, outlining ways to integrate contemplative practices into a course on social change.

THIS ENVIRONMENT FOSTERED TRUST AND FAITH IN THESE PRACTICES TO EFFECT REAL, POSITIVE CHANGE TOWARDS A MORE KIND, JUST, PEACEFUL WORLD.

- 2015 Summer Session participant
Creating Contemplative, Just Communities

How can we inspire students, faculty, administrators and staff to engage in just and inclusive community building through contemplative pedagogy? How can contemplative communities do the work of unsettling oppression, both within the communities and outside of them? What are the attributes, capacities, and actions of successful campus contemplative communities? What types of resources, tools, and connections can we provide to help emerging contemplative campus communities?

In 2015, we investigated these questions through our events and a new project undertaken with the Fetzer Institute to examine contemplative community-building on college and university campuses.

These inquiries provides important guidance for the realization of our vision of education that creates opportunities to inquire deeply into meaning and purpose. Supporting teachers and students in expressing themselves as whole persons—integrating their hearts and minds—creates the opportunity for connection and transformative teaching and learning for all.

We are coordinating a meeting of community organizers and individuals from across our network who are engaged in creating and sustaining contemplative communities on their campuses. The meeting will be held April 14-17, 2016, at Fetzer’s meeting and retreat facility, Seasons, in Kalamazoo, MI, and it will be facilitated by Mirabai Bush.

By addressing and engaging in these questions, we plan to develop a set of tools and resources for other faculty, staff, and students who are interested in initiating or growing contemplative communities on their campuses. We hope this inquiry will help us envision the many ways in which communities and contemplative approaches can affect the current and future state of higher education, helping us plan a 2017 conference on the interrelationship between contemplative practice and the future of higher education—another project that we will undertake with the Fetzer Institute.
Building Just Communities: The 2015 ACMHE Conference

Since 2009, members of the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education have gathered at annual conferences to explore contemplative approaches in all aspects of post-secondary education and to share their questions and discoveries.

“Building Just Communities,” held at Howard University in Washington, DC, from October 8-11, 2015, opened the way to deeper and more extensive inquiries into the ways contemplative methods can impact social justice and change. The conference explored contemplative approaches to creating and sustaining just communities: approaches that foster connection while recognizing and honoring difference, with a commitment to the common flourishing of all.

These approaches examined the profound ways in which our social locations within higher education—based on age, gender, sexual orientation, discipline, ability, religion, race, social/economic class, nationality, contemplative tradition—affect and are affected by differing levels of advantage or disadvantage. As we recognize our interdependence and our responsibilities to one another, we can cultivate more ethical, compassionate, and more socially just communities.

We often see contemplative approaches as practices focused inward, as forms of self-inquiry and reflection for fostering intrapersonal development. However, we also know that they arise out of and influence broader human relations, developing and sustaining greater interpersonal connection. Presentations at the 2015 ACMHE Conference explored this connection, and discussed many ways in which colleges and universities can be sites for the development and exploration of this deep understanding of community.
To learn more about the 2015 ACMHE Conference, visit 2015.acmheconference.org

The Poster Session at “Building Just Communities” featured 42 concurrent presentations.

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<th>2015 Conference Steering Committee</th>
<th>Featured Speakers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kakali Bhattacharya Kansas State University</td>
<td>Rhonda V. Magee Professor of Law, University of San Francisco</td>
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<td>Beth Berila St. Cloud State University</td>
<td>Ali Smith Atman Smith Andres Gonzalez Founders and Directors, Holistic Life Foundation</td>
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<td>Stephanie Briggs Community College of Baltimore County</td>
<td>Renee Harrison Howard University</td>
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<td>Jennifer Cannon University of Massachusetts Amherst</td>
<td>Jason Miccolo Johnson Photographer and Author</td>
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<td>Michelle Chatman University of the District of Columbia</td>
<td>Paul Wapner American University</td>
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<td>Bradford Grant Howard University</td>
<td>Mary Dolores Guerra Arizona State University</td>
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<td>Andres Gonzalez</td>
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Rhonda V. Magee
Professor of Law,
University of San Francisco

Ali Smith
Atman Smith
Andres Gonzalez
Founders and Directors,
Holistic Life Foundation

Jason Miccolo Johnson
Photographer and Author
THE SESSIONS MADE ME THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT OUR ROLE AT THE INTERSECTION OF CONTEMPLATION AND SOCIAL ACTION. I ALSO APPRECIATE THAT THE CONFERENCE WAS AT HOWARD UNIVERSITY—IT MADE THE TOPIC COME TO LIFE IN A VERY MEANINGFUL WAY.

- 2015 ACMHE Conference participant

Rhonda Magee (Professor of Law, University of San Francisco) delivers a keynote address at “Building Just Communities.”
CMIND COMMUNITY MEMBER PROFILE

Velma L. Cobb, Ed.D., CPCC, ACC
Director, Equity Assistance Center (EAC) – Region II/Associate Professor, Graduate School of Education
Touro College

Much of my work is focused on developing skills in cultural responsiveness, understanding structural inequity, unconscious bias, institutional bias, and how these affect equitable, high quality education for all students in general but poor and students of color in particular. Consciously or unconsciously, we respond to organizational structures, practices, and cultures that make sense to how we see the world and that correspond to our way of dealing with the world. While many see the contemplative as an avenue for greater well-being, clarity, centeredness, and presence in self and others; often the connection to social justice and social change is lost. Institutional systems as we know them today are simply the expression of our current world-view, our current stage of development. Systems change requires changes in people. Inner, reflective and contemplative work goes hand in hand with outer, social systems change with an equity lens.

Consciously or unconsciously we all operate with values and beliefs that impact our worldview and how we act in the world. These values and beliefs operate as assumptions and expectations and shape our judgement of “what is” and what we “know.” I have used a values chart to help with articulating personal values. Also folks are encouraged to look at stated and implied values in organizational mission statements, curriculum syllabi and writings. External visuals, writings, or scenarios help individuals identify what they are drawn to and what they push away. How might personal values concur with or differ from stated or implied values of colleagues, clients or those they serve, and within the organizations they work for? What lived experiences concur with or differ from personal or externally stated values? Journaling, freewriting, and sharing via dyads or triads assist with identifying how speech, behavior and actions personally and professionally.
Supporting the Development of Contemplative Approaches in Education

The world we inhabit is more clearly integrated and connected across ever greater distance and difference. Providing teachers and students with the means to live, and address global issues, with open hearts and clear minds is essential for continued thriving on this planet. In 2015, CMind worked to develop the field of contemplative education to create greater means for communication, cooperation, and creative problem solving.

Grants to Centers for Teaching and Learning
In recent years, CMind has established relationships with Centers for Teaching and Learning (CTLs) throughout the US and Canada. Centers for Teaching and Learning exist within many colleges and universities and work to improve teaching by providing faculty with training and resources.

Working with Centers for Teaching and Learning is a highly effective means to reach across the curriculum and work with professionals who are committed to teaching excellence. CTLs have legitimacy on campuses and can easily reach hundreds of instructors across all types of instruction and disciplines. In addition, these centers are ideally situated to collect and assess the outcomes of the implementation of contemplative pedagogies, an area that is currently underdeveloped.

In 2013, with funding from the 1440 Fund, an advised fund at Silicon Valley Community Foundation, and the Mind & Life Institute, we began offering $5,000 seed grants and smaller grants to fund guest speakers on contemplative pedagogy. This support has helped CTLs establish and develop groups and courses to extend the use of contemplative practices throughout their institutions.

The 2015 Contemplative Mind Teaching and Learning Center Grant Program drew the greatest number of applications in the brief history of the program. We received 41 proposals from a wide variety of institutions in the US and abroad, which made for an exceptionally challenging selection process for our review committee, which consisted of two past recipients of Teaching and Learning Center grants, and two other individuals from our network with experience in contemplative pedagogy.

We would like to extend our deep gratitude to the 1440 Fund, an advised fund at Silicon Valley Community Foundation, for providing funding to make the 2015 grant program possible.
The 2015 CTL Grants

The Institute for Learning and Teaching, Colorado State University

CSU Mindful Leaders Faculty Training: Integrating Mindfulness for Transformational Leadership

Colorado State University’s (CSU) Center for Mindfulness in the Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT) proposed a Mindful Leaders Faculty Training with a Mindfulness Practices Guidebook in Higher Education as an instructional framework. Twenty CSU Faculty will participate in a pilot project designed to deepen practitioner skills and competencies in contemplative education including classroom instruction, community-based research, and committee work. A lens of social justice and gender equity will encourage cultivating kind, compassionate, and high social-emotional mature leaders who are engaged in the world in positive ways.

Northern Kentucky Center for Educator Excellence, Northern Kentucky University

Contemplative Teaching and Learning Initiative

The Northern Kentucky Center for Educator Excellence (NKCEE) is creating professional learning communities to think, study and learn together; develop two courses that model contemplative pedagogy (i.e., Best Practices in College Teaching and Mindfulness & Contemplative Practices for Helping Professionals); provide project faculty with partial funding to attend the Summer session on contemplative pedagogy; and sponsoring a workshop for faculty on integrating contemplative practices.

Research Academy for Integrated Learning, University of the District of Columbia

UDC Contemplative Faculty Learning Community

The University of the District of Columbia is the public, four-year institution in Washington, DC. In 2014, UDC was awarded an Invited Speakers grant and hosted two successful talks on Contemplative Pedagogy. This project enables UDC to build upon that momentum and explore Contemplative Pedagogy in greater depth through the formation of a faculty learning community. The UDC-FLC will gather in monthly circles to discuss the literature and varied approaches to Contemplative Pedagogy and will host a faculty workshop in Spring 2016. By the end of the grant period they plan to have contemplative approaches integrated into at least 12 courses in the Interdisciplinary General Education Program.

Office of Faculty Development, Syracuse University

Assessing the Outcomes of Contemplative Pedagogy

To further the development of contemplative studies and practices initiatives, a 2-day workshop was held in the fall of 2015 with an outside expert in assessing contemplative pedagogy. A follow-up session in Spring 2016 will present the work to the campus community. The goal is to consider deeply the evaluation of educational outcomes of contemplative pedagogy, including the development of an assessment plan. Institute applicants will be those who currently teach courses with a contemplative component and who are interested in drawing on additional expertise to create and pilot an assessment plan that could be used broadly across multiple contemplative courses to help us understand course outcomes and explore students’ perceptions of these experiences.
Insights

“*It’s unethical to not practice self-care.*”

Paula Lozoya

"Given the amount of suffering in the world today, it is impossible to be too gentle.”

“*Modeling is the best way to teach.*”
2015 Webinars on Contemplative Education

CMind has been hosting webinars—live online seminars presented by leaders in contemplative higher education—since 2009. Webinars provide a valuable resource for attendees at a distance and bolster our outreach. Our 2015 webinars were free and open to the public, drawing an international audience. The recordings of our webinars have been viewed over 15,700 times.

Challenges and Opportunities in Contemplative Higher Education
Carolyn Jacobs and Mirabai Bush
February 11, 2015
Registrations: 357
Attended: 170

Be. Still. Move: Creative Contemplative Movement
Stephanie Briggs
Assistant Professor of English, Community College of Baltimore County
March 25, 2015
Registrations: 298
Attended: 123

3 Steps for Building & Evaluating Successful Contemplative Programs
B. Grace Bullock & Sara Kraemer
International Science & Education Alliance
June 9, 2015
Registrations: 394
Attended: 170

Our webinars are recorded and available online:
www.contemplativemind.org/webinars

Dr. Arthur Zajonc, former Director of CMind and Professor Emeritus of Physics at Amherst College, discusses contemplative inquiry at the 2015 Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy.
The Journal of Contemplative Inquiry

In Spring 2015 we published the second issue of *The Journal of Contemplative Inquiry*. JOCI is a peer-reviewed online scholarly journal for publishing leading-edge writing on the transformation of education with contemplative approaches, serving all who design, research, teach, and assess contemplative and introspective methods and practices in college and university settings. Our second issue contained six papers:

**From Being Known in the Classroom to "Moments of Meeting": What Intersubjectivity offers Contemplative Pedagogy**
Dana A. Schneider, Elizabeth King Keenan

**Contemplative Approaches to Reading and Writing: Cultivating Choice, Connectedness, and Wholeheartedness in the Critical Humanities**
Dorothe J. Bach, John Alexander

**Four days of mindfulness meditation training for graduate students: A pilot study examining effects on mindfulness, self-regulation, and executive function**
Megan M. Short, Dwight Mazmanian, Lana J. Ozen, Michel Bédard

**On the Edge of a Bank: Contemplating Other Models by Which to Live**
Michelle S. Hite

**Holistic Ethnography: Embodiment, Emotion, Contemplation, and Dialogue in Ethnographic Fieldwork**
Christine Salkin Davis, Deborah C. Breede

**Dancing/Integration: Observations of a Teaching Artist**
Jessica Renee Humphrey

Visit the JOCI website at [journal.contemplativeinquiry.org](https://journal.contemplativeinquiry.org)
Assessment and Evaluation of Contemplative Practices in Higher Education

In 2015, in partnership with the Fetzer Institute, we laid plans to further an investigation into the assessment and evaluation of contemplative practices in higher education contexts. This was the theme of our 2014 ACMHE conference, “Intention, Method, and Evaluation,” where 65 professors and researchers from across the higher education spectrum presented their work, which examined how varying intentions for using contemplative practices in higher education affect the design and implementation of methods for assessing their effectiveness. We seek to extend the inquiry enlivened by the conference: How can our efforts be guided by what has been discovered about the many ways we learn, the creation of meaning, and the development of meaningful assessment? How might contemplative practices inform new ways of evaluating effectiveness?

Faculty, staff, and administrators throughout higher education are employing contemplative practices with many intentions, such as developing focus and attention; enhancing well-being; addressing inclusion and supporting the vibrant diversity of our institutions; deepening engagement with subject matter; reflecting on and supporting spiritual transformation, inquiry, and meaning-making; and considering the impacts of our actions. Given the breadth and depth
of these many intentions, the types of practices used are extremely diverse, and their assessment must be approached with great sensitivity. Assessment of practices intended to develop attention, for example, will be different from assessment of those intended to increase conceptual understanding, explore meaning, or develop compassion.

In 2015, we began planning a working meeting to take place March 30 - April 3, 2016 at the Fetzer Institute in which participants would look at effective evidence-based methods now existing for evaluating contemplative pedagogy. We plan to create guidelines for assessment related to a range of educational intentions. After such guidelines are drafted, circulated, agreed upon, and distributed, CMind could act as a clearinghouse for case studies and advances in methods. We are looking forward to reporting on this next phase of this project in our 2016 annual report.

Richard Chess (Professor of Honors Arts and Sciences, University of North Carolina Asheville) presents “To Dwell In Possibility: Poetry as Practice, Poetry and Practice” at the 2015 Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy.
By introducing and incorporating contemplative practices and assignments into the graduate courses that I teach, I invite students to connect their minds and their hearts to engage in deeper self-reflection around issues of social justice and equity. My courses engage students in topics such as power, privilege, oppression, race, ethnicity, gender, class, immigration, sexuality, religion/spirituality, emotion, etc. Working within a culture of mindfulness and as nurturing and validating an environment as possible, we engage in these contentious yet critical issues in higher education and society that are often uncomfortable and painful. Together, the students and I create an environment that supports learning and allows us to lean into the wisdom of our interconnected human experience. In doing so, we enter our work with an ethic of care, compassion and empathy. This self-reflective engagement is liberatory and healing because it challenges all of us to develop self-awareness and provides opportunities to examine our assumptions, beliefs, prejudices and biases.

I engage with a variety of contemplative practices in my daily work. These could be intentional moments of stillness and silence to guided meditative sessions and walking meditation. However rather than attempt to find peace in those moments of contemplative silence, I seek peace and moments of transformation in the chaos I experience in life to influence me as an educator. To encourage my students to be critical self-reflective scholar-practitioners, I introduce arts-based contemplative activities to my students. For example, student use guided imagery (photos) to explore and understand their positionality and self-reflexivity as emerging researchers. Through the Cajitas project (designed by Professor Alberto Pulido), students deeply examine their philosophies of education and student affairs and what unique gifts and experiences they bring to higher education to advance social justice and equity issues.
Envisioning the Future of Higher Education

In 2015, we undertook a large, important project with the Fetzer Institute: envisioning and designing a conference for examining the role of contemplative methods in the current state of higher education, and considering how contemplative approaches can inform the future of higher education to best serve the changing needs of our increasingly complex world. This watershed national conference is being planned for the fall of 2017.

For our college graduates to address issues such as climate change, growing national and global poverty and income inequality, food security, sectarian conflicts, and terrorism, they will require sophisticated skills: special training in a variety of fields, inner resiliency, and an ability to sustain their well-being despite challenging circumstances. These personal capacities are crucial yet by themselves, they are not a solution: the systemic causes and conditions through which these issues arise must be addressed.

A more robust vision and structure for the 2017 conference will emerge from our July 2016 planning meeting, where we will explore how contemplative practices in higher education can help us address the roots of many social challenges. As we respond to the shifting landscapes of society at large, how can we create educational environments that foster pathways for meaningful, lifelong learning for all?

This conference will weave together many aspects of our work, including our initiatives for advancing the assessment of contemplative pedagogies, building just communities, and exploring the relationships between contemplative practices, education, and social change.
Vivian Mac  
Student  
Amherst College

I became interested in this topic because of a variety of experiences. I questioned the purpose of education and engaged others in this inquiry, helped develop the QUESTion Project as an intern for the nonprofit Open Future Institute (an initiative that provides spaces for high school and college students to reflect on the meaning and purpose of their lives), became exposed to contemplative practices, and took Amherst courses centered around the themes of suffering and injustice. I wanted to find a way to deeply integrate inner change and social change work, and see how both can be fostered in colleges and universities (as well as in my own educational experience).

One of the contemplative practices that I’ve engaged in is mindfulness meditation. I have developed a clearer perspective on my thoughts, emotions, and body in ways that I haven’t experienced before. It made me more aware of the transformative potential that contemplative practices can have when integrated into education.
Teaching Contemplative Practices

Deep personal experience with contemplative practices is essential to all of our efforts. As the integral core of our mission and vision, it is essential that all of our events and initiatives embody an intention to support participants’ individual contemplative journeys.

We accomplish this through dedicated retreats and by integrating practice throughout our activities. In 2015, we paid special attention to representing a diversity of forms of practice, such as at a one-day retreat for educators, our Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy, and at a workshop on Contemplative Practices in Higher Education.

Retreat for Educators: Contemplative Practices in Teaching and Learning

This one-day retreat was led by Daniel Barbezat and Shalini Bahl on March 28, 2015, at Central Connecticut State University. The retreat was hosted by ACMHE member Jane Fried, Professor of Counseling and Family Therapy at CCSU. There were many opportunities for the 47 participants to connect with one another, which was a greatly appreciated aspect of the retreat, fostered afterwards through an email list and Facebook group.

The day offered an opportunity to quiet down and let go of our many responsibilities in order to cultivate awareness of ourselves and others and inquire into our lives. Much of the time on this retreat was spent in mindful guided inquiry (with journaling and partnered dialogue), silent sitting meditation, and silent movement, enabling participants to reenter their professional lives from a place of greater skillfulness and insight. The retreat included whole-group and small-group discussions on the relationship of the contemplative perspective to work in education, such as developing focused attention, deepened understanding of course content, greater kindness and compassion, and enhanced contemplative inquiry and insight.

Practice at the Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy

The 2015 Summer Session offered opportunities to explore ways of knowing through various forms of contemplative practice which complement lectures, discussions, and workshops about the application of practices and methods in the classroom or on campuses. Each day began and ended with a different contemplative practice led by Mirabai Bush and other Summer Session faculty members.

Emphasis was also placed on somatic, embodied ways of knowing. Each morning, instructor Anna Passalacqua led participants in gentle yoga, emphasizing body awareness, a focus on the breath, and self-compassion. A variety poses and movements were offered so that participants with different levels of experience and ability would find the practice accessible.
In the afternoons, Paula Sager led small groups of participants in Authentic Movement, an exploration of direct experience through the embodiment of two roles—mover and witness. Many of the contemplative practices led by other faculty members throughout the week also incorporated movement and somatic awareness: standing and rooting the body, positioning oneself for the purpose of seeing, and a partnered drawing activity.

Workshop on Contemplative Practice in Higher Education

At this workshop, held September 18-20, 2015, through presentations, contemplative practice, engaged discussion and question-and-answer sessions, Daniel Barbezat, Mirabai Bush, and Veta Goler (Professor of Dance, Spelman College) introduced contemplative pedagogy for academic environments; provided experiential examples of the ways contemplative practices can enrich teaching, research, self-care, and interpersonal interactions; and explored the relationship between personal introspection, the development of meaning and purpose, and engaged action in the world.

The workshop was hosted by the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, NY. The beautiful Omega campus offers a number of options for practice and self-care, such as guided yoga, dance, and meditation sessions, nature trails, and spaces for individual and small-group practice.
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CELEBRATE THEM AS EXPERIENCES OF OUR JOYS AND 
SORROWS.

- Carolyn Jacobs, Former Dean of the Smith College School 
for Social Work, at the 2015 Meeting on Diversity, Access, 
and Inclusion in Contemplative Higher Education
Glaisma Pérez Silva  
Coordinator of Disability Services / Student Services  
Mount Wachusett Community College

In my professional role, I have created a welcoming environment that allows our students to feel comfortable, and confident to express their needs. My demeanor provides the students with a trustful approach where the exchange of confidential information needs to be disclosed. The ambiance of the office is always conductive toward empowerment, acceptance and determination to overcome the challenges that impact their academics and in some cases validating personal life experiences. In my office, the students are surrounded with background music that promotes a relaxing environment, an invitation to feel comforted by the musical enchantment of soft and entertaining musical beats. I believe that Deep Listening is a rewarding practice that allows my visitors to feel validated. I provide an open space for exploration of the most valuable academic strategies that will be included as part of their personal academic support plan. I strive on self-advocacy practices as it is very important for students transitioning into a higher education setting. Students with disabilities in some cases are not equipped with the necessary “tools” to advocate for their academic needs. The unfolding of Contemplative Awareness promotes acceptance and understanding of the uniqueness that inhabit within every human being, with the purpose of being able to deliver an understanding of their learning styles and demystify the “disability” stereotypes.

In order to be productive in the provision of services and understanding the needs of the student population that I serve, it requires a level of balance and inner peace from within myself. Through my professional growth I found that practicing Centered Prayer provides me with a needed state of mind, peace and harmony. The goal is to obtain emotional and spiritual balance; in order to be able to embrace those that surround me. Additionally, the use of Storytelling is another practice that has also enhanced a sense of being human and that we are not alone. In many cases, the daily demands of survival, blinds us from our surroundins leading us to believe that “X” situation “only happens to me.” Other stories both oral and written, promotes value of self-appreciation and validation of the richness that we carry.
A Contemplative Inquiry: Clarifying and Connecting to our Intentions

A significant form of contemplative inquiry was woven into many of our events in 2015: a process of inquiring into our intentions for integrating contemplative practices into our work.

As guided by CMind’s director, Daniel Barbezat, this process seeks to promote greater clarity and understanding to aid participants in developing contemplative approaches that respond to their unique educational and institutional interests. As one Summer Session participant shared,

The importance of articulating intention in teaching a course—this was possibly the most significant thing I learned, because I’d lost heart for teaching in the previous years, and kept thinking that there might be something else out there for me to be doing that would be more useful to the world. I care about the students and want to teach them valuable skills and ideas, but haven’t felt that what I was teaching them was actually of much value beyond the technical skills of reading, analyzing, writing, and presenting. Now that I’ve been able to find and articulate intention, and have learned a process for doing that again as needed, I feel much more recharged about teaching and am looking forward to next semester.

Responses to an investigation into hopes and intentions at the 2015 Retreat for Educators.
CLARIFYING AND CONNECTING TO OUR INTENTIONS

Express all of myself in my work—hold all pieces of my life in equal importance & awareness, w/o judgement for what they are, reflect them in my medium. And then give others an opportunity to do the same.

There would be relief from the suffocation of suffering without a voice.

(Top) Daniel Barbezat leads an inquiry into intention at the 2015 Retreat for Educators at Central Connecticut State University; (left) a participant’s statement of intention and (right) small group discussion at the retreat.
Financial Summary

Statement of Financial Position

Assets
Cash $365,368
Investments $252,583
Other Assets $318,980
TOTAL Assets $936,931

Liabilities
Current $24,359
Long Term $6,618
TOTAL Liabilities $30,977

Net Assets
Unrestricted $505,754
Temporarily Restricted $400,200
TOTAL Net Assets $905,954

In 2015, the number of contributors to CMind doubled over the previous year. As we evolve, we are working to build a substantial donor base.

Statement of Activities

2015 Revenue
Foundation Donations $446,200 62.9%
Individual Donations $40,471 5.7%
Programs $221,703 31.4%
Other Income $685 0.1%
TOTAL Income $709,058

2015 Expenses
Program $356,356 70.7%
Fundraising $39,042 7.7%
Administration $108,935 21.6%
TOTAL Expenses $504,334
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Paula Sager introduces an awareness practice during a breakout workshop at the 2015 Summer Session on Contemplative Pedagogy.

The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

PO Box 817
Northampton, MA 01060
(413) 582-0071
info@contemplativemind.org
www.contemplativemind.org