

GUEST EDITORIAL

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Let me begin this editorial by formally thanking Dr. Charles Irby, Past President of the NAIES, for his exemplary leadership over the past two years. The membership in general, and the Executive Council in particular, are indebted to Chuck for his commitment and hard work. The Association has grown strong as a result of Chuck's efforts. Our thanks to you, Chuck! We will continue to pursue the ideal of unity through diversity, in its many ramifications, during the next two years.

At the Association meetings in April, we were privileged to hear Mr. Patrick Montgomery of The Anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights speak persuasively and compassionately regarding the status of countless persons throughout the world who are enslaved. Elsewhere in this journal is a membership form for the Anti-Slavery Society. I would urge each of you to actively consider membership in the Anti-Slavery Society as a matter of conscience, because as long as one person is bound, as long as one person is enslaved, each of us is diminished.

Over the years there has been expressed a consistent concern for the welfare of various ethnic/minority studies programs. This concern has variously taken the form of overt support for programs in trouble to inviting faculty and students to participate in the NAIES annual conference. It is not enough, anymore, in the face of growing educational, social, and political conservatism to invite minority/ethnic program members to participate in yearly meetings. In order for programs to thrive and not merely survive, it is important to have an independent forum to lend some substance or credibility to program evaluations. The NAIES is moving in the direction of setting up such a system for constructive program evaluations and would welcome any thoughts on this matter.

Over the years, one of the things that has distinguished members of various ethnic/minority groups in their struggles has been the fact that each group has usually had to go it alone. This situation is contributory to the generally agreed upon erosion in the field of ethnic/minority relations. The "divide and conquer" strategy is as old as the hills--and unfortunately just as effective as it ever was. The NAIES is one of the few national organizations that is committed to providing an ongoing forum for open and conciliatory discussions, where participants may come together to share experiences and gather new support. This issue is addressed elsewhere in this volume.

This volume focuses on a number of issues, but is principally engaged with the theme of the most recent NAIES conference: Women and Ethnicity. If you agree or disagree with points raised, please feel free to write and share your thoughts. After all, this is your forum, and without your comments and helpful suggestions, we are less than we can be!