Big News!

The title for next year's common read has been selected! We will be reading *In Defense of Food* by Michael Pollan. The book has been chosen, but there is still plenty of opportunity for you to participate in this exciting project! Join the FIG to help us integrate the title into the college curriculum and plan programming related to the book!

Pollan provides a shocking yet essential treatise on the industrialized Western diet and its detrimental effects on our bodies and culture. Here he lays siege to the food industry and scientists' attempts to reduce food and the cultural practices of eating into bite-size concepts known as nutrients, and contemplates the follies of doing so. As an increasing number of Americans are overfed and undernourished, Pollan makes a strong argument for serious reconsideration of our eating habits and casts a suspicious eye on the food industry and its more pernicious and misleading practices. Listeners will undoubtedly find themselves reconsidering their own eating habits. – Publishers Weekly
What is One College, One Book?

This project is designed to unite the college community in a common reading experience in order to:

- Foster a strong sense of community
- Inspire community conversations
- Promote reading and encourage scholarship
- Create cross-disciplinary dialogue and collaboration
- Examine issues of social justice through medical, historical, sociological, ethical, racial, psychological, and economic perspectives

Free training on how to incorporate Reading Apprenticeship with the One Book read will be available! Contact Nancy Sander at sandern@wlac.edu

For more information about One College, One Book visit www.wlac.beta.libguides.com/onebook

Exciting Announcement!

The One College, One Book FIG is sponsoring a summer read! FIG members were very enthusiastic about The Sky is Not the Limit by astrophysicist and educator Neil deGrasse Tyson and have adopted it as a summer read for faculty and staff or any other member of the West community who would like to participate. We will plan a few gatherings over the summer to discuss this fun and interesting book. Thanks to Professor Elizabeth Bell for recommending the book!
The first year of the One College, One Book initiative included lectures, panel discussions, intimate book discussions, film screenings and giveaways of copies of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* generously donated by the West Los Angeles College Foundation.

Professor Karen Quitschau facilitated a discussion on Jim Crow laws in the south and arranged a screening of *Miss Evers’ Boys* in FA 100. Both were well-attended, interesting events.

Dr. Bonnie Blustein opened dialogue on the ethics of medical research in a profit model. The popular discussion generated lively and enthusiastic conversation and was repeated twice.

Dr. Anthony Lee facilitated a discussion of the Black family in the era of Jim Crow as seen in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Student Alyssa Carrera facilitated a conversation about the ethics of tissue ownership. Discussion attendance ranged from three to thirteen and provided an ideal venue for chatting about the book in small, comfortable groups. Couldn’t make it? See upcoming events for the next discussion!

Dr. Kareen Martin lectured on basic cellular division. During the fascinating talk, she discussed how cells reproduce, how and why they stop dividing and how the process can go awry as it did in the case of Henrietta Lacks. She provided two encore presentations of this well-attended lecture.

A panel discussion was held in November on the ethics of medical research on human subjects and the issue of consent. The panel, facilitated by cancer consultant Rhonda Smith, included Dr. Bonnie Blustein of West L.A. College who has a Ph.D. in the history and sociology of science; Dr. Karen Brooks, senior director of Development Operations at Pfizer; Michelle D. Lagemann-McDonald, West L.A. College student who read the book for her political science class and felt a strong connection to the material; and Dr. Eva McGhee, assistant professor of Internal Medicine, Division of Cancer Research and Training at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine. The discussion included a spirited question and answer period and concluded with refreshments in the lobby. Many thanks to Professor Arnedra Jordan for her assistance in making this happen!
Dr. Greg Horwitz lectured on his research on HeLa cells. He discussed his research on cell progression from a normal to a diseased state and on how a virus can reprogram the genome of the host cell to prevent the cell from mounting a defense.

A panel discussion took place in May in celebration of Women’s History Month and in honor of Henrietta Lacks. While the earlier panel focused on the ethical issues involved in medical research, this panel focused on how we can take care of our bodies and minds while balancing the demands of daily life. Felicia Lateef, a health coach and nutritionist, discussed food and health and how to fit healthy eating into our busy lives. Darlene Edgley, president and CEO of Instant Recess talked about the mental and physical benefits of exercise, even if taken in 10-minute increments. Jacki Schechner, former director of Health Care for America Now, shared information about the Affordable Care Act, debunking myths and demystifying the provisions of the act.

In March, Professor Nancy Sander offered three screenings of the film *The Way of All Flesh*. This documentary chronicles the story of cellular biology and the discovery of Hela cells. It includes information about Ms. Lacks and interviews with her family.

The STEM Symposium series included a lecture by Dr. Patricia Zuk called *The History of Tissue and Cell Culture*. Professor Zuk spoke about the history of tissue and cell culture and how the field has revolutionized the worlds of research and medicine. Her talk covered the earliest attempts to grow tissues and cells outside the body and the challenges associated with the development of techniques that are now a critical part of every cell biology lab. The lecture connected with the book and with Bio 185, Cell Culture, offered this year for the first time at West.

It was an eventful year!
**Book Giveaway**

Thanks to a generous donation from the West Los Angeles College Foundation, the FIG was able to give away 70 copies of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Students submitted applications that included a short essay on why they wanted to win the book. Copies were also given away at One College, One Book events. A few more copies will be given away at the final book-related events so don’t miss out on the opportunity to be a lucky winner!

**Upcoming Events**

A discussion on the historical role of Johns Hopkins Hospital in the Black community will be held in HLRC 218 on Thursday, April 28th at 12:45 pm. Susan Trujillo will facilitate the discussion.

Greg Horwitz will facilitate a discussion on external issues that can influence research on Wednesday, May 4th in GC 130 at 1 pm.

A panel discussion on the medical ethics of research is being planned for May. Details will be coming soon.

**Using the Book**

Many professors have shared how much they and their students enjoyed reading *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* in their classes. It was used by professors of English, ESL, Biology, Anatomy, Political Science, and Theater.

Professor Mirmovitch shared the following about assigning a chapter to her students:

“Students discussed in groups what they thought about the egg and the busy city metaphors in order to describe the cell, and whether it enhances their understanding. The second discussion prompt was to discuss their willingness to donate cells/tissues/organs before and after death considering the potential for discovery and advancements of science that can come from their own body, but at a cost of loss of privacy (DNA sequence) and compensation.

The room was busy with discussion, and the students conversed and
debated many other issues of ethics and race in relation to medical treatment and experimentation in their groups. They loved the metaphors, and one student shared his excitement that he now feels he can teach even his 1 year old son about the cell using the "sunny-side up" metaphor. A few students felt that the "busy city" analogy would make it immensely easier to explain to non-biologists how the organelles in the cell operate. The use of metaphors in the book inspired the students to use other metaphors in the class exercise that followed, when every group taught the class in a creative way about one of the cell organelles. In addition to referring back to the busy city, they used helpful metaphors in their presentations, such as comparing the Golgi Apparatus to Fedex/UPS/Post office operations, or the lysosomes to garbage collection trucks.

...the sentiment in the room was that we could have continued to talk about the issues that came up for much longer.”

Next year’s selection, In Defense of Food, is equally cross-disciplinary. It examines the politics, sociology and biology of food and its effects on health. It’s a superb primer on the influence of special interests on food policy and the way we eat. It delves into issues of social justice as it scrutinizes the unequal access to healthy foods in the United States and how populations are simultaneously overfed and undernourished and the consequences of our Western diet. This promises to be an interesting and enjoyable read that we hope you will consider using in your classes. But if all you do is read the book, you are still participating!

Copies are available for checkout at the Library and your local public library. You can buy a copy for less than $10 at Amazon.com.

More Good News

Since 2010, Overdrive has offered SYNC YA, free downloadable audiobooks available during the summer. They will release two books per week beginning May 5th through August 17th. This year, one of the titles being offered is The Omnivore’s Dilemma by Michael Pollan, the author of In Defense of Food. For more information, visit http://www.audiobooksync.com/