

## Faculty women speak on diversity issues

By Dana Minney  
Staff Writer

Diversity was the key word in last Thursday's panel discussion, "Women's Perspectives on Cultural Diversity" sponsored by the Grossmont Chapter of the American Association of Women in Community Colleges. Carol Hallstrom, a local attorney and activist, moderated the event.

The panel consisted of Grossmont staff members Annjennette McFarlan, Speech and Communications professor; Linday Mann, Dean of Communications and Fine Arts; Carmen Hernandez, professor of Spanish; Lucy Price-Murofusi, Administration and Records Specialist; and Kathleen Gustafson, Librarian.

Ann Daluiso, President of Grossmont's AAWCC, wanted the panel to represent "diverse women on campus." This was apparently accomplished, judging by the wide array of opinions expressed. According to Hallstrom, the overall message that came through from the women was that of "strength and pride." Each woman told her own experience with prejudice, and shared views on what the future would be like in an ever-increasingly culturally diverse world.

Hallstrom led the discussion by sharing her experience with cultural discrimination. Her history involves her parents have to flee Russian and Poland because of the pogrom persecution of Jews.

"Having been a victim of racism does not excuse me from my responsibility to fight racial and sexual prejudice," she said. Hallstrom is currently very active as the Regional Director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Annjennette McFarlan, sharing her experience with racism, said, doors have been closed for me

because of my skin pigment and not my gender." She first became cognizant of racism at age 12, when she was not allowed into Knott's Berry Farm with the rest of her school band because they did not permit 'blacks.' "I have always had people try to put me in a box just because of my color," she said. She describes herself now as self-assured, which some people mistake for anger. "On the contrary, I love people and want to be involved in their survival."

Linda Mann, Dean of Communications and Fine Arts, spoke of the minority of women at the administration level in community colleges. She stated that this is because "women opt to not enter the higher level of power positions because they are too exhausted, and that they deliberately select themselves out of these positions."

Kathleen Gustafson spoke of her half-Okinawan, half-Japanese heritage. "I never admitted to being half-Japanese as a child because I lived in Hawaii near Pearl Harbor and there was much paranoia of Japanese." She also expressed hope that people will eventually be able to poke fun at themselves and each other because of their vastly different cultural compositions.

Lucy Price-Murofusi, spoke of a different kind of discrimination.

"As a 25-year-old white woman married to a Japanese man living in Japan, people never invited me to their houses because they thought I was too good for them," she said. Despite this fact, she was badly treated by her husband and finally moved back to America with her two daughters and filed for divorce.

The last panel speaker, Carmen Hernandez, told of her experience as a political refugee from Cuba at age 16.

"People were nice to me and I

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did not experience racial prejudice.” She also said that regardless of discrimination and prejudice, “What is in our head and heart, cannot be taken away from us.”

The discussion ended on a positive note with Hallstrom saying, “There is room at the decision-mak-

ing table for everyone.”

The AAWCC was organized in 1973. Its goal is to “create an awareness of the value of women as leaders in community colleges and to gain financial support for professional development of women as leaders.” Membership is open to men and women.