

The Central Project -- Notes from the Dramaturg
by Roxanne Ray

Who are we? That's the question that inspired *The Central Project*. We in the Drama Department were curious about the diverse population that comes together each week to utilize the space and resources at Seattle Central Community College. But we didn't want to answer our question from an artistic seat on high, or by examining tabulated reports from an executive's chair. Instead, we tried to share the investigation with the entire Seattle Central community.

First, we invited every person connected with Seattle Central to submit material to our project. Students, faculty, and staff sent us a myriad of work: poetry, short stories, spoken word text, and short plays. A committee of faculty and artists from throughout Seattle Central was convened, and its members asked to evaluate and recommend those submissions they found most compelling. We in the Drama Department then created a collage of a broad range of these submissions – but we also strove to extend the collaborative and inclusive nature of the project. We held open auditions, coalescing a cast of actors, dancers, and musicians whose own creative input has helped to shape the staging and final look and sound of *The Central Project*. We've also brought in designers and artists from the wider Seattle populace to aid in framing and polishing the show.

Yet, for all our good intentions regarding inclusiveness, we in the Drama Department have also continually had the face the same issue encountered by all in a world of limited resources: we couldn't include every submission, nor could we incorporate every good idea we developed in rehearsal. In our editing and shaping of the final text of *The Central Project*, we necessarily *excluded* some material, some writers, and some viewpoints, and our choices have likely reflected our creative and political priorities, as well as unconsciously revealed traces of our academic and artistic training and influences. We think it's important to acknowledge these limitations candidly, and to encourage our diverse audiences to share in our imaginings of the Seattle Central community, as well as to feel free to speak out in their own ways about this educational neighborhood that we all inhabit. Our performance, we hope, is a fairly comprehensive one, but it can never offer a truly complete picture of the entire Seattle Central community, or an entirely representative view of the talents and abilities of all those who learn, work, and create on this Capitol Hill campus. We present *The Central Project* as one element in a larger conversation about ourselves, our relationships, and our aspirations, and we look forward to the opportunity to listen to other perspectives.