



*Fairmont State Foundation, Inc.*  
1201 Locust Avenue  
Fairmont, West Virginia 26554-2470  
Phone (304) 367-4009  
Fax (304) 367-4742  
Toll Free (866) 372-ALUM  
Web [www.fairmontstate.edu](http://www.fairmontstate.edu)  
Web [www.pierpont.edu](http://www.pierpont.edu)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center at Fairmont State University facilitates interdisciplinary learner-centered programs and activities that engage individuals in discovering their own cultural roots and heritage.

### **The Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center:**

- equips teachers with curriculum and resources to effectively integrate regional culture, history and traditions into their classes in a way that is relevant to the students;
- provides various on-site and distance learning opportunities for students; and
- involves the community at large through special events, festivals, publications, programs and exhibits that foster a sense of cultural awareness, heritage and lifelong learning.

The Fairmont State Foundation, Inc., has embarked upon a fundraising campaign to refurbish for adaptive reuse a historically significant landmark to become a facility that will enable the existing folklife/folklore programs at Fairmont State University and Pierpont Community & Technical College to continue to advance. An integral part of this campaign is securing adequate funding to sustain and further extend the center's programming and curriculum.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center is dedicated to the identification, preservation and perpetuation of our region's rich cultural heritage, through academic studies, educational programs, festivals, performances and publications. The program possesses one of the richest archives of Appalachian culture, art and history in the state. Under the direction of Dr. Judy P. Byers, The Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center is the foremost provider of Folklore educational programs for North Central West Virginia and for central Appalachia. The Folklore program has a celebrated faculty, including Noel W. Tenney who also serves as the folk cultural specialist for the center, and a successful curriculum with regional and national recognition. The Folklife Center at Fairmont State University is a member of the Consortium of Appalachian Colleges and Universities and has been heavily involved in the Appalachian Teaching Project sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Commission. It is one of only twenty-five folklore-folklife programs nationwide.

## **I. RESTORATION AND RECONSTRUCTION**

The new center will operate as a viable educational resource and learning center serving both Fairmont State University and Pierpont Community & Technical College students and the West

Virginia community at large. It will include space for classrooms and labs for educational instruction, as well as gallery facilities for community and campus events, archival storage of Appalachian folklore, history and artifacts, and a complete research library and media center.

Recognizing the significance of historical preservation, Fairmont State University has selected the former Kennedy Barn (circa 1903) on the west-side of campus to become the new home of the Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center at Fairmont State. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The first phase of restoration and renovation for adaptively reusing the structure is nearing completion.

## **II. EXHIBITS**

The new center, when completed, will feature a Great Room of Cultures. This particular room will offer a wide array of Cultural Heritage Exhibits, which will both honor and recognize ethnic and cultural groups responsible for the growth and cultural identity of West Virginia. Exhibits will reflect the major migration patterns into West Virginia: Native Americans (10,000 B.C. to 1770); the pioneer era of Anglo-Celtic-Germanic (Scotch-Irish, English, Welsh, Irish and German/Dutch) and African-American settlement (1750-1860); and the Industrial Revolution era of labor force migration of Southern and Eastern Europeans, including natives of Italy, Spain, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, southern Ireland, Austria and Russia, as well as various Asians (beginning in 1880). Exhibits will also examine the many industries that left an indelible mark on the region, including railroad, oil, gas, timber, coal, chemicals, glass and other industries such as zinc.

Additionally, the new center will have a secured gallery in order to display other in-house curated exhibits along with traveling exhibits from all over the United States and the world, further exposing area students to the diverse cultures that have influenced this region.

## **III. PROGRAMMING**

### **A. ACADEMIC STUDIES AT FAIRMONT STATE UNIVERSITY AND PIERPONT COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

The Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center, through Fairmont State University's Department of Language and Literature in the College of Liberal Arts, features a 19-hour interdisciplinary academic minor that can be attached to most liberal arts majors. A folklore studies specialization prepares students for graduate studies and professional involvement in such areas as preservation, archiving, teaching, curating, historical parks and museum management, entertainment, and storytelling.

The School of Human Services of Pierpont Community & Technical College, in association with the Folklife Center, also offers an Associate of Arts degree featuring a 21-hour concentration in Museum Studies and two certificates programs, Craft Production and Marketing and Museum Studies. These offerings are coordinated by Mr. Tenney.

## B. INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMMING AND CURRICULUM FOR K-12 SCHOOLS IN WEST VIRGINIA AND SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The Frank and Jane Gabor West Virginia Folklife Center serves as a hub in bringing together teachers, students and the community in a quest for a deeper understanding of the region's culture and of the root cultures of the groups who settled this area. The center is a resource that houses numerous artifact collections, including the unpublished folklore estate of folk tale scholar Ruth Ann Musick, who was the archivist for the WV Folklore Society and editor of the *West Virginia Folklore Journal*.

The center is more than an archival repository. The new cultural exhibits are designed to engage the participant in a living, interactive expression of folklife. In addition to activities at the center, special outreach programming provides direct and indirect opportunities for Folklife scholars to share their expertise with public school children across the region. Highlights of outreach programming include:

1. **WV Folklife Center in the Classroom**—Folklife Center staff will often take the curriculum directly into the schools, providing demonstrations and serving as special guest speakers. The staff also serves as a resource to public school teachers.
2. **Teacher Institutes**, formerly in collaboration with the West Virginia Humanities Council—These are held for English/language arts, social studies and arts teachers in grades 4-12. Themes are designed to expose teachers to formal academic training in folklore and equip them with practical strategies to integrate folklore studies into their existing curriculum.
3. **Pre-professional teacher training**, in collaboration with Fairmont State's School of Education—Classes, workshops and special activities expose pre-professional teachers at Fairmont State to folklore studies and curriculum.

*In the Mountain State: A West Virginia Folklore and Cultural Studies Curriculum*, produced by the Folklife Center, is a ten-unit curriculum containing lesson plans, instructional ideas, activities, and extensive resource lists. This is a comprehensive tool for educators to incorporate folklore/folklife studies into their reading, language arts, social studies and arts classes, serving as a resource to public school teachers as they integrate the multi-cultural and cultural awareness components of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning initiatives. Additionally, the curriculum is designed for use in non-academic settings, including community education programs for all ages, such as libraries, senior citizens centers and historical societies/museums.

## C. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. **Roads to Appalachia Study Abroad Program**—This program offers students enrolled in Folklore Studies classes and interested members of the community the opportunity to

experience root cultures first-hand and conduct in-depth research. For the past four years, students who have participated in this study abroad program have been invited to present their undergraduate research before the Appalachian Regional Commission in Washington, D.C. as part of the ARC Appalachian Teaching Project. In 2010, the Roads to Appalachia program will visit Eastern Europe and will partner with GEAR UP schools to allow public school teachers the opportunity to participate in this experience.

2. **Festivals, galas and events**—These and other special presentations are designed to celebrate folklife, culture and tradition in a community setting.
3. **Lifelong Learning**—The Folklife Center teams up with Community Education at Pierpont Community & Technical College to offer special classes with cultural heritage themes.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

In addition to the *In the Mountain State* curriculum, the Folklife Center regularly publishes two journals and has been actively involved in producing and promoting other works pertaining to West Virginia folklore and heritage. These publications are used as integral resources throughout the program. Additionally, these publications provide opportunities for student-writers and student-editors.

*Traditions: A Journal of West Virginia Folk Culture and Educational Awareness* was first published in 1993. Nine volumes of *Traditions* are currently in circulation. This journal features past and contemporary West Virginia authors and includes artwork, photographs, reviews and articles of historical and cultural relevance. Each issue has an educational connection, which affords public school teachers an opportunity to publish their classroom projects, lesson plans and narratives of their experiences teaching Folklore curriculum. *Traditions* is the recognized journal for West Virginia folklore.

*Hillchild: A Folklore Chapbook about, for, and by West Virginia Children* was first published in 2002 as a companion publication to *Traditions*. Three volumes are now in circulation. *Hillchild* introduces children to folklore and folklife through stories, poetry, illustrations, photographs, games and activities. Each issue also features stories and illustrations by children, providing a medium through which they can express their creativity and participate in the tradition of storytelling, while gaining a better understanding of the culture that surrounds them.

*The West Virginia Literary Map*, published in 2004, was created and sponsored by the Folklife Center in collaboration with the West Virginia Library Commission, West Virginia Center for the Book, Center for the Book of the Library of Congress, and West Virginia Humanities Council. This piece is displayed in the Library of Congress and is housed with the National Council of Teachers of English as part of their permanent literary map exhibit. The map will soon reach a broader audience as it will become a virtual exhibit on the Mountain Lit and Life website.

Recently, the West Virginia University Press called upon Dr. Byers and her students in the Folklore studies program at FSU to conduct scholarship and to compile the classification motif-index for the second edition of *Witches, Ghosts and Signs: Folklore of the Southern Appalachians*, written by Patrick W. Gainer.

## **COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

The Folklife Center works with many partners to accomplish the mission of identifying, preserving and perpetuating the rich cultural heritage of this region. Past and current partnerships include:

- Appalachian Regional Commission
  - Appalachian Studies Association
  - Appalachian Teaching Project
- Calabria-West Virginia Italian Heritage Association
- Fairmont State Community Education
- Fairmont State Community Lifelong Learners
- Fairmont State Masquers' Historical Costume Collection
- Fairmont State University School of Education
- Fairmont State University School of Fine Arts
- GEAR UP
- Mountain Lit and Life—Educational website through the FSU Library
- National Council of Teachers of English—Assembly on Literature and Culture of Appalachia
- National Storytelling Association—WV Storytelling Guild and Festival
- Pierpont Community & Technical College
- Pricketts Fort State Park
- Upshur County Historical Society
- Vandalia Heritage Foundation—Legacy Program
- West Virginia Humanities Council
- West Virginia Association of Museums
- West Virginia Public Broadcasting