Diversity Awards - 1999
Awards Winners

Undergraduate Student Excellence (Leadership/Service) Award Recipients:

Winston Bedell received the 1999 Diversity Award in Student excellence. Winston Bedell was nominated for his service as President and co-founder of the African Awareness Association (AAA), and for his participation in the establishment of the Third World News Service. A senior majoring in Finance, Winston has been instrumental in coordinating the AAA Cultural Show, and has been involved with the newly-established Multicultural Student Business Association.

Silas Pinto received the 1999 Diversity Award in Student excellence for his service as President of the cape Verdean Student Association, as founder of Capoeira, and Afro-Brazilian-influenced martial arts student group; and as convener of the Multicultural Student Alliance, an umbrella organization of groups of color. A junior majoring in Psychology, Silas is a master teacher of Capoeira, a fluent speaker of several languages and a skilled musician who plays multiple instruments.

Ebony Brown received the 1999 Diversity Award in Student excellence for her service as the student senate Multicultural Representative, as the president of Students Organized Against Racism (SOAR), and as the student coordinator for Search Weekend. In addition, Ebony has been an active Participant in Uhuru SaSa and the Diversity Task Force, and Coordinator of the recent visit to campus of Susan Taylor, the noted Editor of Essence Magazine, the leading black women's magazine in the United States.

Undergraduate Student Excellence (Academic/Service) Award Recipients:

Ibrahim Abdul-Matin received the 1999 Diversity Award in Undergraduate Student excellence. Ibrahim served as Vice President of Student Government, a member of the Executive Board of Uhuru SaSa, and a Varsity Football Player. Ibrahim is a Political Science major and an active participant in the URI Poetry Slam.

Danielle L. Hill received the 1999 Diversity Award in Undergraduate Student excellence. Danielle received the award for her excellence as an Academic Researcher, and for her service as president of Uhuru SaSa, and as an active member of Students Organized Against Racism (SOAR), The Diversity Task Force, and Solidarity Outreach. Danielle is a Communication Studies and Sociology major, and a minor in Portuguese. Danielle is a McNair Fellow, a member of the Alpha Kappa Delta Honor Society, a Trained AIDS counselor, a member of Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, and an RA at Bressler and Heathman Halls.

Undergraduate Student Excellence (Artistic/Cultural) Award Recipients:

Jhomphy Ventura received the 1999 Diversity Award in Undergraduate Student excellence. Jhomphy Ventura was selected for his service as a Producer-Director for URI Ram TV, as Stage Manager for Teatro Latino Estudiante at URI and as actor in URI Theater productions, such as The Wiz and The Taming of the Shrew. A major in Theater with minors in Psychology and Honors, Jhomphy is the founder and President of the URI Judo Club, a McNair Fellow, a member of Golden Key National Honor Society, a Trained AIDS counselor, a member of Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, and an RA at Bressler and Heathman Halls.

Student Organization Excellence (Leadership/Service) Award Recipients:

Brothers United for Action (BUA) received the 1999 Diversity Award in Student Organization Excellence for its service in promoting a broad-based diversity agenda for social change on campus. Providing insights for a diverse coalition of student, faculty, staff and administrators, The BUA has incorporated correctives for racism, sexism, homophobia, and other issues into its Task Force and with various curriculum committees.

Staff/Administrative Excellence (Leadership/Service) Award Recipients:

Linda Palazzo received the 1999 Diversity Award in Staff/ Administrative excellence. Linda received the award for her several years of service to organizations of diverse and underrepresented students. A Public Properties Officer in the URI Security Office, Linda has been friendly accessible, and supportive to student organizations in need of weekend coverage for events. Linda has been an active participant on the Diversity Task Force.
Lifetime Achievement Award: N/A

Graduate Student Excellence (Academic/Service) Award Recipients:

Vonda Jones Hudson received the 1999 Diversity Award in Graduate Student excellence. Vonda Hudson received the award for her service as a mentor and role model for African-American and other students. A graduate student majoring in Psychology, Vonda is assistant Residence Hall Director at Coddington Hall, and has been instrumental in the establishment of the Multi-Ethnic Graduate Association (MEGA). Vonda's most lasting contribution to URI may be her leadership in influencing the URI Psychology Department to integrate Multiculturalism into its policies, procedures, and practices.

Faculty Excellence (Academic/Service) Award Recipients:

Dr. Bette La Sere Erickson received the 1999 Diversity Award in Faculty excellence. Dr. Erickson received the award for her service in conceiving, conducting and developing the URI Multicultural Center Faculty Fellows Program, a support group of approximately 25 faculty and a handful of students and staff, who meet regularly to discuss classroom teaching, their interactions with diverse students, and service or research projects with diverse faculty and students. Along with her husband, Dr. C.B. Peters and other faculty and staff, Bette recently developed and submitted a major grant proposal to the Hewlett foundation to support Faculty Fellows and other programs of the Center. The Assistant Director of the Instructional Development Program, Bette has been active on the Multicultural Center Advisory Committee, the Faculty of Color and Friends, and the Diversity Week Planning Committee. Her research interests include faculty development and the adjustment of students to college.

Dr. Paul de Mesquita received the 1999 Diversity Award in Faculty excellence. Dr. de Mesquita received the award for his service in coordinating Diversity Week, a week long program of workshops, videos, a keynote address, a poetry slam, and a Graffiti Wall, intended to acknowledge and celebrate the full gamut of Multiculturalism. An Associate Professor in the Psychology Department, Dr. de Mesquita has been active on the Multicultural Center Advisory Committee and the Faculty of Colors and Friends. In addition, he is a Multicultural Center Faculty Fellow. His research interests include education reform.

Dr. Cynthia M. Hamilton received the 1999 Diversity Award in Faculty excellence for her service in linking URI students to students at the Training School, her nurturing of the student run Third World New Service, and for her leadership in designing and developing the African and African-American studies Program major. The Director of the Program and an Associate Professor, Cynthia is a committed activist-scholar, who principle research focus is urban politics.