

# FALL 1998

## BROTHERS UNITED FOR ACTION (BUA)

In the fall of 1998, a clandestine collective known as Brothers United for Action (BUA) was formed with the aim of finding solidarity amidst a hostile environment. Under the guidance and counsel of TD core staff members, Edward Givens and Gerald Williams, the BUA convened for intimate gatherings, commonly referred to as "skull sessions," with no intention of stepping into the public eye. However, a series of events triggered by the publication of a contentious and, according to many, racially charged cartoon in "The Good Five Cent Cigar" thrust the BUA into a prominent leadership position. Marc Hardge and Barry O'Connor emerged as the group's spokespersons, with unwavering support from notable individuals such as John Carl Cruz, Kenneth Dovale, Maxford Foster, Brian Hardy, Azikiwe Husband, Jonathan Lewis, Ariel Marmolejos, Frantz Medina, Edward Moye, and Derek Rezendes.



Marc Hardge (left) with Barry O'Connor (right) whose Marine Corps experience influenced BUA's military formation.



When Jonathan "Globe" Lewis came across the cartoon published in "The Good Five Cent Cigar", he brought it to the attention of fellow members of BUA. Together, along with their supporters, they collected each of the issues placed around campus and marched back to newspaper headquarters to return in protest.



**MARC HARDGE**  
**TD ACADEMIC ADVISOR**

"When I reflect on my experiences back in 1992, I remember that I was incensed when I saw the cartoon. I could not believe that "The Good Five Cent Cigar" would publish such a negative depiction of Black people here at URI! Therefore, from the beginning I was "all in" with whatever the BSLG had to do to address the matter. However, I had no idea that we would be responsible for being the "voice of POC" for the entire movement. It was a tremendous responsibility that weighed heavily on all of us. The best part of it was the fact that it empowered all POC at URI to find "their voice" and share it with the entire URI Community. This was the genesis of several new student organizations that emerged from the groundswell of support for the BSLG such as: Asian American Student Association [ASA], Cape Verdean Student Association [CVSA], and Latin American Student Association [LASA]. I distinctly remember that there were people in the RI community that were telling us that we were the voice for: "all people of color in the state of Rhode Island." This was an awesome responsibility, and we took it very seriously. It was valuable leadership experience that prepared us for our next step as professionals in society. TD Assistant Director Ed Givens was the architect and Taft Hall was the basecamp for all of us and the anchor to the whole movement. That responsibility is what made all of us who we are today. TD Director Gerald Williams often says that TD Scholars "stand on the shoulders of giants" and that is what it felt like in 1992."

**To the current TD Scholars** - "All of you must understand that as you navigate your way through your educational experience, you represent the TD Program on the URI Campus. It is your responsibility to carry yourselves accordingly to honor all those people that came before you."

# URI activists report receiving threats

■ Marc Hardge, of the Brothers United for Action, meets with the FBI to report threatening letters and messages, and even the university president says he has been the victim of vandalism.

By ELIZABETH RAU  
Journal Staff Writer

A few days after the Brothers United for Action protested a racially sensitive cartoon in the University of Rhode Island's student newspaper, a leader of the group said, he found a note on his truck bearing a hand-scrawled swastika and the words "white power."

Loath to "dignify it with a response," Marc Hardge tossed it aside. But when he received a racist letter in the mail this week, he took action: The letter was addressed not only to him, but also the BUA.

Yesterday, Hardge and other BUA members drove from the URI campus in South Kingstown to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Providence and filed a complaint.

"Grammatically, the letter was terrible," said Hardge, after his meeting with the FBI. "Not only was it ignorant, but obviously it was written by somebody who doesn't have the education I have."

BUA members say the letter is one of many incidents over the last several months provoked by racial tensions on campus.

Hardge said he recently found two other "white supremacy" notes on his truck, parked outside his house in South Kingstown, and received several threatening messages on his answering machine at home, warning BUA members to "watch their backs."

BUA members say they have found racist graffiti on the walls of a dormitory bathroom and that

someone threatened a girlfriend of a BUA member, telling her to "watch your back because we can snatch you up at anytime."

URI President Robert L. Carothers says even he has been a target of threats.

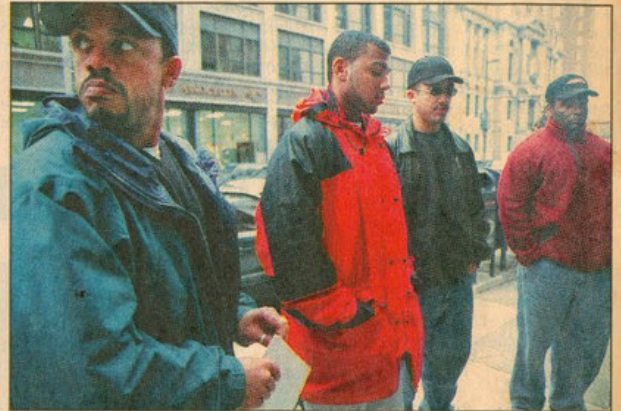
Carothers said yesterday that rocks were thrown through two windows of his campus house in mid-November, several days after a man left a racist, misogynistic and homophobic message on the voice mail of URI's affirmative action office.

Around the same time, someone painted crosshairs on a pillar outside his front door and broke his basketball hoop. And on Wednesday, he found an obscene message painted on his backyard shed.

As a precaution, he said, campus police have stepped up patrols at his house.

URI Police Capt. Brian Cummings said he does not know if the

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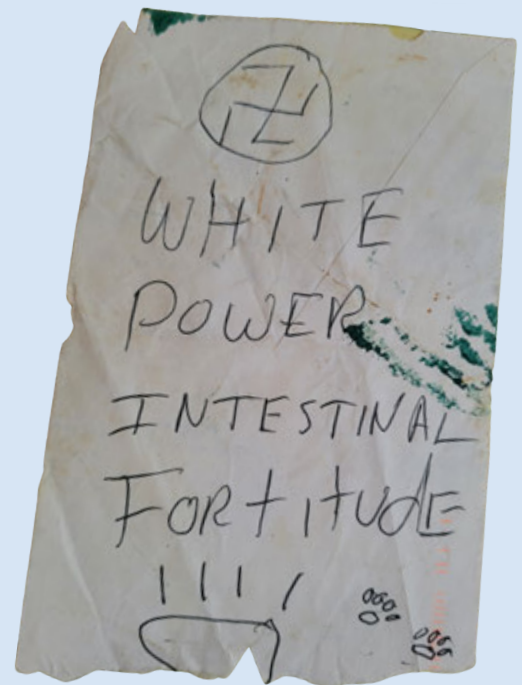


Journal photo/MARY MURPHY

**BUA MEMBER** Marc Hardge, left, waits outside the FBI office in Providence, holding an envelope containing a hate letter he received this week. With him are Vaughn Baker Jr., Barry O'Connor Jr. and Ed Givens.

## INCREASING THREATS FACED BY THE BUA...

The URI campus was consumed in a spirited, and sometimes tumultuous, discussion on the subject of free speech, attracting attention from local, regional, and national media outlets. Another source of controversy was the military-style appearance of the BUA, which drew inspiration from the Black Power Movement. Clad in black attire, the BUA and their numerous supporters marched together, evoking the spirit of Black Power as a historical precedent. Unfortunately, unidentified individuals made threats against the BUA and marked buildings, including President Carothers' residence, and BUA members' vehicles with gun-sight symbols. Amidst these unsettling events, it's important to note that Black Power represented just one facet of the BUA's identity. A diverse and robust support network rallied behind the BUA, consisting of faculty, staff, and students with varied beliefs and perspectives. This campus-wide movement issued "Two Demands and Ten Points of Light" to President Carothers, the Diversity Task Force, and the entire University community.



One of many threatening messages by White supremacists on URI's campus. This note was left on BUA member, Marc Hardge's, vehicle.

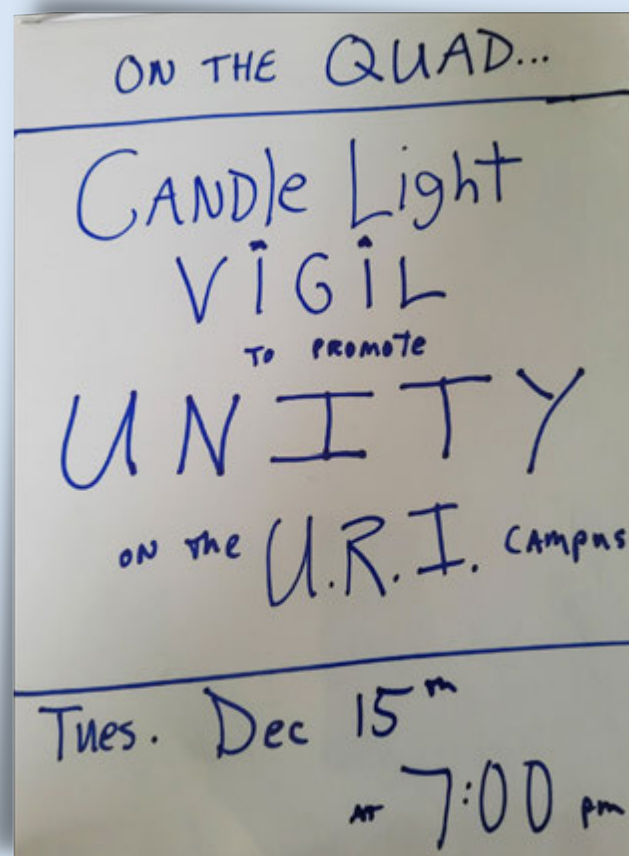
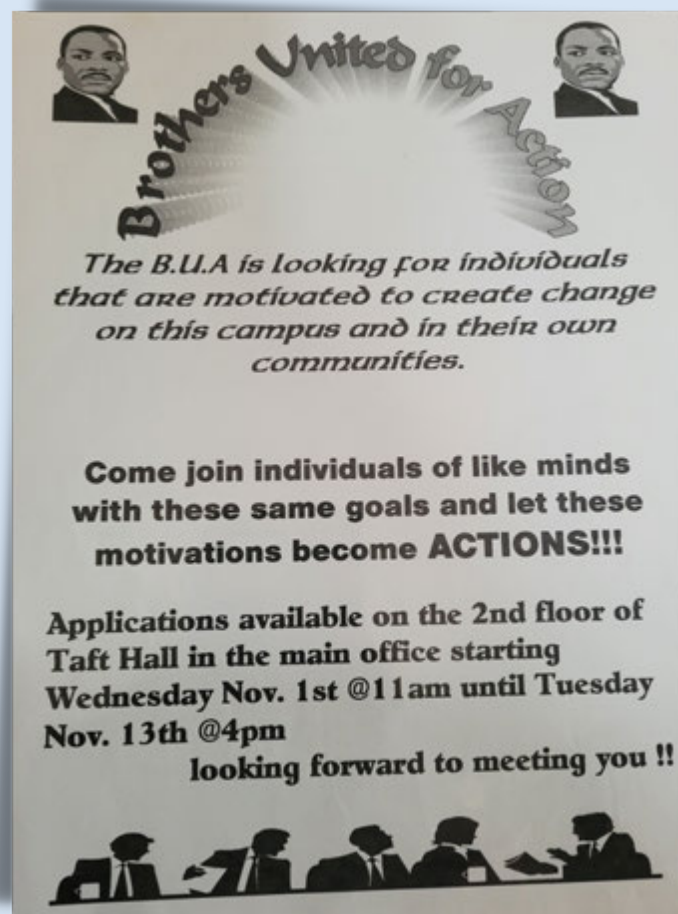
"Intestinal Fortitude" refers to having the courage and determination necessary to do something difficult or unpleasant. These scare tactics were meant to intimidate student activists.



## BUA'S "TWO DEMANDS & TEN POINTS OF LIGHT..."

The BUA's First Demand was a universal cry for justice for all individuals. The Second Demand called for a reformation of the curriculum to ensure that all URI students receive an education that explores and comprehends racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and prejudice against disabled individuals. Among the Ten Points of Light, the BUA advocated for the establishment of six new faculty positions dedicated to Native American Studies, Afro-American Studies, Latin American Studies, and Southeast Asian Studies.

They also called for the appointment of an Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) director and the creation of an LGBT Center, as well as a position in Disability Services. Additionally, the BUA sought to expand international study opportunities and connections, initiate the DiMaio Scholars Program, restore the Uhuru Sasa House, and name the MCC after Reverend Arthur Hardge. As a concluding note to the BUA's activities in 1998, President Carothers allocated funds to admit 250 new TD students. The success of TD Scholars and staff as change-makers at URI was not merely acknowledged but even celebrated. To underscore the extensive reach and impact of TD, the number of African students increased, with students from Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and various other African countries seeking to become part of a diverse community with a focus on advocacy.



# 1999-2000 BROTHERS UNITED FOR ACTION (BUA)



In Fall 2000, members of BUA were honored to escort Civil Rights leader, Coretta Scott-King (wife of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.) from the airport during her visit to the University of Rhode Island. King was scheduled to kick off URI's fall honors colloquium series, "Nonviolence: Legacies of the Past, Bridges to the Future."

Alongside King is Dr. Bernard Lafayette, Civil Rights leader and advocate for non-violent social change and members of the BUA.

The BUA's "Two Demands and Ten Points of Light" became the focal point of an intense, lengthy, and challenging negotiation involving the BUA, President Carothers, the URI administration, and the United States Department of Justice, represented by Dr. Josephine Carabello from the Civil Rights Office. In May of 1999, a Mediated Agreement was signed by all three parties. The BUA/President Carothers/Justice Department Agreement continues to serve as a roadmap for future transformation at URI, just like the "Two Demands and Ten Points of Light" document. The BUA paved the way for comprehensive and diverse change.

In many respects, URI is only now beginning to embrace the vision put forth by the BUA. The BUA may have been ahead of their time, as they established a framework that has proven beneficial to everyone involved. The existence of DiMaio Scholars, new faculty positions, increased awareness regarding LGBTQ+ issues, expanded opportunities for international study, and the presence of the Reverend Hardge Statue are all a testament to the far-reaching impact of the BUA. By collaborating with their TD mentors and garnering support from numerous allies among faculty, staff, students, as well as the Rhode Island Civil Rights community and spiritual leaders, the BUA charted a course towards a new era of transformative change across the entire campus.

**FALL 2023 MARKED THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF BROTHERS UNITED FOR ACTION!  
READ MORE ABOUT THE CELEBRATION ON PAGE 70**

# 2000S

## OPPORTUNITY IN A NEW CENTURY

In the spring of 2000, Gerald R. Williams, assumed the role of director for TD. His background, both as a former TD student and TD academic advisor, brought a profound and distinctive perspective to the helm of Talent Development. The vision of equal opportunity, famously expressed in Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, increasingly became a reality for a growing number of students. In 2001, TD welcomed over 300 new students. Thanks to Mr. Williams' guidance, TD swiftly progressed to accepting 400, then 500, and later 600 new students each year, accompanied by enhanced academic and financial support. The Hardge-Forleo Grant also evolved into a need-based, full-tuition scholarship.

An influential figure in this journey, Mr. Williams played a vital role in introducing the Guaranteed Admissions Program (GAP) to TD. Working closely with Dr. Joanna Ravello, former TD assistant director and former director of Community & Organizational Development at URI, this initiative further expanded the opportunities for higher education at URI. Additionally, under Mr. Williams' directorship, Dr. Karoline Oliveira returned to TD as an academic advisor for a while and Marc Hardge (son of founding TD director Reverend Hardge) joined as the GAP coordinator. Domingo Morel served as a TD academic advisor for five years before embarking on a doctoral program at Brown University and co-founding the RI Latino Policy Institute.

To bolster TD's technological capabilities, Mr. Williams enlisted the expertise of Dr. Edward "Ted" Shear, who became an academic advisor and systems innovator within the TD core staff. Jarso Jallah Saygbe made significant strides in building relationships as an academic advisor during her tenure. Later on, TD once again turned to its own, hiring Robert "Bobby" Britto-Oliveira and Wynston Wilson as academic advisors, both valuable additions to the TD team. Jacquelyn Moreino also excelled in her role as an Information Aide.

Demonstrating his support for TD students, Mr. Williams endorsed the candidacy of Brandon Brown, a TD student, for a position on the Board of Governors. Mr. Brown's appointment marked a historic milestone as the first African-American student to serve in this esteemed role, and he fulfilled his responsibilities with distinction. From its humble beginnings with thirteen students, TD's journey has been characterized by struggle, activism, and historic collaborations between students and staff. Mr. Williams leadership has further strengthened this tradition and legacy.

*Moving Towards TD Nation!*



## TD HONORS FORMER DIRECTOR MR. LEO F. DIMAIO, JR.

During his 31 years at TD, Mr. Leo F. DiMaio Jr. influenced the lives of thousands of students, fighting for equality and transforming the face of URI. His commitment to the program and its students was unparalleled. Even after retiring from TD in November 1999, his presence and influence remained a vital part of TD's history.

To honor his numerous accomplishments and devotion to TD and its students, a dedication ceremony was held on June 1, 2001. The Leo F. DiMaio Student Conference Room was unveiled outside Taft Hall, with over 200 people in attendance, including University President Robert L. Carothers, former R.I. governor Bruce Sundlun, Judge Frank Caprio, the Narragansett Indian Tribe delegation, and several other dignitaries.

President Carothers, deeply moved by the stories of TD and its commitment to students, described “Mr. D.” as a man who carried a large stick but did so with love. “Mr. D.” had three great loves in his life: his wife Ilene, with whom he had been married for 47 years, his work at the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI), where he served for 13 years, and TD, which he considered his most consuming and passionate love. During the ceremony, “Mr. D.” shared stories of TD's early years at URI, when the program and its students faced significant barriers and struggled to establish themselves on a campus dominated by hite middle-class students. He recounted encounters with individuals who doubted the success of TD students, dismissing them as not “college material.” “Mr. D.” defiantly told them to “go to hell.”

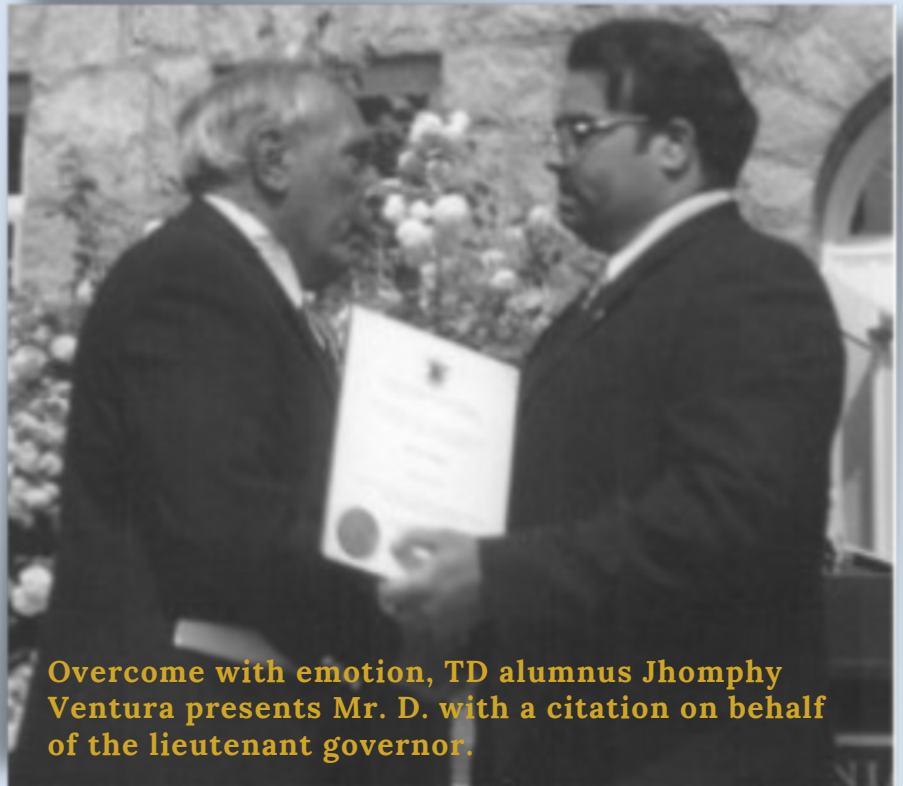
TD Staff, along with URI President Robert L. Carothers, prepare to unveil the Leo F. DiMaio dedication plaque. The plaque featuring “Mr. D.” is located in the newly named Leo F. DiMaio Conference Room.



He proudly proclaimed that 11 out of TD's original 13 members had graduated, and TD students had achieved various honors and accomplishments. These achievements defied the expectations placed upon them, proving the critics wrong. "Mr. D." credited the success of TD to its students, considering them the foundation upon which TD was built. He expressed his gratitude to the TD students, stating that they gave him life, energy, and passion, and that they were remembered every day.

Jhomphy Ventura, a TD alumnus from the class of 2000 and then an aide for Lt. Gov. Charles Fogarty, presented "Mr. D." with a citation on behalf of the lieutenant governor. Ventura, moved to tears, emphasized the special meaning the citation held for him as a TD alumni. He expressed his admiration for "Mr. D.", stating that if he could live to be half the man "Mr. D." was, he would consider it a life well-lived.

"Mr. D's." impact on TD and its students will forever be remembered and celebrated. His unwavering dedication, passion, and fight for equality left an indelible mark on URI and the lives of those he touched.



**Overcome with emotion, TD alumnus Jhomphy Ventura presents Mr. D. with a citation on behalf of the lieutenant governor.**

## EQUITY COALITION/EQUITY COUNCIL (2007)

In the summer of 2007, the members of the URI "President's Council on the Status of Women" recognized the need and importance of expanding their group. Dr. Lynne Derbyshire, Grace Frenzel, Karol Leuzarder, Dr. Barbara Silver, and Dr. Sylvia Spears took the initiative and organized a meeting in November of the same year, followed by a campus-wide Equity Forum. With the support of President Carothers, the Equity Coalition was established and later officially recognized as the URI Equity Council. The primary purpose of the Equity Council was to provide advice to the President on matters related to race, class, gender, orientation, and disability. It became a space where students, faculty, and staff could come together to address shared concerns.

One critical issue that garnered significant attention within the Equity Council was the longstanding debate about the creation of a URI Vice President for Diversity. The goal was to ensure that leadership and support for diversity were established at the highest level of the university's hierarchy. Recommendations for such a position had been made in two separate studies conducted by Van Leesten Associates: one in the 1980s in response to the Convocation, and another in the early 1990s in response to the BSLG. Over the years, numerous faculty, staff, and students had advocated for the establishment of this position.

The co-chairs of the Equity Council, initially Grace Frenzel and Dr. Jerry Schaffran, followed by Dr. Patricia Morokoff and Dr. Schaffran, then Dr. Morokoff and TD Director Gerald "G" Williams, and later Dr. Derbyshire and Michelle Fontes, played a significant role in leading URI towards the creation of the Senior Associate Vice President for Community, Equity, and Diversity. Their efforts were supported by then URI President Dr. David Dooley, whose endorsement and advocacy were instrumental in appointing Naomi Thompson, JD, as URI's first permanent Senior Associate Vice President for Community, Equity, and Diversity in 2012. In 2020, Dr. Mary Grace Almandrez was named the Associate Vice President for Community, Equity and Diversity. Upon her departure, URI appointed Dr. Sean Rogers as Vice President for Community, Equity and Diversity, who has since transitioned to serve as the Dean of the College of Business at URI, and TD Scholar Michelle Fontes as Assistant Vice President of Community, Equity and Diversity.

While the Equity Council no longer exists, the legacy of its outcomes continues to hold a to be felt on the URI campus, as the ongoing struggle that began in 1968 progresses toward the realization of Dr. King's dream.

## HARDGE-FORLEO GRANT

In 2008, at the TD 40th Anniversary Celebration, Sharon and Frank Forleo were honored by having their names added to Reverend Hardge's on the Talent Development Scholarship.



## CONTEMPORARY ACTIVISM: “STOP THE HATE” & “I-AM-U URI”

At 11 a.m. on November 18, 2009, the chimes of Davis Hall on the URI Quadrangle resounded with a heightened intensity. Instead of a mere indication of time passing, the bells rang out until complete silence enveloped the surroundings, drawing together more than 1,500 URI students, faculty, and staff for a shared purpose: putting an end to hate. This gathering marked the largest protest the URI campus had witnessed since 1970.

Side-by-side, and even hand-in-hand, many individuals stood in silent opposition against the prevalence of hate crimes on the URI campus. Racial slurs, depictions of Nazi symbols, and anti-LGBTQ rhetoric had become all too familiar in the lives of URI students. Leading the way in initiating the silent protest was Christina Knoll, who utilized social media as a contemporary tool for organizing. Shortly thereafter, officers from Uhuru Sasa, leaders from URI-NAACP, and TD students joined forces to advance this cause. Among the core members of the "Stop the Hate" movement were Darlene Fulp, Tyrene Jones, Richlieu “Rich” Norris, and Douglas Tondreau, who played crucial roles in organizing peaceful resistance within the URI community.



Despite facing racial slurs and opposition from fellow students who demanded the cancellation of the event, Christina Knoll and her colleagues exhibited unwavering courage to persevere. The success of "Stop the Hate" culminated in an exceptional student conference in early 2010. With broad participation from student leaders across the campus, the movement evolved into "I-AM-U URI." This group formulated an agenda for change at URI, which they presented to the newly appointed URI President, David Dooley, and the Equity Council in the spring of 2010. Key issues addressed included the treatment of LGBTQ students, leading to a spotlight on LGBTQ concerns and the demand for a new LGBTQ Center. In the fall of 2010, LGBTQ students and their allies occupied a section of the URI Library, further amplifying these issues.

**NAACP MEMBERS, DOUGLAS TONDREAU, (LEFT)  
DARLENA FULP (RIGHT)  
& CHRISTINA KNOLL (MIDDLE)**



**Before the protest, free t-shirts were given  
to the URI community reading,  
"Stop The Hate"**

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD (UGR)

Founded in 2003 by TD Scholars Babatunde Jenyo, Rex Porte and Oluwaseyi "Shaye" Omoniyi, the Underground Railroad (UGR) was an extraordinary student service organization. Named after the network of guides who helped escaping enslaved people move north to freedom before and during the American Civil War, the URG took a lead role among men of color on campus in fostering academic excellence and creating community. Like the original, UGR worked almost totally behind the scenes and in secret. UGR never came "above-ground" or ever accepted any public role. They truly existed to guide and to serve.

## NEW DIRECTIONS IN STUDENT GROUPS & LEADERSHIP

While the traditional student leadership groups such as ASA, LASA, and Uhuru Sasa thrive, newer organizations like "Powerful, Independent, Notoriously Knowledgeable" (P.I.N.K.) and "Brothers On a New Direction" (B.O.N.D.), among others, are also deeply rooted in the history of the TD movements and events. The formation of P.I.N.K. Women in 2006 by undergraduates Margarida DaGraca, Deanna Kelly, Natalya Rocha, Michelle Rosa, and Samantha Vaughan was a response to the search for a safe and inclusive space within the URI community. These five founders recognized a lack of support for multicultural women at URI and sought to fill that void by establishing P.I.N.K. Their primary objective is to educate URI and the surrounding community about the specific issues faced by multicultural and ethnic female groups. P.I.N.K. places a strong emphasis on empowering women, fostering progress in multicultural family life, and organizing diverse events that align with their mission. Through their efforts, they have built a network of support for all multicultural women, aiming to serve as genuine role models and help younger generations envision a brighter future.

B.O.N.D., founded in 2007 by undergraduate members Karley Carto, Andrew Corria, Alexander Jibuike, Jeremy Kollie, and graduate student Kevin Martins, recognizes the importance of unity among men of color. B.O.N.D. commits to guiding adolescent men of color towards personal growth and equipping them with the tools for academic success. They lead by example and utilize mentorship to empower young men, instilling the knowledge that they hold the key to their own futures and can achieve success. B.O.N.D. advisor Robert "Bobby" Britto-Oliveira, continues to make a positive impact at URI, paying it forward towards an empowering and promising future.

Both P.I.N.K. and B.O.N.D. are guided by the principle of service, actively giving back to the URI community and their respective home communities. These organizations, alongside many others, carry the torch passed down to them by trailblazers such as the African-American Society, the BSLG, the BUA, and other individuals and groups, who made sacrifices to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive URI.



**ROBERT BRITTO-OLIVEIRA**  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
MULTICULTURAL STUDENT SERVICES CENTER  
TD CLASS OF '06, M.S.'11



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS  
& THE MULTICULTURAL STUDENT SERVICES CENTER (MSSC)**



# TD SUPPORT FROM VICE PRESIDENT THOMAS R. DOUGAN

Dr. Thomas R. Dougan, served as Vice President of Student Affairs for three decades before retiring from URI. A special event was held on December 16, 2015, at the Memorial Union's Rainville Ballroom to pay tribute to his contributions. The purpose of the event was to honor Dr. Dougan's exceptional work and recognize the lasting impact he has had on the URI community.

Renowned for his unwavering dedication to student welfare, Dr. Dougan commanded respect from both the Academic and Student Affairs sectors. A steadfast supporter and close ally of the TD Program, he played an instrumental role in its success. His impact, tireless efforts and invaluable services will long be felt at URI. He will forever be cherished as an esteemed member of the TD Nation Family.



**"Talent Development grew out of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. So in essence Talent Development is a product of the Civil Rights struggle. Talent Development is a program that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would point to and be extremely proud!!" - Dr. Thomas R. Dougan**



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. DOUGAN IN THE SPRING/SUMMER 2005 EDITION OF THE "TD STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWSLETTER."**

## COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW

In the fall of 2016, the University of Rhode Island initiated an extensive evaluation of the Talent Development Program. This evaluation included a thorough self-study conducted by TD staff, followed by an assessment carried out by an external review team. As a result, a set of recommendations was put forth to enhance the program. To address the team's findings within specified timelines, the TD Program devised an action plan and assigned staff members with specific responsibilities.

The self-study, external review report and action plan can be found at:  
<http://web.uri.edu/student-affairs/assessment-planning>.

## ROUSSEAU TREE OF LIFE MEMORIAL

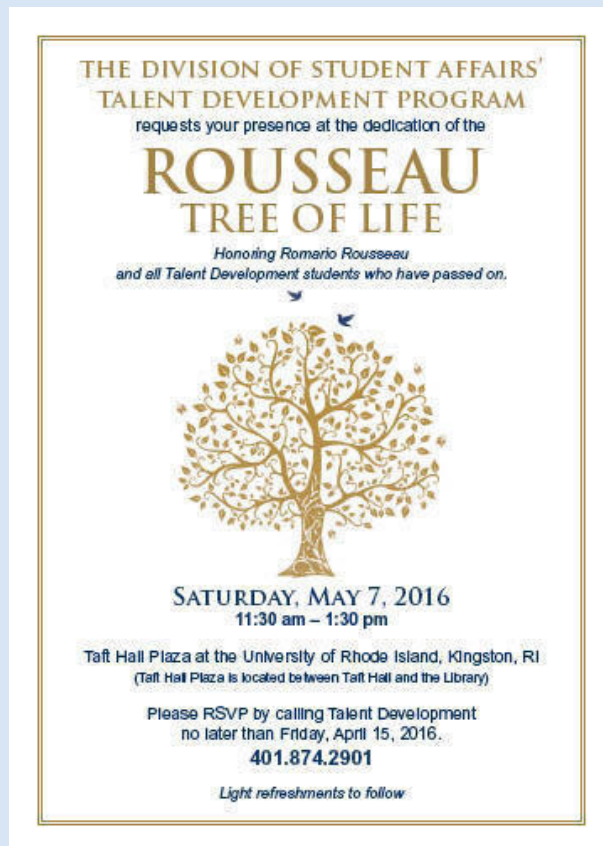
TD organized the Rousseau Tree of Life Memorial on Saturday, May 7, 2016, to honor the TD Scholars who passed away while pursuing higher education. The memorial paid tribute to Fernando Cano, Jose Figueroa, Breanna Foster, Khoi Pham, Romario Rousseau, Fandia Shloul, and Sierra Stanton, with four of them having family representation at the event. The Master of Ceremonies was Robert "Bobby" Britto-Oliveira. Dr. Thomas Dougan, the former Vice President of Student Affairs, supported the event during his tenure, and Dr. David Dooley, then President of URI, along with Dr. Mary Jo Gonzales, the interim Vice President of Student Affairs, continued that commitment after Dr. Dougan's retirement.

The memorial would not have been possible without the assistance of various individuals and departments. John Sears and the Housing and Residential Life staff

purchased the tree and plaque, Steve Mello and the Dining Services staff provided lunch, Sheleen Clarke and the Landscape and Grounds department planted the tree and mounted the plaque, Gina Simonelli from the URI Foundation handled the paperwork, and Sara Potter and Jacqueline Moreino from TD also supported the effort.

After the welcome and acknowledgements, President Dooley delivered a heartfelt speech about the significance of the loss of the TD Scholars, setting the stage for the first musical performance by TD Scholar Bethly Cruz, who sang Bette Midler's "Wind Beneath My Wings."

Following the song, individuals who had close relationships with the departed Scholars shared their reflections. Luis Javier Cano represented his cousin Fernando Cano, Edward Givens spoke on behalf of his advisee Breanna Foster, Stacey Brown represented her brother Romario Rousseau, and Carol "Kippa" Stedman spoke for her niece Sierra Stanton. Each speaker highlighted the qualities of the Scholars and the impact they had on their own lives and others'.



At the end of the remembrances, representatives from the families received a plaque from the TD Program. The plaques read, "TD Nation Remembers [name of loved one]" and were presented by members of the student organizations the departed Scholars belonged to while at URI. The late Earl Smith, Assistant Dean of Arts and Sciences, presented the gift to Fernando Cano's family on behalf of Phi Kappa Psi. Kristy Berdugo, President of URI's dance group eXposure, presented the plaque to Breanna Foster's family. Kevin Martins, a founding member of B.O.N.D., presented the plaque to the Rousseau family. Gerald Williams, Director of Talent Development and Advisor to the Native American Student Organization (NASO), presented the plaque to the Stanton family.

To conclude the ceremony, Jeffrey Jones, a B.O.N.D. Brother, sang the hymn "I Need Thee," and Robert "Bobby" Britto-Oliveira delivered closing remarks, directing guests to the tree and plaque outside of Taft Hall. The tree, an arbor vitae meaning "Tree of Life" in Latin, symbolized the enduring presence of the departed Scholars within the university community, especially within the TD Nation family. The plaque in front of the tree bore the inscription, "ROUSSEAU TREE OF LIFE DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF THE DEPARTED TALENT DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARS IN PURSUIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION." Gathered around lunch, guests engaged in conversation and captured memories through photos taken by the Rousseau Tree of Life.





# THE HARBORONE FOUNDATION HELPS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES & FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO SCHOLARS

The HarborOne Foundation in Rhode Island has a mission to uplift and provide support to individuals and communities suffering from economic depression and one of the programs they support TD. The funds provided by the foundation directly assist students who are facing difficulties in obtaining necessary resources such as books, hardware, and software, especially in the current environment.

The program is particularly important because not everyone has the financial means to pursue higher education. It has helped many Scholars become better individuals and approach challenges with a positive attitude. The TD Program offers opportunities to first-generation college students, who may not have had the chance to attend university otherwise. The impact of the program extends beyond individuals and also positively affects their families and the broader community. HarborOne Bank is proud to collaborate with the community and be a part of the TD Program at URI. The donation from HarborOne directly assist Scholars who face difficulties in obtaining resources such as technology. The HarborOne Foundation has committed \$50,000 for five years. As a community bank representing various communities in Rhode Island, HarborOne Bank takes pride in supporting educational opportunities and helping students complete their college education.

**"HarborOne Bank is very proud to be a sponsor, supporter, but most importantly, a friend to the University of Rhode Island's Talent Development Program." - Phillip Kydd, Vice Chairman, HarborOne Foundation**

**"The Talent Development Program gives students and their families and loved ones a sense of hope that obtaining a college degree is possible...it's really about supporting an individual scholar and really understanding them holistically"**  
- Kristina Moyet, Associate Director of Academic Programming and Assessment, TD



SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH A VIDEO ABOUT THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN HARBORONE BANK AND THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT THEY OFFER OUR SCHOLARS!



## FINANCIAL LITERACY WEBINARS

HarborOne Bank, as a partner of the Talent Development Program, contributes its expertise in financial education. They have conducted virtual financial education webinars for over 300 TD Scholars, teaching them about budgeting, saving money, accruing interest, spending with intention, and understanding student loans and debt. The Scholars have found these webinars beneficial in developing their financial knowledge and making informed decisions about their finances.

# TALENT DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENT HOUSE (TDAH)

Since the fall of 2021, TD initiated its first living-learning community (LLC) at URI called the Talent Development Achievement House (TDAH). TD Scholars with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher are eligible to live in the TDAH. All programming is specifically catered to the interests and needs of our TD Scholar residents. The values of the House are the same as TD Values: Respect, Academic Excellence, Mental Health & Wellness, and Scholar Success (R.A.M.S.), with a focus on social justice and leadership.

TDAH is the only LLC that centers the core values of fostering a community of students regardless of major and career aspirations.



Scan the QR Code  
below to learn more  
about TDAH





# BLACK EXCELLENCE & ACHIEVEMENT FOR MALES (BEAM)

The purpose and mission of BEAM is to improve/increase persistence, retention, and completion for Black males and other males of color at URI. The goal is to create community and safe spaces to validate, confirm, encourage and mentor these young men through their college experience. Programming opportunities have been developed to achieve these goals while also creating a rite of passage program that will see young men go from mentees to mentors as BEAM becomes a self-sustaining program and pipeline to Black males with aspirations to attain a college degree. This is important because, in higher education, Black men are among the lowest achieving demographic, and at URI, are tied for the lowest with Native/Indigenous males. Given the traditional tropes and stereotypes that are associated with "uneducated" Black men, it is incumbent on Black men to contribute equitably to a change in the narrative. The success of BEAM can place URI on the leading edge in New England for changing that narrative.



**COREY FERNANDEZ**  
**TD ACADEMIC ADVISOR**  
**CLASS OF '08, M.S. '18**

*"Now is the time to demand EVERYTHING we are owed! Demand your respect; Demand your humanity and DEMAND your space to exist with equity and justice EVERYWHERE you go. Do not apologize for showing up as yourself. Our ancestors died on this foreign soil to build this country and this country- EVERY INCH OF IT- owes us a debt and you shouldn't accept a penny or inch less than what you are owed. Our people paid the cost and it is now our time to collect on that debt. We achieve these things by being unified; by forgiving each other; by loving each other through our mistakes; and consistently coming back to the table to get to work!"*

**To the current TD Scholars** - "Find your tribe! Find Black males here who have been in your shoes and can mentor you through your growing pains. It is not a matter of IF you will have struggles, but WHEN. And when you have those struggles, having a tribe of people who understand your unique experience is vital and could be the difference between you succeeding or not. Never underestimate the power of asking for help. We got your back!"

- Always in Solidarity. Corey Fernandez



# TD DIRECTOR IS AWARDED THE GARY S. SASSE DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Gerald R. Williams was awarded the Gary S. Sasse Distinguished Public Service Award at the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council's 79th Annual Meeting on October 24, 2022. This award is given annually to recognize individuals who have made exceptional contributions to state government but may not have received widespread recognition. URI President Marc Parlange provided a video testimonial during the Annual Meeting to express gratitude for Mr. Williams' dedicated public service and congratulate him on receiving this prestigious award.

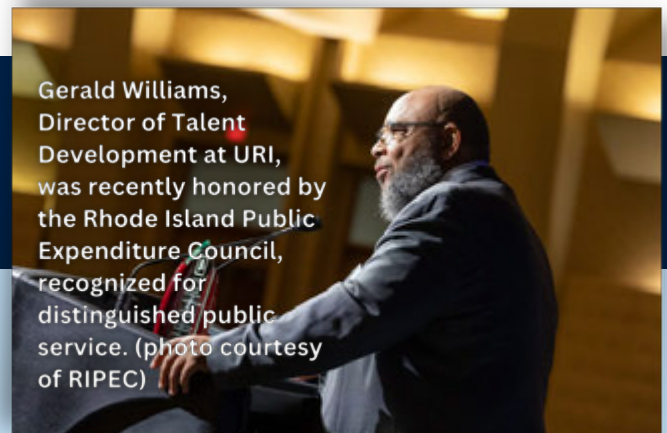
Gerald R. Williams has served as the Director of the TD Program at URI since 2000. Williams is the program's third and longest-serving director, and he has played a significant role in its growth and success. Under Williams' leadership, the TD Program has undergone several notable improvements. These include expanding the program to the Providence campus, doubling the number of Scholars admitted annually, and creating career pathways in various high-demand fields. His dedication and efforts have contributed to the program's positive impact on the lives of many Rhode Island students.

Before his appointment as Director, Williams worked for the Educational Talent Search Program at the Community College of Rhode Island and served as an academic advisor for TD. His prior experience and commitment to educational support have shaped his ability to lead and enhance the TD Program. Gerald R. Williams was a TD Scholar himself when he entered URI. He holds a B.A. in Communications and an M.A. in Education. In addition to his academic achievements, Williams excelled as a student-athlete, playing football for both Bishop Hendricken High School and URI. His athletic accomplishments led to his induction into the Athletic Hall of Fame.

Williams resides in Providence with his wife, two daughters, and two granddaughters. His years of dedicated public service, commitment to educational opportunities, and transformative work within the TD Program have earned him the Gary S. Sasse Distinguished Public Service Award and the recognition he deserves.



**SCAN THE QR CODES TO VIEW PRESIDENT PARLANGE'S VIDEO TESTIMONIAL & RHODY TODAY'S FEATURE ARTICLE ABOUT TD DIRECTOR GERALD R. WILLIAMS**



## **2022-2023 MARKED A HISTORIC YEAR!**

### **URI CEREMONY HONORS LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

*Commemorating 1966 speech in  
Keaney Gymnasium*

### **BLACK STUDENT LEADERSHIP GROUP (BSLG) ALUMNI COMMEMORATE**

*30th Anniversary of Taft Hall Takeover*

### **REMOVAL OF TRUNCATED MALCOLM X QUOTE FROM URI LIBRARY**

*A 30 Year Wait for Justice...*

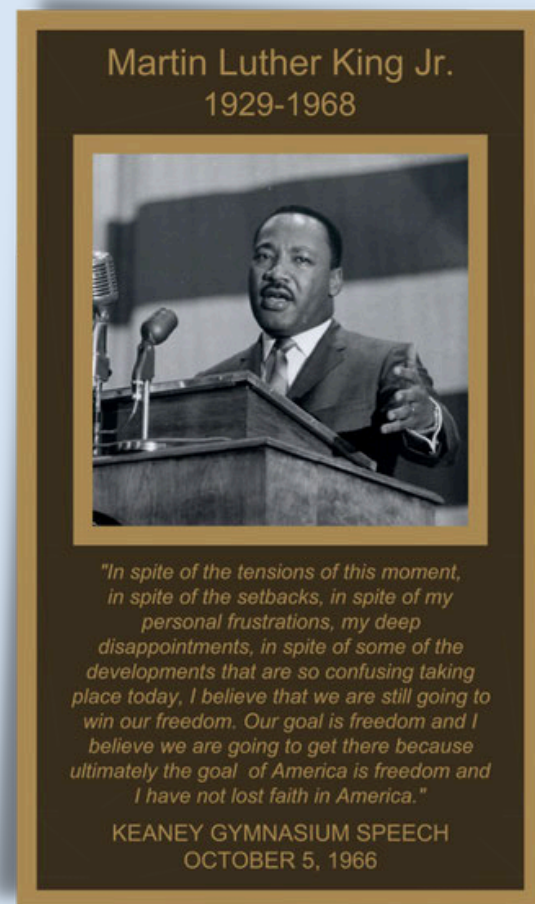
# URI HONORS THE LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COMMEMORATION OF 1966 SPEECH IN KEANEY

The dedication of a plaque at URI's Keaney Gymnasium commemorated a historic speech given by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on October 5, 1966. The speech, delivered to a capacity crowd of 5,000 people, highlighted the progress made in racial and economic justice while acknowledging the work that still needed to be done. The event was attended by more than 100 members of the campus community, including URI President Marc Parlange, Director of Athletics Thorr Bjorn, and former Vice President of Community, Equity and Diversity Dr. Sean Edmund Rogers.

President Parlange emphasized the significance of Dr. King's words, noting that at the age of 37, he had already achieved more for the civil rights movement than had been accomplished in previous decades. The event aimed to honor Dr. King's legacy and reaffirm the university's commitment to diversity and inclusivity.

URI's TD program, initiated after Dr. King's assassination in 1968, was acknowledged as part of his lasting legacy, providing opportunities for over 4,500 alumni from Rhode Island who are students of color or come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The dedication ceremony concluded with a reminder from Dr. Rogers that Dr. King, though beloved today, faced criticism and resistance during his lifetime. Rogers called for a commitment to the right course of action, even when faced with adversity, as personal injustice is often the price paid for pursuing public justice.



The plaque, measuring 14 inches by 24 inches, features a photo of Dr. King during his speech and includes words he delivered at Keaney Gymnasium

Scan the QR Code to watch a **video from URI Athletics** recounting the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and see a **full transcript of his speech** in Keaney on Oct. 5, 1966



Scan the QR Code to read the article from **Rhody Today** recounting the **unveiling of the plaque** commemorating Dr. King's Oct. 5, 1966, speech in Keaney Gymnasium





# BSLG COMMEMORATES 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF TAFT HALL TAKEOVER



Members of the Black Student Leadership Group pose after a commemorative dinner and speaking program. Seated at center is Malcolm Anderson; second row from left are: Ana Barraza; Dr. Karoline Oliveira, Emilia Fernandes and Marilia Fernandes; back row: Dionne Hyman, Tony Sanders, Lanre Ajakaiye, Michelle Fontes, Arthur Berry, Marc Hardge; Charles "Chuck" Watson and Antonio Goncalves

It was 30 years ago that a peaceful protest was sparked by a truncated Malcolm X quote engraved on the Robert L. Carothers Library and Learning Commons, as well as various injustices experienced by BSLG members and their supporters at the university.

During the commemoration event, plaques were presented to the families of two late BSLG members, Toney DaMoura and Earl N. Smith III, who had passed away earlier that year. The plaques honored their commitment and selfless sacrifice to the BSLG and carried an inscription commemorating the 30-year anniversary of the group.

The audience at the event also had the opportunity to view a documentary film about the BSLG takeover by TD Scholar Cristóbal D. Bustos. The documentary included historic news footage, newspaper clips, and recent interviews with individuals involved in the protest.

Scan the QR Code to watch the full documentary recounting the takeover of Taft Hall, *The BSLG - A Voice Was Heard!* by TD Scholar Cristóbal D. Bustos



Additionally, several current students, including Bintou Keita, Markeem Rodrigues, Stedman Gyamfi-Darkwah, Kiara Duarte, Jordan Severino, Shamar Morgan, Lourdes Monteiro, and Brandon Grace, participated in the event. They read the original 14 demands made by the BSLG during the takeover. These demands were the result of extensive study, fasting, and discussions among the BSLG members and had led to positive outcomes, although there is recognition that the work is ongoing.

One of the former BSLG spokesmen, Anderson, emphasized the importance of self-accountability and encouraged students to hold themselves accountable in their academic pursuits. He highlighted the potential impact their efforts could have, such as earning scholarships or improving their family's circumstances. Anderson also spoke about the challenges faced by their ancestors and urged students to persevere in the face of adversity.

The event's master of ceremonies, Robert “Bobby” Britto-Oliveira, expressed that the purpose of the event was to commemorate the BSLG takeover, hold the university accountable for its actions since then, and empower current students to continue the fight for a better URI. Other speakers, such as Sara Monteiro, emphasized the importance of service and the sacrifices made by the BSLG members in their pursuit of justice.

The 30th Anniversary commemoration of the takeover of Taft Hall aimed to honor the legacy of the BSLG, educate current students about their struggle, and inspire them to continue the fight for racial justice and equality at URI.

Scan the QR Code to read the article from *Rhody Today* about the 30th Anniversary Taft Hall Takeover featuring members of the BSLG and their message to current students.



Scan the QR Code to read the article from *Rhody Today* about TD Scholar Cristóbal Bustos' film capturing URI history



Scan the QR Code to view the featured segment on *Generation Rising on PBS*. Host Dr. Kiara Butler sits down with Malcolm Anderson, Lanre Ajakaiye, and Cristóbal Bustos as they reflect on their experiences at URI and the tensions that led to the student takeover of Taft Hall in 1992.





# REMOVAL OF TRUNCATED MALCOLM X QUOTE FROM URI LIBRARY



In early March, the URI community saw a construction barricade surrounding library on campus, leaving many wondering what was happening...that barricade marked the commencement of efforts to eliminate a truncated quote that has adorned the granite façade of the Robert L. Carothers Library and Learning Commons at URI. Originally installed in 1992 as a tribute to Malcom X, the quote has sparked discontent among numerous students, particularly the leaders of the BSLG. They argued that the shortened version distorted the comprehensive essence of the civil rights leader's message. URI President Marc Parlange, who assumed office in 2021, acknowledged the initiative's origins three decades ago when a group of URI students demonstrated the courage to confront prevailing injustices. During a reunion in November, President Parlange pledged to have the quote removed, expressing gratitude towards the past and present generations of student leaders. Their unwavering advocacy continues to inspire the ongoing efforts towards cultivating an all-embracing and equitable community at URI.



Students, faculty, staff, and BSLG alumni gathered on April 27, 2023 to mark the completion of a decades-long attempt to right a grave wrong: removal of the offensive inscription. Ana Barraza, Director of the Women's Center and BSLG representative involved in the 1992 building takeover, expressed the determination of the BSLG to hold the University accountable. Barraza acknowledged the University's fault and the harm caused to alumni, while also recognizing the good faith action to remove the misquote. Markeem Rodriguez, President of B.O.N.D., called the day special and encouraged others to be the change they wish to see on campus. URI President Marc Parlange emphasized the significance of the removal to promote unity and support. Dr. Sean Edmund Rogers, former Vice President for Community, Equity, and Diversity (now Dean of the URI College of Business), offered words to describe the strained existence of Black and Brown people on campus, both thirty years ago and today, and challenged others to consider the bravery the BSLG to stand in the face of adversity and commended their unwavering voices. Michelle Fontes, Assistant Vice President for Community, Equity, and Diversity, organized the event and expressed pride in the past activism of the BSLG and the administration's commitment to accepting their demands...

**MESSAGE TO TD SCHOLARS:** While this was a significant win for student activists, past and present, you are encouraged to stay vigilant and to never forget how long it took to right this wrong. Stand firm and never again let 30 years pass for justice!



**Pictured, Left to Right:**

**Dr. Sean Edmund Rogers**, Dean of the College of Business  
**Ana Barraza**, Director of the Women's Center and TD Alumna  
**Michelle Fontes**, Assistant Vice President of Community, Equity & Diversity and TD Alumna  
**Markeem Rodriguez**, TD Alumnus  
**Dr. Karoline Oliveira**, TD Alumna  
**Charles "Chuck" Watson**, Assistant Dean of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for the College of Engineering and TD Alumnus

Scan the QR Code to read the article from *Rhody Today*, 'It's about doing what's right.' Campus event marks removal of truncated Malcolm X quote from URI library



Scan the QR Code to read the article from *Rhody Today*, *URI removes truncated quote from campus library exterior*





## THE LEGACY OF TD NATION - A MESSAGE TO CURRENT SCHOLARS...

**The history of the Talent Development Program is a continuum and you are now a part of that legacy...so how do you envision serving in the lifetime honor of being a TD Scholar? First, know that you were not “given” anything...you earned your place at the University of Rhode Island, where systemic and institutional oppression that prevents access to marginalized communities is acknowledged, alleviated and supported.**

Scholars-led movements in TD’s history and the Scholar activism happening today, are an indication that the work is not over and much remains to be done. We live in a society that tells us that nothing is guaranteed and that history has a funny way of repeating itself...so always be ready to advocate for yourself and your community, knowing that you stand on the shoulders of Scholars who came and advocated before you to ensure your place.

The future of TD is in your hands...it has always been. You have the support of the TD staff, who are committed to going to bat for you at every turn. The history of the TD Program gives us clarity and insight to our steps forward. TD Scholars and staff have relentlessly struggled and made sacrifices to preserve and expand opportunities. Within our institution, we have fostered an atmosphere that promotes academic excellence and fuels activism, propelling meaningful change. We owe a profound debt to the change-agents who preceded us, the past students and staff who blazed the trail. Our destiny hinges on our ability to wield this invaluable gift with prudence and astuteness.

Reflect on the pioneers who defiantly rejected the "Program for Disadvantaged Youth" emblem, or the individuals who, in 1971, risked their education, jobs, and even lives to safeguard TD's future. Consider the courage displayed by the BSLG, the BUA, and all others who dared to rise and effect positive transformation. Furthermore, let us not forget the countless TD graduates who, for 55 years, defied the skeptics, triumphed across diverse fields and proved them wrong. That is who we are as a program and as a people...now the time is yours to pen the next chapters of our history — **TD NATION!**

# PAST TALENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

## The "I AM TD" Video Series

is designed to profile students within TD Nation giving them the opportunity to share their own individual story of their experiences in the URI community via a 1-2 minute video. Theoretically, every student who feels that they have something to share is given the opportunity to have a moment in the spotlight. The videos are available for screening via the TD website, and also on the New TD Student Media broadcast through the URI TV Network.

## The L.E.A.D Conference

(LEAD. ACHIEVE. EXPLORE. DEVELOP.) hosted by the TD Program, is an all-day conference for incoming first-year students among the TD community who have an interest in exploring leadership development. Topics include self-leadership, social responsibility, campus engagement, and career development.

## Meet the Colleges

provides incoming students with the opportunity to meet the Deans and in some cases, faculty from the various college and academic departments here at URI. The event is designed like a career fair in that, students are free to walk around and explore as many Colleges as they wish. They are also encouraged to take as much literature as needed to develop a full understanding of the University's academic offerings.

## Raise the Bar

is an opportunity for students to engage in a fun and rigorous rock climbing activity at URI's North Woods Challenge Course. This leadership event encourages student leaders to apply themes of collaboration, communication, strategy, and trust. Students are able to relate these themes to everyday real life leadership challenges to better understand the power of group dynamics and improve their personal effectiveness as leaders.

## TD Summit

During TD Summit prospective URI students from local high schools visit the University and have the opportunity to accompany a current URI student to class, participate in recreational activities and bond with current students who serve as Real Models or mentors.

## Career Seminar

is a two hour seminar designed to encourage career exploration and major selection. Students are given valuable information on campus-wide office and services available to them (i.e. the Center for Career & Experiential Education, the Office of International Education, etc.) as well as practical guidance on a variety of topics such as: "How to speak to your professor when you have a concern?"

## TD Student Advisory Council (TDSAC)

The collaboration of TD students engaging in contemporary social issues led to the development of Talent Development Student Advisory Council. By working together, students are able to assist TD in its mission and help give back to the community. TDSAC's agenda and mission create a platform for students' voices to be heard. This student led group emphasizes the importance of individuality. By establishing a strong sense of belongingness, TDSAC perpetuates the familial structure that bonds everybody together.

## TD Student Media

is a student driven initiative designed to give students with an interest in either Film Studies Communication Studies, Journalism, Sports Media, also Arts and Entertainment, a chance to get practical hands on experience in the field. TD Student Media deals with ALL aspects of TV Production both in and out of the studio, including programming, actual TV Production, news correspondence, filming, film editing, public relations, and News anchoring. All activity is done with the intention of broadcasting over the TD Student Media channel that is within the URI TV Network solely for the purposes of TD Student Media.



# ONGOING TALENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

## Alumni of Color Network (ACN)

The URI Alumni of Color Network (ACN) was founded in 2007 to provide personal and professional development, networking, advocacy, and community-building opportunities for URI alumni of color.

As a member of the ACN, alumni have the opportunity to:

- Connect with other alumni, current students, and the URI community at events organized by the ACN throughout the year
- Build community through social and cultural experiences and partnerships with other community groups
- Impact the lives of people living in our communities through service and outreach
- Mentor students and alumni of color, providing guidance and insight into the challenges professionals of color may face each day
- Learn from ACN members, alumni, faculty, and staff and share their own experiences at panel discussions and other ACN events



Scan the QR code  
for more information



## Onward We Learn (formerly College Crusade of Rhode Island)

Onward We Learn and TD have a strong partnership that began over ten years ago as part of a College Access Challenge Grant. Today, this partnership provides a direct pathway for Onward We Learn students attending URI to benefit from wraparound college success support with shared goals to increase persistence.

Kristina Moyet, Associate Director of Talent Development serves as the liaison for this partnership.

## Police Assistant Learning Support (P.A.L.S.)

Initiated in 2007, the P.A.L.S. Program is a ride-along and internship program with the URI Campus Police. P.A.L.S. is a partnership between Talent Development and the Campus Police that was developed to promote better campus community relations between the police and students, while also providing professional development opportunities for TD Scholars planning on a career in criminal justice or government.

## PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) and Ernst & Young Global Limited (EY)

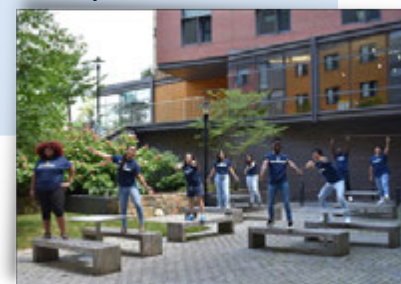
Ernst & Young Global Limited, commonly known as Ernst & Young or simply EY, is a multinational professional services network with headquarters in London, England. EY is one of the largest professional services networks in the world.

PricewaterhouseCoopers is a multinational professional services network of firms, operating as partnerships under the PwC brand. PwC ranks as the second-largest professional services network in the world and is considered one of the Big Four accounting firms, along with Deloitte, EY and KPMG.

Started in 2009 to support Scholars in Business/Accounting to build relationships with PWC and EY for summer internships, mentorship, and build faculty relationships as early as the Summer Success Program.

## Talent Development Student Board (TDSB)

TDSB is a Scholar-run, student senate recognized multicultural student organization. Their mission is to be prominent voices on campus by helping students achieve academic success, as well as encouraging Scholars to be active role models within the URI and TD communities. It is our obligation to empower Scholars to not only give back but to voice their opinions, as evidenced by their motto, *"where your voice is heard"* in effort to give them an outlet to share their opinions about their experiences, growth and advocating for change.  
As of Spring 2022, TDSB is paused.



# THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT SUMMER SUCCESS PROGRAM (TDSSP)

The Talent Development Summer Success Program (TDSSP) has evolved over time to better meet the needs of Scholars and address opportunity gaps during the transition from high school to college. While specific program structures have changed, the core purpose remains the same.

TDSSP is a unique five-week opportunity on URI's Kingston Campus. Scholars engage in credit and non-credit bearing courses, participate in transitional activities, and engage in co-curricular programming. Scholars learn firsthand about the college experience while living in a residence hall on campus. Concurrently, they gain independence and have the opportunity to build a strong sense of community. There are no out-of-pocket costs to Scholars for the TDSSP.

The TDSSP is designed to assist in Scholars' academic and social transitions by introducing them to the necessary tools to build a foundation for autonomy and success at URI, all while closing opportunity gaps in education.

Addressing the equity gap in education involves implementing new interventions aimed at providing equal opportunities and support to all Scholars. The TDSSP extends beyond the confines of the TD Program and bridges connections to the entire campus and surrounding community.



## THERE IS A STRONG FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS
- HOLISTIC SUPPORT
- COLLEGE AND CAREER EXPLORATION
- COMMUNITY BUILDING
- TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION
- ACCLIMATION TO CAMPUS LIFE



Scholars acclimate to campus life through adjusting and adapting to the social, cultural and academic environment on URI's Kingston campus by becoming familiar with the campus facilities, resources, and student support services. Acclimating to campus life helps Scholars navigate these transitions and feel more comfortable, build connections, make friends, and develop a sense of belonging.

Early on, the TD Summer program focused on access. Over time, addressing academic gaps in Scholars' knowledge and skills shifted towards a more comprehensive approach which combines academic support with broader college readiness initiatives. The TDSSP now aims to enhance Scholars' academic skills while also fostering their personal and social development through holistic support. In this way, services such as mentoring, counseling, and academic support, Scholars in navigating the challenges they may face during the transition to URI. These programs include workshops on research, study skills, library, financial education, campus & community safety, student support resources, and building a supportive network.

Today, the use of data and assessments to identify Scholars' strengths and areas for improvement helps align interventions and tailor support services to meet the specific needs of individuals, improving overall retention and graduation rates. Overall, the TDSSP has evolved from primarily access to a comprehensive program that provides academic, social, and individual support to Scholars as they transition to URI. These changes aim to enhance Scholars' preparedness, engagement, and success.

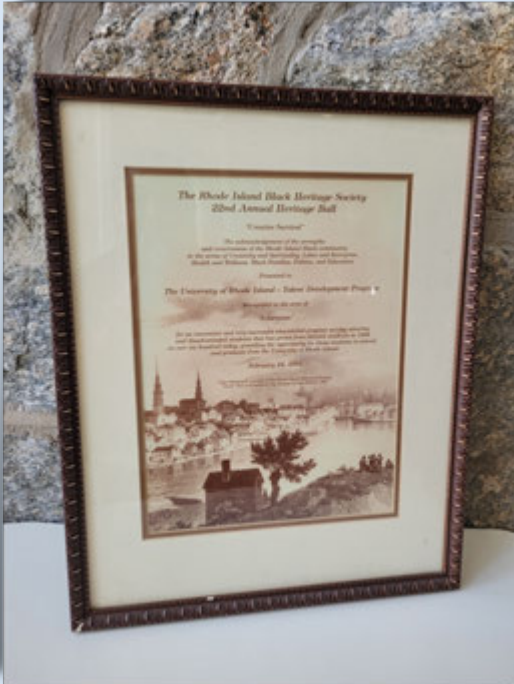
**AS OF 2020, THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM HAS BEEN IN THE PROCESS OF REDESIGNING THE TD SUMMER SUCCESS PROGRAM (TDSSP)**

**A COMPREHENSIVE UPDATE AND FULL HISTORY OF THE TDSSP WILL BE UNVEILED IN THE NEXT EDITION OF TD HISTORY.**





# TALENT DEVELOPMENT AWARD HIGHLIGHTS



## 2001 Rhode Island Black Heritage Society Award

On February 24, 2001 at the 22nd Annual Heritage Ball, the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society awarded the Talent Development Program with the *Creative Survival Award* in the area of *Education*

The *Creative Survival Award* is given as an *"acknowledgement of the strengths and creativeness of the Rhode Island Black community in the areas of Creativity and Spirituality, Labor and Enterprise, Health and Wellness, Black Families, Politics, and Education"*

The Talent Development Program earned this accolade in the Education category for *"an innovative and very successful educational program serving minority and disadvantaged students that has grown from thirteen students in 1968 to over six hundred today, providing the opportunity for those students to attend and graduate from the University of Rhode Island"*



## 2015 Progreso Latino Adult Education Champion Award

Awarded to the Talent Development Program for opening doors for young adults in diverse communities



### 2018 Innovation Award for Advising

The National Academic Advising Association acknowledged the Talent Development Program for creativity, dedication, and successful interfacing, delivering a positive and impactful student experience



### 2018 Rising Star Award Corey Fernandez

Academic Advisor/Success Coach Corey Fernandez was the recipient of the Rising Star Award at the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) 2018 Drive-In Conference at Johnson & Wales University. This award is given to a professional who has shown excellence in the areas of leadership, innovation, excitement, and has had an early and significant impact on their campus community.



## 2020 National College Attainment Network Partner of the Year Award of Excellence

The Talent Development Program was nominated by Onward We Learn, formerly the College Crusade of Rhode Island, citing that "in our 30-year history, there has not been a more impactful or enduring relationship"

*The TD program is something I reference in my work every day. The experiences and opportunities they gave me as a first-gen student allowed me to not only flourish on the URI campus but also overcome my own insecurities about the things that I didn't know about attending college. I would not have been able to outgrow the small bubble I grew up in on the east side of Providence. I wouldn't be a College Crusade advisor today if I didn't know the benefits of mentorship from those who look like and came from the same communities as me.*

**-Ashley Davega, College Crusade College Success Coach**

**SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ THE FULL NOMINATION LETTER & NCANETWORK PRESS RELEASE**



## 2021 Rammy Award Recipient

The Student Success Team at the University of Rhode Island recognized the Talent Development Program in October 2021 with a Rammy Award. Rammy Awards are given to URI faculty, staff, or departments that a nominator believes should be recognized for extraordinary commitment to undergraduate student success. TD was recognized for pivoting summer programming to best support scholar success



# URI CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BROTHERS UNITED FOR ACTION (BUA)



Members of the BUA pose after a commemorative dinner and speaking program. From left to right: Gary Crum, Brian Hardy, Eddie Moye, John Carl Cruz, Ariel Marmolejos, Maxford Foster, Vaughn Baker, TD Assistant Director for Campus Life Ed Givens, Kyle Alston, Kyle Brown and Azikiwe Husband

On Thursday, February 29, 2024, the Talent Development Program along with the Multicultural Student Services Center honored the 25th anniversary of the BUA, recognizing the organization's student activism to advance their mission to create a more inclusive campus and foster a greater sense of belonging for all students at URI.

The event began at the Hardge Forum and featured remarks by alumna Sarah Monteiro, a spoken word performance by alumnus Stephen Larbi, remarks by BSLG Member and Women's Center Director Ana Barraza, performances by the Alima International Dance Association, and music by Marlin On The Keys. The event continued for a dinner reflection at the Ram's Den in the Memorial Union with further remarks by URI President Marc Parlange, Vice President of Community, Equity & Diversity Markeisha Miner, Assistant Director of the MSSC Bobby Britto-Oiveira, BOND President Daryl Mensah, BUA Member and URI administrator John Carl Cruz, a presentation on the "Two Demands & Ten Points of Light" by BOND Members, and the screening of TD Scholar Cristóbal Bustos' documentary, recounting the experiences of BUA members.

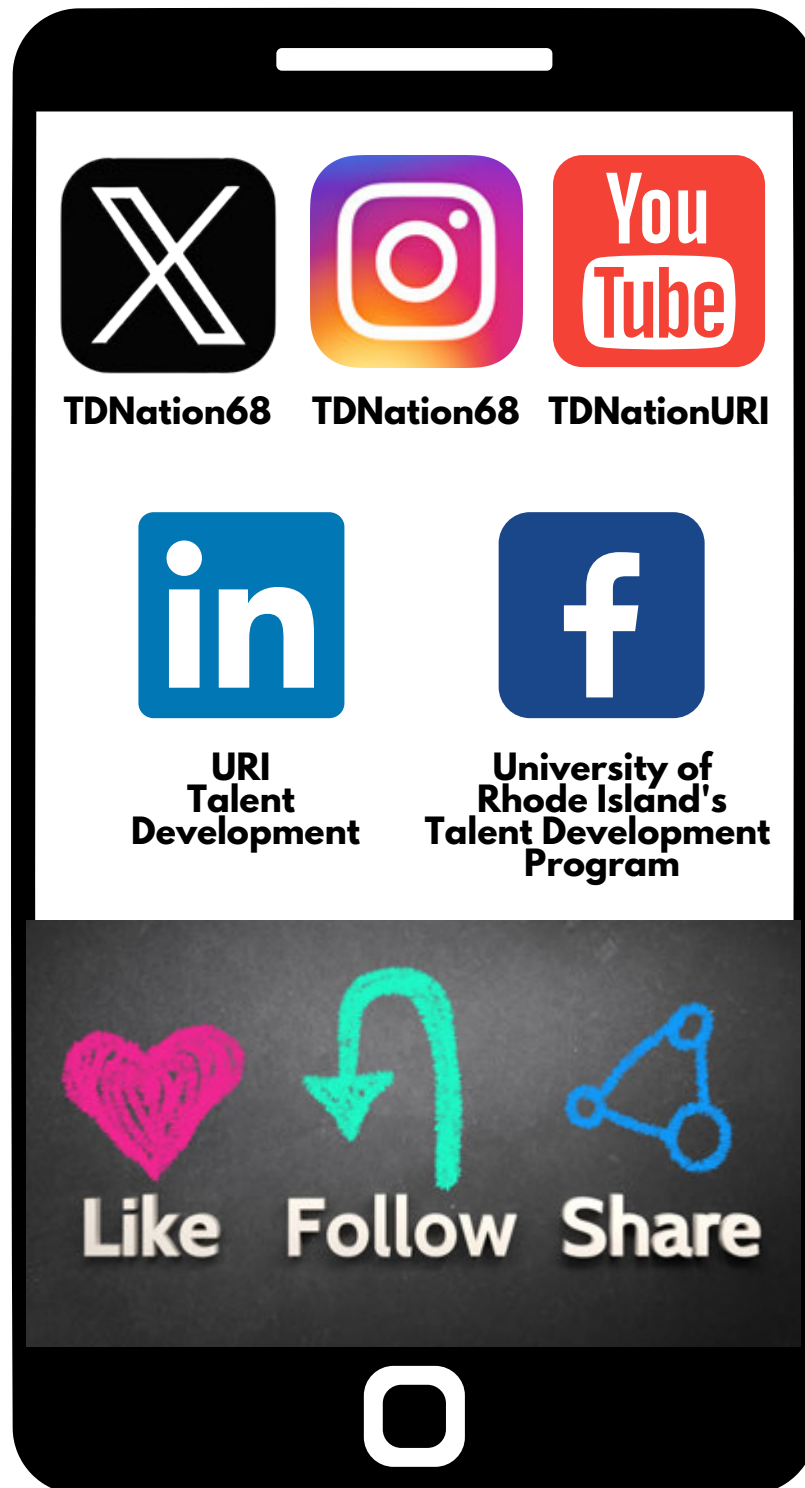
Scan the QR Code to watch the full BUA documentary, *Strength in Unity*, by TD Scholar Cristóbal D. Bustos



Scan the QR Code to view a livestream of the dinner reflection (beginning at the 46 minute mark)



# GET CONNECTED TO TD NATION



THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND

# TALENT DEVELOPMENT

*Values*

RESPECT

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

SCHOLAR SUCCESS



  
TALENT  
DEVELOPMENT



Scan the QR Code to meet the  
Talent Development Team

TENTH EDITION