

Equity Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 29, 2015
9:00-10:30 a.m., Memorial Union
Student Senate Chamber
Kingston Campus

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Attendance: Diane Kern (co-chair), Robert Samuels (co-chair), Lynne Derbyshire, Annemarie Vaccaro, Garry Bozylinsky, Gerard Holder, Ted Shear, Susan Golet, Sarah Couch, Pamela Rohland, Faye Boudreaux-Bartels, Melvin Wade, Debbie Suggs, Vicki T. Sapp, Carol Pegg, Robert Vincent, Gerald Williams, Mary Jo Gonzales, Roxanne Gomes, Eileen Orabone, Amy Olson and **Earl Smith**.

1. Welcome and introductions

- Vicki T. Sapp, Director of Community and Organizational Development, introduced herself to the council.

2. Confidentiality Policy was read to the council members and affirmed.

3. The minutes of meeting December 9, 2014 meeting were approved.

4. Old Business

- Student Senate equity issue follow up:
 - We need an Itemized Budget List
 - We invited President of Student Senate, Joseph Maynard, he was unable to attend meeting on Reading Day, offered to attend the January 29, 2015 meeting. We had several communications with him. He said that he wouldn't be able to get all the info he was planning so he didn't want to come with incomplete presentation.
 - Q: What is the ultimate goal of this process?
A: We need individual reports of the distribution of funds. We couldn't see the actual breakdown without an itemized budget. That was the concern. We wanted to see the numbers before we acted on. Also, numbers were requested by members to have some transparency.
 - Q: Is there any entity we can report this delay and who can exert pressure for that?
A: There is no authority who can tell Student Senate to come to our meetings. We can designate a small group to engage with them. It seems like we are wasting time instead of acting strategically.
 - Early December Joe let us know that he could not make the meeting. Joe did not want to make that small group meeting. We are trying to communicate in small numbers but it is not happening. He was free to bring anyone he wanted.

- It is student money and we are supposed to support students, so it is important to work directly with students. Stipends were one of the issues and it might have been taken care of.
 - Q: What is our goal at the end?
A: We can only back up students who have issues. We can ask them to post their budget for transparency.
 - There was inequity in the past. All groups are required to put a budget for events they want. Once they put their budgets, it goes to Student Senate to approve. There has been no student group which didn't get approval from Student Senate. All groups go through that process. The issue is that MUSIC wanted to be similar to IFC, have council status, and receive stipends. They changed that process, now it is a process of affiliations. No one gets a budget; Student Senate gets a budget and disseminates it. MUSIC was denied the opportunity to perform like IFC; they wanted MUSIC to hold events like IFC, but IFC is a nationally recognized group.
 - This is a very crucial issue to discuss. MUSIC members feel that they have the support of Equity Council. This is the best opportunity for MUSIC to have equity. MUSIC wants to have council status. They are also asking for a share of the budget irrespective of their activities. They want compensation for the work they do. It is an issue for Equity Council, but there should be a small group who can report to the Council. It should not be set aside.
 - **It was asked if all** multicultural student organizations have to agree and approve to be under MUSIC for council status.
 - ACTION ITEM: Sub group to meet with MUSIC and Student Senate: **Michelle Fontes-Barros**, Melvin Wade, Debb Suggs, Gerard Williams, and **John Sears**. The group's mission is to find out explicitly what MUSIC wants and communicate with Student Senate, and report back to the Council. A faculty member is to be recruited.
- Security Cameras on URI Campuses—update from Equity Council Chairs
 - With the winter break, we are still waiting for a date for a meeting.
 - Student veterans' issue—Update from Student Veterans Committee
 - The group has not met in the last couple of months. We are hoping to meet with Naomi Thompson.
 - University Manual changes
 - Handout: The info is not in the manual yet. Whether we need to give this to President directly or the CED is not clear.
 - They are working on the manual. They are working on it. They would like to do all changes and post a complete manual. It could take a couple of months.
 - We can focus on definition of the Equity Council.
 - We advise Chief Diversity Officer; we do not report to her.
 - ACTION ITEM: Subcommittee to review the entire University manual: Earl, Mary Joe, Roxanne, and a faculty member.

- We need to be open to the community and willing to work with whoever that person is. We should not exclude anybody from attending the meetings.
- Can we have a survey to the council to ask if they are comfortable or uncomfortable.
- An executive session could be more practical.
- The Chief Diversity Officer should be periodically invited. We would like to know what is going on and we want to be updated.
- Some things are spontaneous; some sensitive issues may be difficult for some to share when there is an administrator who many report to in the meeting. (Discussion tabled.)

5. New Business

- Equity Council goal-setting process: What do we hope to achieve as a Council and community in 2015?

6. Announcements

- **January 21-February 20, 2015**, Black Super Heroes: From the Comic Book Universe to the College Campus, **Fine Arts**; Opening Reception: Wednesday, January 28, 5-8 p.m. Panel Discussions and Artist Talks: TBA

In celebration of Black History Month the University of Rhode Island, Department of Art and Art History, Main Gallery, the College of Arts and Sciences, and Africana Studies are joining to mount the exhibition, **Black Super Heroes: From the Comic Book Universe to the College Campus** that will run from January 21 through February 20, 2015. The theme is **The Academic Implications of Black Heroism** and explores representations, the cultural significance and development of black superheroes in the public consciousness. In this collection, the graphic narratives are recognized for their contributions to the still growing racial awareness in the United States. The show includes the seminal black comic book superheroes such as Black Panther, Black Lightning, Storm, Luke Cage, Blade, the Falcon, Nubia, and others, and celebrates black superheroes as a powerful source of racial meaning and imagination in American history. In their radiance and heroic fortitude, these figures dispel racial assumptions and help shape social and political perspectives, and black identity. The exhibition aims to spark dialogue on issues such as equality, forgiveness, community, and racial justice.

This will be a big and exciting show, which partly involves transforming the gallery into a comic book universe. Volunteers are needed **immediately** to help scan images and work with large format printers in preparation for the installation of the exhibition beginning December 29, 2014.

If you know of any **Heroes** who are interested please contact me at: dilworth.bob@gmail.com or leave name and contact info at 401-874-5821. Feel free to use social media to get the word out.

- The URI Multicultural Center and the URI Dr. Martin Luther King Week Planning Committee are pleased to announce the 29th Annual Celebration of **URI Dr. Martin Luther King Week, Saturday, January 31-Friday, February 6, 2015**. For more information and to register: www.URI.edu/mcc

- **Wednesday, February 4 from 7-8 pm in the Multicultural Center** to address these issues through the lens of deep listening.

Here is the description: Deep Listening - the Path to the Beloved Community

Martin Luther King's vision of a "beloved community" was the realization of a completely integrated society, a community of love and justice wherein brotherhood would be an actuality in all of social life. "Deep Listening" is a practice where we let go of our inner clamoring and our usual assumptions and listen with respect in order to understand another person. As we grapple with issues of racism in our society, particularly in light of the recent incidents in Ferguson and Staten Island, this workshop will offer an opportunity to experience how deep listening can lead to reconciliation and empathy and bring us closer to King's vision of the Beloved Community.

I hope members of the Equity Council are able to attend and encourage students to participate. We will also be looking for 3-4 "panelists" to share their personal stories and perspectives so if you have any good suggestions, please forward them to me and I will share them with our planning team.

- **Friday, Feb. 6, 2015 4th Annual Avi Schaefer Shabbat (Sabbath) at Hillel**

Hillel will host the 4th Annual Avi Schaefer Shabbat (Sabbath) on Friday, February 6. Multicultural Student groups have been invited to come together in the afternoon at Hillel to cook a meal that will be served at 6:15 pm. Before the meal at 5 pm groups have been invited to perform or teach a dance from their culture. At the meal, groups have been invited to share blessings from their religious traditions. We are still lining up the participants so if you know of any student groups that would like to participate, please have them be in touch with our student co-chairs, Hannah Kaplan, hannah_kaplan@my.uri.edu or Kelsey Uguccioni, kuguccioni@my.uri.edu. The Avi Schaefer Shabbat an annual event to bring together students on campus for a communal meal and a shared experience fostering interfaith understanding and cross-cultural encounters. Avi Schaefer was a student at Brown University who dedicated himself to promoting the values of empathy, mutual respect and active listening. After he was tragically struck and killed by a drunk driver in 2010, his family established a fund to promote the ideals and dreams that inspired Avi throughout his life.

- **Student Handbook review:** Deadline for submissions is February 28, 2015.
- There will be **interviews for the next major for campus police**. Please look for them and try to participate.

7. Meeting adjourned at 10.30 am.