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A Message from Kevin McDonald

I am extremely grateful for having been afforded an opportunity to join Rochester Institute of Technology and the Rochester communities. As we embark on a journey of diversity and inclusion, your support and active involvement are imperative if we are to impact our university and local community in meaningful ways.

The first step of this journey is the development of a diversity and inclusion framework that significantly integrates our diversity efforts with all aspects of institutional functioning. To that end, I have drafted a framework that I believe can serve as a foundational building block for our community. Your input, however, is needed to ensure that the document accurately reflects the needs of our community and appropriate areas of functioning at our university.

The document is currently being shared throughout our campus community, so

please take time to review the proposed framework and provide feedback. Your input is both welcomed and needed.

I recognize that this journey is a marathon and not a sprint. Each successful initiative will provide the sustenance needed to press toward our goals of inclusiveness. Let us work together to be the pillars of strength needed to support diversity, inclusion, and community engagement at RIT and within the local community.



Kevin G. McDonald, J.D.
Chief Diversity Officer

Invitation: Partnerships in Pluralism 3rd Annual Alumni Reunion

Partnerships in Pluralism is a premier program facilitating communications and rich friendships across cultures at RIT. More than 270 people have completed the program and 80 more are participating this academic year!

You are cordially invited to join us in celebrating current and previous partners (and to encourage new participants!) during our 2010 Isaac L. Jordan Faculty / Staff Pluralism Award and Student Scholarship Awards Ceremony.

Tuesday, May 11, 2010

12:00 pm– 1:30 pm

Campus Center, Bamboo Room 2610/2650 (*lunch will be served*)

Please RSVP by Wednesday, April 28 to Geraldine Ciurca at grcpro@rit.edu or 585-475-6546

Assessing the 2009 RIT Climate Study Results

During spring quarter 2009, the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer initiated a climate survey to gain faculty and staff perspectives on issues related to diversity, inclusion, and the climate of the campus. Approximately 28% of RIT's 3,000 faculty and staff members completed the survey. Responses were analyzed and a summary of the survey findings is posted on the President's web site at http://www.rit.edu/president/climate_study.html.

Dr. Destler has now asked the University's new CDO, Kevin McDonald, to form a task force that will analyze the findings and submit recommendations designed to address key concerns.

McDonald has charged the President's Commission on Pluralism and Inclusion with analyzing the climate study findings, engaging campus community members in this process, and recommending a course of action that will address glaring issues. Members of the President's Commission have developed a climate

study leadership follow-up committee consisting of diverse faculty and staff from the Commission, representatives from Staff Council and Academic Senate, and ethnic faculty and staff from across the campus. The full committee will convene mid-March and begin the process of identifying the key issues and next steps. It is expected that a proposal will be presented to Dr. Destler and Kevin McDonald at the end of this academic year.

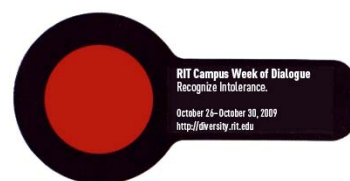
The leadership committee and the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer are committed to addressing all issues that are not consistent with RIT's core values. We are striving to create and sustain an organizational culture that acknowledges and celebrates diversity and utilizes inclusive practices that foster excellence, creativity, innovation, and collaboration. Addressing the issues identified in the climate survey is an important step in that direction.

Campus Week of Dialogue Poster Campaign Wins a 2010 Addy Award

The President's Commission on Pluralism and Inclusion is proud to announce that the Diversity Office's recent Campus Week of Dialogue poster campaign has been awarded a 2010 Addy Award.

The campaign was officially awarded a Laddy Award, comparable to a silver award, for its non-traditional print advertising campaign and shares honors with numerous, nationally well-known designers and design firms. Barret Furton, RIT graduate and designer and marketing assistant for RIT Student Auxiliary Services, designed all ten posters and is especially recognized for his skillful efforts.

The poster campaign's provocative and interactive concept used "truth glasses" to reveal hidden messages that represented underlying biases and encouraged the viewer to become cognizant of his/her own internal biases. The campaign was successful and inspired dialogue amongst students and RIT community members, increasing awareness on topics of intolerance, diversity, inclusion, and pluralism.



Pillars of Hope Celebrate Black History

In February, the Pillars of Hope continued to encourage students from Nathaniel Rochester Community School No. 3 and conducted a Black History Jeopardy event. The students received questions and answers before their break in February to study for the competition. Below is a sampling of some the questions provided to the students:

John Johnson is the founder of what two Black Magazines?

Answer. Ebony and Jet magazines

Which amendment to the US Constitution granted Blacks citizenship?

Answer. 14th Amendment

What type of ship was the Amistad?

Answer. Slave ship

What is the name of Maya Angelou's autobiography?

Answer. I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

What boxer scored a round-one knockout and became the first black national sports hero?

Answer. Joe Louis

Name the first black dance troupe to perform at the Metropolitan Opera House?

Answer. Alvin Ailey Dance Company

The event was made even more special due to the fact that part of the studio audience cheering on the contestants were several students from 6th and 7th grade classes at the school, several teachers, and Connie M. Wehner, principal. This was a great opportunity for the Pillars to demonstrate professionalism and demonstrate what students can achieve if they work hard. The event also gave the Pillars a wider audience to show that RIT is a realistic option for their futures.

For more information, or to volunteer for the Pillars of Hope program, contact Venessa Mitchell at 475-2162 or ymmeme@rit.edu.



Pillars (L-R): Stanley Purdie, W. Michelle Harris, Eliote Simpson, Nicole White, Joyelle Proctor, Kenneth Sayres, Venessa Mitchell, Chance Glen, Sr., Denise Hampton, Ricardo King

Winning Student Team (L-R): Darien Thompson, Olesha Thomas, Darion Jones

Photographer: Meryn Thunen, 4th year RIT Visual Media Photography

Staff Diversity Highlight: Stanley Purdie



Stanley Purdie, Assistant Controller for Financial and Tax Reporting, came to RIT a year ago from The

Urban League of Rochester. His 'professional' journey began when he decided at the very young age of 13, that he wanted to become an accountant. With determined effort he attended high school at the Academy of Finance in Buffalo, and upon graduation continued his pursuit at Canisius College and further obtained a Master's degree in Business Administration.

As Purdie reflects back on the influences in his life, he notes that during his adolescent years he was

introduced to INROADS, Inc., whose mission is to develop and place talented minority youth in business and industry, and prepare them for corporate and community leadership. In his junior year at college, he applied to INROADS and interned at a global accounting firm for two years. This internship experience was valuable because it required training and knowledge in areas such as organizational behavior, networking, business communication, and leadership. Additionally, as an INROADER, Purdie led several community service projects yielding positive results. Upon graduation he became a full time auditor with his INROADs sponsor and transitioned to a volunteer trainer for Western New York and the Northeast Region.

Ten years ago when he came to Rochester, he continued seeking avenues to support the needs of the Greater Rochester community. One of the first mentors he met was James H. Norman, CEO of Action for a Better Community, who effectively matched Purdie's interests with a variety of community needs.

Purdie is grateful for the opportunity to work at RIT and enjoys the many positive influences. At RIT, Purdie is a member of the Pillar's of Hope, a group of RIT professionals who volunteer at the Nathaniel Rochester Community School. While he has had the good fortune of making sound choices and meeting wonderful mentors, Purdie credits his faith as teaching him the respect and compassion that has enabled him to develop fruitful and professional relationships.

Patriotism and Pluralism: A Reflection by Barry Culhane

In America, one of the first and most significant institutions that pioneered pluralism, diversity and inclusion, using total emergence, was the United States military. People are aware of the segregation in the military through World War II, and the Tuskegee Airmen are perhaps one of the most well known symbols of this. However, President Truman was the champion for the integration of all people from different creeds, races, and cultures to be integrated as one military force with several branches in the United States.

By the time I entered the United States Army and became an army

medic, the integration was fully implemented. During basic training, every soldier is stripped of his identity and reinvented as a "lean mean fighting machine." I will always remember one of the first speeches by my drill sergeant (salty language excluded): "We come from different parts of the country, with different religions, different skin colors, and a wide variety of family situations. From now on none of those differences matter, because on the battle field, we all bleed American red blood." The truth is, in the military, everyone had to work as a team member and pull his own weight

no matter what the task at hand. In the process of achieving a mission, we had the opportunity to learn a great deal about each other and our differences, but mostly our similarities. In a microcosm, our platoon was "one nation under God", diverse and very united. In the end, no matter what the person's background, we knew we had each other's back.



Solidifying PR and Its Professionals Through Diversity: An Essay by Wilma King

In celebration of Black History Month, the [Public Relations Society of America](#) (PRSA) invited prominent black leaders in the public relations profession to offer their views on race and public relations and their ideas for achieving greater racial and ethnic diversity in the industry. The following is an [essay written](#) for this series by Wilma Ruth King, associate professor of public relations at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

As a public relations educator, my role is to produce graduates with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in a profession that is multicultural, multi-faceted, global and technologically advanced. College classrooms like mine serve as incubators for future leaders, who harbor myriad ideas, opinions and beliefs that — as study abroad and international exchange opportunities continue to grow — are increasingly shaped by the cultures and geographies from which they come.

To succeed and compete, graduates today must learn to see connections among disparate ideas and factors, and to identify new knowledge. Mainstream concepts and practices in many parts of the world — such as integrated planning and management, cross-industrial collaboration and multi-channeling — are making their way into American curricula and business, as our institutions and workplaces are globalized.

I share teaching duties in the business college at a large science and technology-focused university with a physician from Cameroon. He holds a Ph.D. in business management and is “director of medical services, business improvement” for a major health care provider. Between the two of us we have a working knowledge of at least six languages, including Spanish, French, Italian and Swedish, reflecting the many countries in which we have lived, worked, or studied. Our course is titled: “The Business Case for Diversity and Equity: Becoming World-wise.”

Our goal for the course is to encourage future business leaders to be comfortable discussing and modeling leadership on diversity, which we characterize as a “business imperative.” We first discuss diversity in a social and historical context, recalling how this country has benefitted and grown through immigration and the contributions of immigrants (attendance of a Naturalization Ceremony is suggested when possible).

As my colleague and I are both Black, we also openly share our “Black experiences” as a separate and unique

set of circumstances and contributions to our personal growth and development: In essence, we all are learning how to effectively “multichannel” resources, experiences, beliefs and ideas. Multi-channeling, which relies on shared knowledge acquired from a multitude of human, scientific and technological sources, is central to business longevity, as the need for — and channels of — communication continue to emerge, change and expand.

Much of what we appreciate about our American lifestyle — from varieties of ethnic and cultural cuisines, fashion and entertainment to travel and tourism to the essence of southern hospitality, for example — are all opportunities for diverse practitioners to contribute creative and unique ideas based on their own culturally relevant experiences. But more importantly, individuals with diverse backgrounds add authenticity and help sustain the cultural lifestyles that these so-called lifestyle industries seek to leverage, imitate, enhance and/or brand.

More and more, programs that focus on community relations and collaboration as part of campus-wide culminating experiences — or service learning — are being added to college curricula throughout the world. Here in the United States, where Blacks and other ethnicities are integral to our communities, opportunities to prepare or further develop beneficial community/workforce partnerships should be encouraged.

Over the course of a typical career, individuals change jobs several times, sometimes transitioning into new roles and foreign locations (worldwide), as dictated by a specific industry’s technological needs, problem-solving inventions or progressive changes. This makes it all the more imperative to embody cross-cultural (and also cross-disciplinary) formats and content in curriculums, mirroring the world’s transitory work environments, and reflecting diversity of not just races and ethnicities, but of personality, skills and viewpoints.

Answers for many of today’s social, religious, political, technological and environmental concerns will come from a collaborative team of next generation practitioners; the more diverse their ethnicities, experiences and interests, the more creative and unique their ideas will be.

Student Diversity Highlight: Erika Mason



Erika Mason is a second year Electrical Biomedical Engineering student. Before attending RIT, she experienced a number of

opportunities that allowed her to decide what she wanted to do with her future and how she was going to make that happen.

As the youngest of five children, Erika was able to see what her other siblings were doing with their lives and how they were accomplishing the goals they set for themselves. She was able to learn from these examples and being from a large family of people who were goal oriented helped her push harder to achieve her own goals.

Erika attended the Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies in California, where she was encouraged by her family and teachers to constantly challenge herself and do all the things she wanted to do. In high school, she was a member of Young Black Scholars and after taking many workshops regarding engineering, she was convinced that this was the field that she could thrive in. Since she already had a strong interest in the medical field, she decided to get the best of both subjects and chose biomedical engineering.

As she grows towards her future goal, Erika has become involved in many activities that will help her become more of the woman that she is aiming to become. She is currently involved in Global Leadership, a leadership certificate program at RIT. Through this

program, Erika was assigned a faculty and peer mentor of a different cultural background to obtain a more diverse perspective of the world. She also has formed a close bond with her mentors Shyrl Orrego Scalice and Peter Inthirakoth on a more personal level and this personal connection is a main reason why Erika chose to be apart of this unique program.

After graduating, Erika would like to initially do research with prosthetics and then continue to make a difference with her talent to open a medical firm for prosthetics and orthopedics. With her drive to be not only be a great student, but also a better person through mentoring and peer education (PEERS), Erika's accomplishments will continue to grow and help those around her.

Student Diversity Highlight: Peter Inthirakoth



My name is Peter Inthirakoth. I am the son of refugees from the country of Laos, which my family left soon

after the Communist takeover. I was born a few months after my parents arrived in the United States and grew up in a small community of Laotians. Having spent as much time in the US as my parents, we shared the learning process of growing up in a new community—

although I have never known another one. I split my upbringing between traditional Laotian culture and American culture. Straddling the lines was not an easy task, but it provided an interesting perspective growing up. I could see so many differences and yet so many similarities.

Upon graduation from high school, I joined the United States Navy and “saw the world” (realistically, I spent a lot of time staring at water; it doesn't look too different between various parts of the world). I served with Americans, as well as individuals from several other countries.

Working in close quarters brought a different level of understanding between us. Our lives depended upon each other doing a proper job and we didn't let out differences get in the way. I also had the opportunity to visit several different countries such as Bahrain, Dubai (UAE), Greece, France, Great Britain, and Italy and enjoyed speaking with the natives and learning their perspectives on the world.

It was an enjoyable experience communicating with such diverse groups and I'm fortunate that I have been able to continue these

(Continued on page 7)

Inthirakoth (cont.)

types of experiences here at RIT. In the fall, I was accepted into the Global Leadership Institute through RIT's Diversity Office. During the initial meeting, we shared our backgrounds, provided interesting stories, and I was paired with a thoughtful young woman, Erika Mason, an RIT Biomedical Engineering student, and Shyrl Scalice, an NTID employment advisor.

We came from very different backgrounds, yet we found it easy to share our thoughts and ideas. Our common ground came from our interest in other

cultures and a desire to foster better understanding of the world we lived in. It is a goal that I believe will provide a sustained sense of adventure and continue to provide our lives with fresh perspectives. To the reader, I will say this—the world is a splendid and heterogeneous entity. Take the time to explore and experience the rich diversity that it offers. You may find that the adventure of such an undertaking exceeds the malaise of sitting in front of the television and only experiencing it from afar.

Diversity Photo Album



Top photos: College, Accounting & You students from Thomas Jefferson High School enjoyed their monthly campus visit, especially on their way to lunch when they stopped by the WITR booth to dunk a few RIT college students. The College, Accounting & You program, sponsored by PriceWaterHouseCoopers and the Diversity Office, gives students an opportunity to visit RIT campus once a month, from January through June, to learn about accounting, business, and leadership.



L-R: Poet Caridad De La Luz (aka La Bruja), Stephanie Paredes (North Star Center), and poet Lamar Manson (aka Black Ice) at the My Truism, My Words Poetry Jam for the Expressions of King's Legacy.

RIT and Rochester community members at the Expressions of King's Legacy luncheon. (Top L-R: Emerson Fullwood, Essie Calhoun, David Anderson, Peter Oddleifson, Rebecca Johnson, and Dr. Destler. Sitting L-R: Reverend Vernice Warfield and Constance Mitchell.

Events Calendar

Rochester Institute of Technology

Date	Event
April 17	OASIS Basant Celebration and Dinner—Webb Auditorium—6 p.m.
April 21	Dessert & Dialogue: Gender and the Divine—Faculty Commons, bldg. 6, room 1251—noon—1:30 p.m.
May 1	Imagine RIT Festival
May 11	Partnerships in Pluralism Reunion & Presentation of the Isaac L. Jordan Faculty/Staff Pluralism Award —Campus Center, Bamboo room 2610/2650
May 11	Dessert & Dialogue: The Next Generation—What Do We Tell Our Children? - Faculty Commons, bldg. 6, room 1251—5:30 p.m.—7 p.m.
May 21—22	RIT Commencement Ceremonies

Area Colleges and Rochester Community

Date	Event
April 2	1st Annual SUNY Cortland Student Conference on Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice —Corey Union—8:30 a.m.—5 p.m.
April 15	CSA Presents: Many Islands, Different Cultures, One People —SUNY Brockport, Seymour College Union 119—9:30 p.m.—11 p.m.
April 15	Let's Talk About Diversity @ ESM —University of Rochester, Eastman Commons, Director's Meeting—noon
April 23	Baobab Documentary: Let the Church Say Amen —University of Rochester, 728 University Ave.—7 p.m.
May	Gay and Lesbian Pride Month
June	Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Visit the following RIT diversity offices' web sites for a list of programs, events, and information:

[AALANA Collegiate Association](#)
[Center for Campus Life](#)
[Center for Religious Life](#)
[Center for Residence Life](#)
[Dining Services](#)
[Diversity at RIT](#)
[Environmental Science Program - Native American Science & Technology Program](#)
[Environmental Science Program – Study Abroad](#)
[Foreign Language Department](#)
[Future Faculty Career Exploration Program](#)
[Future Stewards Program](#)
[Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Center \(GLBT Center\)](#)
[Global Union](#)
[Greek Council](#)
[Higher Education Opportunity Program \(HEOP\)](#)
[Housing Operations](#)
[Human Resources—Diversity](#)
[International Student Services](#)
[NTID](#)
[North Star Center](#)
[Office of Faculty Recruitment](#)
[OUTspoken](#)
[Student Government](#)

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