



## Make a Connection!

Greetings RIT!

As our new academic year gets underway we continue to spotlight the diversity found at Rochester Institute of Technology. Once again we will provide a year full of opportunities for learning more about our rich community. It is all about making connections with those around us!

Our theme this year is "Reading between the Signs: Connecting our Communities," a broad metaphor for signs that identify diverse people and groups, providing us with a glimpse into their uniqueness.



We see signing every day with members of RIT and NTID-- a community with a distinct language and culture. There are other signs of community here as well, including those of race, age, gender, ethnicities, orientations, and identities. We cannot know all things about all people, but at RIT we always want to learn more for ourselves. You can start by joining us for the kick-off event, a **Campus Week of Dialogue**, which will focus on Deaf Culture and Audism. This topic will be brought to life by our keynote speaker Dr. Martina "MJ" Bienvenu. A full week of educational sessions has been planned for October 27-31, so plan on making a connection!

Register for sessions at <http://diversity.rit.edu/schedule.html>

Alfreda Brown, EdD  
Chief Diversity Officer

---

## What is Audism?

Audism (from Latin *audire*, to hear, and *-ism*, a system of practice, behavior, belief, or attitude) has been variously defined as:

- the belief that life without hearing is futile and miserable, that hearing loss is a tragedy and "the scourge of mankind," and that deaf people should struggle to be as much like hearing people as possible. Deaf activists Heidi Reed and Hartmut Teuber at D.E.A.F. Inc., a community service and advocacy organization in Boston, consider audism to be "a special case of ableism." Audists, hearing or deaf, shun Deaf culture and the use of sign language, and have what Reed and Teuber describe as "an obsession with the use of residual hearing, speech, and lip-reading by deaf people" (Pelka 1997: 33).
- the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears (Zak 1996).
- an attitude based on pathological thinking which results in a negative stigma toward anyone who does not hear; like racism or sexism, audism judges, labels, and limits individuals on the basis of whether a person hears and speaks (Humphrey and Alcorn 1995: 85).
- the corporate institution for dealing with deaf people, dealing with them by making statements about them, authorizing views of them, describing them, teaching about them, governing where they go to school and, in some cases, where they live; in short, audism is the hearing way of dominating, restructuring, and exercising authority over the deaf community. It includes such profes-

### In this issue:

What is Audism?  
..... p 1

Campus Week of Dialogue  
Schedule of Events  
..... p 2

Opportunities to Make a Difference  
..... p 3

Diversity Training CPD  
..... p 4

### In Winter issue:

Read about RIT  
2008-2009  
Minett Professor  
Hoffman Moka  
Lantum, Ph.D., M.D.



## Campus Week of Dialogue

*Reading Between the Signs: Understanding More about the Deaf Culture*

### Monday, 10/27

**Keynote address: Deaf Culture, Community Identity and "Audism"**  
**Dr. Martina J. (MJ) Bienvenu , Gallaudet University**

Learn more about Deaf Culture and evolving interactions and community identity from longtime educator, author, and advocate. Bienvenu will discuss the concept of Audism— defined as bias against Deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals and judgment about one's intelligence, language capabilities, and competencies.

*Bienvenu is a faculty member and chair of the ASL and Deaf Studies department. A native ASL signer, she received her BA in English ('74) and MA in linguistics ('83) from Gallaudet. Bienvenu has published several ASL teaching materials and American Deaf culture videos and workbooks. She has presented on topics of sign language instruction, culture, oppression and empowerment, cross-cultural interactions and interpretations in educational settings across the nation, Canada, Europe, Japan, Israel, and Cyprus.*

10 - 11:30 a.m. - Ingle Auditorium



### Tuesday, 10/28

**Student Panel: Organizational Communication and the Deaf Employee**

Dr. Linda Gottermeier's organizational communication students will present research on Deaf culture and effective communication. The group designed interesting awareness t-shirts and posters for campus and will describe the development process in light of varying information about the Deaf Culture.

9 a.m. - NTID Student Development Center, Room 1310

**Diversity within the Deaf Community and Deaf Culture: A Panel Discussion**

Moderator: Professor Patricia Durr

The panel will discuss the broad range of diversity within the Deaf community and focus on the unique aspects of Deaf culture including race, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc. In addition, the panel will speak to the impact of audism and Deafhood.

Noon - 1:30 p.m. - NTID Student Development Center, Room 1310



### Wednesday, 10/29

**Video Presentation and Discussion: Audism Unveiled**

Moderators: Professors Barbara Ray Holcomb and J. Matt Searls

The documentary film Audism Unveiled defines audism through a series of interviews with Deaf and hard-of-hearing people recounting their experiences from job discrimination, attempts to 'cure' deafness, to miscommunication with other individuals.

10 - 11:30 a.m. - NTID, Student Development Center, Room 1300



### Thursday, 10/30

**Signing in Public Spaces**

Presenter: Dr. Peter Hauser

Dr. Peter C. Hauser's film Signing in Public Spaces will be presented and includes clips from the NTID communication forums. After the film, Hauser will lead a discussion on the request for all NTID faculty and staff to sign at all times in NTID public spaces. Discussion will be related to Bienvenu's keynote address.

11 a.m. - 1 p.m. - NTID Student Development Center, Room 1310

## Campus Week of Dialogue *continued*

Friday, 10/31

### Faculty Development - Hearing Professors, Deaf Students, Interpreters, Note-takers and C-Print Staff: Building Team for Academic Success

Presenter: Dr. Rebecca Edwards

This workshop is designed to help non-signing hearing faculty develop skills to build more inclusive classrooms. The goal is to increasing confidence in the ability to manage a classroom with students of diverse audiological backgrounds.

11 a.m. - 1 p.m. - NTID Student Development Center, Room 2102

Register for sessions at <http://diversity.rit.edu/schedule.html>



Voice and Sign Interpreters have been requested for all sessions.

## Opportunities to Make a Difference

The President's Commission on Pluralism and Inclusion members serve 2-year terms and participate on one or more sub-committees. The Commission encourages and welcomes participation from all members of RIT who may:

- attend or volunteer at commission-sponsored events;
- provide feedback to the Commission regarding current issues related to pluralism and diversity;
- share concerns with the Commission if it is perceived that RIT may not be meeting its commitment to promoting a diverse community, or if you know of a specific instance where discrimination has taken place;
- reflect on your own stance and feelings about being part of a diverse community, and renew your commitment to make RIT a place where all community members can feel welcomed and appreciated.

### 2008-09 Commission

Omobowale Ayorinde, *faculty*

Krysta Banke, *faculty*

\*Alex Bitterman, *faculty*

Jodi Boita, *staff*

William Brewer, *faculty*

Michelle Cometa, *staff*

\*Robert Croog, *faculty*

Mike D'Arcangelo, *staff*

Lynn Daley, *staff*

Stacy DeRooy, *staff*

Paula Dolan, *faculty*

Christa Filipowicz, *staff*

Sandy Francois, *grad student*

Tracy Gatewood, *staff*

\*Jeanette Giagios, *staff*

\*Joe Johnston, *staff*

Alex Jones, *staff*

Edward Kannyo, *faculty*

Ivan Kenneally, *faculty*

\*Dominique Lepoutre, *faculty*

Matthew Lynn, *faculty*

Manasi Manjrekar, *undergrad student*

Lisa Nolan, *staff*

Christie Ong, *undergrad student*

Unsilia Pervais, *grad student*

\*Jennifer Petro, *staff*

Susan Phillips, *staff*

Sarah Pillettere, *staff*

Carol Richardson, *faculty*

Michael Riordan, *faculty*

Sue Roethel, *staff*

Rauncie Ryan, *staff*

\*Jaya Save-Mundra, *staff*

Wayne Southerland, *staff*

Deborah Stendardi, *administration*

Peggy Tirrell, *staff*

Maria Vega, *staff*

\*Thomas Warfield, *faculty*

Kim White, *staff*

Sandy Whitmore, *staff*

Kevin Williams, *faculty*

Clesether Young, *staff*

Jason Younker, *faculty*

\* member at large

## Diversity Training - Center for Professional Development (CPD)

### Diversity Awareness: Where is my comfort zone?

Nov. 7, 2008 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. CIMS Rm. 2130

Feb. 10, 2009 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. CIMS Rm. 2140

Facilitated by Jacqueline Cooper

### Exploring Our Personal Diversity, Character and Makeup

Oct. 14, 2008 1 – 4 p.m. CIMS Rm. 2140

Jan. 6, 2009 1 – 4 p.m. CIMS Rm. 2140

March 3, 2009 1 – 4 p.m. CIMS Rm. 2140

Facilitated by Joe Brown

### Generational Collaboration

April 30, 2009 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. CIMS Rm. 2140

Facilitated by Duane Beck

### RIT's Global Community: Learning about our International Students

Dec. 16, 2008 9 – 11 a.m. CIMS Rm. 2140

March 19, 2009 2 – 4 p.m. CIMS Rm. 2140

Facilitated by Jeff Cox

### Safe Zone: Improving the Climate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Community Members

Oct. 15, 2008 10 a.m. – Noon CIMS Rm. 2150

Facilitated by members of RIT's Center for Campus Life and Student Affairs Division.

## What is Pluralism?

The plurality of cultures has come to characterize every part of the world today. Pluralism is active seeking of understanding across lines of difference, holding our deepest differences in relationship to one another. Pluralism is the celebration of individual characteristics and the coming together of individuals to work toward a common interest. The language of pluralism is that of dialogue – speaking and listening, discovering understanding. Pluralism is the engagement that creates a common society from all the diversity.

## What is Audism *(continued from front)*

sional people as administrators of schools for deaf children and of training programs for deaf adults, interpreters, and some audiologists, speech therapists, otologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, librarians, researchers, social workers, and hearing aid specialists (Lane 1992: 43).

Persons who practice audism are called audists. Audists may be hearing or deaf.

*Prepared by Tom Harrington  
Reference and Instruction Librarian  
Gallaudet University - October, 2002*

### References:

Humphrey, Jan, and Alcorn, Bob (1995). *So you want to be an interpreter: an introduction to sign language interpreting, 2nd edition*. Amarillo, TX: H&H Publishers.

Humphries, Tom (1977). *Communicating across cultures (deaf/hearing) and language learning*. Doctoral dissertation. Cincinnati, OH: Union Graduate School.

Lane, Harlan (1992). *Mask of benevolence: disabling the deaf community*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Pelka, Fred (1997). *The ABC-Clio companion to the disability rights movement*. Santa Barbara, ABC-Clio

Zak, Omer (1996). *ZPIG - Zak's Politically Incorrect Glossary*. <http://www.zak.co.il/deaf-info/old/zpig.html>, July 13, 1996.

## Save the Date

**Dr. Martin Luther King Day Celebration** will be held on January 20, 2009. The event will include a presentation by Dr. Iris Banister, Rochester Children's Zone and advocate for the underrepresented, will discuss how community activism and advocacy continues decades later through Dr. King's legacy.

---

*“Audism---  
a term used to  
describe discrimination  
or stereotypes  
against the deaf  
or hard of hearing,  
or that deaf people are  
somehow less capable.”*

*--Wikipedia*

COUNCIL ON DIVERSITY & INCLUSION  
Margaret Bailey • Sean Bennett  
Heath Boice-Pardee • Nicole Boulais  
Jeffrey Cox • Diane Ellison  
Franziska Frey • Ian Gately • Joan Graham  
Jeffrey Hering • Katherine Mayberry  
Donna Rubin • Newt Watson • Jason Younker

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON  
PLURALISM & INCLUSION  
Michelle Cometa (chair)  
Omobowale Ayorinde • Krysta Banke  
Alex BittermanJodi Boita • William Brewer  
Robert Croog • Mike D'Arcangelo  
Lynn Daley • Stacy DeRooy • Paula Dolan  
Christa Filipowicz • Sandy Francois  
Tracy Gatewood • Jeanette Giagios  
Joe Johnston • Alex Jones • Edward Kannyo  
Ivan Kenneally • Dominique Lepoutre  
Matthew Lynn • Manasi Manjrekar  
Lisa Nolan • Christie Ong • Unsila Pervais  
Jennifer Petro • Susan Phillips  
Sarah Pillettere • Carol Richardson  
Michael Riordan • Sue Roethel  
Rauncie Ryan • Jaya Save-Mundra  
Wayne Southerland • Deborah Stendardi,  
Peggy Tirrell • Maria Vega  
Thomas Warfield • Kim White  
Sandy Whitmore • Kevin Williams  
Clesether Young • Jason Younker

DIVERSITY PERSPECTIVES  
is published quarterly by the  
Chief Diversity Officer in conjunction with  
the President's Commission on  
Pluralism and Inclusion.

Managing Editors  
Dr. Alfreda Brown  
Chief Diversity Officer  
Michelle Cometa, chair  
President's Commission on  
Pluralism and Inclusion

Editors and Contributing Writers  
Christa Filipowicz  
Sue Roethel

Information and comments about  
this publication, and deadlines for article  
submission should be addressed to the  
Chief Diversity Officer  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
2 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, New York 14623-5604  
or by phone at (585) 475-5453 or 475-5700  
For more information visit us at  
[www.diversity.rit.edu](http://www.diversity.rit.edu)