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JANUARY 27
4 p.m.
INGLE AUDITORIUM



27th ANNUAL MARTIN L. KING CELEBRATION

Keynote Address - Iris Bannister
Tuesday, January 27, 4 p.m.
Ingle Auditorium, Student Alumni Union

Long time community activist and educator, Iris Bannister will present *The Dream: Are We Almost There?* that touches on Dr. Martin Luther King’s legacy of justice, community activism, and little known facts about Dr. King. Bannister, executive director of Rochester Surround Care (formerly Rochester Children’s Zone), will relate her experiences as leader of a not-for-profit created to advocate for children and their families in the northeast quadrant of Rochester. Identified as one of the most economically challenged areas in the city, with many of its children living below the poverty level, she works to integrate services including health and wellness, housing and economic development and educational opportunities.



IRIS BANISTER

Bannister spent more than 30 years in the Rochester City School District as a teacher, guidance counselor and program director for middle school at-risk youth. As charter schools grew in Rochester, she became the principal of one of the first, the Rochester Charter School of Science and Technology. Bannister has received numerous citations and awards for her community work including the City of Rochester Pioneer Award, the Martin Luther King Achievement Award for Civic Engagement, and the New York State Humanitarian Award. She is also in the National Women’s Rights Hall of Fame – Book of Legends.

The annual Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration is second in a series of programs under the theme *Reading Between the Signs: Connecting our Communities*. The 2008-2009 season opened with a focus on the Deaf community, specifically our peers at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. Bannister’s program widens the circle of our ‘community’ to include the Rochester area.

Update from the Chief Diversity Officer

Diversity efforts continue into the new year with the development of a broad campus action plan and final governance review toward approving the 2009 climate study. Below are some highlights.

Diversity Action Plan Committee - began work on actualizing the framework for a diversity strategic action plan and has narrowed its research to two universities--Penn State and Oregon State, whose diversity plans will be utilized as a guide for creating RIT’s Diversity Action Plan. Research conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) regarding Inclusive Excellence will support RIT’s framework. As part of the plan, a diversity stance was created as an overview of RIT’s interpretation of diversity. This is currently being reviewed by Academic Senate, Staff Council and their constituents, and will be shared with Student Government.

University Climate Study - is close to implementation and will target faculty and staff. A student climate survey will be implemented at a later time. The Executive Diversity Council, Academic

Minett Professor Hoffman Moka Lantum

A focus on diversity in business and health care

Moka Lantum, director of business process improvement for the medical services division of Excellus BlueCross BlueShield in Rochester, has been named the newest Frederick H. Minett Professor at Rochester Institute of Technology. The part-time appointment runs until May.

As Minett Professor, Lantum will teach *The Business Case for Diversity and Equity* during RIT's spring quarter in the E. Philip Saunders College of Business. The course is designed to expose students and staff to the benefits of making diversity a "business imperative, as opposed to a moral obligation," says Lantum. "I will be using case studies and personal experiences to provide a practitioner's perspective on operationalizing diversity."

Lantum has been working in the health sciences since enrolling in medical school in 1991. His 16-year career is a blend of public health, clinical, laboratory and administrative experiences.

"My role as the Minett Professor is ambassadorial first and foremost for my company and for RIT," adds Lantum. "It will be important to use this opportunity to expose students to minority business professionals, urban issues that determine perceptions of corporate citizenship, and expose minority professionals at Excellus and RIT to each other. I am also looking forward to learning from the students and the faculty. I anticipate significant exposure to very bright business minds, and I hope to learn a lot from the diversity initiatives in place at RIT that can be shared with colleagues



H. MOKA LANTUM

at Excellus BCBS. This is about building relationships and connecting people through shared experiences."

The Minett professorship is designed to bring distinguished Rochester-area minority professionals to RIT to share their professional knowledge and experience with students and faculty for one academic year. Past Minett professors include G. Peter Jemison, curator of the Fenimore Art Museum; Augustin Melendez, vice president for human resources, Eastman Kodak Co.; Robert Colón, director, RIT Office of Legal Affairs; Michael Finney, former president and CEO of Greater Rochester Enterprise; and Gladys Santiago, president of Rochester City Council.

CDO Update *(continued from p.1)*

Senate and Staff Council have provided their input and approval on the logistics of the study. Final revisions will be made and implementation is expected by the end of February. More information will be provided in the coming weeks.

Assessment Committee - assessment plans from a variety of universities are being reviewed as a guide for developing the Phase III assessment process. The most appropriate role for this phase of assessment will be to gather data related to how programs are currently conducting evaluations, which allows the committee to have a better understanding of the impact of diversity initiatives and associated challenges. Phase III will ultimately include the work of the Affirmative Action Commission which is currently reviewing race and gender-based programs and initiatives.

I will continue to update campus on all our diversity initiatives and discuss the results from the Diversity Score Card in the spring newsletter.

--Alfreda Brown



Did you know?

The Martin Luther King Celebration has been an annual campus event since 1981. A bill to establish King's birthday as a national holiday first came to a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1979, but was defeated by five votes. In 1983 the bill was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan, and formally observed in 1986.

Nominations Sought for Issac L. Jordan Scholarships and Faculty/Staff Awards

Isaac L. Jordan was both a humanitarian and a visionary. He envisioned a community that celebrated differences and that allowed individuals to develop to their fullest potential. His energies were totally dedicated to creating this kind of world. To honor his vision and his memory, the Isaac L. Jordan Fund was established and annually funds two student scholarships as well as the sponsors the annual Faculty/Staff Pluralism Award. Calls for nominations are being sought for these campus awards.

One scholarship is presented to a first year student based on a writing contest on a diversity topic. The second scholarship is awarded to a returning student who has demonstrated an understanding of the concept of diversity through overt contributions in this area. The recipients are given community-wide recognition, but are also invited to become members of the Commission and RIT Leadership Institute, assisting in the promotion of pluralism on campus. The most recent recipients of the scholarships are Shamikia Banks, Aditya Manjrekar, and Matthew Danna.

Faculty and staff who have made significant contributions to enhancing pluralism on campus are also recognized through the Isaac L. Jordan Pluralism Award. Previous award winners were recognized for carrying on the tradition set by Mr. Jordan toward a community of inclusion and respect. Calls for nominations will go out to the campus the week of January 19 and will be due back to the President's Commission on Pluralism and Inclusion by Feb. 16. The presentation of this year's award will take place during the Expressions of Diversity Conference in the spring.

NEW! Dessert & Dialogue Series: Spirituality

Dessert and Dialogue, a new discussion series sponsored by the President's Commission on Pluralism and Inclusion, makes the most of breaking bread and conversation. The first program, "What Does Spirituality Mean to Me?" opens at 5 p.m. on Jan. 20 in the Faculty Commons, room 1251, in the College of Liberal Arts.

The session is free and open to faculty, staff, and students from both traditional and non-traditional religious denominations. Light refreshments will be served.

With hundreds of recognized religions and sects across the globe, understanding their tenets and practices is a challenge. "This is an informal discussion only, a safe place for exchange of viewpoints," says Susan Phillips, a member of the Commission and one of the program organizers.

The other topics and dates for the program series are: Life after Death (Feb. 17), Sacred Places (March 17), Prayer and Holistic Medicine for Healing (April 21), and Interfaith Marriages/Partnerships (May 19).

For more information or to arrange for an interpreter contact Rauncie Ryan at Irrgla@rit.edu or Susan Phillips at sdpkla@rit.edu. Registration is not required for this session.

View Presidential Inauguration with Colleagues

Several members of the RIT community were very fortunate to secure tickets to the Presidential Inauguration of Barack Obama. Others will travel to take part in the parade and other public events in Washington, D.C. For those who won't be making the trip you may still 'attend' the ceremony while here at RIT.

Come together with students, faculty and staff to mark this historic occasion via telecast on Tuesday, January 20 in the Clark Gym. RIT will celebrate "A New Birth of Freedom" with others across the country, as the 44th President of the United States is sworn in at the United States Capitol. The theme for the 2009 Inauguration is "A New Birth of Freedom," a phrase from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

The doors will open at 10 a.m. for mingling and light refreshments, followed by a brief welcome from Provost Jeremy Haefner. The swearing-in ceremony and presidential address will be broadcast on a large screen in the gym at 11:30 a.m.

This event is sponsored by the Center for Residence Life, the Office of the President, Student Government, the Division of Student Affairs, the Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs, Office of the Senior Vice President for Finance & Administration, and the Offices of the Chief Diversity Officer and The President's Commission on Pluralism and Inclusion.

Annual Education for Peace Conference

Local non-profit organization, Education for Peace, Inc. presents its 18th Annual Education for Peace Conference on Tuesday, April 28, 2009 in the CIMS building. The event is free and open to elementary through high school-age students from across Monroe County. Registration starts at 9 a.m. and the event will conclude at 2 p.m. after the general assembly.

"This is one of the few local events that afford the opportunity for students from suburban and city schools to interact, learn from each other, and participate in joint activities around peaceful coexistence," says Dina D'Aiuto, conference organizer.

Annually, local Rochester and Monroe County officials proclaim the last week in April as Education for Peace Week. Within this week, Education for Peace, Inc. sponsors the Peace Conference to provide students workshops addressing conflict resolution, cultural diversity, peer mediation, and alternatives to violence.

For additional information, please contact Dina D'Aiuto at (585) 426-3708, via email at ed4peace@frontiernet.net, or online at educationforpeace.org

Diversity Focus - Center for Professional Development

Diversity Awareness: Where is my Comfort Zone?

Date: Feb. 10, 2009
Time: 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Location: CIMS Rm. 2140
Facilitated by: Jacqueline Cooper

Exploring Our Personal Diversity, Character and Makeup

Date: March 3, 2009
Time: 1 – 4 p.m.
Location: CIMS Rm. 2140
Facilitated by: Joe Brown

Generational Collaboration

Date: April 30, 2009
Time: 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Location: CIMS Rm. 2140
Facilitated by: Duane Beck

RIT's Global Community: Learning About our International Students

Date: March 19, 2009
Time: 2 – 4 p.m.
Location: CIMS Rm. 2140
Facilitated by: Jeff Cox



Partnerships in Pluralism October 2008-May 2009

Partnerships in Pluralism is in its fifth year. Under the leadership of the President, faculty and staff from across the campus are invited to participate. Participants are paired based upon a number of diverse variables, one of which is race and ethnicity. The goal of Partnerships in Pluralism is to improve the climate and effectiveness of diversity at RIT by providing an opportunity for building trust and credibility.

Coming Events...

- Dessert & Dialogue:
"What Does Spirituality Mean to Me?" January 20
- Asian Awareness Week January 26-31
- Cultural Unification Show..... February 7
- Dessert & Dialogue:
"Life After Death" February 17
- Dessert & Dialogue:
"Sacred Places" March 17
- Spring Global Union
World Issues Forum..... March 31
- Diversity Day..... April 1
- Dessert & Dialogue:
"Prayer and Holistic
Medicine for Healing" April 21
- Education for Peace..... April 28

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DIVERSITY PERSPECTIVES

is published quarterly by the Chief Diversity Officer in conjunction with the President's Commission on Pluralism & Inclusion
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