

College of Arts and Letter Diversity Council

Minutes, April 17, 2015

Harrison 1131, 8am

Present: Andreas Broscheid (chair and scribe), Erica Cavanagh, Stephen Chappell, Christie Liu, Iain MacLean, Besi Muhonja, David Owusu-Ansah, Christine Robinson, Vanessa Rouillon

1. Announcements

- Tea in honor of Patricia Hardesty, who is retiring, April 23, 5-6 in Cleveland Hall. RSVP by April 20: Anita Brown, brown2am@jmu.edu
- Veteran's Center to be created in Wilson Hall.
- Fridays 3pm, Hoffman Hall Lounge, Global Connections - coffee with international students
- April 17, 2:30-4, Memorial Hall forum: Dr. Lara Coggin, Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, "Richmond, Tuscon, and Raza Studies: Educational Equity and Culturally Relevant Curriculum in U.S. Public Schools" Virginia Latino Higher Education Network (VALHEN) lecture series.
- April 17, 3:30pm, Zane Showker 106: Debra Stevens Fitzgerald, Blue Ridge Community College and the Harrisonburg Planning Commission, "Economic Issues of Urban Planning in the City of Harrisonburg"
- April 17: Ability Olympics, GodwinHall April 17 (4--9pm), April 18th (8am--5pm). Come volunteer and spend an amazing day with some amazing kids! To volunteer or learn more information--email Richelle Villa at villa2ra@dukes.jmu.edu
- April 24, 2:30-4:30, Movie: A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night, Grafton-Stovall. Synopsis: Residents of a worn-down Iranian city encounter a skateboarding vampire (Sheila Vand) who preys on men who disrespect women. (Amirpour, 2014)
- April 27, 7-9pm, Movie: The Hunting Ground, Grafton-Stovall. From the Academy Award-nominated filmmaking team behind THE INVISIBLE WAR, comes a startling exposé of sexual assault on U.S. campuses, institutional cover-ups and the brutal social toll on victims and their families.
- **Resource meetings with librarians:** April 28, 9-10am and 2:30-3:30pm Festival Ballroom 2; April 29, 9-10am Taylor 404 - faculty with expertise/resource requests are invited to meet with librarians
- April 29, 5-7pm, Taylor 306, American Women at War Project Presentations
- **May 6, 6pm: Donning of the Kente, Madison Union Ballroom, RSVP by April 30 (krzanosx@jmu.edu) - CMSS encourages faculty participation**
- **May 8, 10am-1pm: Lavender graduation, Festival Highlands Room. We are encouraged to participate. CMSS will send out RSVP link, which I will forward.**
- **May 12, 9:15am, Salome Heyward, Esq., Disability Issues in Higher Education.** Festival Highlands. Heyward also facilitates a workshop and a roundtable during the CFI May Symposium.

- CFI May Symposium: See particularly “conference days” on May 12 and 13 with several sessions on diversity-related topics, partly repeated from diversity conference.
<http://www.jmu.edu/maysymposium/index.shtml>

Christine Robinson reported on preparations for the Fall 2015 School of Public and International Affairs symposium, which will be on the topic of sexual assault. Robinson specifically mentioned one guest speaker, Walter S. DeKeseredy, who is scheduled to talk on “Ending Campus Sexual Violence: How Research on Men Can Help Inform Best Practices and Policies” (more on DeKeseredy: <http://soca.wvu.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-directory/dekeseredy>). Robinson asked if the CAL diversity council would co-sponsor DeKeseredy’s talk; this would not require a monetary commitment, since the talk is already funded. The council unanimously agreed to co-sponsor the talk.

2. Conversation on library resources for diversity

David Owusu-Ansah and Christie Liu attended the council meeting to engage in a conversation on what the library can do to support diversity in the college curriculum. David Owusu-Ansah explained that the desire to start a conversation on library resources for diversity was based on a desire to broaden the focus on diversity in the curriculum beyond the general education curriculum. While many individual courses addressed diversity-related questions, Owusu-Ansah reported that the provost’s task force on diversity found that this focus deserved more support and needed conversations at the college level. The college diversity council meetings with librarians constituted part of such conversations. Since the library had a very active diversity council, it was well positioned to provide resources to support diversity in the curriculum. Owusu-Ansah also pointed to the university-wide resources meetings on April 28 and 29 (see announcements above).

While the ensuing conversation did not produce any specific action items, a number of points were highlighted by the participants:

- Christie Liu asked if faculty with expertise in non-dominant subfields of their disciplines could help librarians identify resources that would help them as well as other faculty members work on those subfields. Several council members expressed concern that this might lead to additional work expectations from faculty who are already working with tight resources. The ensuing conversation identified several ways in which librarians could proactively develop expertise in non-mainstream subfields, for example by attending subfield conferences.
- David Owusu-Ansah highlighted the need for faculty and library to collaborate in identifying content that does not firmly fall into a faculty member’s research focus but that might be important to enable a broader diversity of intellectual inquiry. Talking about his own expertise in African studies, Owusu-Ansah identified literature on the LGBT community in South Africa or literature on the Central African Republic as examples of questions that he came across as a subject matter expert, even though they’re not the focus of his own research, and for which the library should be able to identify and/or provide resources.

- Some council members raised the possibility that the library could identify central publications of visiting speakers and publicize these resources before their talks.
- The council raised the question of which librarians would be responsible for interdisciplinary subfields that crossed college boundaries, since these are frequently subfields that add to curricular diversity by providing different and non-dominant perspectives.
- With regards to fostering curricular diversity at the departmental level, the question was raised as to whether librarians should meet with departments and specifically ask for what disciplinary perspectives would add to the department's diversity and what the relevant resources would be to support work in those areas.