

Commission on Multicultural Understanding
Executive Council Meeting Summary
October 31, 2008 – Distinguished Alumni Room, IMU – 1:30-3:00pm

Attendance:

Chair: Pamela Freeman

Deputy Chair: Bill Shipton

Graduate Assistant: Jodi Benenson

General, At-Large, & Ex-Officio Members: Melanie Castillo-Cullather, Laury Flint (IUPD), Rob Meyer, Dana Whippo (for OWA)

IUSA Students: Shane Bohbrink, Seth Bowers, Indira Dammu, Jessica Gross, Akash Rusia, Abigail Skinner

Committee Co-Conveners:

Orientation and Welcome: Melanie Payne & Thea Heninger-Lowell

Retreats and Recognition: Barry Magee and Cynthia Solorzano

Teachable Moments: Sharlene Toney & Rebecca Riall

Student Coalition: Currently inactive

Faculty and Staff Policy Issues: Hilary Kahn & Natalie Conlon

Training: Ashleigh Klingman

Student Policy Issues: Sandy Britton, Rachel Peterson, & Jen Yu

I. Welcome

- Pam welcomed all of the new IUSA representatives to COMU.
- Please take a copy of the new roster, and if you would like to update your information, contact Jodi at comu@indiana.edu.

II. Guest: Deb Getz, Director, Center for Student Leadership Development

- Deb's office serves 350-500 students and participates in leadership development and organizational leadership development.
- Deb talked about a new course: Leadership and Life Skills. This course is primarily for incoming freshmen and goes over how to be successful at IU.
- The Center focuses on different types of coursework, and everything that we do now is being developed around diversity. Several programs are centered around building a diversity piece in everything the Center does, and everything is developed online and face to face.
- Council for Advancing Student Leadership holds events, such as Conversations on Race and the Cardboard Boat Regatta.
- Last spring, the Center initiated an opportunity to talk with Sigma Chi fraternity about diversity and hopes to see it as ongoing. The Center is also hoping to propose a 2 credit-hour course, which would ideally be beneficial for both participants and facilitators. The first part of the semester would be developed around learning about diversity & communication among small groups, and then the second part of the semester would show how diversity plays out in small group meetings and talks, like with Sigma Chi.
- What the Center has seen thus far in their research is the polarization of students opposed to diversity and those who embrace or support diversity.
- Pam mentioned that several COMU committees may be interested in the in-depth research and training methods done by the leadership programs.

- If there are any partnership opportunities you see that will allow us to work together, you can contact Deb.

III. Cultural Lens Project

- Melanie Castillo-Cullather described Cultural Lens, which was developed out of the Campus Community Partnership Meeting sponsored by COMU and City of Bloomington in January 2008.
- One thing that came out of this meeting was to take advantage of the free air time on channel 3.
- Barbara McKinney of the Bloomington Human Rights Committee, Melanie Castillo-Cullather, and a group of campus and community individuals have met to organize and implement this project.
- Carolyn Thomas Calloway, a professor in the Communication and Culture department, is providing the voiceover for the first episode.
- The next episode will begin airing in mid-December on a Wednesday. There is a subcommittee producing this episode, comprised of individuals like Lillian Casillas and members of Hillel.
- Each subcommittee picks a theme. In each episode, there will always be a special feature, a demonstration, a cultural “happening,” and cultural “oops” (a dramatization of a well-intentioned “oops”).
- The December show will be focused around holidays (with things like GLBT coming out during the holidays, Hillel HooShir, and Dwali).
- Melanie expressed a need for ideas and people for activities such as camera work. If you have students who may be interested in helping, please let Melanie know.
- A show will come out every other two months (October, December, February, April).
- The Cultural Lens will be aired on channel 3 every Wednesday at 8pm.

IV. Sponsorship Events

- Will be discussed at the next meeting.

V. Committee Updates

A. Training Committee

- Ashleigh liked hearing what Deb had to say, and would like to carry out some of these ideas throughout the semester once she gets in contact with Rob and Eric.

B. Orientation and Welcome

- Thea talked about a recent meeting the committee had to plan for the welcome for transfer students in the spring semester. The committee has been working on things like invitations, space reservation, a movie (history of IU), game show with prizes, and other things to get this ready.
- Melanie said our hope is to get a piece of Culturefest in the orientation program and a piece of the Student Involvement Fair.
- About 300 students are expected to participate in spring orientation, and about 60 have come to this event in past years.
- Please get involved if you can in spring orientation in any way. There is not much of an orientation feel during this time of year, so it is particularly important to have cultural representation at these events and make them more welcoming and lively.

C. Retreats and Recognition

- Barry said that the retreat wants to tie together the immersion trip that COMU has helped sponsor. This year, the cultural immersion trip will hopefully go to a tribal college in Michigan or

Wisconsin (with contacts through Johnny Flint, faculty member at IUPUI). This year the trip will focus on civil rights and understanding Native American issues.

- The retreat ideally will be planned for a date after that trip, on February 6.
- Part of the retreat will be a passive program that will highlight Native American tribes from the state of Indiana.
- Then, a half-day retreat would consist of a Native American speaker in higher education, and follow with faculty research roundtables with research on Native American higher education.
- The next part of the retreat would be a student-led function to complete the connection between the students who attend the event and other students. This will hopefully allow the students to interact and recognize similarities and differences.
- Ashleigh brought up possibly visiting Haskell University in Lawrence, Kansas.

D. Teachable Moments

- Sharlene talked about Teachable Moments' first program on Columbus Day and passed around shirts with different quotes or facts about Native American students.
- Groups of students and community members froze for five minutes in three different locations on campus.
- Afterwards, there was a gathering on October 30 to talk about a scrapbook that could be put together from the event.
- Becca said she thought the response was pretty confused at first, and there was only one hostile incident.
- Some people clapped during parts of the performance, and the event was covered on WFHB to talk about the program and recruit volunteers.
- Pam mentioned that if you are going to use funds for t-shirts, make sure to approach Jodi or Nita Allgood, Administrative Secretary in Student Ethics first, in order to do it in a way that it will be approved by the university. Remember that you cannot have IU logo without permission on a shirt, and you have to use an IU-approved vendor, etc.
- We owe a large thank you to Nita Allgood for her help.
- Pam talked about the high level of emotions that might take place after the election, and this might be a topic that we could do something with.
- Rob mentioned that currently there may be rooms open for watching the election results at the IMU.
- It might not hurt for Teachable Moments to be proactive about things that may arise during/after the election.

E. Student Policy Issues

- Pam talked about the fact that for several years now (since 2001) it was brought to our attention that often some of the smaller student organizations on campus are not able to use different rooms for events like fundraisers.
- In order to use the IMU for a fundraiser, there is a fee.
- In turn, this became an issue for the COMU Student Policy issues committee to try and find a solution.
- Rob discussed the requirements, limitations, and application process for students to be able to apply for funding and use IMU rooms for fundraisers. Please look over the sheet handed out at the meeting, and contact Rob with any alterations to the grant sheet.
- You can email Rob if you are interested in serving on the IMU Facility Use Grant Committee.
- Pam mentioned the issue of the religious discrimination policy in academic settings.

- Something that the Student Policy committee may be able to address is: How does the religious academic policy get communicated? Currently, if you have an issue you can go to academic affairs or write to trust@indiana.edu and someone on the religious bias incident team will help work it out.

F. Faculty & Staff Policy Issues

- Hilary and Pam met and had a very productive meeting, and the next step is to look at the previous video that was made about the Benton murals. We will open the screening to anyone available to get feedback, but we may need to redo the video.
- Hilary spoke to Overseas Studies about sharing the area, and they were okay with it.
- Hilary is thinking about having her Human Rights and the Arts class help with some of the content for this project.
- By June 30, 2009 we should have a finished project.
- For the students, this is a great project to work on, and we can include members outside of COMU as well.
- Melanie Payne still has a great deal of footage on the murals from an orientation program.

VI. Announcements and Discussion Items

- Sandy mentioned that the International Education Week celebration starts next week. The kickoff will be the IU World's Fare. For the rest of the week there will be things going on at the International Center and around campus.
- Jodi provided information about MBLGTACC that will be happening on February 13-15, 2008 at IU.
- Becca announced that November is Native American Heritage Month and if you would like information, you can email nagsa@indiana.edu , and First Nations also has a calendar at fnecc@indiana.edu.
- Laury Flint's daughter's school (Bloomington High School North) is raising money to bring a human understanding and diversity project to the high school in February. They are looking for community people to create an immersion experience.