

College Diversity Roundtable Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 20, 2019
401 Douglass Commons
12 -1 PM

AGENDA:

- Introductions & Lunch
- Welcome Dr. Mercedes Ramírez Fernández, Richard Feldman Vice President for Equity and Inclusion & Chief Diversity Officer!
- Current Bias-Related Incidents Discussion:
 - Racial epithet (N-word) found written in Susan B. Anthony Hall
 - Restorative Circle scheduled for today from 1-3 PM, co-facilitated by David Sanchez, M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence and Jessica Guzman-Rea, director of the Burgett Intercultural Center
 - Upcoming event(s) planned by the College Republicans is a concern for International Chinese Students due to the nature of the topics
- Overview of upcoming Meliora Weekend Events (Oct. 4-7) – Lauren McKenna, Alumni Relations
- 2017-2018 Bias-Related Incident Report Update - *Tabled to next meeting*

CDR MISSION:

The College Diversity Roundtable (CDR) is structured as a student-centered task force where campus climate and quality of life issues and/or concerns can be voiced, heard, and acted upon, especially those affecting racial, ethnic and cultural groups on campus. The CDR is also a focal point for diversity discussions, initiatives and best practices.

CURRENT BIAS-RELATED INCIDENTS DISCUSSION:

Incident #1: Racist graffiti in Susan B. Anthony 3rd floor bathroom mirror

Here is a brief timeline:

- Sept. 12 - a Bias-Related Incident that involved racist graffiti (the N-Word) was found by an Environmental Safety Worker in the third floor of the Susan B. Anthony Residential Hall bathroom mirror. The Resident Director of the First-Year Hall immediately submitted a Bias-Related Incident report. Public Safety was dispatched to document and investigate and facilities was sent to remove the graffiti.
- Sept. 12 - The Resident Director of the First-Year Hall called for an all-hall mandatory meeting to address the incident.
- Sept. 13 - An email was sent to all undergraduate students regarding the incident (see below for copy).
- Sept. 18 - An email was sent to all CDR members regarding the incident.
- Sept. 20 - Discussion was held regarding the incident at the College Diversity Roundtable Meeting.
- Sept. 20 - A Restorative Circle was held at the Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center regarding the incident and co-facilitated by David Sanchez, M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence and Jessica Guzman-Rea, director of the Burgett Intercultural Center
- Sept. 20 - An email was sent by Dean Runner to all faculty, staff, and graduate students within the College regarding the incident.

Email sent to the College

Dear Student:

Sometime this past Wednesday night into Thursday morning, an incident of graffiti occurred in the Susan B. Anthony residence hall, involving a racial epithet, “n****r”, written on a bathroom mirror. We are writing to address this incident, to clarify the College’s position in this matter, and to ask for your assistance.

We expect that all clearly can understand that this graffiti, written in this manner, is cowardly and exceedingly offensive, and represents not only a blatant contradiction of the University’s Meliora Values, but also a violation of University policy. As we celebrate the value of Equity this year, which we describe as committing to “diversity, inclusion, and equity,” we are left feeling as though few behaviors could exhibit a more opposite outlook, and we are deeply disturbed that any member of our community would feel comfortable engaging in this act.

In incidents such as this, our practice is to document the vandalism, remove it, and submit a bias-related report through the CARE system to initiate follow up and to track such incidents. All of these things have been done. Last night, the Resident Director for the area called a mandatory meeting for all residents, and offered the opportunity to have restorative conversations about the incident in its aftermath, acknowledging the harms it caused to the community and identifying possible ways the community can respond. Since incidents of this nature often have “ripple effects” around our larger campus community, such conversations can and should occur in a broader context. Anyone interested in planning or joining such conversations can find out more about restorative conversation resources and assistance by visiting the Burgett Intercultural Center on the third floor of Douglass Commons (or email them at bic@rochester.edu).

The CARE network is available should any student need to reach out for assistance, as are the Residential Life staff, the University Counseling Center, the Office of Minority Student Affairs, and the David T. Kearns Center, among others. Please take advantage of any of these resources should you feel the need.

If anyone has any information about who committed this act of vandalism, exactly when it occurred, or other information you think might be helpful, please contact Public Safety at (585) 275-3333. Lastly, we assert our shared belief that this act does not define our community, which continues to be committed to equity, leadership, integrity, openness, respect, and accountability.

Sincerely,

Norman Burnett
Assistant Dean and Director of the Office of Minority Student Affairs

Matthew Burns
Dean of Students

Jessica Guzman-Rea
Director of the Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center

Beth Olivares
Dean for Diversity and Director of the David T. Kearns Center

Jeffrey Runner
Dean of the College

DISCUSSION/THOUGHTS ON THIS INCIDENT DURING THE CDR MEETING:

- It was requested that for situations like this, all residents in every hall should have been notified and interviewed asap. By doing this it could have made the students felt safer. It would seem like the university was being more proactive and efficient in showing that not only do they care about this issue, but that there is an urgency in resolving this matter.
- Creating a protocol/code of conduct on how these situations are to be handled and the repercussions of what could happen if someone does this type of act/behavior. By doing this, people can hold themselves accountable and it creates consistency on how to handle these situations.
- It was requested that all bias-related incidents and issues on university campus should be communicated to all faculty, staff, graduate students, graduate students, etc., and not just those directly impacted.

RESTORATIVE CIRCLES:

A restorative circle was held regarding this incident right after the CDR Meeting from 1-3 pm. Many great conversations were had and it looked like everyone left feeling heard with regards to their opinions and feelings.

Restorative Circles is a dispute resolution process based upon the principles of restorative justice. Circles seek to address conflicts by;

1. Providing opportunities for dialogue, direct or indirect, between offending parties and those they have harmed by their actions
 2. Encouraging collaborations between the offending parties rather than isolating them
 3. Showing respect for all parties including offenders, impacted individuals and facilitators
- Restorative circles are used at the University of Rochester when an incident or conflict is impacting a group of community members.

For more information about restorative circles, please check out this [link](#).

Incident #2: Upcoming event(s) planned by the College Republicans is a concern for International Chinese Students due to the nature of the topics

Chinese Students Association (CSA) President, Simeng (Sampson) Hao presented to members of the College Diversity Roundtable to discuss the upcoming event(s) and why it was a concern for students.

On Sept. 21 – the College Republicans held an event titled, “Tibet Dialogue: Democracy in Exile and the Future of Tibet.” Members of a group not affiliated with CSA called the "Tibet Event Group" presented a document to share their side of the issues during the Questions & Answer portion of the event.

Update: Over 50 Bias-Related Incident Reports have been submitted to the Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center related to the September 21 event, flyers, Tibetan Monks in Starbucks, and responses to the Overheard at Rochester Facebook posts. These Bias-Related Incident Reports are currently being reviewed and investigated. Meetings are currently being held and scheduled with students who included their names on the reports to speak about this matter and the impact it is having on the community. In addition, restorative circles are being planned for those impacted and/or involved in the series of incidents. More information about the restorative circles will be sent out as soon as the logistics are solidified.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Meliora Weekend – Diversity Related Events

<https://registration.melioraweekend.com>

**CDR Sponsored Events*

*****Please register to these events! Free for Students. Fee is waived. Registration stays open and allows walk-ins*****

Thursday, October 3, 2019

- A Conversation with Paulina Porizkova

Friday, October 4, 2019

- Walk the Walk, Talk the Talk: A Self-Guided Walking Tour on Race and Student Activism*
- Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center Open House
- Mind Cure: How Meditation Became Medicine
- 32nd Annual Tropicana Dinner Celebration & Dance

Saturday, October 5, 2019

- Black Alumni Network Breakfast
- 50 Years Since Stonewall: A reflection of Rochester's Journey with the LGBTQ Community
- Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) 50th Anniversary Celebration
- Sweet Five-Minute Language Experience
- 2019 Stanton/Anthony Conversation: Igniting Social Change
- A Mindful University: Creating a Campus Community Ever Better
- Intersection of Religion, Race, and Culture
- Campus Activism as a Catalyst for Positive Social Change: A Panel Discussion*
- Explore Rochester's Military and Veterans Communities
- Office of Minority Student Affairs (OMSA) Networking Reception
- Eastman Presents: Jon Batiste

Sunday, October 6, 2019

- UR Gospel Choir and Jazz Ensemble Joint Concert

International Education Week

International Education Week is an annual joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education to promote international engagement at U.S. colleges and universities and will be held across the U.S. November 18-22 this year. The IEW Grant is designed to support events during the month of November that either celebrate the benefits of international education, highlight intercultural awareness, or support the integration of our domestic and international student body. The application can be found at: <http://www.rochester.edu/global/international-education-week/> Grant funding is available up to \$500. The grant application is due September 30. If a related event does not require funding, the IEW Committee will still promote the event in its marketing materials. Please contact Meredith Doubleday at Meredith.doubleday@rochester.edu with any questions.

“This is Me”: International Education Week Event.

The University of Rochester is a diverse community, and we all have our own personal stories to tell. Join us for This Is Me, an International Education Week event, on November 18, 12-3pm in Lams Square. Come share your story about who you are and how you would like to be identified. Faculty, staff, and students are invited to share their stories and listen to others tell theirs. Please contact Kathy Wu at kwu@library.rochester.edu for more information or to sign up for a time share your story. Advanced sign-up is encouraged but not required.