

A Seat at the Table

March 2015

The 2014-15 academic year has been a banner one for diversity and inclusion related initiatives at Ferris.

- As part of a yearlong diversity audit, the Ferris community is invited to participate in the Diversity and Inclusion Climate Survey, from March 16 to April 3. Data from this survey, along with data gathered from recently conducted on-campus interviews and focus groups, will contribute to the creation of a new University diversity and inclusion plan. As an incentive, everyone who completes the survey will be eligible to win prizes, including iPad minis, Beats and Ferris paraphernalia.

On March 16, Ferris students, faculty and staff will receive an email from IBIS Consulting, the external experts contracted by the University to facilitate the audit. That email will contain a link to the Diversity and Inclusion Climate Survey. The survey should take fewer than 15 minutes to complete. IBIS will analyze the raw data and submit a final report to the University. All responses, including any personal information, will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you in advance for completing the survey.

- The *Beyond: Diversity* initiative continues with events in March and April. Upcoming panel presentations include:
 - March 19: Diversity of Abilities – 11am-12:30 pm in IRC 104
 - April 9: Diversity and Sports – 6:30pm-8:00 pm in IRC 121
 - April 16: Literature and Diversity – 6:30 pm-8:00 pm in IRC 104
 - April 23: Beyond: Genealogical Diversity – 6:30 pm-8:00 pm in IRC 104
- *Minds Aflame* was a great success, with several hundred students, faculty, and staff listening to provocative short talks. The presentations are available on the diversity YouTube channel, see:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL28K7NXcVLWI7hvoZt3IGuMAz9UZ8UFxo>.
- March is Women's History Month. As part of the *Beyond: Diversity* initiative, the Diversity and Inclusion Office and the Ferris Museum of Sexist Objects (FMSM) will present a major multi-part event on March 24.

On March 24, at 7pm, Albion Professor Trisha Franzen, the author of *Anna Howard Shaw: The Work of Woman Suffrage* (University of Illinois, 2014), will deliver a lecture about Shaw's life and the fight for the right to vote. Shaw lived in Big Rapids and attended Big Rapids High School. Professor Franzen will also be featured at FLITE Library at 11 am on March 24, in a discussion about the process of doing historical research and reconstructing a life story.

Also on March 24, the Ferris Museum of Sexist Objects will be open from 4:00-6:00 pm for viewing and brief tours. The facility is located in Starr 314 (the old home of the Jim Crow Museum). Several faculty are piloting the use of sexist objects as tools to increase student understanding and as resources for student research. March 24 will be a great time for all faculty to see the collection and discuss ways that it can be used more broadly throughout the Ferris curriculum.

- The DisArt Festival, a 15-day, multi-faceted celebration of arts which will be “changing perceptions of disability, one work at a time,” will open April 10 in Grand Rapids. The international exhibition “Art of the Lived Experiment,” along with seven newly commissioned works by American artists, will be hosted by the Grand Rapids Art Museum, Kendall College of Art and Design, and the Urban Institute for Contemporary Art. The Festival includes this major exhibition plus other events and additional exhibits. See <http://disartfestival.org/>
- Chris Smit, the director of the DisArt Festival and a professor at Calvin College will be at the Ferris campus in Big Rapids on Thursday, March 26. He will give a presentation on the lobby on the second floor of the University Center from 3:00 – 4:30 pm.
- Cheers to Brooke Moore, Coordinator of First-Year Seminars, who will facilitate a workshop at the 25th annual Equity Within the Classroom Conference. Her workshop, “How to Talk About Diversity So Students Will Hear You,” will be held March 16, from 4:00-5:00 pm, at the Crowne Plaza on 28th Street.
- The 27th Annual International Festival of Cultures will be celebrated on April 12. Also, a big salute to the Office of International Education which reports that there are now over 500 international students at Ferris. Congratulations to Piram Prakasam and the staff for their tremendous efforts!

- Upcoming events at the Office of Multicultural Student Services include the intercultural exchange series, “Dive In”; see <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/studentlife/Minority/DiveInSpr2015.pdf> and the annual PigNic on May 2.
- Two videos featuring members of the Ferris community are now available: Professor Susan Morris read Eric Garner’s final words, as a poem, at the 2015 MLK In-service, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_wbOlidmEQ

The Ferris community hosted several discussions about the events in Ferguson, Missouri. To view a video about one of the discussions, see, Ferguson: *What would MLK Do?*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxGeLeCk9F4>

- As part of ongoing initiatives of the Diversity and Inclusion Office, please note:
 - The Jim Crow Museum welcomes volunteers to research and write the answers featured in the "Question of the Month." If you are interested, please contact David Pilgrim.
 - Special thanks to Kent Kachaterian and Media Production for helping with images for the FMSM and the Jim Crow Museum.
 - The First Lady’s Attic is up and running and is in need of donations of professional clothing. Please contact Patty Terryn at 231-591-3946 for more information.

Did You Know?

There are over 6,000 languages spoken in the world today, many of which are spoken by fewer than a few hundred people. The top 10 or 12 languages however make up the vast majority of all of the speakers in the world. About 20 percent of Americans over the age of five speak a language other than English in their homes.