

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! Psalm 133:1

I have the privilege of leading the Unity Multicultural Education Center (UMEC) in the midst of exciting transformation at Gonzaga University. The recent inauguration ceremony of our 26th President, Dr. Thayne McCulloh, is a testament to the possibilities of dynamic development at our institution. I am grateful to be in an instrumental position that can help students, staff and faculty become their best self for others in ways that promote the beauty of human difference. Laboring in the field of diversity has its challenges, yet it also has tremendous rewards. The work, programs, and outreach in UMEC throughout the year are executed for the purpose of providing personal growth opportunities, exploring truth and addressing issues and concerns of marginalized members of our community.

Our staff is committed to investing in not just what individuals do at Gonzaga, but what they become. Cura Personalis is a daily practice that we embrace!



Tracy Ellis-Ward
 Director, UMEC



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UPCOMING EVENTS

november

- 1-2 La Raza Latina: Dia De Los Muertos
- 3 FASU Lumpia Sales
- 4 HPIC: Community Service w/SMILE
LEADS Workshop
- 6 FASU & HPIC Karaoke Night
- 11 Chinese Club Movie Night
- 12 UMEC: Cultural Awareness Night,
The Canary Effect
- 13 ISU Formal
FASU attends WSU FASA Formal
- 15-19 International Education Week
- 16 Annual International Day of Tolerance
- 17 UMEC: Crafting Unity
FASU Lumpia Sales
- 18 LEADS Peer Mentor Meeting
- 20 La Raza Latina:
So Do You Think You Can Salsa?
Transgender Day of Remembrance
- 24-26 Thanksgiving Holiday
- 25 Chinese Club Movie Night
- 30 UMEC & the Career Center: Reumania

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN DIVERSE GONZAGA ENVIRONMENTS



Enthusiastic BRIDGE freshmen participate in a team-building activity outdoors.

The BRIDGE is a great pre-orientation program sponsored by UMEC for the past seven years. We had 48 registered BRIDGE participants (the biggest group thus far), 29 of whom were the first in their family to attend college. We had a diverse group of participants from various backgrounds: some students were native to Spokane, and students from as far as China. This year we brought in some new counselors and BRIDGE coordinators so we were anxious to see how the group cohesion was going to work.

This year's Summer BRIDGE program turned out to be another success and our BRIDGE leaders really connected. Alex Cassano provided some personal reflection on this year's BRIDGE. Alex served as a BRIDGE counselor but also being new to the BRIDGE group I asked Alex what her

biggest struggle was during the program. She said, "At first I was shy because I didn't know a lot of people, I naturally sit back and observe where people are coming from before acting." "I had to go outside my comfort zone and interact with everyone to show them my true personality." She said when she started going out of her comfort zone is when she starting developing friendships with people.

In dealing with the unexpected our BRIDGE counselors always had to be prepared to handle anything, with this in mind I asked Alex what was her biggest surprise during the program, and I didn't expect her response. She said, "I was surprised at how many people I have kept in contact with, I knew that people were going to be nice and friendly but didn't expect to have lasting relationships." Through all the crazy up's and down's of BRIDGE it made me feel great that the biggest surprise was something good. Before coming into the BRIDGE program, I believe few people are prepared to experience the honesty, support, and friends that grow, and it's good to know that these things are appreciated.

Alex closed out the interview sharing her favorite moments of BRIDGE. "There was an overall feeling at the end of BRIDGE where you could sense the shift that everyone was getting along and everyone felt comfortable with one another." She noted specifically in her small group that she loved "the feeling of being surrounded by close friends." Alex came into BRIDGE not knowing what to expect and left the program with a BRIDGE family. I am excited and hopeful for the future of the Summer BRIDGE program as I know it will continue to grow and positively affect the lives of Gonzaga students.

LAUREN TREACY WAS A BRIDGE CORE LEADER AND IS CURRENTLY A SENIOR AT GONZAGA.



B-Core Leaders Lauren Treacy, Marvin Dumas, and Elizabeth Martinez (not pictured) spent their summers organizing the BRIDGE program.

LA MISSION FILM & DISCUSSION

Many activities were planned campus-wide in recognition of Justice Month. UMEC coordinated the showing of the film *La Mission*. Bringing the film's producer and writer, Peter Bratt, to Spokane was a collaborative effort by the department along with GSBA, Eastern University, WSU, NW Alliance of Responsible Media and GU's Modern Language Department. *La Mission* is a powerful film about family, redemption, and community. Che, the main character is a highly respected man in the Mission barrio for his masculinity and strength and love for low-rider cars. A reformed inmate and recovering alcoholic, Che wants to turn his life around by raising his only son as a single father. Che is challenged, however, when he learns about his son's sexual identity. In order to accept and love his son, Che has to embrace a side of himself he has never shown.

Over 100 attended the viewing and subsequent Q & A session with the producer proved to be a constructive dialogue for exploring the various themes of the movie. Mr. Bratt spoke of misogynistic-driven homophobia and machismo not only being present in Latino/a culture, but also in the domination-driven society of America at large.



Excited to discuss *La Mission*, Peter Bratt meets students after the film showing and Q&A session.

RAJAH BOSE PHOTO

L.E.A.D.S. *meet + greet social*



Staff mentors Nicola Miller, Robin Guervara (above) and Chris Wheatley (below) help their student teams.



The Washington/California Room of the COG was filled with energy and laughter early October for the official LEADS Meet & Greet Social. This was the first time the twenty freshmen mentees were formally introduced to their mentors. Several staff and faculty mentors engaged with their mentees in fun games adopted from the TV show Minute to Win It.

The Leadership, Education, Academic Development, and Success Skills (LEADS) Program is designed to help multicultural and first-generation students develop a solid foundation at GU so that they are able to excel in our community. LEADS compliments classroom and freshmen orientation information with pragmatic experiences to provide multicultural students unique insights. The students are paired with a peer mentor and a faculty or staff mentor. Mentors go through an extensive application process and are meticulously matched with their mentees according to the mentee's profile.

Most of this year's LEADS participants participated in the summer BRIDGE program. "The mentors are resources for the students. Whether they are a faculty or staff mentor, or a peer mentor, the mentors have a wealth of knowledge and legitimate college experiences that can be shared with the freshmen. What our mentors have to offer through LEADS cannot be taught in the classroom," says Giselle Cunanan, the LEADS program coordinator.

With workshops, skill development seminars, and a plan for a spring retreat, the LEADS program helps students develop skills to be successful in the Gonzaga community. "We want our students to thrive at GU," states Giselle.



RAJAH BOSE PHOTOS

MICHAEL BENITEZ, JR. ON GLOBAL DIVERSITY & RACE

Jepson Wolff Auditorium was flooded with faculty, staff, and students not only from GU, but also SCC, friends from the Hispanic Business Professionals Association, and excited community members. "Identity Politics and Whiteness in Latino/a Culture: Deconstructing Conditions of Race in 'pero somos latino/as'" engaged the audience for approximately two hours. Mike Benitez Jr. explained that today's Latino culture has been "neutralized." He suggests that we should be examining race from different perspective.

Rudy Mondragon, UMEC's intercultural relations specialist, states, "I think it was good to hear faculty and students discussing the lecture in class (afterwards). It also pushed people to think critically and see how identity politics is a complex topic. People laughed, people were serious, and people left with many questions to continue the dialogue." Rudy hopes to continue to make larger presentations and to, "collaborate more with the community and local and university colleges." With high hopes of filling the Cataldo Globe Room in the future, Rudy enthusiastically states, "I would [like to] have Mike do a workshop on engaging in social justice work through hip-hop."

LAUREN TREACY & GISELLE CUNANAN



(Top Photo & Above) Michael Benitez, Jr. poses questions for self-reflection for an engaged and thoughtful audience.

MEET OUR STAFF

tracy ellis-ward

Tracy Ellis-Ward dreamed of a career as an oceanographer in her youth because she wanted to prevent California from falling into the ocean. Luckily for her, being raised in the Midwest made the likelihood of her home state -Ohio- safe from such a fate. Tracy discovered a passion for sports in 7th grade and later basketball opened up a plethora of opportunities including a full-ride scholarship to college. She became an All-American and served as team captain for the University of Missouri. Later, she earned her master's degree in sports administration from Ohio University and now serves as the director of UMEC. She is excited to be part of a new era and is passionate about integrating diversity initiatives in support of Gonzaga's mission and social justice tradition. During her free time, she enjoys listening to gospel, jazz and classical music as well as watching movies with an espionage theme.

rudy mondragon

Rudy Mondragon grew up in South Gate, CA. His community inspired him to major in Chican@/Latin@ studies and minor in African American Studies and Education at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). At UCI, Rudy was on an athletic scholarship, which gave him the opportunity to play soccer for head coach, George Kuntz. After UCI, Rudy worked with foster youth for a non-profit organization where he coordinated workshops and support programs to help emancipated youth succeed. Rudy received his Master's in Higher Education from Iowa State University and is a lifetime member of Sigma Lambda Beta International Fraternity Incorporated. He enjoys watching gangster mafia movies, documentaries, and romantic thrillers and cooking new recipes during his free time. Rudy loves being the new Intercultural Relations Specialist at UMEC because of the energy and motivation he receives from students and being able to journey collectively with the Gonzaga community. He also enjoys being confused as an undergraduate student and states one of his highlights here at GU was being asked to participate in University Ministry's freshman retreat.



deborah ellis

Before moving to Spokane, Deb Ellis lived in Arizona, California, and Germany because her father was in the U.S. Air Force. She still likes to travel and loves to try new foods wherever she goes. Deb graduated from Eastern Washington University and majored in Human Resources Management. Having dreamt of becoming an architect when she was a younger, her plans changed because of the times. Deb now expresses her creativity through metalsmithing, making jewelry and small sculpture. She taught classes at the Spokane Art School for many years. Deb has a twelve-year old son and a daughter in college. When her daughter returns to Spokane for summer break, they all enjoy hiking the Inland Northwest. Deb is the new Program Assistant at UMEC and enjoys being at Gonzaga. She likes the Gonzaga community and the beautiful campus.

giselle cunanan

Giselle Cunanan grew up in a very diverse community in San Diego, California. Reminiscent about family gatherings, she misses home-cooked Filipino food the most. Giselle attended an all-girls Catholic high school and remembers going to the beach immediately after school to claim a bonfire pit. She has held a variety of part-time jobs from telemarketing to making fresh lemonade at Hot Dog on a Stick to working at Gonzaga's very own undergraduate admissions office. Giselle was the former president of Gonzaga's Filipino American Student Union and recalls being involved in several diversity efforts. She enjoys running during her free time and was recently certified to teach Zumba. Giselle earned her degree in sociology this last school year and now serves as the AmeriCorps volunteer at UMEC coordinating the LEADS program.