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We celebrate the achievements of all faculty and staff across campus. From those who are recognized via our annual awards, to those who are the everyday heroes. We applaud you.
Twyla Cummings wins RIT Isaac L. Jordan Sr. Diversity Award

**Senior associate dean of CIAS recognized for campus and community involvement**

by Rich Kiley

Twyla J. Cummings, senior associate dean of the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences at Rochester Institute of Technology, is the 2014 Isaac L. Jordan Sr. Faculty Pluralism Award winner. The award is given to an RIT faculty member or staff member who has made a significant contribution to diversity efforts on campus and within the Rochester community.

“I am humbled to be among the nominees and I am deeply honored to be recognized with this award,” said Cummings, who was recognized among all faculty and staff from the university who have led programs that serve under-represented groups on campus. Nominees also were acknowledged for their community service and volunteerism in the greater Rochester area.

A professor in the School of Media Sciences, Cummings is actively involved in the Rochester community serving as chair of the board of the Rochester Area Business Ethics Foundation and co-chair for the YWCA Board Advisory Council. She previously served as board chair for the YWCA of Rochester and as a board member for the Rochester Women’s Network.

Cummings’ teaching and research at RIT is focused on the areas of media distribution, print industry trends and women in graphic communications. A frequent speaker on critical developments in post-press and issues impacting the graphic communication industry, she was last year inducted into the print industry’s Women of Distinction program, sponsored by the OutputLinks Communications Group, a global marketing and publishing firm.

She is a past board member of the National Association for Printing Leadership (NAPL) and the board of governors for the R & E Council of NAPL. Cummings also is a current member of the prestigious Walter E. Soderstrom and Nonpareil Societies of NAPL and the R & E Council. She presently serves as a member of the America East Advisory Board and chairperson for the 2014 America East Conference.

In addition to earning a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry and a master’s degree in business and industrial management from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, Cummings earned her doctoral degree in management from Union Institute and University in Cincinnati.

The award, established in 2002, is named after Isaac L. Jordan, the first chairperson of the President’s Commission on Pluralism and Inclusion. Jordan was well known for his leadership and role in advancing pluralism among a wide range of campus constituents.

RIT Isaac L. Jordan Sr. Diversity Scholarship Award honors students

Isaac L. Jordan Sr. represented the best of the human spirit: compassionate, fair, committed to promoting community among all people and supportive of people in their individual struggles to obtain economic and social equality.

As RIT’s first chairperson of the Commission for Promoting Pluralism, Jordan provided outstanding leadership in advancing pluralism at RIT. He set an example for others to emulate. These awards in his name ensure the continuance of his legacy and honor those who carry out his work.

To this end, the RIT community is honored to present the 2013-2014 Isaac L. Jordan Sr. Student scholarships to Casira Copes, freshman and Shannon Trudeau, upper classman.

Casira, College of Liberal Arts, Advertising & Public Relations major, has begun developing ties with the Multicultural Center for Academic Success (MCAS) where she hopes to get involved with guiding students not only to hone her leadership skills but also to help students have a better experience at RIT.

Shannon, GCCIS, Software Engineering major is involved in tutoring, and has been an orientation mentor. In addition, she has participated in a research grant investigating the effects on family size and wealth on the speed at which people were evacuated during Hurricane Katrina.

The entire RIT community is grateful for Casira’s and Shannon’s efforts, commitments and stewardship of diversity, pluralism and leadership and congratulations on being recognized as the 2013-2014 Isaac L. Jordan Sr. Student scholarship recipients.

Please join the Division for Diversity and Inclusion in welcoming Lorraine Stinebiser and Dr. David Wick

Lorraine comes to us from the Rochester Business Journal as the Director of Circulation since 2006. Prior to that she was at the University of Buffalo as their Community Relations and Outreach Manager. She holds a MBA in Marketing from the University of Buffalo and a Bachelor’s Degree from St. John Fisher College in Political Science. As an entrepreneurial-minded strategic leader with creative marketing solutions, Lorraine was the ideal candidate for the Assistant Director in the Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention.

David began his tenure with our team as the Interim Associate Director for MCAS from 2012-2013, then transitioned into the Research Analyst position while taking on the Interim Director of Diversity Assessment and Research Management position in November 2013. On March 1st, David accepted the position of Director of Diversity Assessment and Research Management for the Division of Diversity & Inclusion. We are very fortunate to have David with us in his new role! If you need any tutoring help in physics, David is always willing to have you join his tutoring sessions. As he is quite qualified, holding a Doctorate and Masters in Physics from Clarkson University and a Masters in Mechanical Engineering from Clarkson University.

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ADVANCE RIT project team hosted program launch in Feb
Event highlights status of program to address career advancement for female faculty

Programming for AdvanceRIT is ramping up. In February, RIT officially introduced the project by welcoming Dr. Marjoriein van der Meulen as the keynote speaker for the campus launch event. Dr. van der Meulen is the Swanson Professor of Biomedical Engineering at Cornell University, and one of the principal investigators of Cornell’s 2006 ADVANCE program. She spoke about the project’s research and progress at Cornell.

More than 100 people joined the launch event where the recipients of the 2013 AdvanceRIT Connect Grants were also announced. The Connect grants are designed to support leadership and career development for all tenured and tenure-track faculty at RIT. Successful grant proposals supported one or more of the AdvanceRIT project goals. “We received 23 grant requests from individuals and department groups across campus, for team development, negotiation strategies and transition planning,” said Clayton. “This year’s recipients and the titles of their projects are:

- Carol J. Romanowski, Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Mentoring Group (GCCIS) Group Members: Sumita Mishra, Yin Pan, Xumin Liu
- Patrick M. Scanlon, Post-Tenure Mentoring
- Lea Vacca Michel, WISE Networking and Leadership Initiatives (COS) Group Member: Kara L. Maki
- Behnaz Ghorani, Support Successful Research Proposal (KGCOE) Re-submission Efforts for External Funding
- Deirdre Schlehofer, Effective Mentoring and Leadership Skills for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing women faculty at NTID/RIT (NTID) Group Members: Annemarie D. Ross, Karen J. Beiter

AdvanceRIT’s Connect Grant Recipients are currently working on a wide range of initiatives, from improving recruitment and retention practices to enhancing diversity and inclusion efforts across campus.

In December 2013, Newt Watson began a special assignment within the Human Resources organization as Diversity Liaison Manager for Staff Recruitment. In this role Newt is responsible for developing and nurturing partnerships with internal and external diverse communities in support of RIT’s commitment to building and maintaining a diverse workforce. Newt will partner with the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, the AALANA Faculty and Staff Association, and other campus organizations to enhance awareness of RIT in the community and strengthen our efforts to attract and retain a diverse population. This will be a multiyear assignment as achieving the goals of this position and creating a sustainable process for recruitment and development will be a long-term effort.

“In the past three months I have had an opportunity to visit several of our local community organizations; my goal has been to provide them with information about employment opportunities at the university,” says Watson. “These meetings have also given me an opportunity to reinforce RIT’s commitment to diversity in all of our programs including hiring. I also provide detailed instructions on how to log on to our employment site along with some promotional material that highlights a variety of career opportunities here at RIT. I am excited about increasing the awareness of RIT as an employer of choice in the Rochester community.”

As a former recipient of the Isaac L. Jordan, Sr. Staff Pluralism Award with more than 25 years of experience in Human Resources, Newt is uniquely qualified for this work. He previously held the position of Affirmative Action Manager at the Xerox Corporation and has contributed to many community programs including serving as the Executive Director of the Rochester Black Business Association and working with leaders of Action for a Better Community and the Rochester Urban League. He was also a key contributor to bringing the RACE exhibit to Rochester in 2013.

Newt Watson Appointed Diversity Liaison Manager for Staff Recruitment

By Luke Auburn

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Sharon Morgan and Thomas DeWolf confront the legacy of slavery during program at RIT

Authors discuss book, The Healing Journey of a Daughter of a Slave, and Son of the Slave Trade

by Michelle Cometa

Sharon Morgan and Thomas DeWolf confront the legacy of slavery during program at RIT.

Authors discuss book, The Healing Journey of a Daughter of a Slave, and Son of the Slave Trade

by Michelle Cometa

Sharon Morgan is a descendant of slaves; Thomas DeWolf, a descendant of slaveholders. The two wrote Gather at the Table: The Healing Journey of a Daughter of Slavery and a Son of the Slave Trade, the true story of Morgan and DeWolf’s three-year, 27-state journey to confront America’s “race problem” together. They visited each other’s families, ancestral towns, court houses, sites of racial terror, cemeteries, plantations and antebellum mansions, seeking to come to terms with the history out of which racism evolved.

Morgan is the founder of OurBlackAncestry.com, a website devoted to helping people appreciate and explore African American family history and culture. For more than 25 years, she has been researching her family history in Lowndes County, Ala., and Noxubee County, Miss. She is a member of several genealogical associations including the National Genealogical Society, the African American Historical and Genealogical Society and local societies in the geographic areas of her research. Professionally, Morgan is a marketing communications consultant and founder of the National Black Public Relations Society.

DeWolf travels extensively throughout the United States speaking at colleges, universities, and conferences, and leading workshops and trainings for groups dedicated to social justice. He is the author of Inheriting the Trade: A Northern Family Confronts Its Legacy as the Largest Slave-Trading Dynasty in U.S. History. He wrote about traveling with nine distant relatives on a life-altering journey through Rhode Island, Ghana, and Cuba to film the Emmy-nominated documentary Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North, in which he is featured. An Official Selection of the Sundance Film Festival, the film premiered on national television on the acclaimed PBS series P.O.V.

Morgan and DeWolf came to RIT on Thursday, Feb. 13 for a book signing and discussion in the Campus Center Reading Room. They also gave a keynote address later the same day, at 6 p.m. in Webb Auditorium. Both events were well attended by students, faculty and staff, and at the evening keynote, the general public. Sharon and Tom retold their riveting story of their ancestors trials and misfortunes and how these stories can teach us lessons for today. Following the keynote they took direct questions from the mostly student audience. The conversation combined with the images of slavery and race in America over time, was eye opening for all in attendance.

Topics like this spark your interest? Join us for Gray Matter, a monthly discussion series at RIT designed to promote critical exploration of provocative topics related to higher education and the RIT campus community. The discussion is great! The refreshments are free. Facebook & Twitter: RITGrayMatter

Bridges, multicultural competency certificates presented

During the past year and a half, the Director of Diversity Education, Dr. Michael D’Arcangelo created the multicultural competency program for RIT faculty and staff called Bridges. The program was designed to provide four certificates, implemented and instructed in a targeted manner along several themes: Inclusive Interpersonal Communication; Inclusive Group Dynamics; Ally Development, and a newly-developed certificate focused on Social Change and Sustainability. The academic year (2013-14) served as a milestone in that (of the 121 participants who had attended Bridges in some point), 16 individuals actually completing 24 certificates; these individuals were recognized at the Partnerships in Pluralism Alumni Luncheon on April 21, 2014.

GLBT Task Force Recommendations Undergoing Review and Acceptance

During the past academic year, the Director of Diversity Education, Dr. Michael D’Arcangelo met with university administration to review the 17 recommendations of the Presidential GLBT Climate Study Report, so as to determine feasibility and subsequent steps required to accept or complete them. Of those 17 recommendations under review, D’Arcangelo and Task Force members facilitated closure to eleven of the recommendation; five of the recommendations are still progressing and underway.
Newsmakers

April 13, 2014 University News
Photo by A. Sue Weisler

Rick A. Kittles ’89 (biology) received a distinguished alumni award on April 11. Kittles helped establish the National Human Genome Center. Currently, he is associate professor in the Department of Medicine and the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He is at the forefront of developing ancestry-informative genetic markers and studying how this information can be used to map genes for common traits and disease, especially among African-American populations. His talk, “The Epidemiology of Prostate Cancer: Genomic Insights,” was a College of Science Series Lecture.
2014 Distinguished Alumni Awards

This honor is presented to graduates who have brought distinction to the college and RIT through professional and/or community achievement. The awards ceremony took place on Friday, April 11, 2014.

Each year, the senior leaders of the colleges and centers select one graduate from each college who represents the best of RIT. This year, RIT honored a diverse group of 10 distinguished alumni who stand out among the more than 110,000 accomplished graduates.

Stacey R. Rychlewski
Mark N. Gentile
Andrew R. Jacobson
Herbert Eichelberger
Johann G. Demmel
Tristan E. O’Tierney
Kelly McCormick-Sullivan
Rick A. Kittles
Debra Heath-Thornton
Frank S. Sklarsky

RIT’s scholarship program for Rochester City School District students is reaping rewards

In 2009, the Rochester City Scholars program was established to provide students from the city’s high schools with tuition scholarships upon acceptance at RIT. The scholarship opportunity came at a time when the district was in the state and national spotlight for its declining high school graduation rates. Coupled with high rates of children living in poverty and coming from single-parent homes, the district was working to manage these socio-economic challenges impacting student achievement.

That first year, 27 students were admitted to the university and qualified for the scholarships that would cover full tuition at RIT. Since that first year, more than 70 additional students in three subsequent classes have been accepted at RIT. The Rochester City Scholars have an average GPA of 3.0, in line with the overall average of the university. Retention of these students is among the highest at the university.

Students, Tianna Manon and Karim Yapport included on panel about race relations 50 years after 1964 Rochester Riots

RIT students participate on community panel featuring future leaders

by Michelle Cometa (edited)

Tianna Manon and Karim Yapport, RIT students, will be among the community panelists on the upcoming “State of Race in Rochester: 50 years after the ’64 Riots.”

Manon, a third-year student with a dual major in journalism and political science. Yapport, also a third-year, is a double major in Psychology and International Studies as well as Rochester City Scholar. Both were part of the “Future Leaders” panel, one of two that was featured at the community event.

Tavis Smiley was the keynote presenter at the campus’ Expressions of Kings Legacy program on Thursday January 30th and moderated the community panel later that same evening. Manon, Yapport and the panelists fielded questions raised by Smiley and members of the audience about how far Rochester has come in addressing issues of racism and inequality since the early 1960s and the Civil Rights movement.

“IT’s an absolute honor to be part of such an amazing event. Words honestly can’t describe the mix of excitement and nervousness that I feel, but overriding both of those is the pride I have in my school and community,” said Manon, who has interned at the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle newspaper; served as executive assistant for RIT’s Global Union, a student affinity group; and is the editor of TALKBACK4Teens, a social issues website and blog for young adults.

Both Manon and Yapport made meaningful contributions to the lively discussions about race relations in Rochester, while representing the viewpoints of college age adults in the area. To read the full article about the panel from the Democrat & Chronicle go to: http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/local/2014/01/30/panel-addresses-state-of-race-in-rochester/5070987/
**Goodbye Butterfly**

During her time at RIT, Gabby worked for the Student Life Center and Multicultural Center for Academic Success (MCAS) as a graphic designer. She designed the MCAS logo that is still used today. She was also a member of the Women’s Cross Country Team and a Hermana of Latinas Promoviendo Comunidad Lambda Pi Chi Sorority, Inc. She joined the Lambda Chapter of LPC in the Spring of 2010 and graduated from RIT in 2011 with a degree in Graphic Design and a minor in American Sign Language. She was also an avid runner and fitness trainer.

“I am extra spicy today” is just one of many funny “Gabby-isms,” delivered by the late RIT alum. It is one that seems to describe the speaker, perfectly. She was extra spicy, extra talented, and extra special.

A graduate of RIT’s 2011 class, Gabrielle “Gabby” Oberti passed away Thursday February 13, 2014. Gabby started in the Multicultural Center for Academic Success in 2009 as a student Graphic Designer. Her smile brightened the center each day, and her talent was evident. Gabby quickly became part of the MCAS family, assisting in daily administrative tasks as well as designing flyers, brochures and invitations. She created the now well-known MCAS logo, and other branding materials for MCAS and the division. Gabby’s contributions to RIT and our division are still appreciated today, and will remain as a tribute to her skill as a designer and a part of her legacy.

“I was very fortunate to work with Gabby beginning with her participation in the North Star Academy. Her intelligence, quiet confidence, and smile were meaningful to all members of the Multicultural Center.” Said Sean Bennett, Assistant Dean Undergraduate Academic Affairs, College of Applied Science and Technology “Although Gabby was judicious in her speech, when she did speak, people listened. Gabby lives on in each heart that she touched while at RIT and through her artistic contributions to logos and publications in MCAS.”

Gabby was a consummate artist, an enthusiastic cheerleader of her craft. Her twitter account reflects her strong support for adding a letter to STEM creating STEAM, by adding “Art” to the familiar acronym. She even attended a congressional meeting about the change.

Gabby loved butterflies and purple these were selected and designed just for her.
RIT will proudly graduate its first class of Rochester City Scholars this May. The impact of these students hard work can be felt not only on the RIT campus but throughout the Rochester community. As the program continues to grow, we hope it acts as motivation to other Rochester area students.
City Scholars Program Launches First Graduates into the World

March 24, 2014
by Michelle Cometa

When RIT announced a program offering full scholarships for Rochester City School District students in 2009, the goal was to launch the most capable students into careers they had always dreamed about.

Twenty-seven students from the district qualified for the scholarships for the 2010 academic year. Four years later, 21 are on track to graduate in May. They have aspirations to be lawyers, engineers and scientists—and those careers are within reach.

The program was designed not just for individual students but for the well-being of Rochester, said RIT President Bill Destler, who with his wife, Rebecca Johnson, provided the initial funding for the scholarships. The lack of finances would not be an obstacle to getting a college education.

RIT’s announcement about providing full-tuition scholarships came at a time when the district was in the national spotlight for its declining high school graduation rates. Coupled with its high rates of children living in poverty or coming from single-parent homes, the community was determined to manage these socio-economic challenges impacting student achievement.

“It is important for people to understand the context in which these students go to school, the challenges their teachers and administrators face every day trying to provide a meaningful experience in the classroom,” Destler said. “We are also trying to send a message to even younger students, those in middle schools, because many don’t see college as a viable option as they are going through their adolescent years. I think this is an opportunity for them to see a real future in front of them.”

Since that first year, more than 70 additional students in three subsequent classes have been accepted at RIT. Many were class valedictorians at their high schools, participated in demanding international baccalaureate programs and were active in community services, athletics or the arts.

At RIT, their average GPA is 3.0, in line with the overall average of the university. Retention of these students is among the highest at RIT. The university provides a variety of affinity groups and academic support units, including the Multicultural Center for Academic Success, to provide social, professional and scholarly connections, anchors for all students to persist in college.

Off campus, the community also has embraced the program and contributed to its growth. Local individuals, nonprofit organizations and corporations have helped sustain it through monetary or in-kind gifts.

“By eliminating the financial roadblock to college, a pathway of hope is created and opportunities are unlocked for our youth,” said Rochester Mayor Lovely A. Warren. “If we wish to continue to be a successful and viable city, it is our responsibility to make sure that access to higher education is attainable, and it is up to the community to help ensure our young people receive continual support, not just through high school graduation, but beyond.”

Rochester School District Superintendent Bolgen Vargas said the program is changing the lives of the district’s students.

“Having the opportunity to continue their college education at such a prestigious institution as RIT provides students with a wealth of resources, and it’s these resources that will help them in their path to success,” he said.

Evidence of the effects of that support and the success of the program will be more than higher graduation rates; it will be the Rochester City Scholars themselves as they graduate from college and enter the workforce.

“That’s a wonderful outcome of this program for the community,” Destler said. “And if they stay in this community, they will become natural leaders.”

The program is available to students who have attended an approved high school in the Rochester School District for the last three years. Students must be accepted using RIT’s regular admissions standards. The student’s total family income must not exceed $60,000. Students are expected to enter as full-time students the year of high school graduation.

Click here to see the full article in the RIT magazine http://www.rit.edu/news/magazine/spring14.pdf

2013 Donors and Scholarship Partners

The Jane King Harris Scholarship was awarded to Pechramsey Chun in the amount of $110,000 to be used towards tuition expenses. Warmest congratulations to Pech! The M Forrest and Robert Hurlbut Resident College Fund provided full room and board to two MCAS students. One student was awarded the Sandy Parker Scholarship in the amount of $10,000 to be used towards tuition expenses. David and Patricia Jones donated to the RIT Residence College Fund that awarded one MCAS student $2,500 towards room and board fees. RIT Alum donated $11,000 to the MCAS Book Loan Fund. Thank you all for your support!
Martin Mason ‘15 earns 2nd place at McNair Science Symposium poster session

Martin Mason ‘15 (computing security and business administration) recently took 2nd place in the undergraduate poster session at the 28th Annual Ronald McNair Commemorative Celebration and 12th Annual Research Symposium. According to Mason, his poster, “Comparative study of security tools,” aimed to compare Windows and Linux security tools and “showed virtualization of how someone would train with these different tools.”

According to the event’s website, the event is “designed to commemorate the life and accomplishments of the late Dr. Ronald E. McNair.” Dr. McNair was a famed laser physicist and the second African American to fly in space. He was tragically killed during the 1986 explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger. 

“My ultimate goal is to get a Ph.D. in cybersecurity engineering,” explains Mason, who has a keen interest in mobile security. “There are so many crimes committed through cell phones nowadays. I’m a hard worker when it comes to my craft and I plan continue my studies at the University of Maryland where there is a program specific to this field.” Mason added, “I was happy that I was able to represent RIT and McNair Scholars program in this event. This experience would not be possible without both organizations.”

AISES National Conference
The American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) National Conference took place in Denver, Colorado during the Fall 2013 semester. Graduate student, Robert Jimerson (Information Technology) was awarded the Special Judges Cultural Award for his Graduate Oral Presentation “Seneca Language Revitalization Project.” Three RIT undergraduate students, Brendan John, Caitlin Kavanaugh, and Alicia Lazore, presented at the undergraduate student research session. The RIT AISES Chapter was awarded the 2013 Chapter Award for Recruitment & Retention.

The AISES conference offers Native scholars the opportunity to network with top companies and has led to co-ops and jobs for FSP conference attendees such as GE, NASA and Toyota. The conference also provides a valuable bonding opportunity for FSP students, faculty, and staff.

Native American Heritage Month
On November 5, 2013, Native American Heritage Month at RIT was kicked off with the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address, given by Tadodaho Sidney Hill. Tadodaho is the Chief of Chiefs and the President of the Haudenosaunee Grand Council. He is the principal leader of the Iroquois Confederacy, which includes the Onondaga, Seneca, Oneida, Mohawk, Cayuga, and Tuscarora Nations. The Thanksgiving Address was given in the Student Alumni Union in the Ingle Auditorium. About 160 RIT staff, faculty, students, and community members attended the event.

Other events held to celebrate NAHM included the “Finding My Path As A Native Scholar discussion with Dr. Jason Younker”, as well as a “Frybread Expo”. The Frybread Expo was a collaboration between the Native American student organizations, Native American Student Association (NASA) and the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), and the AALANA Collegiate Society (ACA). Students gathered in front of Grace Watson Hall and made frybread. Students passing by were also encouraged to get their hands sticky and make their own frybread. On November 15, 2013 the RIT Community was encouraged to participate in the nation-wide Roc Your Mocs day.

Native American Heritage Month ended with a Lacrosse Expo, featuring the Haudenosaunee Stick Maker Alfred Jacques and Onondaga Lacrosse player Jeremy Thompson. Jacques and Thompson shared the history of lacrosse with RIT faculty, staff, & students. They also gave insight into what goes into making a lacrosse stick. Earlier in the day Jacques held a lacrosse demonstration in the Student Alumni Union; people passing by had the opportunity to ask Jacques questions. Those who attended the Expo were entered into a raffle for a traditional lacrosse stick, made by Alfred Jacques. A special thank you to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, MCAS, the Center for Campus Life, and ACA for their contributions and support.

Global Leadership
The Global Leadership Certificate Program, 8th year is a partnership program between the Office for Diversity & Inclusion (Sandra Whitmore), RIT Leadership Institute & Community Service Center (Molly McGowan) and the Office of International Education & Global Programs (James Myers). The goal of the program is to provide students the opportunity to learn about important leadership skills and provide experiential education opportunities for students to practice these skills and apply them. By participating in the Global Leadership Certificate program students:

- Identify and practice the skills necessary for leading in a global environment
- Explore and discuss cultural similarities and differences and their impact on leadership
- Develop an understanding for the ethical dilemmas that exist when leading and the global impact of our actions

This was our first year offering the program in the semester format. We had 25 faculty/staff serve as mentors to 50 students. Thank you to all our participants for another fun and successful year!
Nearly 1,500 people attended RIT’s annual Expressions of King’s Legacy celebration on Jan. 30 and heard keynote speaker Tavis Smiley talk about a Martin Luther King Jr. many may not have known. The speech marked the 32nd Expressions event presented at RIT and continues a tradition of recognizing King’s influence with music, dance and oratory.

Smiley is the author of 16 books and outspoken advocate for racial and gender equity. His daily radio show, Tavis Smiley Show, is in its 11th year on PBS. Smiley is the longest running minority late-night talk show host in history. Named one of the 10 most influential people by Time Magazine, Smiley recently had his star installed on the Hollywood walk-of-fame. Calling King a great American, Smiley said that most people have an image of King as a benevolent dreamer and advocate for civil rights. He also saw King as a visionary whose emphasis on racism, poverty and militarism are as relevant today as they were in the 1960s. “Whether we agree or not, the future of the democracy is linked to how seriously we take the legacy of Dr. King,” said Smiley.

Joining Smiley for the Expressions program were Curtis Babers, a fourth-grader from Houston, Texas, who won the 2013 Gardere Martin Luther King Jr. Oratory Competition with RIT poets Alexis Harris, LaKeishia Brown, Michelle Sason, and local singer Whitney Morrison accompanied by pianist Dr. Wayne Bucknor. Babers received a standing ovation for his winning signed and spoken speech describing his perspective as an African-American boy growing up in today’s society. Whether we agree or not, the future of the democracy is linked to how seriously we take the legacy of Dr. King,” said Smiley.

Later that evening Smiley moderated a community forum at East High School titled “The State of Race in Rochester: 50 Years after the July ’64 Race Riots” a collaboration between RIT’s Division for Diversity & Inclusion, Facing Race, Embracing Equity (FR=EE) and Action for a Better Community (ABC). The platform consisted of two separate panels offering perspectives from varying backgrounds and generations on race realities in Rochester to about 800 attendees.

On Saturday, Feb. 1, the university hosted a Harlem Renaissance-themed evening of music and poetry featured performers are nationally-known Def Poetry artists Alysia Harris and recording artist Dwele. Alysia delivered rousing and provocative poetry with the underlying message of female empowerment, while Dwele brought the crowd to their feet dancing and joining in as he sang and strolled through the crowd.

This year’s Expressions of King’s Legacy event was a wonderful success and the Division for diversity and Inclusion thanks all of the RIT and Rochester community members who make it possible. We look forward to seeing everyone next year as we welcome journalist, Soledad O’Brien.
EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MOCHA Awards Ceremony
Friday, May 16th
By invitation only

MCAS Scholars Workshop
Friday, May 16th
12:00 - 1:00 pm
Campus Center, Rm 2740

MCAS Finals Study Break Station
Mon-Fri, May 19 - 23rd
All Day in the MCAS Lobby

Native American Convocation
Thursday, May 22nd
5:30 – 7:30 pm
Global Village Plaza

Congratulations Class of 2014!

Do you have a diverse story to share?
Would you like to be in the FALL edition?
Send your story to us at: www.rit.edu/diversity/contact

Morgan M. Martins,
Marketing & Public Relations Manager
mmmpro@rit.edu

Twitter: @RITdiversity
Facebook: Facebook.com/RITdiversity