

# A Seat at the Table

December 2015

- The Diversity and Inclusion Planning Work Group has released a draft of the new Diversity and Inclusion Plan <http://ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/DiversityOffice/pdf/DiversityPlan2016.pdf>. All members of the Ferris community are invited to share comments about the document. In January there will be public forums to discuss the initiatives in the Plan.
- Plans are well underway for MLK week activities. The Diversity and Inclusion Office has put out a call for readers to participate in the Faculty/Staff In-Service event on Monday January 18. Readings will address the subject of compassion from different perspectives. Please contact David Pilgrim ([pilgrimd@ferris.edu](mailto:pilgrimd@ferris.edu)) to volunteer.
- The Native American Thanksgiving was a great event that brought many Ferris students, staff, and faculty together to feast on turkey, sweet potatoes, squash, cornbread and rolls, and pumpkin pie. The Rankin Lounge at the University Center proved to be a great space for the community to gather.
- Disability Awareness month ended with hundreds of students and others attending a presentation by Luis Montalvan at Wink Arena. He is an Iraq War veteran who wrote the best-selling book, *Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him*, about how his service dog, Tuesday, helped him deal with physical and psychological disabilities. Thank you for your service, Luis.
- Andrea Gibson, a well-known poet and activist, performed in the University Center as part of the Arts and Lectures Series. Gibson's poetry focuses on gender norming, politics, social reform and the struggles faced by LGBTQ people. See <https://www.facebook.com/AndreaGibsonPoetry/> for more information about Gibson.
- Ferris students created a display table for the Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20<sup>th</sup>. This day honors the memory of those whose lives were lost in acts of violence against transgender people. Students talked to people about the issues and raised funds for a memorial.
- Vanessa L. Marr, Teaching and Development Fellow at the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, hosted a video series during Fall semester called

*Speak UP: Lessons from the Community*. It was a call for students, faculty, staff, and the local community to reach across differences, find common ground, and work together to produce positive change. See <http://ferris.edu/HTMLS/academics/center/events/2015fall/speakup.htm> for more information. We love your work, Vanessa.

- Beyond: Globalization and FSU Ubuntu hosted a screening of the documentary *Connected by Coffee* on November 10<sup>th</sup>. The screening was followed by a discussion of the film with the filmmakers, Aaron and Chelsea Bay Dennis, who traveled across Central America to learn about the lives and histories of the people who grow coffee.
- Academic Affairs has placed 3 digital signs in the IRC. One is dedicated to offering information about diversity and inclusion and International events. Please contact Carrie Franklund at [carriefranklund@ferris.edu](mailto:carriefranklund@ferris.edu) for information about content, image sizing and formats.
- Julie Alexander, Educational Counseling and Disabilities Office, wrote an article for the Ferris Museum of Sexist Objects entitled "Not Funny," see, [http://ferris.edu/moso/perfection\\_imperfection/articles/notfunny.htm](http://ferris.edu/moso/perfection_imperfection/articles/notfunny.htm)
- *Understanding Jim Crow: Using Racist Memorabilia to Teach Tolerance and Promote Social Justice* by David Pilgrim was published by PM Press in November. The book, like the objects in the Jim Crow Museum, is intended to promote pointed and thoughtful examination of the issues of race, race relations and racism. *Understanding Jim Crow* can be purchased at the Jim Crow Museum, as well as Room 312 of Ferris' Timme Center for Student Services. It can also be ordered online from PM Press. All author royalties go directly to the Museum.
- We are sad to lose two of the institution's greatest champions for students—and champions for diversity and inclusion—Jessica Cruz and Leroy Wright. They are leaving to take leadership positions at Northern Michigan University and Appalachian State University, respectfully. We do not have the words to express our sense of loss; nevertheless, we are comforted by the knowledge that others will benefit from their talents and compassion. As for us, we will think of Jessica and Leroy and cry each time we hear this song, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pK6mUJZYcVU>.

Words to take with you...

“Compassion allows us to be in the presence of suffering with an open heart, but an open heart is not enough. Do something to help.”