2012

Diversity Awards

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Diversity Awards honor commitment to multicultural involvement

BY NANCY LAVIN
News Editor

The University of Rhode Island celebrated its students, faculty, staff and organizations’ commitment to multicultural inclusion at the URI Diversity Awards Banquet last night in the Memorial Union.

The event recognized 13 students, clubs and faculty members who have made unique advancements to URI’s commitment to campus diversity. The winners were selected after being nominated by themselves or another member of the URI community, according to Mailee Kue, assistant director of the Multicultural Center.

“Anybody can nominate someone, and you can even self-nominate,” Kue said. “Our process is that it’s not the number of nominations you get, but that you have actually contributed to the community.”

The Multicultural Center put out a call for nominations in late fall of 2011, according to Kue. After all the nominations explaining more about themselves “so we could get a full picture of the individual,” Kue said.

“It was a complete surprise [to be nominated],” senior Narvan Hilliard, who was awarded for Undergraduate Student Excellence in Arts and Culture for his commitment as president of the URI Capoeira Club, said. “I was minding my own business and I got an email from Mailee, and she because I guess he got something similar during his day.”

A committee of 12 undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff members then read the individual information and ranked them on how they answered the questions against others in the specific pool they were competing in. Kue then calculated the scores, and the group came to a consensus to select either one, two or three recipients.

works in collaboration, so we really shoot for consensus,” Kue said. “If there’s disagreement, I try to remind the group to look at how we impact the community on a larger level, and just keep the group focused on that.”

Kue said since the committee does not really operate by a majority vote, coming to decisions can be difficult in some instances. Other times, however, there is clear agreement on the winner.

“Typically you’ll find patterns of individuals who are ranked pretty high consistently across groups,” she said. “Choosing a more flexible approach is appropriate, particularly in the work of diversity.”

The event featured keynote speaker John Ramos, who is known for revitalizing urban education in Connecticut and promoting educational reform for students of all backgrounds. Ramos urged URI students and faculty to be pro-active in

Students to light lanterns for Africa in annual event

BY KIMBERLY DELANDE
News Reporter

University of Rhode Island’s Students for the Welfare of Africa (SAWA) is planning to hold their third annual Lights for Africa event, which was originally scheduled to take place this week, but has been rescheduled due to issues SAWA had with ordering lanterns for the event.

While the group does not have a concrete date as for when the event will take place, SAWA president Tete Joseph said that it should occur “in about two weeks.”

Lights for Africa is an event where students gather on the Quadrangle and light a lantern for Africa. Joseph said
In an effort to better their eating habits, students on campus are beginning to turn to organic foods. One student organization at the University of Rhode Island is finding ways to enjoy foods in their natural forms.

Founded three years ago, the organization Slow Food URI focuses on the principles of good, clean and fair food. Slow Food URI supports food that is healthy, nutritious and good for people. They ensure the food is produced by environmentally sound practices, and that those who produce the food are treated fairly.

Nutrition and dietetics major, Alyssa Neill, has been the president of Slow Food URI for two years and hopes to increase mindful-social eating throughout the URI community.

"Slow Food URI works to restore the pleasure of eating while bringing a sense of awareness back to what food is, food is whole and is not processed," Neill said. "Food is the corn on the cob, not the maltodextrin derived from corn in a processed power bar and it's vital to know the integrity of our food, and to know that eating should be just as pleasurable as it is medicinal."

The organization is working hard to bring local food to the URI campus and is sponsoring the Local Food Market on the Quadrangle today and every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. from now until May 9.

The Local Food Market consists of popular vendors throughout Rhode Island, including a Tallulah's Taco cart that uses only locally-sourced produce and meat. Another vendor, chef Jake Rojas, was nominated for best chef of 2012 by Food and Wine magazine for his Newport restaurant. Other vendors included at the event are the Coffee Guy, who makes cold pressed coffee and Bravo Wood Fired Pizza with locally sourced toppings. Another vendor, Great Harvest Bread Co. is also organic and grinds all of their own grains to bake fresh bread and muffins daily.

Slow food URI will host another Local Food Market in the fall, which will be held on Tuesdays.

The next goal for the organization is to expand the Local Food Market and have more local food available throughout the URI community.

Rhody the Ram looks around at the Farmer's Market on the Quad, organized by Slow Food URI.
Diversity

Hilliard echoed this idea, explaining that he has tried to get people involved in Capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian form of martial arts, and expose them to a new culture.

"I'm excited because I'm not doing what I do on campus just for an award," he said. "I'm doing it because I love Capoeira, the aspects of the particular martial art and getting more people involved in it. I didn't know I could even win an award for this."

Other award winners included Kayla Butts and Riley Davis for Undergraduate Student Excellence in Academics and Service; Erick Betancourt, Precious Kafo and Brian Sit for Undergraduate Student Excellence in Leadership and Service; Hillel and the URI LGBTQ Women's Group for Student Organization Excellence; Jennifer Brandy and Yifei Li for Graduate Student Excellence; Laura Beauvais for Staff/Administrative Excellence and Walter Besio and Yvette Harps-Logan for Faculty Excellence.

Africa

to those who might be worried about the lanterns' effect on the environment," Joseph said.

According to Joseph, hosting Lights for Africa is a critical event for SAWA to not only unite the campus on the Quad, but to teach students about the ongoing battles that countries in Africa are still facing today. The lanterns, Joseph said, do not only act as beacons of hope, but represent the "epiphanies" people have after learning about the issues that are plaguing modern-day Africa.

"Some people say ignorance is bliss, but I say ignorance is a disease," Joseph said. "If you don't know what's going on outside of your state, then it's hard to say that you know anything at all. When people come out to the Quad, learn about all that's going on in Africa, and see the lights in the sky, they have an epiphany. It all comes together for them."

For Joseph, who is Liberian and has recently returned to URI after taking a trip to Liberia, being able to support One Day Without Shoes, a TOMS campaign to raise awareness for the impact a single pair of shoes has on the life of a child.

Miss Universe pageant allowing transgender women to compete

NEW YORK (AP) — Allowing transgender women to participate in the Miss Universe pageant was something we took very seriously," said the Institute for LGBT Studies at the University of Arizona, said she hoped to see similar support for transgender candidates in other beauty pageants as well.