

## revolUtion: the final installment of "understanding diversity"

Wednesday, May 20 will mark the final installment of the "Understanding Diversity" seminar series of the academic year. Our guests will be revolUtion, a group of students committed to ending sexual violence at the University of Utah. revolUtion devises and facilitates workshops to help students create healthy relationships. They utilize interactive, improv-based techniques. revolUtion is a sex-positive program; supporting all

sexual choices and recognizing that some students may choose abstinence. revolUtion advocates for mutual, informed, clear consent in all relationships. They perform and/or provide information sessions for residence halls, student groups, fraternities and sororities, classes, incoming students, and numerous other groups across campus.

**Why:** Department of Justice reports that approximately one in

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## mission statement

The Student Affairs Diversity Council (SADC) strives to cultivate an environment that embraces and promotes the broad scope of diversity within the division.

## it's hard to hate someone whose story you know: stories of growth and change

*This column features stories by Student Affairs professionals and students who are willing to share an experience (event, book, speaker, etc) which promoted growth, a change in perspective, an awareness of another, or when some knowledge that was previously missing slipped into place.*

### meritocracy

#### **Karen Cone-Uemura**

Meritocracy, as defined by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary is "a system in which the talented are chosen and moved ahead on the basis of their achievement." As a young child, I remember my family emphasizing this point. Although my parents' exact words are muddled, I recall

believing that I could be whatever I wanted if I worked hard enough. I guess my folks thought that, because we were lucky enough to have been born in the USA, we were privy to the "unalienable" rights granted us by the Declaration of Independence which guaranteed that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

"Myth: a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around



something or someone; especially : one embodying the ideals and institutions of a society or segment of society (Merriam-Webster online dictionary)." Well, my parents forgot to mention this part! Having mostly grown out of my rebellious phase, I no longer hold this omission against them. But for a good while, I was angry

that despite my strong desire (and effort), I would not truly be able to realize my dream of becoming an actor, preferably of the musical stage variety. I internalized this

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calendar

**2011 Max and Sara Cowan Public Memorial Lectures in Humanistic Medicine: "Women's Health: Inequalities in Developing Countries"**

Ruth Macklin, PhD  
 Thursday, May 5, 2011  
 12:00 - 1:00pm, HSEB 1730

**University Commencement/ Convocation Exercises**

Friday, May 6, 2011  
 Beginning at 9:00am

**revolution**

Student Affairs Diversity Council  
 Wednesday, May 20, 2011  
 12:00 - 1:30pm, Parlor A, Union Building  
 Come and join us for the final installment of the "Understanding Diversity" seminar series of 2010-2011. See more about revolution on page 1 of the newsletter.

*meritocracy, continued*

anger, telling myself that obviously I just wasn't working or trying hard enough. It didn't placate me at all that my mom, when I was considering leaving college and instead packing up and moving to Los Angeles, gently reminded me that it would be extremely hard work because there just weren't many jobs for "Orientals."

So, I decided to stay on the safer path. Because I had excelled at math and science (don't all Asians?), I bought into another myth, that of the model minority and did as my advisor suggested: pursue a career in engineering. I stuck it out for 2 years, enduring the grueling lessons of quantum physics, linear algebra, organic chemistry and other courses whose names I don't recollect. I did

ok in them, because ever the hard worker I put my nose to the grindstone. I would always reward myself by taking enjoyable classes such as acting, musical theatre, and college chorus. By the time I hobbled my way towards college graduation (after several changes of major, all within the hard sciences so as to not have wasted any college credits), I successfully earned

my B.S., and I could make a rude comment about those letters, with honors from UC Berkeley. The irony is that, at that original appointment with my advisor, I had told him I wanted to be a psychologist, with a minor in theatre. He told me that this path would take a long time (and he wasn't kidding, because at

age 48 I finally became a licensed psychologist) and, due to my strength in math & science, along with the fact that I was female, I could land a lucrative job in engineering after 4 short years of school. I actually graduated with a degree in Nutrition and Clinical Dietetics; the most rewarding and enjoyable aspects of my job as a registered dietitian were when I taught courses on well-being, counseled clients or facilitated experiential groups. Yes, very indicative of my future career as a psychologist...

During those formative years, and I truly disdain admitting this, I subscribed to a color-blind ideology. I disliked it when people noticed that I was Japanese; why couldn't people just see me as a person? Sadly, my lack of awareness

*During those formative years... I subscribed to a color-blind ideology. I disliked it when people noticed that I was Japanese; why couldn't people just see me as a person? ...I didn't even see that my "colorblindness" was actually a desire to be seen as White.*

led me to constantly also dream of looking "normal" with rounder eyes, pointier nose, lighter-colored hair, a curvier body. (The only thing I liked about myself was my skin color, because those were the days when being tan was cool.) I didn't even see that my "colorblindness" was actually a desire to be seen as White.

These are painful memories to conjure, and I have learned much from them.

My life experiences (and I've only shared a snippet) have influenced who I am, personally and professionally. I have great empathy for people who subscribe to colorblind notions, myths of meritocracy or model minority. But

my training and continued growth have given me voice to be able to work with people from where they're at to help them develop deeper awareness and insight into their own experience, as well as to societal plights that are borne from unenlightened ideological beliefs.

Is this easy or comfortable work? Nah, just ask my children, coworkers, friends and family!

## diversity dialogues

If your office, class or organization finds it challenging to discuss issues such as race, sexual orientation, power and privilege, religion or a host of other difficult topics, the SADC would like you to know that there is help. There is a trained group of facilitators who would be glad to assist you. You can contact Debra Daniels (ddaniels@sa.utah.edu) or Kari Ellingson (kellingson@sa.utah.edu) for more information.

## revolution, continued

five women who attend college will become the victim of a rape or an attempted rape by the time she graduates. However, it is estimated that the numbers of college women that experience sexual assault is one in three.

**How:** Through using Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and Michael Rohd's Theatre for Community, Conflict, and Dialogue Techniques we will



engage college students, staff and faculty in interactive exercises and discussions about healthy dating and relationship practices

## The 10 Most Diverse Schools

US News and World Report College Rankings 2010 Undergraduates

		% FEMALE	% AFRICAN AMERICAN	% HISPANIC	% ASIAN	% RECEIVING PELL GRANTS	% FROM OUTSIDE U.S.
1	UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA*	51	7	5	16	8	8
2	BROWN UNIVERSITY, RI*	52	7	8	16	12	12
3	OBERLIN COLLEGE, OH*	55	6	5	7	11	8
4	SWARTHMORE COLLEGE, PA*	52	9	11	17	12	8
5	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, NY*	62	4	8	19	15	9
6	AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, DC*	62	4	4	5	10	6
7	WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, CT*	49	7	8	10	12	10
8	DUKE UNIVERSITY, NC*	49	10	6	21	10	7
9	PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, NJ*	48	8	8	15	10	12
10	MASSACHUSETTS, INSTITUTE OF UNIVERSITY OF UTAH, UT*	45	8	12	25	15	11
		45	1	6	5	32	5

\* Ranked as gay-friendly by The Advocate & insidercollege.com

## student affairs diversity council

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Women's Resource Center  
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 Educational Opportunity Programs  
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