Spotlight on Admissions Counselor, Kelley Brooks

Kelley Brooks has been an Admissions Counselor here at SIUE since July 2007. She speaks with the students about the many opportunities at SIUE and also travels to high schools and college fairs to speak with potential students as well.

The Office of Admissions offers several programs that specifically target minority students locally and in the Northern Illinois areas. One of the biggest programs Admissions offers is the Bus Tour. Brooks said, “The Bus Tour is where we pick up 100 minority students from the Chicago area that have already been admitted to the university, then we take them on a campus tour and give them the opportunity to meet and speak with members of the faculty, staff and current students.”

Brooks is also a member and one of the founders of the Black Alumni Association at SIUE. Their mission is to maintain a professional and social network for African American alumni of SIUE and to help with the recruitment and retention of African American students enrolled at SIUE. In addition, they hosted their first Black Alumni Reunion Weekend in 2009 where all of the proceeds helped to establish a scholarship fund to be provided to students in need. Many of the members also are mentors to many of the different on-campus student organizations.
Black Girls Rock to Success at SIUE

Black Girls Rock is a national organization and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs created a version here at SIUE to motivate young women of color to make productive choices while attending SIUE.

Alexandria White, Community Director for University Housing, was instrumental in recommending Chaz Pitts-Kyser visit to campus. She states, “The goal of the Black Girls Rock program is retention of women of color on campus. More importantly, it is hoped that the program will promote civility, academic achievement and professionalism among African American female students.”

Speaker, author and educator Chaz Pitts-Kyser emphasized college success of African American women. Pitts-Kyser addressed issues such as low graduation rates, violence-related incidents and conduct violations among African American women on college campuses. She discussed ways to increase enrollment and retention of not just African American students but all minority students with stressing the importance of mentorship and the creation of a Multicultural Student Affairs Office or Center.

Diversity and Inclusion Film Series

The Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion sponsored a film series that focused on historical events in American history. Some of the films shown were: The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow, Freedom on My Mind, The Language You Cry In, The Boringueers, and The African American Journey. Many students, faculty and staff viewed the films over the course of the semester and plan to return in the spring.

Some of the films to be shown during the spring semester are: Race the Power of an Illusion (3-part series), Memory of Forgotten War (which explores the human costs of military conflict through deeply personal accounts of the Korean War by four Korean-American survivors), Embracing Change and A Place at the Table: Struggles for Equality in America.

The film series is open to all faculty, staff and students. Faculty are encouraged to register their classes.

Diversity Bingo in the Goshen

On Wednesday, September 11th the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion in collaboration with the Kimmell Leadership Center hosted Diversity Bingo in the Goshen Lounge located in the Morris University Center. About 100 students, faculty and staff participated in the event and the winners received great prizes. The purpose of the Diversity Bingo activity was not only to have fun but to encourage the campus community to embrace the diversity on campus. Students were encouraged to take diversity bingo back and use it as a conversation piece in the residence halls. This activity is just one way to bring the campus community together.
Faculty Mentoring Student Athletes

The Faculty Mentoring Student Athletes program was developed as a supportive program for student athletes. It initially was developed for Men’s Basketball but later was offered to all sports at SIUE. This year Men’s Basketball, in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, decided to revisit the initial vision for the program. Each player was assigned a member of the faculty based on their major. A mentoring relationship on and off the court will guide the athlete through the academic year and beyond.

Senior, Ray Lester said, “The mentoring program provides a base for me to succeed once basketball is over. I am able to meet and get to know members of the faculty I may have never been able to meet prior to this program.”

This program is very beneficial to both the student and the faculty mentor. The mentors are a great group of faculty who have shown a commitment to student athletes over the years. Come out to the games and cheer your faculty mentor on as they serve as an honorary coach during the season.

Photo: Men’s Basketball players, Faculty and some of the Coaching Staff

Faculty Mentors for Men’s Basketball 2013-2014

Dr. Thad Meeks
Dr. Janice Joplin
Prof. Renee Fussel
Dr. Sandra Weissinger
Prof. Lydia Jackson

Dr. Venessa Brown
Dr. Tom Foster
Dr. Marcus Agustin
Dr. Bill Retzlaff
Dr. Musonda Kapatamoyo

GO Cougars……Go Men and Women’s Basketball
Sue Cataldi and Saba Fatima, professors in the Philosophy Department have started a reading group pertaining to the book *Pursuing Trayvon Martin: Historical Contexts and Contemporary Manifestations of Racial Dynamics*. The book addresses issues across various domains, including: how Trayvon Martin’s killing might be depicted within the specifically historical context of racism, especially as some have compared Martin’s situation to that of Emmett Till and Rodney King; how contemporary conceptions, perceptions, and treatment of Black bodies and Black embodiment from the historical perspective of white supremacy in the U.S. continue to function or not function, how we ought to think about the political and legal implications of the Trayvon Martin case within the context of the politics and laws that have historically informed and shaped black people’s lives, how we should think critically about the historical exclusion of Black bodies and embodiment in public space and the ramifications for the ways in which Black people must navigate public space today and finally, how we should think about the ways in which the historical negative gendering of black girls and boys and black men and women, with respect to their white counterparts, in a white supremacist society, have impacted various intersections of race and gender in our contemporary setting.

Cataldi and Fatima chose this book because of its “interdisciplinary nature and contemporary relevance. Although George Zimmerman’s trial is over, many people remain deeply distressed by the fact of Trayvon Martin’s killing. The reading group provides an opportunity for members of the SIUE community to reach out to each other to think about transformations that need to take place in ourselves, our perceptions, our interactions, and our institutions to reduce the likelihood of such events.”

Cataldi and Fatima want the reading group to “better serve our diverse student population by coming away from our study with a deeper understanding of the discourse on race both in this case and in our society at large. We recognize that no one measure can prevent this tragedy from happening again. However, by giving it the scholarly attention and contextual understanding it deserves, what we can hope to do is effect a shift in how we look at cases where issues of race and justice are involved.”

If you are interested, there is still room and time to join the reading group. Please contact Sue Cataldi (scatald@siue.edu) or Saba Fatima (sfatima@siue.edu) for the chapters under discussion.

Cataldi and Fatima would like to thank the Department of Philosophy, the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, and Lovejoy Library for generously providing copies of the book for the group to use. The on-line version is available at https://vufind.carli.illinois.edu/vf-sie/Record/sie_777795. A print copy is on Reserve at the library, and the Philosophy Department (Peck 3212) has copies available to borrow.