

UIS Campus Activities for Underrepresented Groups

The Office of Disability Services (ODS)

Over the last academic year, ODS has participated in and hosted a variety of events to support the education of individuals with disabilities. Throughout the year, ODS hosted several mini-conferences presented by leaders in the field of disability service provision. Those conferences included the following:

- October 18, 2005. "ADA Legal Update: Current litigation trends under the ADA."
Speaker: Barry Taylor, Director of Legal Services, Equip for Equality, Chicago, Illinois.
2-Part Series: Accessible Information Technology
- November 15, 2005. "Pros and Cons of Web Accessibility Validation Tools."
Speaker: Terry Thompson, Do-IT Program and AccessIT, University of Washington
- December 13, 2005. "Accessible Web Based Communication Tools: Why are they so hard to find?"
Speaker: Steve Jacobs, IDEAL Group, Inc
4-Part Series – Employment and the ADA
- January 17, 2006. "Employer Case Studies: Best Practices of Employers."
Speaker: Robin A. Jones, Great Lakes ADA and Accessible IT Center
- February 21, 2006. "Hot Topics in Employment: Pre-employment Testing and Leave as an Accommodation."
Speaker: Adele Rapport Attorney, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- March 21, 2006. "Planning for Emergencies in the workplace: Inclusion of people with disabilities."
Speaker: Brian S. Parson, Advisor for Employer Policy, Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor.
- April 18, 2006. "Survey of Employer Resources Regarding the ADA."
Speaker: Andrea Haenlin-Mott, Northeast ADA & IT Center, Cornell University
2-Part Series – The Built Environment
- May 16, 2006. "Creating Accessible Play Areas: State of the Science."
Speaker: Jennifer Skulski, Director of Marketing & Special Projects, National Center on Accessibility, Indiana University
- June 20, 2006. "Permanent Rooms and Spaces: Accessible Signage."
Speaker: Mark Derry, Eastlake, Derry and Associates

In addition, ODS hosted its 9th annual Disability Awareness Week, April 24-28, 2006. Events ranged from workshops on American Sign Language to a wheelchair basketball game, an exhibition rugby game, an adaptive dance workshop, and sessions on job-search strategies. All events were held on the UIS campus and were free and open to the public.

ODS collaborated with several on and off campus sponsors to make Disability Awareness Week a successful event. Sponsors included, Speakers Bureau, ICCB, Student Life, Athletics and Recreation, Housing and Residential Life; and Delta Sigma Omicron. Off-campus sponsors were: Lincoln Land Community College, Department of Human Services, Illinois Employment Training Center and the Transition Planning Project, Hazel Dell and Owen Marsh Schools.

The Office of Multi-Cultural Student Affairs

The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs serves all students, with a special focus on underrepresented groups. These groups include, African, Hispanic, and Asian Americans, as well as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender students. Descriptions of the programs offered include:

- Targeted Recruitment of underrepresented groups.
- Leadership in Public Service Program (LPS).
- Student Academic Improvement Program (SAI) program
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)/ Low Income Degree Scholarship Program
- Partnership with the Illinois Department of Public Health
- The Common Bond E-magazine
- Information Clearinghouse
- Job and Scholarship postings

Women's Center and Campus Safety

Cultural and Co-Curricular Programming:

Annual Spring Speaker Series: In spring 2005, in partnership with the Center for State Policy and Leadership (CSPL), the Women's Center initiated a major, annual speaking event: Sheila Simon on "A Life in Illinois Politics and Law: A Daughter Carries Forward the Legacy of Jeanne and Paul Simon." The series was continued in 2006 when Zakia Salime spoke on "Feminization of Islamist Women and the Power of Women's Rights." Winona LaDuke spoke on "Politics, Women and Environmental Justice" in April 2007.

Art Events:

The Women's Center sponsors art events throughout the year, focusing on issues of special interest to women. These events include gallery exhibits, theatrical productions, artist talks, and literature discussions. Specific events have included the multimedia gallery installation, "Commute," and the photo exhibit, "Merge," which features the work of two Illinois women photographers. These two events were attended by 75 and 100 participants, respectively.

Event openings are held, featuring the work of various artists. Examples of these events include poetry, theatrical productions such as "Rising Up of the Springdale Ladies Aid Society," and a *Reading Lolita in Tehran* discussion which was attended by 60 individuals in Brookens Library.

Other Special Events:

In academic year 2007, a Year of Ecofeminism was funded by the Student Government Association. Events for the year include the Winona LaDuke speaking event as well as the "Ecology of Childbirth" (history), the "Ecology of Breast Health" (activism), the "Commute" multimedia installation in the Visual Arts Gallery, and a discussion of naturalist Mary Austin and her 1910 book, *Land of Little Rain*. These Year of Ecofeminism events are co-curricular. The events are developed in partnership with campus entities including the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Environmental Studies classes, the Women's Issues Caucus club, the Center for Teaching and Learning club, the Visual Arts Program, and the Center for State Policy and Leadership.

Office of International Student Services (OISS)

The OISS offers a Host family program for incoming international students. The Host Family Program is made up entirely of local volunteers motivated by an interest in removing barriers to international understanding. International Student Services provides names and information about newly arrived students who would like a local family with whom he/she can visit, enjoy an occasional meal, celebrate holidays, participate in community sports and cultural events and relax in easy conversation among friends. These students are then matched with an American family with similar interests. The family, in turn, will gain insight and information about a country and culture different from their own and have the pleasure of adding new members to their family circle.

Office of International Student Services (OISS) provides formal orientation programs each semester, including summer session. The orientation is mandatory to ensure pre-registration, academic advising and English proficiency testing, as well as required visa status document processing. The director, international peers, faculty and university service unit representatives, i.e. Housing, Health Insurance, Health Services, Center for Teaching and Learning, Library and host community volunteers provide information, guidance and hand-outs to facilitate a smooth transition to the campus and community. In follow-up orientations, information is provided on academic, financial, personal, social, institutional, cross-cultural and governmental issues. Cultural and educational program participation is encouraged to facilitate a comprehensive, successful educational experience for each international student and scholar attending the university.

Each spring, prior to April 15th, the filing date for income tax returns, the Office of International Affairs arranges an Income Tax Workshop. Representatives from the Internal Revenue Service and the Illinois Department of Revenue come to our campus and help international students fill out their income tax forms. The workshop is usually scheduled for sometime in late February or March.

The OISS sends the Welcome packets to all international students who have been admitted. They conduct mandatory orientations for incoming international students. They maintain files on them, answer visa questions and work related questions. The OISS also signs federal documents so that international students can do OPT, travel outside the U.S. etc. They maintain their SEVIS record which is an INS tracking system which came in after 9/11. The university is mandated to do this, or UIS will lose their ability to admit international students. The annual international celebration, popularly known as "International Student Festival" brings students and the community together to learn about and celebrate multiculturalism, diversity, and international connectedness. Each year a theme is selected.