

# Diversity at UGA

News from the Office of Institutional Diversity at the University of Georgia

Volume 14 • No. 2 • Spring 2015



## A message from Michelle Garfield Cook

Associate provost and chief diversity officer

*"Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment; full effort is full victory."*

Mahatma Gandhi

These words value the willingness of individuals to be engaged in action; a willingness to do. This reflects the fact that there is incredible value in the effort involved in what we strive to accomplish. Diversity and inclusion are perfect examples of realizing value in the effort. We are engaged in an institution-wide effort to increase our understanding of diversity and make sure that everyone knows that they are valued members of our community. This is an ongoing process of engagement, exchange, education and enrichment. The spring Diversity Newsletter includes only a few of the myriad ways in which we as an institution are involved in this effort.

I am pleased that we are both expanding our capacity to support diversity and celebrating our

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From left, UGA President Jere W. Morehead is pictured with Fulfilling the Dream Award recipients Joan Prittie, Lemuel "Life" LaRoche, Charles King and Ericka "Ricky" Roberts.

## Fulfilling the Dream Award winners named

The University of Georgia presented four awards to Athens and university community members for exemplary service Jan. 23 as part of the 12th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Breakfast sponsored by UGA, the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government and the Clarke County School District.

The breakfast commemorates the life of the late civil rights leader. Held at the Grand Hall of the Tate Student Center, the event had a capacity crowd with more than 600 people in attendance.

**Ricky Roberts**, an academic adviser in the UGA Honors Program; **Charles King**, a senior education major at UGA; **Lemuel "Life" LaRoche**, founder of Chess and Community Conference Inc.; and **Joan Prittie**, executive director of Project Safe Inc., received the President's Fulfilling the Dream Award for significant efforts to build bridges of unity and understanding as they strive to make King's dream of equality and justice a reality.

**Roberts**, an academic adviser in the Honors Program, was honored for her efforts to work for fairness and equality for all. She is actively involved in several local organizations that promote equality for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population, and she wrote the original proposal for domestic partner benefits at UGA, which was passed by the University Council in 2012. She is a board member for Georgia Equality, Athens Pride, the Common Ground LGBT Community Center and UGA's Black Faculty and Staff Organization.

**King** is president of the student organization Black Male Leadership Society, which he helped revive after years of dormancy. He's worked with faculty, staff and Athens community leaders to create an organization that embraces UGA's black

**DREAM AWARDS** continued on page 2

undergraduate and graduate students while setting them up for success in their academic, social, personal and professional lives. Key accomplishments under his leadership included a candlelight vigil in response to the Michael Brown shooting, a record number of members inducted at the group's first formal pinning ceremony and ongoing community service with Athens Clarke-County Youth Academy. King also works as a campus recruiter with Teach For America.

**LaRoche** is a social worker, therapist, author and poet who is dedicated to developing leadership skills in young people. LaRoche, who earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in social work at UGA, is founder and executive director of Chess and Community Conference Inc., a nonprofit youth empowerment organization dedicated to developing leadership skills in young people. He is the subject of "Life the Griot" (2014), a documentary highlighting the work that he has accomplished in the Athens area.

**Prittie** is the executive director of Project Safe Inc., a nonprofit working to end domestic violence through crisis intervention, ongoing supportive services, systems change advocacy, prevention and education. Prittie advocates for laws that will help victims and hold perpetrators accountable. She also has served as chair of the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, chair of the Department of Human Resources State Advisory Committee on Domestic Violence and co-chair of the Domestic Violence Task Force of Athens-Clarke and Oconee counties. She has served on the board of directors for the Athens Area Humane Society, Athens Nurses' Clinic, United Way of Northeast Georgia and recently joined the board of Books for Keeps. She's been an adjunct instructor at UGA since 2008, first in public administration in the School of Public and International Affairs and now in social work.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Breakfast and the President's Fulfilling the Dream Awards are spearheaded by the UGA Office of Institutional Diversity. For more information about the office, see <http://diversity.uga.edu>.

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## Diversity Advisory Council reorganized, focused on inclusion

The newly reorganized Diversity Advisory Council is working to further their mission of fostering an inclusive environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors.

The 14 new members of the council met for the first time in December, receiving their charge from Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Pamela Whitten.

"An institution such as UGA should always have a Diversity Council," said Michelle Garfield Cook, UGA's associate provost for institutional diversity, who redesigned the board to align with smaller configurations used at other universities. "My hope is that the group will be able to identify and consider issues that affect diversity and inclusion at UGA and make recommendations for how we can continue to progress as a university."

UGA's Diversity Advisory Council was created in 2008 and charged by then-Provost Arnett Mace to assist in the design and implementation of strategies and programs to enhance diversity and inclusion at the university. The council developed the UGA Diversity Plan with input from faculty, staff, students and administrators.

While the more than 30 members of the board provided a great breadth of viewpoints for creating the 2011-2016 plan, Cook worked to create a more effective organizational structure with Beverly Johnson, who researched the change as part of her pursuit of a doctorate of education in adult education.

"As I serve my terms as a member of the council, I look forward to being able to share my knowledge and experience in providing awareness to our campus and building an inclusive relationship that values the rich diversity of our community," said council member Tran Nguyen, an international student advisor in the Office of International Education.



Pictured are members of the UGA Diversity Advisory Council with Provost Pamela Whitten, second from left on the bottom row, and Associate Provost for Institutional Diversity Michelle Garfield Cook, center, bottom row. For a complete list of members, see <http://t.uga.edu/1ij>.

Council member Diane Miller, director of Student Academic Services in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, said the work of the council will further the value that every student, faculty and staff member should be treated with respect and care.

"By advancing diversity awareness, I hope to support a campus culture built on a foundation of respect and caring for all of the diverse individuals and populations that comprise UGA," Miller said.

Charles Orgbon III, a first-year student studying environmental economics and management, is serving as a student representative on the council.

"I think it's important that students are part of the conversation with the administrators because it is all about the learning environment and ensuring the university is for all students," he said. "We are all excited to figure out what students need."



# UGA's Amazing Students

## Nakia Smith

Nakia Smith, a senior majoring in financial planning, found that UGA was the perfect place to overcome some personal obstacles and set herself on a bright path to a successful future in her professional life.

### I chose to attend UGA because...

I grew up pretty sheltered because I have been disabled and wheelchair-bound my whole life. On top of that I am the baby of the family. Prior to college, I had never been away on my own without family to look after me. When it was time for college I had two options: I could either go to the school 15 minutes from my house and live at home, or go to UGA 45 minutes away and have to fend for myself for the first time in my life. Honestly, I applied just to see if I could get in. I had no intention of attending because I was terrified at the thought of leaving home. I had no idea how I would manage. Thanks to some great friends, tons of encouragement and a lot of convincing, I decided to commit to UGA. I am so thankful for the friends that wouldn't leave well enough alone because it is the best decision I ever made. I've been able to get a great education, experience campus life, meet many different types of people and learn so much about the woman I am and the woman I hope to become. I couldn't have grown as much I have these past four years sitting at home. I am eager to graduate, go into the "real world" and experience more aspects of life.

Read more at [uga.edu/amazing/profile/smith-nakia/](http://uga.edu/amazing/profile/smith-nakia/)



## Sokngim Kim

Sokngim Kim is on the path to becoming the first woman engineer in her home country of Cambodia who was educated in the U.S. She plans to return to Cambodia to improve its infrastructure and boost its economy.

### I chose to attend UGA because...

... UGA just offered the civil engineering program in the last two years. I like being part of a new program because what I want to do is new to Cambodia. We can be the first together! We can grow together. The professors at UGA have good experience and skills in helping students to reach their goals. So many people at the UGA College of Engineering, including faculty and staff, encouraged me to come to UGA to achieve my goal of becoming an engineer that I knew it would be the right place for me to study in the U.S. I have also adopted a family that lives in Athens and Atlanta, and so I am close to people who care about me.

Read more at [www.uga.edu/amazing/profile/kim-sokngim/](http://www.uga.edu/amazing/profile/kim-sokngim/)



## Omar Martinez-Uribe

Omar Martinez-Uribe, a senior biology major, has been volunteering in the community, working with student organizations, conducting undergraduate research and representing his college throughout his UGA career. The next step for this avid Bulldog fan is medical school.

### My favorite professor is...

... Karl Espelie. He is the man, the "Larry Munson" of advising, the Gandalf to mentoring, and one of the most interesting men in the world. He is such an amazing person, and the care he shows to each student is unparalleled. He always welcomes students into his office and will tailor his advising and mentoring to each individual student. He is also an amazing cook and has a vast knowledge of everything related to science, food and culture. I was so fortunate to have been introduced to him when I was in high school, and he has made such a significant impact on my family's lives.

Read more at [www.uga.edu/amazing/profile/martinez-uribe-omar/](http://www.uga.edu/amazing/profile/martinez-uribe-omar/)





# Campus



Above: Students reflect on a LGBT Resource Center display at the Tate Center on Transgender Day of Remembrance 2014.

Below: Members of Ambassadors for Global Awareness volunteer at Project Safe.



Left: Members of the UGA C Association participate in the

Below: Members of the Col





# Scenes

Below: Students enjoy a coffee hour event held by Athens for Justice in Palestine and the Arab Cultural Association of UGA.

## DIVERSITY RESOURCES

### STUDENTS

Office of Institutional Diversity  
<http://diversity.uga.edu/>

Multicultural Services and Programs  
<http://msp.uga.edu/>

International Student Life  
<http://isl.uga.edu/>

Disability Resource Center  
<http://drc.uga.edu/>

LGBT Resource Center  
<http://lgbtcenter.uga.edu/>

Connections: Faculty Student Mentoring Program  
<http://diversity.uga.edu/programs/connections/>

Student Veterans Resource Center  
<http://dos.uga.edu/svrc/>

### FACULTY

Equal Opportunity Office  
<http://eoo.uga.edu/>

Black Faculty Staff Organization  
<https://www.facebook.com/BF-SOUGA>

Diversity and Inclusion Certificate  
[http://diversity.uga.edu/programs/diversity\\_and\\_inclusion\\_certificate/](http://diversity.uga.edu/programs/diversity_and_inclusion_certificate/)

Disability Services and Accommodations  
<http://www.hr.uga.edu/disability-services-accommodations>

UGA GLOBES  
<http://ugaglobes.wordpress.com/>

Left: Students participate in a meet and greet for Latinos Invested in the Students of Tomorrow (LISTo).



Left: Journalist Soledad O'Brien leads a panel discussion as part of the Black in America tour stop at UGA in February. About 650 people attended the event, which also featured (from left to right) comedian W. Kamau Bell, author Julianne Malveaux and Fenwick Broward, executive director of Community Connections of Northeast Georgia.

Below: The Alpha Eta Class of Delta Phi Lambda, an Asian-interest sorority.

Chinese Undergraduate Student at the 2014 Dragon Boat Festival. Georgetown Gospel Choir perform.



# UGA's Howe wins inaugural prize for Native American book

The Modern Language Association of America awarded its first MLA Prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures and Languages to University of Georgia professor LeAnne Howe. Howe received the honor for her book "Choctalking on Other Realities" at a ceremony at the MLA annual convention in January in Vancouver, British Columbia.

An international lecturer and scholar, Howe is an enrolled citizen of the Choctaw nation of Oklahoma. She is the Eidson Distinguished Professor of American Literature in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences department of English and is the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas, was a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar to Jordan and was named a United States Artists Ford Fellow. In addition to her scholarly output, she writes fiction, poetry, plays and creative non-fiction that deal with American Indian and Native American experiences.

"As a writer and scholar, the 2014 MLA Prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures and Languages is one of the most significant awards I've ever received," Howe said. "I am truly honored that 'Choctalking on Other Realities' is considered to be in the same literary tradition of N. Scott Momaday's 'The Way to Rainy Mountain' and Leslie Marmon Silko's 'Storyteller,' as their work is seminal for American Indian writers, critics and students of indigenous literatures."

The MLA committee's citation for "Choctalking on Other Realities" reads in part: "LeAnne Howe integrates high theory with travel narrative, personal reflection, humor and analysis to craft a formally innovative work of anticolonial literary and cultural criticism that teaches its audiences about the inner workings of indigenous epistemologies. As the inaugural winner of this new prize, Howe's book sets a high standard by offering a field-defining study that is generative in its narrative performance of tribally based aesthetic and theoretical sophistication."

Howe explains that "in the beginning of my writing life, I thought that stories could not be theoretical and theories were not stories. As I've matured as a writer and scholar, I've come to see them as doing the same work," she said. "Both are efforts to explain the world. In Choctalking, I follow in the footsteps of my ancestors, world travelers, storytellers and theory makers in order to link one thing with another thing, one culture with another, that's a tribalography. I'm fortunate to be continuing the journey at the University of Georgia with the wonderful colleagues here."



LeAnne Howe

## Leidong Mao

Associate professor  
College of Engineering



### How does your research or scholarship inspire your teaching, and vice versa?

A group of faculty including myself has been interested in disseminating our research results on nanotechnology into undergraduate classrooms. We have done so by creating the "Fundamentals and Applications of Nanotechnology" course in the College of Engineering. I think it is a great opportunity for the students who enroll in this class, because they get to do cutting-edge nanotechnology research as an undergraduate.

Read more at [www.uga.edu/faculty/profile/mao-leidong/](http://www.uga.edu/faculty/profile/mao-leidong/)

## Vanessa Ezenwa

Associate professor  
Odum School of Ecology and the  
College of Veterinary Medicine



### What are your favorite courses and why?

In fall 2013, I taught a First-Year Odyssey seminar called "Infectious Films: Separating Fact from Fiction," and I loved it! As a class we watched Hollywood blockbusters about infectious diseases (like "Contagion" and "I Am Legend"), and using these films as a jumping off point we discussed principles like how diseases spread, how they can be controlled and how drugs are developed to combat new diseases. The students were highly engaged in class activities, and I was surprised at how much they learned about infectious disease biology using such a non-traditional format. It was amazing to see the almost effortless way in which the students absorbed some really important concepts over the course of the semester. I can't wait to teach this course again at some point in the future.

Read more at [www.uga.edu/faculty/profile/ezenwa-vanessa/](http://www.uga.edu/faculty/profile/ezenwa-vanessa/)



# Indian Cultural Exchange brings Bollywood to Athens

When the largest multicultural organization at the University of Georgia decides to put on a show, the Classic Center double-checks its maximum capacity.

Since 1994, the Indian Cultural Exchange (ICE) has hosted a spring celebration of dance, comedy and activities unique to Indian culture. India Night 2015 featured 300 student performers from across the state and one charismatic singer from across the Atlantic. With more than 1,500 in attendance, India Night once again turned downtown Athens into Little Mumbai.

This year's event was, for the first time, an intercollegiate dance competition. Bollywood-style dance crews represented students from UGA, Georgia Tech, Emory University, Georgia State and Georgia Regents University. Aside from the dance competition, ICE presented three student-led acts that included an a cappella group from Georgia Tech and two exhibition dance troupes from UGA. Sri Lankan-born R&B singer and Internet sensation Arjun Kumaraswamy traveled all the way from London to perform in the night's grand finale.

Although India Night is the group's most extravagant party of the year, ICE also unites students interested in Indian culture with more modest festivals during both spring and fall semesters. In November, ICE members celebrate Diwali, the Indian festival of lights, by hosting a formal dinner at Athens' Foundry Park Inn. In March, the group hosts a field day for Holi, the Indian festival of colors known for its famous barrage of dry powder and colored water.

ICE members do more than just party. They also give back to the community and pay homage to those who have changed the world for the better. In October, members participate in an international week of service dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi. In May, they observe Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month with events aimed at raising awareness of Indian culture.

Open to all, the Indian Cultural Exchange meets on campus once a month in the Zell B. Miller Learning Center.

Learn more about the Indian Cultural Exchange at [www.ugaice.org](http://www.ugaice.org)



Emcees from India Night meet on North Campus before the annual spring celebration.

## COOK

successes, as the following examples demonstrate.

- UGA was ranked in "Military Times Best for Vets: Colleges 2015." Several campus divisions and departments collaborate to provide comprehensive services to student veterans, including academic affairs, the registrar's office, student affairs, the dean of students office and the Student Veterans Resource Center; "full effort is full victory."

- The 2015 President's Fulfilling the Dream Award recipients represent a range of activity in support of social justice here on campus and throughout Athens-Clarke County. They reflect the best of what is possible when people look beyond themselves to be change agents in their community; "full effort is full victory."

- Dr. Paige Carmichael, a professor of veterinary pathology in the College of Veterinary Medicine, has been chosen as the recipient of the 2015 Iverson Bell Award by the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges. The Iverson Bell Award is given every other year in recognition of outstanding leadership and the promotion of diversity in veterinary education; "full effort is full victory."

- A newly formed Diversity Advisory Council was charged by Provost Pamela Whitten. This group of individuals representing units across the institution will be instrumental in helping us to

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

**"... full effort is full victory."**

*– Mahatma Gandhi*

move forward in accomplishing our diversity goals; "full effort is full victory"

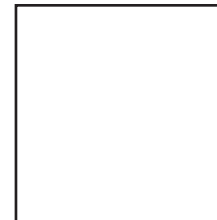
- In the 2015 State of the University Address, President Jere W. Morehead expressed strong support for diversity and inclusion at UGA. He also announced an endowment to support the Office of Institutional Diversity's efforts to increase diversity and to provide trainings and workshops to engage the entire community; "full effort is full victory."

The list of efforts to promote inclusion at UGA goes on and on. Each unit and every school and college is a part of the effort. Have we attained all of our goals? No. Can we rest on our accomplishments? Never. We have much work to do.

If effort is an indicator, the University of Georgia can proudly say that we will be successful in enhancing a learning environment that recognizes, celebrates and embraces difference. We know that the contributions of the many create a strong and vibrant place to live, learn and work. We are putting our full effort into building such an institution, and in that we all find great satisfaction.

# Diversity at UGA®

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## Giving to the Office of Institutional Diversity

A contribution to the Office of Institutional Diversity (OID) will help support a variety of initiatives that foster diversity at UGA.

OID provides and supports programming, such as recruitment and retention efforts, diversity scholarship funding, pre-collegiate learning opportunities, and faculty and student mentoring events.

Please contact us at (706) 583-8195 or at [diverse@uga.edu](mailto:diverse@uga.edu) to discuss ways to give and we will work to ensure your charitable giving needs are met.

To donate online, go to [diversity.uga.edu/about/giving\\_to\\_diversity/](http://diversity.uga.edu/about/giving_to_diversity/)

Checks should be made payable to the UGA Foundation and designated for OID on the memo line.

Please mail checks to:  
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# THE FIRST

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