

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

Parliament of the World's Religions



By Michael Bard, Office of the Registrar

On October 15-19th, I had the opportunity and honor to attend the Parliament of the World's Religions which was held here in Salt Lake City. The Parliament is an interfaith organization that was created to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities, and to foster engagement with the world's institutions in order to achieve a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. The first Parliament was held in 1893, and it has been hosted in several cities around the world. This year's Parliament welcomed nearly 10,000 attendees from 80 countries and 50 different faith traditions. Secularists, agnostics, and atheists were also warmly welcomed.

The opening ceremony was an incredibly beautiful piece of pageantry and set the tone for the days that followed. There was a processional of flags for each

country with a delegation in attendance, followed by the flags, leaders and representatives from seven nearby American Indian tribes who were the hosts of this year's Parliament. Speeches were given in the spirit of interfaith cooperation and laid out the important topics that would be discussed during the Parliament.

Plenary sessions and workshops were held during the following days on a number of topics including climate change, environmental issues, war, violence, and hate speech. There was significant focus on social justice issues including racism, sexism, Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, economic inequities, and the treatment of indigenous peoples and religious minorities around the globe, just to name a few. I felt truly inspired sitting in rooms filled with leaders and adherents of the world's religious and spiritual communities peacefully discussing how to overcome these challenges in their own communities and how to influence change in the world to achieve safety, equality and equity for all. I witnessed so many hugs, handshakes, conversations, and shared meals between people earnestly seeking to make a difference in the world.

There were also many opportunities to learn, experience, and talk about various cultures and beliefs. Just a few of the cultural events that I had the privilege of attending included the creation of a sand mandala by Himalayan Buddhist monks that was then subsequently dismantled at the end of the parliament to symbolize the transient nature of material life,

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

demonstrations of a range of symbolic dance forms, and the serving of Langar. Langar is the Sikh tradition of serving a vegetarian meal each day to all visitors, without distinction regarding identities or backgrounds. It is an expression of service to others in an atmosphere where all can eat as equals. It begins in a circle with music and prayer, followed by the serving of the food.



At the conclusion of the Parliament, I left feeling more a part of our beautifully diverse global community. I learned to not only appreciate difference, but I found immense beauty in it. As one speaker so eloquently said, he believed God made us different so that we would have the opportunity to get to know one another. Getting to know so many others was truly an experience I will never forget. Over the course of



those five days, I also learned more deeply the meaning of the words of my own faith tradition--the Buddha's teaching to 'See Yourself in Others'. While I was in awe of the beauty and importance of the diversity that was represented at the Parliament of the World's Religions, I could also see how profoundly similar we are as sisters and brothers of the human race.

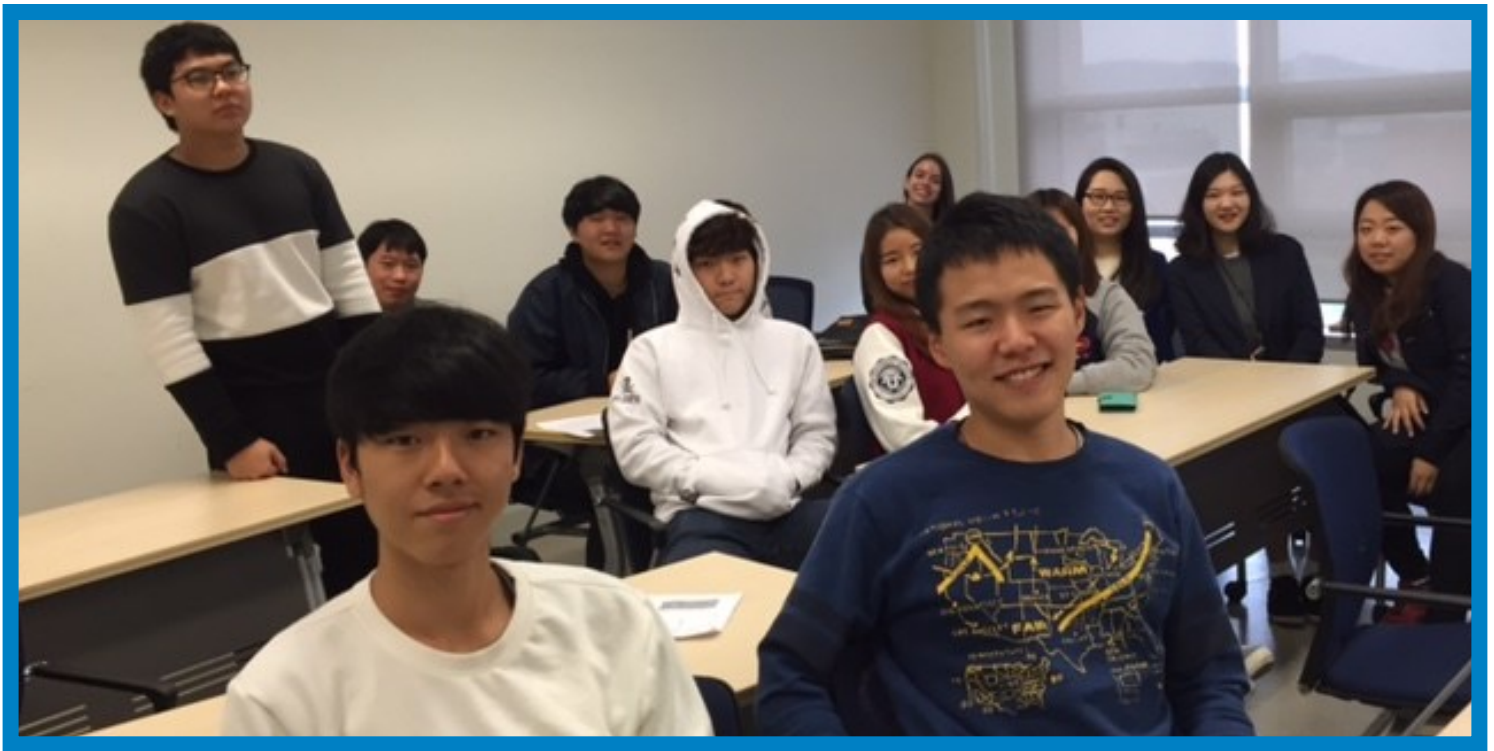
In the days and weeks following the Parliament, I've continued to reflect and feel a deep sense of personal responsibility to take what actions I can within my own life and within my own communities in order to address the many issues facing our global community. It inspired me to put into writing my own personal commitments in the form of a personal guiding document. That exercise has revealed that there is much work for me to do.



Racial Incidents, Student Protests and Resignations at The University of Missouri

Join Diane Rehm and her guests for a discussion on the recent events at the University of Missouri, racial tensions on campus, and administrative response.

Listen Now at thedianerehmshow.org.



Do You Own Your Personal Space?

By Kari Ellingson

Being in South Korea, I've given this question a lot of thought. Wikipedia defines personal space as the region surrounding a person which they regard as psychologically theirs. When this personal space is invaded, resulting emotions can be anxiety, distress or anger (remember this phrase...anxiety, distress or anger).

Last week I was at Costco (yes, our campus is only 25 minutes from a Costco!) to pick up paper products and pies for our University of Utah Asia Campus Thanksgiving luncheon. Entering a Costco in Korea feels very much like entering a Costco in Murray... someone checks your membership card when you walk in, the electronics are near the front, produce and meat in the back. But the actual shopping experience is quite different. I was shopping at 11:00am on a Thursday. I would roughly estimate that there were four times as many people shopping at this time as on the worst Saturday in Utah.

Koreans, as a whole, love to shop and no one shops alone (except for me). Everyone is shopping with their family or four of their closest friends. Sample tables become insurmountable obstacles to avoid.

I KNOW that personal space differs by cultures and by individuals within a culture. When I worked at the Counseling Center, some clients pulled their chairs closer, others pushed them further away. Even geographically in the U.S., those from the East tend to have a need for less personal space than the West. Personal space tends to be related to how densely populated a region is and South Korea is among the top ten most densely populated countries in the world. So, I knew upfront that the personal space here was going to be different than Utah. What I was not prepared for is the reality that personal space is not a concept which holds much meaning here. What I was really not prepared for was my reaction to that.

My observations on South Korea and personal space: 1) just because you occupy a space doesn't mean you own it, even temporarily, 2) if I bump into you, I'm not going to make eye contact or apologize, 3) if I'm older, it's my right to push you out of the way, and 4) most importantly, none of these behaviors are seen as rude. In fact, if people apologized each time they bumped someone, life would be one non-stop apology. I went into Costco with these four tenets in mind, trying a kind of a Zen approach. I've seen this in the subway, the tourist sites, and anywhere I've been shopping—I

(Continued from page 3)

know my personal space will be invaded.

Despite knowing this and despite recognizing that, in cultures this densely populated, these tenets have developed as very acceptable behavior, I was still using my Western mind to judge everyone around me. Remember, anxiety, distress or anger? I was experiencing all three—my personal space was being invaded from the moment I showed my Costco membership at the door and, by the time I got to the pies, I was almost hyperventilating!

I pulled myself aside in the paper products aisle (not nearly as crowded) and gave myself a lecture about cultural differences--that just because I had a different way of being in the world didn't mean it was the right or only way. Lessons taught from birth overtly or covertly are always with us. It's a constant battle to not impose my culturally-ingrained sense of appropriate behavior on a different culture. My goal is to recognize it when it happens. People develop rules of behavior within the context of their culture and these exist independent of what rules exist in other countries. Acknowledging my role as a visitor who has much to learn might help me on my next Costco run!

Interested in submitting an article or creative piece to the Diversity Newsletter for publication?

Please send it to:

michael.bard@utah.edu

TED TALKS

Christine Sun Kim:
The enchanting music of sign language



James A. White Sr.:
The little problem I had renting a house



Thandie Newton:
Embracing otherness, embracing myself



Upcoming Diversity Modules

Date	Module	Location	Time
Tues., Jan. 19	Module 1: Exploring Self & Others	Parlor A	1:00pm—4:00pm
Wed., Jan. 20	Module 2: Exploring Power, Bias, & Values	Den	9:00am—11:00am
Thurs., Jan 21	Module 3: Putting it all Together — Dialoging About Social Justice	Den	9:00am—11:00am

Sign up for the modules on the SADC Website using our [Training Module Sign Up Form](#).

Interested in having presentations held for your group or office? Complete our [Request Form](#).

Administration's Response to Town Hall

On November 20th President Pershing called a Town Hall meeting for the University community to discuss campus climate issues. To see the administration's response to this Town Hall meeting follow this link: <http://sadc.utah.edu/pdf/dialogue-on-racial-climate.pdf>

Upcoming University and Community Events

December 10 @ 6-8:30pm

Human Rights Day Celebration 2015, Salt Lake City County Building [[more info](#)] [[RSVP Online](#)]

Through December 30, Daily @ 9am-6pm

Trees of Diversity Exhibit, Utah Cultural Celebration Center [[more info](#)]

January 16 @ 8:00am

MLK Jr Celebration: Day of Service [[more info](#)]

January 18 @ 2:30-4pm

MLK Jr Celebration: March & Rally
East High School [[more info](#)]

January 20 @ 12pm

MLK Jr Celebration: Cultural Performance "Truth Cypher" West Ballroom, Union [[more info](#)]

January 21 @ 12-1:30pm

MLK Jr Celebration Keynote: Talib Kweli
Union Ballroom [[more info](#)]

January 22 @ 12-1:30pm

MLK Jr Celebration: Pizza & Politics
Hinckley Institute Room 255 [[more info](#)]



For more information and resources, please visit:

sadc.utah.edu

Debra Daniels, Co-chair Women's Resource Center
Rob Davies, Co-chair Student Development
Chris Anderson, Housing & Residential Education
Michael Bard, Registrar's Office
Stephanie Charles, Financial Aid
Branden Dalley, Union Administration
Marci Healy, Conference & Guest Services
Matt McCarthy, Campus Recreation
Nomani Satuala, Center for New Students & Family Programs
Kassy Keen, Center for Student Wellness
Chris Macias, TRIO

Carol MacNicholl, Center for Disability Services
Kai Medina-Martinez, LGBT Center
Sana Muller, ASUU
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