Reflection on the Women & Men of Color Retreat

By: Cynthia Chang

The annual OIIL retreat is always something that I look back on and have fond memories of. Just last year, I was also at Camp Friendship attending my first OIIL retreat. This time around, however, I was attending the retreat with a different perspective as an OIIL Peer Leader. As an OIIL Peer Leader, we are trained to foster intercultural and international life at Carleton and build strong relationships with mentees on campus. Even with this newfound role, the retreat still brought new perspectives on the different identities present at Carleton just as much as it did last year.

The “Step Forward Step Back” activity hit on harder topics about privilege. Even with the privilege of attending a higher institution like Carleton, it was humbling to understand other important identities of fellow classmates that would not normally be recognized on campus. Regardless, the OIIL retreat provided a safe space to express opinions and talk about tough topics that would otherwise be ignored. Being away from campus, I thought that the retreat was a perfect opportunity to foster a unifying community for People of Color at Carleton to share our stories and have open conversations about diversity.

The last activity of the retreat allowed us to share our life stories in a short blurb, and it was during that time when I took a step back and realized that I was surrounded by so many unique individuals. Behind our scholarly personas, there are different languages, different foods, and different environments that make us who we are, and I felt more connected to everyone after hearing their life experiences. Undoubtedly, the OIIL staff once again successfully gathered a group of Carls in one room to build new relationships and encourage self-reflection.

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

- President Barack Obama

The Spectrum is designed to be a space where students of color, international students, and their allies can find space to verbalize and express concerns, excitement, and their college experiences. It is meant to motivate and inspire.
Día de los Muertos

By: Susie Perez

Every year on the first Sunday of November, the Great Hall is filled with the smell of delicious tamales, the vibrant colors of folklorico dresses, and the roaring rattles of aztec cascabeles. This year was not unlike any other. Thanks to the Latin American Student Organization (LASO) and the Chapel, students, staff, and community members joined yet again to celebrate this Latin American Holiday. As one of LASO's most popular events, we enjoyed the presence of a large crowd of 160, with people standing along the back of the Great Hall and outside in the hallway eager to catch a glimpse of the festivities. As secretary for LASO, I was particularly pleased to see so many people come out to celebrate this beautiful holiday with us.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the holiday, Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a holiday celebrated in México and other Latin American countries that takes place October 31st through November 2nd. During the holiday, family and friends gather to celebrate and remember the lives of loved ones who have passed away. When people of other cultures first hear about a celebration called Day of the Dead, they often mistake the holiday as dark, creepy, or gloomy. However, Day of the Dead is a beautiful holiday in which families happily and lovingly remember relatives that have died, similar to the act of leaving flowers on a tomb of a relative. At Carleton, we do our best to celebrate the holiday in a way that honors tradition, yet is open for the participation of all of our community members.

The event this year started off with a short presentation and description of the holiday made by two of LASO's members, Jess Ibri and Nick Gross. We then watched a local group of Aztec dancers perform a traditional dance for the holiday. Then we heard a short story by Gaston Lopez and his experience with Día de los Muertos in the Philippines, a Spanish song sung by Susie Pérez, and, a poem by Issac Martinez dedicated to his grandmother. Afterwards, we watched some of Northfield's younger community members dance folklorico dances from various regions of Mexico, beginning from the youngest girls and continuing with the older dancers. Then we stopped for a moment to offer a Witness to the Dead, where everyone had a chance to light a candle to place on the altar and share a memory of a loved one who has passed over the microphone if they wished. This is one of my favorite parts because this is where you really feel the connection to the community since we can all come together and remember our loved ones.

Finally, everyone enjoyed a dinner of tamales, pan dulce, and champurado. If you were not able to join us this year, we hope you can stop by next year and partake in the celebration!

"Day of the Dead is a beautiful holiday in which families happily and lovingly remember relatives that have died"
Convocation by Professor Tadd Johnson on November 6th, 2015 was one of the best convocations I attended at Carleton College. The Professor Tadd Johnson’s convocation was about the clash between religious freedom of the Native Americans against the regulations set by the institutions of the United States. The particular example he used to describe this topic was the clash between the Native American beliefs against the autopsy, and the State of Minnesota, which at the time did not legally allow religious exemptions for autopsies. The fight started with a standoff between the deceased’s family members and the medical examiner over the custody of the body and culminated in legislation that allowed religious exemption of autopsies, which was signed by the Governor of Minnesota Mark Dayton.

This one example of a fight to legalize religious exemption from autopsies illustrate that there is still a need for minorities to fight against the institutionalized mainstream culture. Media coverage of racial incidents has been weighted towards covering cases between Caucasians, African Americans, and Hispanics. What tends to be forgotten is that the Native Americans are also suffering from institutionalized racial discrimination as well. One example of this discrimination is seen where Native Americans are placed in reservations, that are often in remote areas with lack of access to economical markets, health facilities, and educational institutions. This dislocation has taken a new dimension with the spread of the Internet, as the Native Americans have received minimal access to Internet Service. The lack of internet access creates a barrier in furthering economic/educational/and health development of the Native Americans.

Prof. Tadd Johnson’s talk was a grim reminder of how even in 2015, Native Americans still have to fight lengthily legal and political battles for the federal/state government to accommodate their religious beliefs into their policies. We must understand that the battle for reclaiming equality for the Native Americans is still far from over and that the process would not be an easy one.
Reflection on the Kente Summit

By: Jeffrey Bissoy-Mattis

Similar to prior years, I was excited when the first week of November came around, because that meant that Kente Summit Conference for Collegiate Black Men was just around the corner. It was my third and final year attending the conference, so I was prepared to soak in as much knowledge from speakers, and connect with as many brothers as I could. The theme of this year’s summit was “Living, Learning, and Leading with Authenticity.” On the first day, as it has become tradition, we had a welcoming dinner at Macalester and later attended a talk by Dr. Peniel E. Joseph, a professor of History at Tufts University, an award-winning author, and a frequent national commentator on issues of race, democracy, and civil rights. Dr. Joseph’s speech was incredibly powerful, as he eloquently preached the deep history of African Americans in the United States, describing their hardships and fight for equality; a battle that rages on today.

Following his speech, brothers Carleton got their books signed and took a picture with Dr. Joseph. On the second day of the summit, students attended two workshop sessions at the University of St. Thomas, led by African American professors and young professionals from the Twin Cities area. I attended a session titled, “Getting to the Next Level: Developing a Vision and a Blueprint for a Career and Graduate School” and “Black Scholars: Being Black and Being a Graduate Student.” The first, was led by Keith Mayes, an African American Studies professor at the University of Minnesota, who asked us about our experiences as black students at private institutions. He talked to us about the importance of a college education and later challenged us on our understanding of the job market. He asked us questions such as, “How much is a bachelors’ degree worth?” and “Is Graduate school mandatory, if you want a well-paying job?” The workshop helped me to think more critically about what I am actively doing to prepare myself for life after Carleton.

To conclude the summit, there were small group discussions held. In our small groups we reflected on what we were taught about masculinity, and how those teachings influenced how we manifested our maleness. At the end of the summit, many exchanged numbers, Facebook names and email contacts. It was a hard good-bye for me at the Summit, because it was my last one; however, I’ll admit that was the first time that I felt as if I had made multiple connections with my other Kente Brothers. Although, I will not have another opportunity to return as a participant, I hope that Men of Carleton, a student org on campus, continues to participate in the event. The Kente Summit conference has always been a fresh of breath air from the daily occurrences on campus; I pray that I have learned enough from their teachings as I commence my journey outside the confines of Northfield, MN.
OIIL Block Party
By: Jack Hardwick

Carleton students are always in for a great party, and September’s OIIL block party was no exception. Delicious foods from around the world adorned tables at the side of the street, a karaoke machine in front of Stimson House blasted out hits from the past, accompanied by singers of various competency levels, from mediocre to absolutely tuneless. Needless to say, I was nearer the tuneless end of that scale.

The sun was shining on a beautiful late summer day, and students involved in all facets of the OIIL office were there sharing in good company and good food. I partook in a couple of rounds of the karaoke, once with a large group and once with the one and only Bonny Lee. We received some applause, some of which was sarcastic and some simply courteous.

The block party was a prime example of the community spirit of OIIL events. A great time was had by all, students of all class years, both international and domestic. It was a great start to my Carleton experience and an experience that I will be very willing to repeat next year.
Featured Organization: Indigenous People's Alliance

By: Malia Molina

Though many people don’t know it, Minneapolis, Minnesota has been at the heart of many Native American revolutions. Even though Carleton is only 45 minutes outside of the city, native cultures on Carleton’s campus have been underrepresented until recently. Despite Carleton’s involvement with programs that promote native-diversity on college campuses like College Horizons, the number of students enrolled who identify as Native American, Native Hawaiian, Native Alaskan or any other indigenous culture has been low. Thus, there was need for an indigenous group and in January 2015, the Indigenous Peoples Alliance was formed. Spearheading this group was Alex Portnow, Malia Molina, and Raelynne Benjamin, all three of whom identify with an indigenous culture.

The Indigenous Peoples Alliance, colloquially known as IPA, provides a community on Carleton’s campus for students who identify with an indigenous culture or those who want to learn more about said cultures. The club currently represents Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Native Alaskan cultures but is inclusive of any and all indigenous peoples. Early in its formation, this year will be its first as an official club on campus. The club hosts weekly meetings where indigenous topics are discussed and events with the purpose of educating the campus about indigenous news. This past October, IPA held its first event for Indigenous Peoples Day — formerly known as Columbus Day — on October 12, 2015. Those who attended enjoyed Navajo tacos (frybread, a Native American staple, with taco toppings) while viewing videos about different native perspectives on the fight for changing the holiday’s name and meaning. The group also discussed the history behind holidays like Columbus Day and Founder’s Day (in Hawai‘i) and how the miseducation of these histories can be detrimental for progress of native peoples into modern society.

As IPA continues to grow, the group hopes to host indigenous speakers to educate Carleton’s community about dealing with racism, views on sexuality, cultural appropriation, and the struggle to balance traditional cultures within a modern society. If you have any questions, please feel free contact Alex Portnow (portnowa@carleton.edu) or Malia Molina (molinam2@carleton.edu).

“Carleton Pride, Native Pride!”
'Home' for me is 7,232 mi away from Northfield. I place inverted commas here because all of us have a different definition for home. For some, it's the place they've lived their entire lives and for others it's where family is. Arriving on campus on the 4th of September, 2015 marked the beginning of a new home for 63 international students of the Class of 2019.

My ISO experience began the night before the actual arrival day. Having done absolutely nothing productive the entire summer the night before arrival day, on the 3rd, I finally decided to get my necessities and room requirements from Target. While leaving, my father and I got into a cab with some students, one of whom was wearing a bright blue T-Shirt. Being the awkward, confused freshman that I was (rather still am), I introduce myself to the other students in the car only to figure out (two silent minutes later) that one of the passengers was (and still is) my mentor. This was the moment I figured I had nothing to worry about. Carleton was instantly accepting of strangers!

After a hectic arrival day, ISO moved into its busiest day: day 1. We went for a scavenger hunt, opened our bank accounts, went to MOA, went to Target and had an extremely memorable bonfire at the Hill of 3 Oaks. Basically, we were dead by the end of all of this. My highlight for the day was getting absolutely overwhelmed by the sheer size of Mall of America. I feel like the second you see rollercoasters in a mall you should just stop questioning things and just roll with it. Although my group spend the entire time in a restaurant, not eating by the way simply waiting for the order, I could see that the mall had way too much to offer. A majority of days 2, 3 and 4 were spent in Olin 149. Our discussions ranged from cultural adjustment to academic adjustment. The best part about these seminars and lectures was that they were tailored for ISO. As ISO kids, I feel we were lucky to get so much attention of things that weren't even mentioned during NSW. This helped us so much during our first few weeks at Carleton. ISO has definitely been a highlight for my Freshman Fall term. It's been a long term for my classmates and I but our OIIL Peer Leaders have gotten us through it. One can't emphasize enough the importance of their job. Joy, Martin, Michael and Brisa are equally responsible for making Carleton an easier transition for all of us. The ISO Program, being the overwhelming time that it is, brings us international students closer to each other and makes us all OIIL family.

By: Ritvik Kar
Inclusion, Empathy, and Cultural Engagement

Meet Our Staff!

Joy Kluttz
Director
jkluttz@carleton.edu
(507) 222-4013

Martin Olague
Assistant Director
molague@carleton.edu
(507) 222-4505

Brisa Zubia
Assistant Director
bzubia@carleton.edu
(507) 222-7488

Mike Hodges
Program Assistant
mhodges@carleton.edu
(507) 222-4014

Mission Statement

For over 25 years, the Office of Intercultural & International Life has been an integral part of Carleton’s initiatives to enhance diversity and cultivate a fully inclusive community, enriched by persons of different ethnicities, nationalities, genders, economic backgrounds, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, and spiritual values. The primary mission of the Office of Intercultural & International Life is to provide programming that fosters intercultural dialogue in the service of greater cross-cultural awareness, empathy, mutual respect, tolerance, and recognition.

Want to submit an article?

If you are interested in writing an article for the Spectrum, please contact Martin Olague or Mike Hodges by email (molague@carleton.edu, mhodges@carleton.edu) with the subject title “Spectrum Article Submission”.

Responding to the Spectrum

See anything you have a question, response, or comment on? Shoot us an email with the subject title “Spectrum Response”. If we like your idea, we’ll put it into our next submission.

This Spectrum was coordinated and designed by: Jojo Kuria