

MULTICULTURAL REUNION PLANNING HANDBOOK

GOALS FOR MULTICULTURAL REUNION

- Rebuild and strengthen relationships between the College, alumni of color, LGBTQIA+ alumni, alumni with disabilities, international student alumni, Jewish alumni and first-generation alumni.
- Build community.
- Create spaces to share individual and collective stories with alumni, students, faculty, and staff.
- Develop interactive learning opportunities.
- Have fun!

OVERVIEW

The first Multicultural Reunion was held on campus in November 2017 with over 100 alumni returning to participate and engage with students, faculty, staff and each other in events, panels, and discussions about the College's ongoing diversity and inclusion efforts.

DAR hosted the 2nd Multicultural Reunion in November 2019 with 56 alumni in attendance. Highlights of the weekend were the 50th anniversary celebration of the Conney M. Kimbo Black Cultural Center and the launch of the Multicultural Archive Project.

This biennial event, will continue in the fall of 2021 and spring of 2022 as a virtual experience. Multicultural Reunion will come to you. In an online format, we can broaden our outreach and keep Grinnellians excited for 2023. We can engage people who have not been able to travel. Once they experience Virtual Multicultural Reunion, they will want to come back to campus in the fall of 2023.

A highlight of each Multicultural Reunion is the presentation of the Diversity Champion Award at the Saturday Evening Gala. The award recognizes the accomplishments of the faculty, staff, and alumni (individual, teams, or organizations) in behaviors, activities, and/or projects that provide a significant contribution to diversity, inclusion, and equity, and support an environment in which these traits are valued. This award encompasses many facets of visible and invisible diversity, focusing on underserved and underrepresented populations, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, geography, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical abilities, and generational diversity.

In 2017, the first ever recipient and inspiration for the award was Dr. Kesho Scott for fiercely advocating for minoritized students, creating social change, and fighting for social justice at Grinnell College for her more than 30 years as the first tenured Black faculty member. In 2019, seven alumni who were critical in the creation of the Conney M. Kimbo Black Cultural Center

were honored: Grant Crandall '69, Hubert Farbes '69, Deborah Green '70, Merryll Penson '70, Roy Walker '69, Margaret Ward '71, and Henry Wingate '69.

A program that formed during Multicultural Reunion planning weekend and was debuted at the 2019 Multicultural Reunion was the Multicultural Digital Archive Project. It is a collaboration between students, alumni, staff, and faculty that established an Internet-based platform for collecting and documenting the histories of Grinnell College's rich legacy of multicultural student organizations. Its goals are to capture, preserve, and share the institutional memory that has gone undocumented, and to show the impact that multiculturalism has had in shaping the College's history. The project began with visual web-based timelines that painted broad strokes of important events within the Multicultural Leadership Council (MLC) student organizations. The project continues within various Grinnell College communities to identify ephemeral material, such as photographs, posters, t-shirts, documents, visual and audio recordings, that help to tell these stories.

For 2021, Multicultural Reunion will be virtual and host 4 signature events the week of November 8-14. The signature events are: a large-scale, fun, engaging social event, a keynote speaker, town hall with chief diversity officer, Dr. Schvalla Rivera, and the Diversity Champion Award ceremony. The alumni planning committee will determine if they want to create more programs and events as part of Multicultural Reunion, which can be held outside of the November 8-14 timeframe.

EXPECTATIONS

The planning committee plans a fun-filled slate of events and programs of positive engagement, where alumni can share their history, engage with students, learn about the College's current priorities and plans as they relate to diversity and inclusion, build community, and reconnect with old and new friends. The committee is composed of 18-24 alumni from a range of class years and intersecting identities. Committee members serve for one year.

Time commitment: The average time commitment is 1-2 hours a month. Typically the first 2 months of planning and the 2 months leading up to reunion may add another hour or two to your commitment.

Committee Member

- Work to engage and connect alumni to the College by conducting personal outreach to fellow Grinnellians.
- Attend Reunion Planning Workshop. For Multicultural Reunion 2021, we will hold 3 virtual planning workshops where all volunteer will:
 - Generate ideas for events and programs for the reunion.
 - Make a list of nominees for the Diversity Champion Award.

- o Propose ideas for a keynote speaker/performer.
- o Decide on theme or if we want to have a theme.
- o Create a marketing plan for alumni, students, faculty, and staff, and gather ideas for images.
- Serve on the planning committee.
 - o Participate in monthly planning calls.
 - o Contribute ideas.
 - o Complete assigned tasks in timely manner.
 - o Communicate with committee members via chosen platform, e.g. email, Slack, Google, Facebook, text, etc...
- Be on 75% of committee calls.
- Have regular access to email and respond in a timely manner.
- Use Lyris list to communicate with entire committee: mlcreunion@lyris.grinnell.edu
- Honor and abide by the [confidentiality agreement](#) and [Code of Leadership](#).
- Attend Multicultural Reunion!

If the planning committee decides to create events and programs that require the formation of subcommittees, then the following structure can be implemented.

Committee Co-chairs

- Help recruit committee members.
- Motivate and keep subcommittee chairs on task.
- Serve as a liaison to subcommittees by joining their monthly calls and reporting back to other co-chair and DAR staff.
- Be in regular communication with assistant director of alumni and donor relations for diverse communities.

Subcommittee Chair

- Find reoccurring monthly time for planning calls.
- Create agenda for monthly calls
- Keep subcommittee members on task.
- Help committee decide on best tool for communication/planning (e.g. email, Slack, Trello, text).
- Be in regular communication with DAR staff regarding progress and plans.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Each subcommittee should have 3-5 members

Panel subcommittee(s)

Overview – alumni panels have been successful programs at each Multicultural Reunion. They allow panelists to delve into a topic of interest to attendees. A list of panel topics is generated

during the planning weekend. Each panel subcommittee can choose from this list or create a new topic. Topics from prior reunions: legacy families of color, invisible identities, multicultural histories, and intersectional activism.

Tasks

- Decide on a panel topic.
- Recruit panelists (preferably alumni, but can be students, faculty, or staff depending on the topic).
- Work with panelists to create the questions.
- Subcommittee chair will serve as the moderator of the panel.

Workshop subcommittee(s)

Overview – A workshop is an interactive way to engage alumni and students in a discussion topic. Workshops allow alumni and students to learn from each other's experiences. Titles from prior reunions: "Multicultural Organizations: Working Together Then and Now", "Life After Grinnell: Adulting 101", and "Looking Back and Leaping Forward."

Tasks

- Create a 90 minute workshop for alumni and students that addresses a discussion topic.
- Design format/layout of workshop.
- Recruit participants/presenters/panelists.
- Lead the workshop.

Outreach subcommittee

Overview – Although we have many modern ways to contact people en masse, research has shown that people attend reunions because they have been personally contacted by someone. More than 60 percent of alumni say that contact from a classmate influenced their decision to attend. Doing outreach is key to the success of Multicultural Reunion.

Tasks

- Create social media posts for the entire committee to share on their platforms to encourage alumni to attend Multicultural Reunion.
- Create a timeline for when each post should be shared.
- Think of creative ways to engage alumni and get them excited to return for Multicultural Reunion.
- Continue to build the Multicultural Archive by getting alumni to bring ephemera (e.g. photos, event posters, t-shirts, buttons) to be scanned into the archive.
- Encourage alumni to add their memories to the MLC timelines.
- Encourage alumni to participate in the oral history project during reunion.

Social Media Guidelines

- Posts should be positive and celebratory.
- Posts should be inclusive—if including event photos make sure to include photos with a variety of alums in them.
- Posts should feel authentic to the writer, but not espouse any personal viewpoints.
- Posts should invite viewers to “talk to us” through comments and likes.
- Posts should encourage participation in Regional Network events and volunteering.

Event subcommittee(s)

Overview – This committee will create and host at least one virtual event. An event provides a social activity that allows alumni and students to continue to build community. Some examples are Loteria, trivia, bingo, game night, or other creative ideas. Traditionally, the Saturday Gala is the signature event that serves as a conclusion to the weekend, because we will be virtual this year, there will be an online celebration and presentation of the Diversity Champion Award.

Tasks

- Create an interactive event for alumni and students to participate in together where they can have fun and get to know each other.
- Create a vision and program for the presentation of the Diversity Champion Award.
- Determine an emcee for each event.
- Serve as hosts for both events by welcoming attendees and creating a communal atmosphere.

See appendix for planning outlines from the 2019 subcommittees

SUPPORT FROM THE COLLEGE

- Access to information that you may need to make you successful.
- A description of your role including clear expectations for your time and service.
- Lyris listserv: mlcreunion@lyris.grinnell.edu.
- WebEx and Zoom meetings.
- Assistant Director of Alumni and Donor Relations for Diverse Communities.
- DAR and Communications will create an outreach plan.
- DAR will create event registration.
- DAR will send follow-up and reminder emails.

TIMELINE

- March 2021 – Participate in 120 minute Kickoff Call, where we will discuss expectations, a tentative schedule for planning calls, resources, and begin to build community.
- April & May 2021 – Each month attend a 60-90 minute planning call where we will create a shared vision for Multicultural Reunion and subcommittees will be determined.
- Ongoing – Participate in your subcommittee(s)’s monthly planning calls.

- Fall 2021- Spring 2022 – Attend Multicultural Reunion

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL MULTICULTURAL REUNION PLANNER

- Be punctual and reliable.
- Be accountable.
- Celebrate successes!
- Give notice if your availability changes.
- Adhere to Grinnell College's policies and procedures.
- Undertake training as requested.
- Ask for support when needed.
- Support other volunteers.
- Have fun!

WHAT TO DO IF YOU CAN'T ATTEND THE ONLINE PLANNING WORKSHOPS

It is the goal to have as many of the planning committee members as possible attend the planning sessions. But sometimes, for various reasons, someone cannot participate. The staff liaisons will do their best to provide everyone with resources and information but it is the volunteer's responsibility to keep themselves updated and informed.

Here are a few pointers for those who cannot attend:

1. Attend the kickoff call : It gives details about the planning process, and summarizes what the year will look like.
2. Stay informed: The committee will create the framework for multicultural reunion. Therefore, it's very important to read through the notes of the each session once they are available.
3. Join a subcommittee: There will be a subcommittee for each event and program during Multicultural Reunion. Those who are unable to attend the planning session still must join at least one of the subcommittees. These subcommittees will meet separately and tackle one program/event together. Although some idea generation will happen during the online planning sessions, most of the planning is done in these small subcommittees much later in the process. Study the notes to see what might be a good fit.
4. Be on the conference calls: The planning will continue after the online sessions. Make it a point to be on calls whenever possible and to participate in the discussions.
5. Ask questions: Let your fellow committee members know if you have questions about any part of this process.

The co-chairs will contact everyone who missed the planning session after the notes have been sent out. This gives those who were absent a chance to join a subcommittee or ask questions.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about your role or duties, please contact Sarah Smith-Benanti, assistant director for alumni and donor relations at smithben@grinnell.edu or call)435-535-5481 (cell) 641-269-1846 (work).

Development and Alumni Relations
733 Broad Street
Grinnell, Iowa 50112-1690

Phone: 641-269-1846 / 866-850-1846 (toll-free)
www.alumni.grinnell.edu

Please sign these two forms to be a volunteer with Grinnell College:

[CONFIDENTIALITY FORM](#)

[CODE OF LEADERSHIP](#)

APPENDIX

In the appendix, you will find sample schedules from the past two reunions, and outlines for the workshop and panels from Multicultural Reunion 2019. The outlines serve as examples of what has been done in the past and are not a prescribed way of doing a program at Multicultural Reunion. In the outlines, you will see how the subcommittee created a plan for each program by: blocking the time allotted to their program, organizing themselves and the participants with clearly defined roles, and writing a script for the program.

SAMPLE SCHEDULES

Schedule for Multicultural Reunion 2019

Friday, November 8, 2019

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| ● 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. | Registration Desk Open | JRC Lobby |
| ● 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. | Class Visitation Opportunities | |
| ● 12:00-2:00 p.m. | "Looking Back and Leaping Forward" | |
| | Workshop with pizza lunch | JRC 101 |
| ● 2:00-3:00 p.m. | Collection, Connection and Conversation | Museum of Art |
| ● 3:00-4:00 p.m. | Campus Walking Tour | 2 nd floor of JRC |
| ● 4:00-5:00 p.m. | Invisible Identities Panel | JRC 101 |
| ● 5:15-6:00 p.m. | Welcome Reception | Golf Course |
| ● 6:00-7:30 p.m. | Welcome Dinner and Shabbat Table | Golf Course |
| ● 7:30-9:00 p.m. | Michael Twitty's Keynote Address | JRC 101 |
| ● 9:00-10:30 p.m. | Lotería | Bob's |

Saturday, November 9, 2019

- 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Registration Desk Open JRC Lobby
- 9:00-10:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast & Diversity Update JRC 101
- 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Multicultural Histories Panel JRC 101
- 12:00-2:00 p.m. Lunch D-Hall
- 2:00-3:00 p.m. IGE Open House HSSC N1164
- 2:00-5:00 p.m. MLC Student Organization Open Houses Various locations
 - 2-3p.m. Chalutzim Open House in Chalutzim Suite on 2nd floor of JRC
 - 2-4p.m SOL: Past, Present, and Future in Spanish House
 - 2-5p.m. AAA & CSA Open House in JRC 209
 - 2-5 p.m. BCC Open House in BCC
 - 2-5 p.m. SRC Open House in SRC
- 5:00-6:00 p.m. Social Hour Main Lounge
- 6:00-9:00 p.m. Multicultural Alumni Weekend Gala Quad Dining Hall
- 9:00 p.m. Drag Show by QPOC Harris

Sunday, November 10, 2019

- 10:00 a.m. Black Church Herrick Chapel

Schedule for Multicultural Reunion 2017

Friday, November 10, 2017

- 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Registration Desk Open JRC Lobby
- 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Class Visitation Opportunities
- 12:00-2:00 p.m. “Multicultural Organizations: Working Together Then and Now”
Panel with pizza lunch JRC 101
- 2:00-3:00 p.m. Campus Walking Tour 2nd floor of JRC
- 4:00-5:00 p.m. Legacy Families of Color Panel JRC 101
- 5:15-6:00 p.m. Welcome Reception Main Lounge
- 6:00 p.m. Welcome Dinner and Shabbat Table Quad Dining Hall
- 7:30 p.m. Keynote Address: Carlos Andres Gomez JRC 101

Saturday, November 11, 2017

- 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Registration Desk Open JRC Lobby
- 8:30-10:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast & Diversity Update JRC 101
- 10:00-11:00 a.m. “Traversing Identities: Intersectional Activism at Grinnell College”
Panel JRC 101
- 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. “Life After Grinnell” Networking Event JRC 2nd floor lobby
- 12:00 p.m. Food Truck lunch BCC
- 12:00 p.m. Football game Rosenbloom Field
- Afternoon Individual Group Events Various locations
- 4:00 p.m. YGB Gospel Choir 45th anniversary concert Sebring Lewis

- 6:00 p.m. Social Hour Hotel Grinnell
- 7:00 p.m. Multicultural Alumni Weekend Gala Hotel Grinnell

Sunday, November 12, 2017

- 10:00 a.m. Black Church Herrick Chapel
- 11:30-12:30p.m. Bagel Brunch Bucksbaum Rotunda

Plan for Looking Back, Leaping Forward workshop on Friday, November 8 from 12:00-2:00 p.m. in JRC 101

5 Committee members
Committee member Emcee

Vision: This is the kickoff event that balances reflection on time at Grinnell. Not a complaint fest or paint a rosy picture.

In room conversation, reflection, closing activity to look forward.

Video allows alumni to advocate for themselves, introspective and reflective.

Room set-up

Chair in a big circle with a circle of chairs on the inside.

Whiteboards at front/side of room with prompts: Favorite Grinnell Memory. Favorite Grinnell Activity.

People enter, grab pizza, write on whiteboard, mix & mingle, and find a seat.

Opening Activity: Posse Macro Lab. Have everyone stand-up and the outer circle face their partner in the inner circle. Emcee reads a question and people answer, then rotate one person to the right and read the next question.

List of lighthearted questions that then get deeper

1. Favorite thing to eat in the d-hall
2. Favorite class
3. Favorite Harris Party
4. Favorite place to live
5. Favorite place to study
6. What care packages did you receive from home?
7. Best memory
8. What friendships do you still carry with you from your days at Grinnell?
9. What did you discover about your identity during your time at Grinnell?
10. What did you need from Grinnell (the college, community, people) that you feel like you were not given, couldn't ask for, or didn't have?
11. When you graduated from college - what did you feel?
12. Have your feelings about the college changed over time? In what ways and why?
13. What is your hope for future generations of multicultural Grinnellians?
14. Do you feel like you have a part to play in creating that future?

15. What did you learn about yourself during your Grinnell experience that you carry with you to this day?

Show video

If we have no videos, do we just have a large group discussion with the 3 questions below?

Who will run microphones around? People cannot speak to large group without a microphone so need 2-3 people each with a mic.

Question discussion: Emcee will have people break into small groups, read the questions, give people 5-10 minutes to discuss, then ask people to report back to the larger group.

1. What were you most curious about or passionate about during your time at Grinnell?
2. In what areas did you thrive? In what areas did you struggle the most? Socially? Academically? Geographically? Where did you seek or find solace? With others? In Community? In Nature?
3. Presently, how do you embody in your life the things you were passionate about at Grinnell or the ways in which you found solace?

Video:

Play video with everyone answering question #1, then discuss

Play video with everyone answering question #2, then discuss

Play video with everyone answering question #3, then discuss

Closing Activity: Ask people to draw: "Where do we go from here?" You can do a free write, draw a picture, let your creativity soar.

Plan for Invisible Identities Panel on Friday, November 8 from 4:00-5:00 p.m. in JRC 101

Committee members: Fae, Anna, Graciela, Karo, Dixon, and Rhonda (planning committee co-chair liaison)

Structure of panel

Anna will moderate and rely on an ASL interpreter. Q&A format. Start with questions that illicit short answers and then lead into longer questions (30 minutes). Encourage discussion amongst panelists (15 minutes). Audience questions (15 minutes). Workshop questions with the panelists beforehand.

Room set-up

2 tables in the front with 2 handheld mics for panelists to pass.

Anna and interpreter at the podium.

Interpreter for Clare, panelist, in front row.

Chairs in rows.

Panelists

Clare Patterson '01
Maya Larson '22
Debbie Gottschalk '90
Graciela Guzman '11

Opening statement

Anna makes an opening statement about why the committee wanted to do the panel and how the panel will run today.

Panel questions

-- Introductions - name, pronouns, what drew you to this panel. (Keep it brief, it's five panelists in an hour. Smile.)

-- What do you consider to be blessings (so to speak) of your invisible identities?

-- How do you embrace your identities when the world dehumanizes so many marginalized people?

-- For alumni: In what ways have your invisible identities and/or your Grinnell experience shaped the post Grinnell world with your identities?

-- For current students/staff: What do you embrace about Grinnell and its interactions with your identities today? What has been more challenging for you?

-- How do we shift the discourse and actions towards undermining the dominant structures that seek to make us invisible while also managing oppression fatigue?

Audience questions

Need 2 people to run microphones

Closing announcement

Anna thanks everyone for participation, and invites people to join us for the Welcome Reception at the Golf Course where there will be drinks and hors d'oeuvres.

Making History: Innovations in Capturing Community-Based Multicultural Stories Panel on Saturday, November 9 from 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. in JRC 101

Committee members: Chris, Kathi, Sarah, and Anna

Structure of panel

Chris will moderate. Q&A format. Start with questions for all panelist then open it to audience. Encourage discussion amongst panelists.

Room set-up

2 tables in the front with 2 handheld mics for panelists to pass.

Chris at the podium.
Chairs in rows.

Panelists

Henry Brannan '21 (Indigenous Lands research)
Dan Kaiser, Professor Emeritus of History
Sarah Cornell '97 (Seacoast New Hampshire LGBT community)
Erik Henderson '19

Opening statement

Chris makes an opening statement about why the committee wanted to do the panel and how the panel will run today.

Panel questions

Question 1:

In a March 2018 Smithsonian Magazine article “How Native American Slaveholders Complicate the Trail of Tears Narrative” by Ryan P. Smith, he quotes Smithsonian curator Paul Chaat Smith on how he approaches difficult facts when presenting that story. “I used to like history, and sometimes still do, but not most of the time. Most of the time history and I are frenemies at best.” He states further that he equates the ugly truth of history to be “a mangy, snarling dog standing between you and a crowd pleasing narrative.”

In your own research projects, do you find yourselves “frenemies” with history and what strategies did you use evade the “snarling dog” to create a “crowd-pleasing narrative?”

Question two:

Our keynote speaker last night, Michael Twitty, writes an excellent blog called Afroculnaria. In August of this year, the post “Dear Disgruntled White Plantation Visitors, Sir Down” Twitty is a champion for historical interpreters who take their work as sacred:

“Facing my/our past has been my life’s journey. It’s also been at times devastating and painful. But reflection in no way equals one second in the lives of the enslaved women and men whose blood flows in my veins. I had the privilege of rediscovering my roots on a North Carolina plantation at a dinner we prepared for North Carolinians of all backgrounds. Knowing that the enslaved people who once occupied those cabins could never have dreamed of that rainbow of people sitting together as equals in prayer, food and fellowship while my Asante and Mende roots were being uncovered after centuries of obfuscation was for me a holy moment.”

What moments in your research were similarly holy or transcended difficult narratives to provide positive and hopeful kernels of truth?

Audience questions

Need 2 people to run microphones

Closing announcement

Chris thanks everyone for participation.

Remind folks to check out the digital timeline of MLC student orgs in Burling. While they are there, they can add their story to the timeline, record their oral history with a student, or digitize their ephemera with a student.

Thank student researchers: Daisy Morales '20, Indira Kapur '20, and Mariyah Jahangiri '20.

Thank oral history students taking independent study course with Sarah Purcell: Martha Beliveau '21, Kedam Habte '21, Evan Hurst '21, Davin Lin '22, and Liz Paik '22.

Invites people to join us for lunch in the Marketplace Dining Hall in the Whale Room.