

## UNAI MEMBER ACTIVITY REPORT 2016/2017

**Mercy College**

**USA**

During the 2016/2017 reporting period, Mercy College undertook a number of activities that underscore its commitment to UNAI and its principles. The following examples stand out as particularly noteworthy:

Most of these activities and events were organized under the aegis of the Mercy College Center for Global Engagement, with the support of Dr. Sheila Gersh, Director, and Ms. Michiko Kuroda, Visiting Fellow for United Nations Affairs.

### **1. International Week, November 14–18, 2016**

In alignment with various International Days at the United Nations, Mercy College held International Week to promote education on these subjects:



#### *1) World Diabetes Day, November 14, 2016*

Professor Peggy Tallier presented a lecture entitled “Diabetes and the Impact on the Older Adult”.

#### *2) Day of the Imprisoned Writer, November 15, 2016*

Professor Celia Ressig-Vasile and Dr. Zelalem Kibret (a Scholar-at-Risk) held a discussion on “The Power of Literature”.

#### *3) International Day for Tolerance, November 16, 2016*

Mercy College held two panels on creation of a just, inclusive world and combating intolerance – one by the School of Education and the other by the Occupational Therapy and Communication Disorders programs.

#### *4) World Prematurity Day and World Philosophy Day, November 17, 2016*

Professor Kathleen Kenney-Riley presented on prematurity. Professors Ben Abelson, David Kilpatrick, and Boria Sax participated in a panel entitled “Reconsidering Global and Conceptual Borders”.

#### *5) World Toilet Day, November 18, 2016*

Professors Davida Smyth and Irina Ellison presented a lecture entitled “How the Toilet Has Changed the World”. Participants learned about the status of toilets and the importance and impacts of toilet on human health and security.

#### *6) Passport Day, November 15, 2016*

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As part of International Week, Mercy College helped students prepare their passports by taking their pictures and submitting the applications.

## **2. International Human Rights**

1) *International Human Rights Day Event: "Memoirs of a War Child," December 13, 2016*  
Mercy College students, faculty, and staff gathered to listen to Mercy student and former war child Sandra Uwiringiyimana recount her experiences. Sandra was ten and living with her family in a refugee camp far from their home in the Democratic Republic of the Congo when rebels entered the camp and she found herself with a gun pointed at her head. Her extraordinary story of escaping the Gatumba massacre touched the hearts of everyone in the audience and taught them the importance of promoting and protecting international human rights. Uwiringiyimana also informed the audience about her forthcoming book, *How Dare the Sun Rise: Memoirs of a War Child* (Harper Collins, 2017). (The event is viewable on YouTube under the title "Sandra Uwiringiyimana in honor of Human Rights Day, Mercy College" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-xljfj57cQ>.)

2) *International Women's Day – Now That the Women's Marches are Over, What is Next for Women?, March 8, 2017*

Mercy College organized a global day celebrating social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. Drawing on diverse academic resources from Mercy College, professors presented on various international women's issues:

1) *Women and Health Issues around the World – Professors Shari Berkowitz and Miriam Ford, School of Health and Natural Sciences*

2) *Girls and Science – Professor Nancy Heilbronner, School of Education*

3) *Women and Childcare Leave – Professors Abby Hirsch and Emily Murphy, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences*

4) *Women's Rights as Human Rights: The Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, Argentina – Professor Celia Reissig-Vasile, School of Liberal Arts*

5) *Women in the Workplace – Professors Li Young and Denise Stefano, School of Business*

Discussion among presentations and participants called for accelerating gender parity.

## **3. Sustainability/Global Citizenship**

1) *Mini-Model United Nations (UN) on climate change for high-school students at Mercy College, February 4, 2017.*

In collaboration with the United Nations Association of the United States of America, Westchester Chapter (UNA–USA Westchester), Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority (AKA), and The Links, Incorporated, Mercy College held an all-day mini-Model UN conference on climate change for high-school students from Westchester. Professor Michiko Kuroda of the Mercy College International Relations and Diplomacy Program (IRDP) coordinated the mini-Model UN conference with support of IRDP students, who acted as chairs and conference secretariat. Acting as delegates, the high-school students discussed their assigned countries' positions on climate change, negotiated, and formed coalitions with other countries based on interests and goals. Mercy College students and high-school students collaborated to find solutions on important issues concerning climate change and sustainability.

2) *Culture and Language Summer Institute - Experiencing New York at Mercy College, July 10–August 4, 2017*

Mercy College hosted nineteen Shanghai Jian Qiao University students for four weeks at a Culture and Language Summer Institute on the Dobbs Ferry, NY campus. While learning English and experiencing American culture in New York City, students had opportunities to learn about globalization and international relations, including a Model UN experience. As part of this Model UN, students discussed and negotiated on a topic related to cybersecurity. They also visited the UN headquarters, 9/11 Memorial Museum, New York monuments, and other sites.

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#### 4. Intercultural Dialogue: United Nations Ambassador's Dialogue Series

Mercy College invited two United Nations ambassadors for public conversations with Ambassador Ahmad Kamal, former Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations and current Senior Fellow at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The conversations included:

1) *"Mexico—Its Role at the United Nations and in the World"*, a discussion featuring Ambassador Juan José Gómez Camacho, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, on November 14, 2016. Ambassadors Kamal and Gómez addressed the role of Mexico in the United Nations and its vision for the future. The conversation continued at the reception.

2) *"Honduras—Its Role at the United Nations and in the World"*, April 24 2017, a discussion featuring Ambassador Mary Elizabeth Flores Flake, Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations. Ambassadors Kamal and Flake discussed the role of Honduras in the United Nations and in the world. The conversation continued at the reception.

3) *"Israel Defense Forces: An Insider View"*, April 27, 2017

Mercy College welcomed a group of Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers who shared their views on challenges of and approaches to armed conflict in the Middle East, from the perspectives of Israel's diverse citizen military. A question-and-answer session and person-to-person dialogue was held among Mercy College students and Israeli soldiers, sharing varying views on the Middle East.

4) *"European Schooling: Cross-Cultural and Cross-Lingual Initiatives"*, May 3, 2017

Dr. Franz Schmek, head of the Austrian Federal Coordination Center for International Initiatives in Education and Executive Director of the Austrian-American Educational Cooperation Association, presented on cross-cultural and cross-lingual activities that their association is implementing throughout Austrian high schools.

5) *"Cherry Blossom Trees Dedication"*, May 10, 2017

The Mercy College Teach Japan Project team, in cooperation with the US-Japan Foundation, presented a cherry blossom tree dedication to mark the planting of these trees on Mercy's Dobbs Ferry campus. Mercy College hosted guest speakers—including the New York Consular General of Japan—and organized activities such as calligraphy, shamisen music, and origami making. High school students from the region also participated in the event.

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