

Human Rights Community Advisory Council
October 30, 2017 4:00PM
MEETING NOTES

Action Items

Under items #3 and #4 below:

- **Item 3:** *Advisory Council members are asked to share your suggestions of possible projects or other ideas or topics you would like this group to work on. These ideas will be brought to the Human Rights Working Group, which will consider ways to help resource and implement these ideas. Also, if you have interest in playing a role in any of the projects listed below or if you'd like to indicate your support for our moving an idea forward, please contact Joshua at (JLM417@pitt.edu)*
- **Item 4:** *Advisory Council members are invited to consider themes and possible speakers for public event/s. Please contact Joshua with your suggestions: (JLM417@pitt.edu)*
- Please check you name/listing: [list of Advisory Council Members and organizational affiliations online](#)

Meeting Notes

Present: Noble Maseru, Dawn Plummer, Carl Redwood, Laura Weins, Carol Hardeman, Michael Goodhart, Jamilah Lahijuddin [Via phone: Jason Beery, Monica Ruiz, Jaime Sanchez-Ruiz (Casa)] Jackie Smith (jgsmith@pitt.edu), Joshua McDermott (JLM417@pitt.edu)

1) Introductions

See [list of Advisory Council Members and organizational affiliations online](#) Please send any corrections to your listing/affiliation to Joshua McDermott (JLM417@pitt.edu)

2) Structure and vision for this Human Rights Working Group

- The purpose of this project is to strengthen working relationships between the university of Pittsburgh and community leaders working to address a variety of human rights concerns in our region. The aim is to amplify human rights on the city's and university's agenda and to raise public consciousness and discourse around human rights. We can help build an organized constituency for human rights in Pittsburgh by bringing diverse groups together and mobilizing university resources. *See organizational chart below*
- Conversations with Carlos Torres, Advisory Council member and Executive Director of the City's Human Relations Commission led to two initial projects for our group.
 - The Commission will help us print more copies of the pocket-sized version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for use by community organizers and educators. Jackie will work with Anu to discuss any design changes from the current version used by the Human Rights City Alliance.
 - To recognize International **Human Rights Day** (Dec. 10), the Human Relations Commission is organizing a **press conference** at the City-County Building on Friday December 8th. We will be reaching out to members of this group to identify residents who might speak at the press conference about human rights

concerns, and we expect to highlight the right to housing and immigrant rights this year. If others have suggestions, please contact Joshua McDermott (JLM417@pitt.edu)

- We have connections to the [National Human Rights Cities Alliance](#), which is organizing a meeting of human rights city leaders in Jackson Mississippi next June (2018). There may be ways for our group to connect with leaders in that city and help build the national effort to share and learn across cities.
- Links to Pitt initiatives-
 - Sociology—is building its emphasis on urban and race studies, so there may be new faculty and graduate students coming in as part of that (details on this coming soon)
 - Global Studies Center has a Just Cities initiative, which our project complements and can help build;
 - Center for Health Equity is now under new leadership of [Dr. Noble Maseru](#), who was the founding director of the Morehouse School of Medicine's Master of Public Health Program and whose vision for the CHE is closely aligned with our goals for this Human Rights Working Group.

3) Brainstorm top priorities and projects

Advisory Council members are asked to share your suggestions of possible projects or other ideas or topics you would like us to work on. These ideas will be brought to the Human Rights Working Group, which will consider ways to help resource and implement these ideas. Also, if you have interest in playing a role in any of the projects listed below or if you'd like to indicate your support for our moving an idea forward, please contact Joshua at (JLM417@pitt.edu)

Some possibilities:

- Pitt diversity-- Pitt employment rates don't mirror diversity of community, especially amongst faculty. More local representation and diversity needed amongst all levels of university employment. The same holds for the student body.
- student food and housing insecurity--Students also recently convinced the chancellor to pass the [Real Food Challenge](#) initiative which will ensure a certain amount of Pitt's food is farmed ethically and locally.
- Work to support initiatives for local hiring for development projects and within city institutions
- Housing Summit II—Raising funds and carrying out a follow-up to last year's [Housing Summit](#). A second housing summit should have a community organization anchoring the project, with participation and support from Pitt
- Pittsburgh Summit Against Racism (January 20, 2018/ Workshop deadline Nov. 15)
 - Theme: **The Struggle Continues: Healing Trauma, Building Community, Inspiring Action.** (90 min. workshops)
 - Jackie will submit a panel proposal to highlight coalition-building work for racial justice and healing. Please contact Jackie if you'd like to be on this panel or if you have suggestions for thematic emphasis (jgsmith@pitt.edu)
- Statement on Immigrant Rights/ DACA (See text below)

- The assembled group agreed that we should use this statement to encourage more attention to this issue. Jackie will work with Monica to consider how best to issue the statement, and we will work with the models provided by the National Human Rights Cities Alliance to craft an appropriate statement aimed at University officials and (if/as appropriate) public officials.
- City Gender Equity Commission- Advisory Council member anu jain is the Executive Director of this new Commission. We will explore ways to help support this work.
- Promoting human rights critical discourse/consciousness raising
 - **Water privatization and the human right to water**—The city will be making decisions about restructuring the water utility. Although we may not have time for much public debate prior to the decision, we should consider ways to help people become more informed about this issue that affects cities worldwide.
 - Amazon corporate headquarters debate & inter-city competition and “race to the bottom”
 - City of Pittsburgh’s proposal: "Future. Forged. For All," HQPittsburgh.com
 - Critical perspectives and alternatives:
 - [The Side Pittsburgh Doesn't Want You to See](#)
 - Urbankind: [Is this really for everyone? Q's about Amazon's HQ2](#)
 - National: [Open letter to Amazon Chief Executive Jeff Bezos—Our Wish List](#)
 - Commission on Human Relations- City Human Rights Assessment due early in 2018
 - March 25 Day of Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and Transatlantic Slave Trade – Theme of reparations?

4) Ideas for speaker event in spring—

We have funding to host a speaker. Advisory Council members are invited to consider themes and possible speakers for this event. Please contact Joshua with your suggestions:

JLM417@pitt.edu

THEME?

Jamilah suggested Reparations

Timing ?

Possible speakers:

- [Jacqueline Patterson](#), Director, NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program
- [Manuel Pastor](#), Sol Price Center for Social Innovation, University of Southern California
- Kali Acuno, Sacajawea Hall, [Cooperation Jackson](#) and Jackson Human Rights Institute
- Others?

DACA STATEMENT

The following statement has been issued by the [National Human Rights Cities Alliance Steering Committee](#):

Below are texts of statements issued by Human Rights defenders in two Human Rights Cities, Seattle Washington and Washington DC. The Steering Committee of the National Human Rights Cities Alliance is sharing these statements as examples for other local groups to bring to local authorities and to otherwise use in fostering discussion and dialogue around this timely human rights concern. We encourage local human rights advocates to take some action at this time to lift up and defend the rights of immigrants in our communities.

In crafting our national response to this issue, we learned two lessons relevant to broader human rights organizing:

- Based on feedback on our conversations in Seattle, we added **language about supporting all undocumented immigrants, not only DACA recipients**. This was feedback from DACA recipients who were involved in writing the statement, as maintaining DACA but deporting undocumented immigrants would be an injury to human rights, and most DACA recipients have family members who they are worried about, who don't have DACA status.
- The Washington DC statement initially included language about the economic contributions of DACA recipients to the city, but we removed it after receiving feedback that **economic contributions aren't a human rights argument**.

Washington DC HUMAN RIGHTS CITY STEERING COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON DACA

The DC Human Rights City Steering Committee is deeply concerned about President Trump's decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, otherwise known as DACA. Removing DACA and targeting the immigrants without DACA status is an inhumane and cruel decision that will devastate the lives of thousands of young people and their families in the DC area and across our nation.

We believe in our Dreamers and call President Trump and Congress to commit the continuation of DACA, established by the Obama Administration via executive order in 2012. DACA allows young migrant immigrants who entered the country as underage minors without documents to receive two-years period of deferred action from deportation and the eligibility for work permits. We believe that Dreamers have positively contributed to our communities and country, and we urge Congress to come together and pass bipartisan legislation to allow them to remain in the United States.

The City of Washington, DC was declared a Human Rights City on December 10th, 2008, committing itself to protect, respect and fulfill the full range of inherent human rights for all as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and numerous other international human rights treaties. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.”

The DC Human Rights City Steering Committee urges the City Council to act immediately to uphold basic human rights and protect DACA recipients, their families, and all.

Seattle Human Rights Commission: 1963 – 2017· 54 years of championing human rights and fostering a just world

The Seattle Human Rights Commission is deeply distraught about President Trump’s decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, otherwise known as DACA. Removing DACA and targeting the immigrants without DACA status is an inhumane and cruel decision that will devastate the lives of thousands of young people and their families in the Seattle area and across our nation.

The Seattle Human Rights Commission joins Governor Jay Inslee, Attorney General Bob Ferguson, local elected leaders, and community organizations that are organizing at the forefront to fight with and for DACA recipients, and all undocumented people. The City of Seattle was declared a Human Rights City on December 10th, 2012, committing itself to protect, respect and fulfill the full range of inherent human rights for all as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and numerous other international human rights treaties. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.” Assuring that DACA recipients and all undocumented people can study, work, live without fear and support their families maintains their basic human rights.

Roughly 12,000 DACA recipients live in King County, and 18,000 DACA recipients live across Washington State. Many DACA recipients support their families through the income that they receive with DACA. Overall, roughly 250,000 undocumented people live in the state of Washington, and their work and service is extremely important to the community.

The Seattle Human Rights Commission urges the Washington State Congressional Delegation to act immediately to uphold basic human rights and protect DACA recipients, their families, and all of the undocumented people living in the United States who did not qualify for the program.