

Reception promotes diversity

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'Weavings' event unites students and faculty of color by building new relationships

Roman Gokhman
Campus/City Culture Reporter

The sweet sounds of mellow jazz drifted from the EMU Ballroom on Thursday night during the 8th Annual Weaving New Beginnings Reception.

The goal of the event was to bring together students and faculty of color and start new relationships with a theme of "the beauty of jazz."

"We have an opportunity to write new stories tonight," Office of Multicultural Affairs Director Carla Gary said.

The Ballroom glowed a shade of fuschia, and floating candles graced black cloth-covered tables as The Ed Coleman Trio — led by University Professor Emeritus Edwin Coleman — kept the mood lively with a mix of slow and upbeat tunes.

Diana Aguilar, a public relations coordinator for the event, said while only 13 percent of University students are of color, those students are actively involved on campus.

"Those 13 percent make themselves stand out," she said.

ASUO President Rachel Pilliod said "Weavings" showcases the best

of the University.

"It only adds to the sense of community we have on campus," Pilliod said.

Attendees were given booklets to write down their new friends' phone numbers. The booklets contained criteria such as finding someone who was "born and raised in Eugene," "watched Fantasy Island or Love Boat religiously" or "rooted for the Raiders during the Super Bowl."

"It's a contact book — so that the relationship doesn't end here," co-emcee Jason Cummings said.

University President Dave Frohnmayer spoke about changing the image of the United States as being a melting pot.

"That isn't what this country is about," he said.

Frohnmayer said the University is progressing in its goal of attracting more students and faculty of color.

"Diversity is not only one of our goals," he said. "(It) adds richness to us all."

Gary said international students and faculty are becoming a stronger piece of the University fabric.

"It doesn't matter where you are," she said. "You can make the space your own."

Some people, such as Coleman and Employee Relations Manager for



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Dr. Edwin Coleman (left) plays his bass for Student Activities Director Gregg Lobisser and his wife, Family Housing Director Lorraine Vijayakar (right) at Weavings.

Human Resources Alana Holmes, said the University has a way to go in order to be considered diverse.

"Events like these are really important to show support for building diversity," Holmes said. "I would hope the University would take these kinds of opportunities in showing support ... by hiring a quality faculty of color. We have

room for improvement."

The event was sponsored by The President's Fund, Enrollment Services, the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Multicultural Center, University Housing and the ASUO.

Contact the reporter at romangokhman@dailyemerald.com.

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SIS to host diversity celebration

South Asian celebration Utsav will exhibit diversity through food, clothing and dance

Roman Gokhman
Campus/City Culture Reporter

Students of the Indian Subcontinent want the University to know that South Asia has more than one culture.

The countries of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Burma, Fiji, Maldives and Lakadives will be represented at Utsav, a celebration of South Asian culture Saturday at the University.

Food from the different countries will be served at 5 p.m. in the EMU Skylight Lounge, and will be followed by a presentation of traditional dances and a fashion show at 7:30 in the EMU Ballroom. Utsav means celebration in Hindi, and SIS Vice President Edwin Prasad said celebration is the central aspect of the event.

"We're going to have a lot of good

food and entertainment," he said. SIS member Joy Nair said the celebration's goal is to not focus on any one South Asian culture.

"There is no such thing (as one culture)," Nair said. The celebration is "a reflection of our culture."

The diversity will be best represented by the different foods served at the event.

For example, in southern India, coconut milk is an important staple, while in the northern part of the country, tomatoes are commonly consumed. In coastal South Asian countries, seafood is a large part of the diet. There will also be many vegetarian dishes served because many Asians do not eat meat due to religious beliefs. Chicken will be the primary meat served.

Students will perform three traditional dances.

Bhangra, from northern India, is upbeat and features a lot of jumping.

"It's a really celebratory type of dance," Nair said.

Tapoori, taken from central India, depicts the life of lower-middle class college-age men — "just kickin' it and chasing girls," according to Nair.

Another unnamed classical dance will be performed. The traditional version involves dancers holding candles, but because fire is not allowed inside the EMU, flashlights will be used instead.

Following the performance, South Asian student volunteers will display traditional attire by parading around the ballroom stage.

SIS member Athar Jameeli, who is taking part in the fashion show, said students need to educate each other about their cultures.

"People don't get to see a lot of Indian functions in Eugene," he said.

Admission is \$4 for students and \$7 for community members. Tickets are on sale at the EMU Ticket Office and at the door Saturday night.

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