

Final Report for GIEU Liverpool Black Community Performance in Liverpool (2014)

- Summarize the program touching on the following topics and including any topics that had not been previously reported in writing

The program went very well. After learning about Liverpool history and culture through museum visits and guest lectures, the students worked about 15 hours a week (for three weeks) at placements with Steve Biko Housing, the Unity Youth Center, African Oye, Brouhaha Carnival. The Green House Project and the Somali Women's Project. During the 3rd and 4th week of the program, students rehearsed at the Blackie Community Center and the MDI dance studios for about 30 hours. They created a performance called "Framing Liverpool Through Michigan Eyes" with the assistance of Gillian Eaton (U Michigan Theatre and Drama), Maxine Brown (MDI African and Caribbean Youth dance) and James Frieze (Liverpool John Moore's University Senior Lecturer in Film and Drama). Students presented two performances of the work to a combined audience of about 60 people, most of whom came from the partner organizations.

- Pre-Departure Preparation

Preparations for the program went well. Students complained about the activities in the GIEU pre-departure classes. In particular they felt that the courses presumed they were born into privilege, and many in my particular group came from underprivileged backgrounds. They also said that the papers felt like time-wasters and that they put little effort into them.

- Academic Matters (curriculum, class size, academic advising, class schedule, instructors, etc.)

Students actively participated in all of the program activities and seemed to enjoy times when they were able to get together. Activities included trips to the Museum of Liverpool, the Transatlantic Slavery and Maritime Museum, the Beatles Museum, Manchester Museum of the People, The Lowry cultural center in Manchester, and the Globe Theatre in London. In addition, we received guided tours of Black History in Liverpool with Laurence Westgaph, learned about cultural Institutions in Liverpool with Rachel Rogers, traveled to Wales with one of the site programs, and participated in an Afro-Caribbean Dance class with Maxine Brown. We collectively discussed what they were learning about the Black community of Liverpool and about ourselves throughout the program. The students also developed a blog about their activities and their responses to the program at: www.GIEUUK2014.wordpress.com.

- Administrative Matters (description of classroom facilities/services and any issues with facilities/services, program schedule, etc.)

MDI was a lifesaver in arranging for facilities and services in the Liverpool area. Our housing was located in a central location and students were easily able to access their internship sites by bus or by walking. We rehearsed at easily accessible facilities in downtown Liverpool and the performance space was small, but adequate for our needs. One logistical complication was that one of the internship sites, Brouhaha, financed the travel of 3 students to Amsterdam for street performances. Brouhaha extended their expected stay in Amsterdam by a few days, so the students were offsite for a total of 10 days, which somewhat disrupted the solidarity of the group. Nevertheless, they were able to bring their experiences to the final performance and share what they were learning with the group during their absence.

- Financial Matters (program budget and expenses, etc.)

I think that the program was delivered at close to the projected costs. There were no exceptional costs. I am still in the process of submitting receipts and invoices. Much of the program cost was pre-financed by MDI.

- Housing (description of student and faculty housing, any issues with housing/host families, etc.)

The students stayed in very nice apartments with all modern conveniences. This would not have been my choice, but it was the cheapest available housing because they were serviced apartments. Staying in these rooms allowed the students to cook for each other and to socialize. It also made all transport to the programs sites easy. My particular unit had challenges with the internet and electronic devices, but other than that things went smoothly.

- Program Partner Relations (on-site staff, services, any official connections with people or departments made on behalf of the University of Michigan, any official events attended on behalf of the University of Michigan, etc.)

We interacted with several institutions on behalf of the University of Michigan. In addition to the 6 organizations where the students volunteered, we worked at the Blackie Center, and the Lantern Theatre and interacted with their staff. Several leaders from other Liverpool organizations also attended our performances. I attended a networking event with the Liverpool Business networking council at the Athaeneum, and I also attended a producer's forum at the National Theatre. Institutions such as the London Arts Council and the Young Vic have been in touch with me about developing new relationships with the University of Michigan.

- Intercultural Components (excursions/fieldtrips, cultural activities, students' integration into local community, etc.)

See above.

- Safety/Security (safety, health, or security concerns/incidents, HTH insurance – if used, any issues, etc.)

Two students visited the Liverpool Royal Hospital, both for minor ailments. Caty Raupp developed a skin rash during the first day or two of the program and received anti-itch cream. Irene Suh developed a small infection and received antibiotics during week 3 of the program. There were no other incidents.

- Student Incidents (these should have been documented throughout using the Student Incident Report Form, so please simply provide a summary of major issues and outcomes)

None

- Recommendations for the Future

It would be better if GIEU were able to provide some program financing for the Faculty Fellow before departure. I used my personal household funds for all living expenses that could have been covered by per diem and/or salary. This left me somewhat strapped for operating cash by the end of the program.

- Other Matters

The program was actively enhanced by the participation of U Michigan theatre faculty member Gillian Eaton. Her two weeks of travel was financed by a CRLT grant. She helped to write and develop the performance script and worked with coaching and directing students for the performance. A stage manager also assisted with coordinating all of the technical elements of the project. Having these additional staff members was essential to the success of the project. My assigned teaching fellow assisted with organizing receipts, but was generally weak in coordinating and organizing the students for program activities. She did lead the Facebook discussion group effectively.

In future GIEU programs that involve developing performance or exhibition work, it may be useful to have an additional adult on site.