

*Rochester Summit on* **CITIZEN DIPLOMACY**

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*April 28, 2006*

More than 100 people attended the Rochester Summit on Citizen Diplomacy on April 28, 2006 at the RIT Inn and Conference Center. The Summit planning committee included representatives of AFS Intercultural Programs/USA, International Sister Cities of Rochester, Linkages of Rochester, the International Business Council of the Rochester Business Alliance, Rochester International Council, United Nations Association of Rochester, Nazareth College Center for International Education, Rochester Institute of Technology International Student Services, State University of New York at Geneseo, and University of Rochester International Services Office. Thus, the planning of the Summit achieved one of the Summit goals – cooperation among the various organizations in the Rochester area engaged in Citizen Diplomacy.

The Summit was preceded by a reception the previous evening for the Honorable Harriet Mayor Fulbright, the Summit keynote speaker, to meet with Fulbrighters in the Rochester area. The reception was hosted by Nazareth College Center for International Education.

The Summit began with welcoming remarks by Dr. Paul Burgett, who serves as the University of Rochester Vice President and General Secretary, Senior Advisor to the President, and University Dean. Dr. Burgett's lively presentation encouraged attendees to embrace the world. Dr. Burgett, who views the world as his living room, concluded by describing himself as a "citizen diplomat without portfolio."

After Dean Burgett's remarks, the people at each table discussed "Cooperation among the organizations involved in citizen diplomacy in the Rochester area" and then reported to the Summit. Those findings are included in Section I of this report.

Each group then discussed one of four topics:

1. Steps our community can take to increase awareness and interest in Citizen Diplomacy
2. Youth in Citizen Diplomacy
3. Building awareness among diverse groups
4. Fostering international education at all levels

A fifth topic, Steps our nation can take to increase awareness and interest in Citizen Diplomacy, was not selected by enough registrants to have a discussion. After the discussions, the findings were reported to the Summit. Those findings are reported in Section II. Section III summarizes the findings of both sets of discussions.

In keeping with the theme of the day's meeting, lunch was an international buffet. Lunch was followed by a speech by the Honorable Harriet Mayor Fulbright, Chairman of the Fulbright International Center. Mrs. Fulbright spoke about the importance of our efforts to reach out internationally. She provided a beautiful image in her answer to her own

question of why, in this day of mass communication, do we need to take the time and money to move people across borders to achieve an understanding of the values and attitudes of others – “Communication – visual and verbal – has passed through the filter of the producer. Seeing and hearing through the eyes and ears of another means learning one point of view. It is the difference between looking through a keyhole and walking through an open door for whole view and even a dialogue.”

The meeting ended with participants eager to continue the collaboration of the day and to get more people in the Rochester area involved in Citizen Diplomacy. A summary of the evaluation forms is included in Section IV.

The Action Priorities set by the planning committee are listed in Section V.

## I. COOPERATION AMONG THE ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN CITIZEN DIPLOMACY IN THE ROCHESTER AREA.

- Communicate better within institutions
- Create an umbrella structure within individual institutions, as well as among the community
- Foster individual contacts
- Communicate through surveys and stories
  
- Promote agency collaboration
- Community advertising
- Recognize opportunities for connections among international communities in the area
  
- Establish a central bulletin board with links to the activities of each organization
- Help local schools find resources, such as students or international visitors
- Live video streaming to multiple classrooms across county
  
- Calendar of events
- Cosponsor events
- Hardcopy of list of organizations with contact information
  
- Devise a resource guide with all contact information of groups and individuals
- Resource of language guides, updated every six months
- Work with travel agencies
  
- Personal connections, not just organizations
- How to raise funds
- New system for finding host families
  
- Communicate with organizations that have worked on similar tasks in past
- Hold conferences for special interest groups
- Model after Buffalo International Institute
- Better project the true nature of American women
  
- Make information simple to use for busy people
- Explain purpose of organizations in database
- Create a system for volunteer connect, place a board on the database
- Provide networking opportunities

## II. ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION REPORTS

### Steps our community can take to increase awareness and interest in Citizen Diplomacy

- Creating the database and website, use same format among multiple agencies
- Allow interns to be aware of opportunities
- Consider pooling resources among agencies
- United International Way
  
- Promote a county wide international festival, possibly a week long
- Possibly in conjunction with the jazz festival
- Promote Citizen Diplomacy at the international festivals
- Promote positive community view in both print and electronic media
- Approach mayor to bring international focus to the limelight
- Create a committee that will organize more events among organizations, collective support of volunteers
  
- Folk festival at the museum, (food, clothing, music is appealing to all)
- Use past festival as a model for a new venue
- Create a log book for international visitors to record their impressions of Rochester upon leaving the city
- Include contact information in the log book for locals traveling abroad
- Create greater cooperation between international students and the local business
- Work with international alumni
- Determine what the current state of awareness is
- Use surveys at festivals and other events

### Youth in Citizen Diplomacy

- Citizen diplomacy must convey diverse nature of our country to students
- Realize that stereotypes exist, do not ignore issue
- Begin working with youth early, at elementary level/ pre-school level
- Be aware of how students display their own values
- Have international college students share their experiences and culture with other schools and the community
- Bring more exchange opportunities to the high school level

### Building awareness among diverse groups

- Increase publicity about own group
- Create an umbrella organization
- Raise awareness among underrepresented groups in the community
- Provide better orientation for travelers
- Educate the media, R-News is always looking for news
  
- Need to change educational emphasis
- Have an input in the changes of the global studies program in schools

- Petition to have citizen diplomacy emphasized in the course
- Service corps for retired citizen diplomats
- Allow more seniors to serve for shorter periods of time with Peace Corps
- Educate community about our role as citizen diplomats
- Request funding for umbrella organization to carry out role of supporting Citizen Diplomacy
- Define role of state citizens in greeting foreign guests in our state
- Improve international medias view of diversity in culture

#### Fostering international education at all levels

- Start at early age, celebrate other countries holidays, international festivals
- Promote international literature
- List of possible international speakers capable of visiting schools
- Make college students more aware of study abroad opportunities
- Human interest stories of locals who have traveled to other countries
- Database of people with expertise in particular cultures or countries
  
- Increase awareness of need to study foreign languages
- Modify certification standards so that more foreign teachers can enter our elementary and secondary schools
- Have local schools send elementary students to international festivals
- Immigration and globalization have negative connotations, need to reverse that view
- Report opportunities associated with more global perspective

### III. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AT THE ROCHESTER SUMMIT ON CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

#### A. Database

One of the recurrent themes of the summit was the desire for some form of database. Many suggestions were given as to what the database could include.

##### Resource guide –

This resource guide would include telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, event notifications, internship opportunities, overseas opportunities available that correspond with individuals and organizations involved in Citizen Diplomacy. This could also include possible host families and community groups relevant to international guests and students.

##### Language resource guide –

Forum where those who are capable of providing language help and those who need help with a certain language can post information in order to be matched. Speakers of other languages can be used to help tour cultural spots.

##### Country guide –

Compilation of information on multiple countries that could be used for work or student use. This information could include advice for travelers, market analysis for business investors, and general cultural, political, and geographical information for student research.

##### Bulletin Board -

Develop a website bulletin board for the organizations represented at the summit meeting. This board would provide information on what each organization does, as well as links to any organizations websites.

##### Speakers List –

Have a bank of pre-approved speakers capable of talking about other cultures. This database could include people who are Fulbrighters, travelers, or relevant professionals.

##### Logbook –

This logbook would be available for international visitors to post their impressions of Rochester as well as contact information. Both good and bad impressions would be welcome so Rochester can improve. The logbook could be kept as a historical document. This logbook could be available online, or in a hard copy.

##### Volunteer connection –

Similar to a help-wanted site. Organizations can post their need of volunteers, and potential volunteers can post their willingness to work.

Master mailing list –

Create a master mailing list available to all participating organizations by compiling existing mailing lists.

## B. Communication

Publicity –

Organizations need to make one another aware of events so they can piggyback and increase support. Increase publicity about our own organizations. Approach Mayor to bring internationalism to limelight. The Citizen Diplomacy community needs to reach out to the local media. Those relationships need to be developed and fostered over time. Create an umbrella organization.

Public awareness –

Raise level of awareness of international relations. Raise awareness of underrepresented groups. Surveys can be given through news stations to keep track of current awareness of international events. Educate the media (R-News is always looking for stories).

Face-to-face liaisons –

Encourage one-to-one contacts. Recognize opportunities for connection among international cultures and local cultures. More conferences should be held at a central meeting place (perhaps at a place like Buffalo's International Institute). Change nature of Sister City exchanges to ensure that participants are involved with Sister Cities and not just sightseeing.

A Service Corps of Retired Citizen Diplomats could be created. Allow seniors to serve in the Peace Corps for shorter assignments.

Human-interest stories –

Visitors inspire people to find out about the country. Example: People who have gone to tsunami affected region. Visits organized by organizations need to be highlighted. Individuals can share experiences of cultural exchange with the media. Newspaper can have a section updating experiences of current students studying abroad.

International festival –

The current Nazareth International Fair needs more advertising in order to bring in more people. Our organizations need to work to develop a partnership with the city to create a better international festival. The festival that was held at RMSC in the past could serve as a model. This festival could be a county-wide international festival, possibly in conjunction with jazz festival so that it will be broad based. A survey should be given at the international festival to find how people became aware of the event. Travel institutions should be interested in cooperating.

## C. Education

### Curriculum –

Begin teaching international history and foreign languages in schools at a younger age. Advise and recommend additions or changes to the global studies curriculum.

### International educators –

Local universities need to host more visiting professors. Integrate foreign teachers into local high schools. Students want to study more languages, and not just European languages. Where do we find the teachers?

### Youth –

Promote more people-to-people youth trips. Younger students can celebrate national holidays and festivals of other countries. The choice of literature schools and parents promote should be more international.

### Awareness –

Local students do not take advantage of the opportunities to study abroad. Although college students often pay the same tuition to study abroad, there is a stigma attached that it is only for rich students.

### University network –

Connect international business community with international student alumni and current international students. There should be greater cooperation between high school and college programs. One example would be college model UN teams working with high school model UN students. Rochester Universities need to establish more relationships with universities overseas.

#### D. Fundraising

A United International Way should be established to raise funds for international organizations.

#### IV. Overview of Summit Evaluations

*Would you be interested in attending a future Summit on Citizen Diplomacy?*

Everyone who did answer this question responded that they would attend another summit. Most comments were very enthusiastic and many people are already looking forward to exchanging more ideas.

*What did you find most valuable about the Summit on Citizen Diplomacy?*

It appears as though most attendees walked away from the summit having learned a great deal.

Many respondents were glad to have found out more about local resources and international organizations. Some hope to become more involved with local organizations and many are very interested in helping these organizations become more unified.

A large majority was very excited about networking and meeting like-minded and internationally oriented people. A lot of respondents loved the discussions and the exchange of ideas that took place.

Several people found the Harriet Mayer Fulbright speech to be the most valuable aspect of the summit.

One person found contacts with the media to be very helpful.

Another respondent liked the idea of an umbrella organization to assist in the publicity of international events in Rochester.

*What overall suggestions do you have for improving the meeting?*

People asked for more educators, students, keynote speakers, and participants.

Two respondents suggested a full day summit; another would like to see the summit take place on a weekend so that more participants could attend.

One person would have liked to hear the keynote speaker earlier and have the second break after lunch.

A couple participants felt that the discussion topics overlapped. To combat this problem, they requested more specific topics.

A few people mentioned that the summit needs to get more publicity.

One person requested that the organizations offer some background as to what they do.

Several respondents requested more time for discussion and networking so they could meet more people and share more ideas.

One respondent would like to hear from other cultures to see how we can join with them.

Another participant suggested providing the names and email addresses of volunteers who would be interested in organizing future summit work and teams at the end of the meeting.

#### *Additional Comments*

Many people gave thanks for organizing such a wonderful and successful summit. They thought it was a job well done and enjoyed having the opportunity to increase their awareness and hear Harriet Fulbright speak. A couple people commented on a database for coordinating and believe it would be highly effective. Overall, the participants seemed very impressed with the outcome of the summit and would like to see it happen again in the future.

## V. ACTION PRIORITIES

1. Create an umbrella organization for all international groups: Rochester Coalition of International Organizations (RCIO).
2. Establish database with the names of international groups. It should include contact information for president and executive directors.
3. Locate the various nationality organizations.
4. Create a website for RCIO.
5. Create a common calendar for all members of RCIO on the RCIO website.
6. Create a listserve for anyone interested in citizen diplomacy.
7. Create a speaker series. A different organization would be responsible for arranging for a speaker each month. It was suggested that the same venue and day of the month (i.e., the third Wednesday) be used each month. The group that the responsible organizations for the first year, and perhaps in the future, should be UNAR, RIC, RRPCV, AFS, and ISCOR.
8. RIC will reinstate its Global Perspectives program to get international students into K-12 classrooms.
9. Expand the Nazareth-UNAR International Festival.