Summer & Fall 2014: Engaging Our Students

The Common Read Committee:
Members: Anjali Cadena (Co-Chair), Dr. David Fleming (Co-Chair), Erin Donnally Drake, Dr. Michael Dodge, Danielle Barone, Kate DiSanto, Kate Freedman, Dr. Mari Castaneda, Dr. Jonathan Wynn, Dave Neely, Karen Magness-Pokornowski, Adam Ortiz, Karl Bluemel, Diana Fordham, & Katy Maher

Common Read is brought to you by Academic Affairs and the Division of Student Affairs & Campus Life
Getting Students Excited:
Summer New Students Orientation

- During Summer New Students Orientation (NSO), students receive their copy of Orange is the New Black and an accompanying bookmark
- Students hear about the fall program plan and the exciting events
- Students begin conversations with the NSO Counselors
- Students will watch a Common Read Video during the closing NSO session to get them excited to read the book over the summer
  - A link to the video is here: http://blogs.umass.edu/commonread/2014/06/02/this-conversation-starts-now/
Getting Students Excited:

Marketing

- **Common Read Website**
  - [http://www.umass.edu/studentlife/commonread](http://www.umass.edu/studentlife/commonread)
  - Visit for regular updates, program announcements, including the Essay Contest, links to resources, & more!
- **Social Media**
  - Class of 2018 Facebook Page
    - Check this page to see student submissions from the Common Read blog, program advertisements, & video clips. The page will get incoming students excited to read *Orange is the New Black* and keep them connected with each other throughout the summer.
  - Follow us on Twitter: @umasscommonread
    - Follow us for daily tweets, book quotes, open ended questions, pictures, & video clips.
- **Common Read Blog**
  - [http://blogs.umass.edu/commonread/](http://blogs.umass.edu/commonread/)
  - Regular and timely posts from current student leaders that invite prospective students to write and engage with themes and content from the book
  - Occurs throughout the summer and into early fall semester
- **Print Materials**
  - Campus Center bulletin boards
  - Dining Commons & Retail Outlets
    - Table tents, large posters and advertisements
    - Stickers on summer NSO student snack bags and coffee cups sleeves
Common Read in the Classroom

- **Residential Academic Programs (RAPs)**
  - First-year students take small classes together and live together in the same first-year residence hall
  - All RAP instructors received a copy of Orange is the New Black in Spring 2014
  - RAP Instructors will engage students in their classes, to varying degrees, based on the relevance of themes in the book to the specific RAP
  - Historically, the Common Read book’s subject matter has had a closer link to some RAPs more than others (e.g., for Common Read 2014: IMPACT! RAP, Social Justice & Activism RAP, Careers in Law RAP!) In such cases, the Common Read book is highly integrated into course discussions.

- **Faculty First-Year Seminars**
  - 1-credit small group, discussion classes for first-year students, taught by tenured faculty members
  - 6 sections dedicated and themed for Common Read
    1. “Privilege and Helping Professions: Insights from Orange is the New Black” – Jacqueline Mosselson, EPRA
    3. “Orange is the New Black” – Alexandrina Deschamps, WGSS/CHC
    5. “Prison Writing” – Suzanne Daly, English
    6. “Orange is the New Black” – Jennifer Merton, ISOM
SACL & Academic Affairs Collaborations

• Book Discussions
  • Faculty and staff facilitators will engage students in the residence halls in book discussion groups
  • Occurring during last two weeks in September in first-year and transfer residence halls
  • To volunteer to be a Book Discussion Facilitator, please visit here: http://tinyurl.com/Common-Read-Facilitators

• Real Talk: Graduate Student Project Assistants
  • A pilot program utilizing graduate students on campus to facilitate a series of dialogues for first-year and transfer students
  • Discussions will be based on themes from the book, not a plot discussion of Orange is the New Black
  • Graduate Fellows will participate in social media conversations, Common Read blog, & Essay Contest
  • Application based and a small stipend provided to the graduate fellow
  • To apply for a Common Read Graduate Fellows position, please visit here: http://tinyurl.com/common-fellows
SACL & Academic Affairs Collaborations

- **5-College Faculty & Community Panel**
  - October 8th, 5:00 p.m., CHCRC Events Hall
  - Organized by Dr. Mari Castaneda and Dr. Demetria Shabazz, Communications
  - Dialogue between faculty and community organizers to address the relationship between the Netflix series, “Orange is the New Black” and the book

- **Essay Contest**
  - Organized by Prof. David Fleming, English
  - First-year and transfer students have the opportunity to submit essays for prizes, recognition, and possible extra credit
  - Essay Contest Prompt: “How does Piper’s experience illuminate the opportunities and challenges ahead, as you begin to live and work with people from different cultures and experiences at UMass Amherst?”
The Common Read Committee intends to market specific Common Read events to faculty as extra credit opportunities they might consider building into their fall courses as they see fit.

**W.E.B. DuBois Library**

- Subject research guides for instructors to use in classroom discussions related to Orange is the New Black
- Digitized and archived Collegian articles related to themes in the book
- Dedicated space in Learning and Teaching Commons advertising the book and events
Residence Hall Programming

- **Social and Educational Events**
  - Residence Directors and Resident Assistants will host either floor specific or hall-wide programs within the first eight weeks around Orange is the New Black.

- **Common Read Trivia**
  - Utilizing an existing and highly popular signature program, Peer Mentors will host Common Read Trivia in each first-year hall.
  - Small groups, typically floors, come together to answer Common Read Trivia questions.
  - Winning team from each hall then competes at a campus-wide trivia event in October.

- **Informal Discussions**
  - Residence Directors, Resident Assistants, and Peer Mentors will be trained on how to have conversations with first-year and transfer students around themes in Orange is the New Black.
Campus Wide Events: 
Laverne Cox

“Beyond Orange is the New Black: Identity, Community, & Her Story”

- September 11th, 7:00pm
  Fine Arts Center
- Open to all campus
- Speech to focus on disadvantaged identities, standing up for oneself and others, her relationship to the book, and her messages on the value of actively engaging in one’s community
- Meet and greet, photo opportunities for students, Orange is the New Black book signing
Piper Kerman Visit to Campus
- October 1st, 2014
- 2 first-year course visits
- Possible Town/Gown dinner
- Speech to focus on responsible activism, how race, gender, class, sexual orientation add complicated layers to issues of incarceration and society in general, her continued work on behalf of the people she speaks for, and her experience writing the book
- A W.E.B. DuBois Library sponsored reception to close the entire event for audience participants, including book signing and photo opportunities
*Events Being Planned*

- **Orange is the New Black Workshops**
  - Venue dependent, hosted immediately following Piper Kerman’s speech by SACL units on topics connected to Orange is the New Black

- **Program Grants**
  - Sponsored through the ECSA (Engage Connect Serve Achieve) grant
  - SACL units and Agencies can propose for funding to host Common Read related events for students

- **SACL Staff Book Club**
  - Multiple opportunities in the fall semester to receive a copy of Orange is the New Black, come together as a SACL staff, and participate in discussion about the themes and stories within the book

- **Additional Author Visits**
  - The following books and authors have been recommended for programming opportunities because of related subject matter
    - “Upper Bunkies Unite”, Andrea James
    - “The Real Cost of Prisons Comix”, Lois Ahrens
  - Feasibility is currently being explored

*Note: The events on this slide are currently in the exploration/planning stages and pending confirmation.*
Contact Us!

- If you have any questions, please contact us!
  - By e-mail @ commonread@sacl.umass.edu

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