
Carswell Research Conversations - March 7

An Opportunity To Connect and Re-Connect

Karen Burke - March 29, 2018



Meet our Research Team (from Left to Right): Dr. Warren Crichlow, (Associate Professor, EDU), Dr. Karen Cyrus, Evelyn Amponsah (PhD Candidate), Cathy Pavlik-Griffen (PhD Candidate), Salah Wilson (PhD Candidate), Joel Ong (Associate Professor, AMPD). NOTE: Dr. Walter Gershon (Kent State University), absent, is a co-researcher with Dr. Crichlow.

Highlights

On Wednesday, March 7, the Helen Carswell Chair in Community Engaged Research in the Arts marked another important milestone. For the first time since the round of adjudications, successful notice to research participants and several individual follow up meetings with each researcher, the researchers finally had the opportunity to meet each other. Our current research team represents several different faculties and research interests in areas including education, liberal arts, music, computational arts and social & political thought.



This informal meet and greet took place at the York University - TD Community Engagement Centre located at the Yorkgate Mall which, appropriately, is right at the corner of Jane & Finch, in the heart of the community where RPSM hopes to make its biggest impact over the coming months. Lorna Schwartzentruber (centre) is the Manager of the TD CEC and a valued member of the Advisory Working Group for this unique partnership between the Carswell Family, York University and RPSM. Lorna and her staff opened their doors for this significant gathering of researchers and joined by Michael Johnny (KM), Richard Marsella (RPSM), Dr. Uzo Anucha (LAPS) and Karen Burke (Fellow).

The meeting began with light refreshments and an extended occasion for those in attendance to make their own personal introductions and meaningful connections. The energy in the room was upbeat and it was clear that this informal time would set the foundation for a productive morning.

After taking some group photos, our group also made a serendipitous connection with York alumna and TD CEC staff member Talisha Ramsaroop. Some would recognize her name from recent headlines as the co-recipient of the prestigious and inaugural Pam McConnell Young Women In Leadership Award presented by Toronto Mayor, John Tory the day after our meeting, in a special presentation ceremony. We believe that Talisha will make a wonderful and enduring bridge for this Advisory Working Group. Having grown up in the Jane-Finch area, Talisha has been connected to various organizations in that community and is now employed as the Community Projects Coordinator at the TD CEC. Here is a link to a TEDxYorkU talk from 2015 presented by Talisha, while she was still an undergrad, called, “The Violence of Low Expectations”: <https://youtu.be/EMF7lnhPnv8>. This is an interesting personal insight into the community that this Chair is serving.

A summary document, titled “Meet Our Research Team” was distributed that morning and it included an introductory paragraph about each researcher and space to take notes as we went around the table giving each researcher the opportunity to briefly describe their research project and related interests. This document is also attached as an addendum for your convenience. The over-arching goal of the meeting was to see if there were places of intersect, organic synergies and resource-sharing possibilities that could be explored right away and from the robust discussion that followed, we were not disappointed. Here are some of the foci and connections that were illuminated that morning:

Evelyn Amponsah is a PhD Candidate who will be looking at RPSM, its teachers, practices and policies through an anti-racism, anti-black racism lens. She will also be asking questions about what lessons we can learn from programs such as ‘drumlines’ in the U.S. which are often trumpeted as an example of culturally sustaining pedagogy. We discovered that Evelyn is also personally connected to Firgrove Public School, one of the schools where RPSM offers several of its music programs. I have also been able to network Evelyn to a graduate student at Western University who is also researching marching arts, especially

drumlines in the U.S., as an important teaching medium through which Ontario music educators can engage students.

Joel Ong joined the Department of Computational Arts in the School of AMPD as an Assistant Professor of Information Design and Data Visualization in 2016. Joel shared that his focus is in experiential education, information design and embodied practices. Part of his research will focus on introducing the use of infographics to measure the experiences and movements of students. This interest, he notes, has been heightened by the launch of the new York University subway station. Joel's microscopic look at individual digital analysis may even include the design of an app to help gather personal locative data. In summary, it is 'Data Sonification' for not-for-profit arts organizations!

Warren Crichlow and Walter Gershon (Kent State University) will partner to ask unique questions such as, "What does schooling sound like?" Warren came to York University in 1995 with interests in urban education and ethnomusicology intertwined with cultural studies. Walter talked about the fact that his attention has more recently turned to sound. Crichlow and Gershon want to help students 'sound out' their ideas about community music and record and otherwise document their compositions. Their research may include helping students to map their community, i.e. "Where is it safe to share your music?" Crichlow and Gershon look forward to staging soundscapes and using video and other technology to create something that has a presence in the community; a type of 'mobile' presentation. Walter especially expressed an interest in making concrete associations with Salah Wilson's expertise in steelpan as well as Joel Ong's interest in data sonification.

The following three researchers will support RPSM focussing their time and energy to interface with the faculty at RPSM for professional development, specific curriculum reviews and expansion of pedagogical methods. Their work is also supported by the Carswell Family, albeit in a different model.

Salah Wilson has been at York as a PhD candidate for the past 6 years and is an expert in Steel Pan pedagogy. Salah will ask questions such as why a steel pan programme works at one place and not at another and encourage innovative ideas to develop Steel Pan repertoire and student engagement in general. After observations of RPSM steel pan classes

in action, Salah will also work with RPSM to determine the expedient use, or fate of, a set of steel pan, that RPSM owns, that currently lies dormant at Monsignor Fraser school. Salah already has current working relationships, coincidentally, with York students who are currently teaching at RPSM.

Cathy Pavlik-Griffen is a PhD candidate and elementary teacher who specializes in teaching French and Music, Holistic Tutoring and is an 'Emotional Success Coach'. Her interests lie in areas of performance anxiety and looking closely at Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) for significant connections to long term health. Cathy will create helpful resources to help RPSM faculty learn how childhood trauma can effect pedagogy. Those of us around the table immediately pointed to Gordon Flett's interest in the area of "mattering & belonging" for children and other scholars' work in the areas of intelligence, resiliency and self-advocacy as opportunities for reference.

Karen Cyrus completed her PhD in 2015 and her thesis centered on the Jamaican-Canadian keyboard musician, Jackie Metoo. Karen analyzed his repertoire and in particular his process of improvisation. Karen has developed innovative music curriculum for piano students and is particularly focussed on the teaching of music as a 'second language'. Karen's experience teaching Group Piano classes at York for several years will also be helpful as she conducts a curriculum review of the Group Piano lessons being currently offered at RPSM. She will consider questions such as, "What are the various levels that students will go through to increase their skills?" No doubt, some of her findings will bridge into the steel pan curriculum review. Warren Crichlow also expressed interest in connecting to Karen's research.

The team at RPSM led by Richard Marsella have invited members of this research team down for a tour and orientation at its Regent Park headquarters. Richard is also ensuring that several helpful documents are forwarded to the team including RPSMs current curriculum guide, which is being updated. RPSM is thankful for the enthusiasm of the researchers. Richard described RPSM as considering themselves 'lucky' for the talent in the room but at the same time, 'daunted' by the responsibility.

Michael Johnny shared that he has made inroads into finding possible shared on-line collaborative space for the research teams . He spoke of a company that can create something unique and secure for this partnership and consequently we look forward to having them make a presentation in the near future. According to Michael , it would be a “closed space with anytime access”.

Uzo Anucha suggested that we also look to include space on the new website that is being developed for this partnership. AMPD wants to host the site but presently it has been stalled in its development. Its launch remains a high priority for us right now. Uzo also mentioned that we also look into using ‘webinars’ as a way of connecting researchers to each other and each other’s resulting data.

The meeting adjourned around 11 am with promises for these seminal connections to bloom. The summary sheet of short introductions follows as an addendum.

Stay tuned for more updates!



Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Burke, Fellow

MEET OUR RESEARCH TEAM - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2018

1. EVELYN AMPONSAH

A PhD Candidate with a focus on Social and Political Thought, Evelyn's research aims to examine existing RPSM trainings, tools, resources and policies and analyze their efficacy through an anti-racism, anti-black racism, anti-oppression framework and make recommendations to help RPSM engage marginalized youth and improve their educational outcomes.

Notes:

2. JOEL ONG

Joel is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Computational Arts in the School of Arts, Media, Performance and Design whose research aims to enhance RPSM's reach in the Jane and Finch community by identifying, through data harvesting and analysis, specific activities and/or programs that would promote student enrolment.

Notes:

3. WARREN CRICHLLOW/WALTER GERSHON

Warren Crichlow is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education. Working in partnership with Associate Professor, Walter Gershon from Kent State University, their research aims to assess young people's experiences in ways that convey their understandings of how York University and RPSM has impacted their lives and to also learn about how RPSM practices deepen pathways for musical engagement.

Notes:

4. KAREN CYRUS

Karen Cyrus completed her Doctorate in Music at York University and will use her extensive background as researcher and an educator (LRSM and OCT) to conduct a Curriculum Assessment with a focus on RPSM's Group Piano Lessons.

Notes:

5. SALAH WILSON

Salah Wilson is a PhD Candidate will use his considerable knowledge in the field of steel pan composition and pedagogy to conduct a Curriculum Assessment with a focus on RPSM's Steelpan programme.

Notes:

6. CATHY PAVLIK-GRIFFEN

Cathy Pavlik-Griffen is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Music whose interest in how a community music school can support students by taking a trauma-informed approach to educational programming. One of Cathy's main objectives is to create a teacher resource for RPSM teachers.

Notes:

Members of the Advisory Working Group include: Narda Razack (LA&PS), Uzo Anucha (LA&PS), Jenny Foster (FES), Honor Ford-Smith (FES), Bill Thomas (AMPD), Mary Fogarty (AMPD), Carl James (EDUCATION), Gordon Flett (HEALTH), Ken Rogers (AMPD), Michael Johnny (K&M), Norma-Sue Fisher-Stitt (AMPD), James McKay (SCHULICH), Richard Marsella (RPSM), Karen Burke (Inaugural Fellow).