



MEMORANDUM

TO: URI Faculty
FROM: Don DeHayes, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
DATE: May 20, 2010
SUBJECT: URI Common Reading for 2010

I am pleased to announce and support the URI Common Reading initiative for our community for summer – fall 2010. We will introduce this program to our incoming first-year students at Orientation in June and to the broader URI community throughout the summer. The overall goals are to introduce students to a campus culture focused on academic engagement and learning and build a sense of community and common bond among our students, faculty, staff, and administrators. **I invite you, too, to read the book and engage in discussions with our students and each other, bringing the book into your courses in a variety of ways.**

The book selected this summer is *A Hope in the Unseen: An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League*, by Ron Suskind. This story of Cedric Jennings' journey from high school to college is an inspiring story of challenge and support through these tumultuous years. I am pleased to announce that Mr. Jennings will visit URI on September 22nd to share firsthand his experiences with the URI community. The common reading committee has been inspired by this story, as am I. I fully expect that each of you will also enjoy this inspirational and important work of non-fiction. The topics of race, adult development, access to higher education, and more, as discussed in this book, complement the fall 2010 Honors Colloquium entitled *RACE*.

Each of our first-year students and their advisors will be given a copy of the book at orientation and asked to read it this summer. Several faculty in various departments, including English, Sociology, Psychology, Writing and Communication among others, are integrating the book into their courses. Deans in each college have been asked to promote this book to all faculty as well. Our goal is to have as many in the University community as possible have this common reading experience. We will again establish a URI blog community to exchange reactions to the book. We welcome you, too, to blog in at: uricommonreading.blogspot.com starting in July.

Along with the blog, and discussions in URI 101 classes this fall, I hope you will consider incorporating this book into one or more of your classes, weaving it into your teaching as appropriate, or simply engaging in informal discussion about the book with students and colleagues over a cup of coffee at the Ram's Den this fall. Should you be willing to consider incorporating it into your course, complimentary copies are available at the Provost Office in Green Hall, or contact us at 874-4408. The Bookstore also has copies available for purchase.

Please join this URI community initiative and help build a campus culture of academic engagement and learning --- or just enjoy blogging with our students.

Best wishes for a peaceful and productive summer.