**OTOC Meeting Notes - January**

**Zoom link:** [**https://fsw.zoom.us/j/83739696234**](https://fsw.zoom.us/j/83739696234)

**Members of OTOC Committee:** Brandon Jett, Mary Ellen Schultz (Absent), Don Ransford, Eric Ivy, Jason Calabrese, Joyce Rollins, Juan Ginarte, Sabine Maetzke, Laura Henning, Eddie Krzeminski, Heather Olson, Katie DeWall, Kari Sizemore

**Meeting Start**: 12:01

* Brandon: Let’s get started if that’s okay with all of you. Don, I saw your email and will give you some time today. It’s been a while. Our last meeting was back in November.
* We have our first and only major event of the semester. As a reminder, Laura will be our go-to person for organizing events.

**Upcoming Events:**

* Brandon: Our first event will be Dr. Lu Vickers on Thursday, January 25th at 2:00 in J-103 or via Zoom: "Seeking Happiness in Nature and Leisure: Remembering Paradise Park"
	+ Wendy has lined up quite a few classes who will come to the event. If we could offer an incentive to our classes, we can get a good turnout.
	+ Will have a Florida theme as well, which will be engaging.
	+ There will be an Oral History workshop for students after the presentation. You cannot participate in the workshop over Zoom, however. It must be in-person.
	+ I will have to Zoom in because I’m out in Moore Haven that day. Can anyone from the committee commit to being there in person?
		- Volunteers: Wendy, Sabine, Don, and Laura (Zoom)
* Also, the CA Conrad event is not an OTOC event but will be awesome.
* Legal Studies and Debate Club: 20th of February at 7 PM on—How the U.S. Constitution Makes Us Happy.
	+ They have been good at incorporating OTOC themes into their conversations. Please support them and encourage your students to do so!
* Illuminations still accepting submissions around the theme of Joy…encourage!
	+ <https://fswilluminations.com/how-to-submit/>
	+ Deadline extended until February 9th.
	+ Laura: We need submission in every genre.
	+ Sabine: What can we tell students to incentivize them?
	+ Laura: A publication credit.
* Juan Carlos expressed interest in an event
	+ Juan: I’m interested in doing something on international happiness surveys. Hopefully in March. The proposed topic is “Does Money Buy Happiness” and uses evidence from the surveys. I’d like to explore this link between money and happiness.
	+ Brandon: This sounds like a great idea, especially considering our budget. There’s a link to our speaker from last semester (Dr. Sanderson).
	+ Link to survey: <https://worldhappiness.report/about/>
* Michael DeMoran
	+ Michael is planning an event with a link between happiness and nature. Let’s support him as he is a new faculty and it’s awesome that he’s already planning something.
* Anyone want to do anything else?
	+ Kari: Are you allowed to do fundraising? This might help with our funding issues.
	+ Brandon: That’s a good idea. I was also thinking about making another pitch to admin for more funding.
	+ Don: I’m not sure about going back to admin but they are offering grants we might be able to get. If we get a high-end speaker we might be able to put in for a grant.
	+ Brandon: I didn’t know there was a renamed “fee grant.” Can you send me the details for that?
	+ Heather: The Institute of Technology might also be an opportunity for funding. We could partner with them on those events and they can foot the bill.
	+ Heather notes she will bring someone from the Institute to the next meeting.
	+ Brandon: My only concern with going the Center of Undergraduate Research is how long they will be able to fund what we do. I’d like to ask for some funding back from admin, even if it isn’t as much as we asked for last year.
	+ Brandon appreciates all of these ideas.

**CURC Newsletter**

* Wendy Chase asked the CURC advisory committee if anyone wanted to help work on the newsletter for April 2024. I volunteered and thought this might be a good way for OTOC to remind everyone of all the things we did over the year related to our theme.
	+ Brandon: How do we feel about that? This might be a good way to show how much work we’ve done throughout the year. I know people don’t usually read those newsletters.
	+ Don and Heather note that they do read them.
	+ Laura: That sounds good and if you want any help, I can help with that.
	+ Brandon: Thank you, Laura, and Don, you are NOT a nobody, you are somebody!

**New Theme: Our Changing Worlds…Get the Word Out!**

* New Theme Selected: We need to get the word out in ways that still encourage people to engage with our current theme: The Pursuit of Happiness
	+ Brandon: This new theme is getting a positive response so far. It is a good blend of a lot of ideas that were submitted.
	+ I would like for us to go to different school meetings as a way to get event ideas. Are you all comfortable doing that?
	+ Joyce: Which departments do we not have representation for?
	+ Brandon: I think the School of Business. Does anyone want to volunteer for this one?
	+ Sabine: We could reach out to Jen Patterson. She might be able to get the word out.
	+ Joyce volunteers to go to the School of Business meeting.
	+ Don and Sabine volunteer to pitch the OTOC theme at their School meetings. Brandon volunteers to pitch it to the school of Heath Professionals.
	+ Submit events ideas to me at bjett@fsw.edu before the end of March.
		- My hope is that we can get a few ideas put together before the Summer. I can work with Wendy Chase and Rebecca Harris on scheduling (and paying) for event ideas. I’d like to have as many of the events planned out for the fall as possible before August.
* Ideas for events for next year
	+ Brandon: I need everyone on the committee to submit an idea: either a speaker, a roundtable discussion for something, film screening, poetry reading, beach day…I don’t care what it is, but we need to generate ideas in case we don’t get much from faculty, students, or staff. We need something concrete. You may work in pairs on this as well.
		- Or: if you know the perfect speaker to bring in, send their information to me and I can look into it.
	+ Last time we brought up the idea of TED-like Talks related to the theme. I like this idea, but need something more concrete. What does this look like? Who participates? Is there a general question people are answering? When do we want to do this? Where? Etc… I need help making these ideas more concrete.
		- Brandon: Heather can you reach out to student government about this Ted Talk idea. If we felt that any event is going to be “controversial” we should reach out to student government so they can sponsor it. This might help us work around some of the recent Florida legislation.
	+ Other event ideas:
		- Juan Ginarte: For AY 2024-2025, I'm interested in holding one of more chats on the topic of climate change or some other topic relating to the "Anthropocene" (period in which humans began having a major impact on the natural world).
		- Roundtable about how SW FL has changed since Ian?
		- Ellie Bunting published a book, Lost Icons, about Ft. Myers Beach since hurricane
		- Anyone else we could think of bringing in? Maybe like a local news personality?

**Other items?**

* Brandon: Any other questions, comments, or concerns?
* Don: One of my ideas that I sent was creating a book list based on our theme. We could reach out to the library and possibly get a display or even a reading/movie list posted on their website.
* Another idea: Could we get something to link into the FSW website that would be an interactive game. It could have maps of the world from different centuries and the user guesses which time period the map is from in our history. The geographic borders have changed so much even in our lifetime and this would fit into our theme. This idea could extend even to an art collection and things that are a bit more interactive.
* Sabine: I like that idea. It gives us a good perspective outside of ourselves.
* Heather: We could possibly do this with Google Forms and even be in the form of a scavenger hunt.
* Brandon: I would like to reach out to Jade (Jay?) if he wants to partner with us. He’s super famous so I’m not sure how early I would need to reach out. As for the maps, we could even put physical maps in the hallways.
* Heather: We used to have screens in the hallways and those could possibly be used.
	+ Update: Those screens are controlled by marketing. Might be a good way to do a student competition for a slideshow we can show on these screens?
* Don: I have some more topic ideas as well: how education has changed, what causes obsolescence?
* Joyce: What would be interesting if we had a community speaker on higher education, and some break-out sessions about K-12 education.
* Laura: I really like the obsolescence idea. We could look at it through a pop culture lens.
* Don: Another idea I had was cultural gender fluidity.
* Brandon: That last one might cause a bit of controversy considering the current state of politics.
* Don: There’s also an association that has a list of speakers around SWFL that we could use.
* Don: My last idea is climate change, but I’m not sure how tired we are of that topic.
* Brandon: I’m not sure if young people are tired of the climate issue. I’m always a proponent of exploring this topic.

**Final Thoughts:**

* Heather: Have you been in contact with marketing?
* Brandon: It’s tough to get a response from them. I’d like to have more of a link with them.
* Heather: Would you like me to work with marketing?
* Brandon: Yes, that sounds great.
* Eric: I had a few students ask me “how would I define ‘worlds’”? Should we define these terms for our theme?
* Brandon: I’d rather leave it up to the interpretation of the reader. The broader we can be, the better.
* Eric: What do all of those “worlds” have in common?
* Brandon: I think that could be a good event idea covering that question.
* Eric: I actually do have a movie idea that could help answer this. Many philosophers have tackled this question. I can send that over to you.
* Brandon: Any final comments?
* Kari: Can you add me to the mailing list?
* Brandon: Thank you all! Have a great weekend. If you need to contact me, shoot me an email. See you all next meeting.

Meeting Ends: 1:00 p.m.