

OCAT Newsletter

January 2010

ISSUE 1: FALL SEMESTER

Director's Welcome

Welcome to Spring Semester 2010 here at MSU. Please take some time to review our bi-annual newsletter and website. The *Office of Cultural & Academic Transitions (OCAT)* staff is dedicated to providing assistance and guidance to students for a variety of issues they may encounter while here at MSU. OCAT initiates and coordinates a range of "culturally" oriented programs geared to exposing students, faculty and staff to the diversity of our campus. OCAT also provides programs that impact the transition, academic, and social lives of students.

The administration and staff here in OCAT strives to provide a "welcoming" & "supportive" environment for students to enhance their success. Students who actively participate in programs administered by OCAT have been very successful in navigating and negotiating MSU.

We are committed to assisting students in solving any problem they may encounter. We are proud to inform our campus of our *Cultural Aide Program's* academic success. Over 98% of the students that serve as Cultural Aides in our program graduate from MSU, a true test to our commitment, support and development of our students.

We look forward to you attending our programs, allowing our Cultural Aides to assist you, and giving our staff a chance to "impact" your success here at MSU.

Sincerely,

Murray Edwards
Director



Cultural Aide Program's 40th Year Reunion

This year marked the 40th year anniversary of OCAT's *Cultural Aide Program*. Through a span of 40 years, the Aide program has undergone a number of name changes beginning with "Black Aide" Program in 1969, "Minority Aide" Program in 1972 and now the "Cultural Aide" Program. Undoubtedly it remains an integral part of OCAT's success in promoting cultural awareness, developing student leaders and in assisting students with their transition to MSU. The success of the program can also be demonstrated in recognizing the impact of its alums.

This past semester Aide alums came back to visit current OCAT students sharing with them the impact the Aide Program had on their lives and professional careers. **Ms. Marcelina Trevino-Savala**, *Director of Migrant Affairs for the State of Michigan* and **Rodney Paige**, a



(From Left to Right, Back Row) Corey Crutcher, Simone Wright, Lydia Vanderbilt, Charlie Brown, Bryce Colquitt
(From Left to Right, Front Row) Megumi Hirohara, Raegaan Johnson, Rachel Moore, Krystal Janigan

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UPCOMING OCAT EVENTS:

- **2010-2011 Cultural Aide interviews**
February 8-26th
- **Pow-wow of Love**
February 13-14th
- **Chat with OCAT**
February 19th (1-3pm)
- **MAGIC Peer Assist. Applications**
Available: February 22
Due: March 26th
- **Día de la Mujer (DDLJ)** March 20th
- **Asian Pacific Am. Heritage Month Celebration**
(April TBA)

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M.A.G.I.C. 2009

This past summer OCAT completed another two weeks of its MAGIC program. Now in its 10th year, MAGIC stands for "Maximizing Academic Growth in College." It is an intensive one-week summer program offered to incoming freshmen MSU students. MAGIC participants prepare for college while introduced to campus resources. MAGIC is offered twice a year with a limit of 125

"MAGIC is powerful. It was a great benefit to me because it opens doors of resources at MSU"

- Bennetta Thomas,
Freshman in Pre-Nursing

students participated in helping them prepare for the rigors of college while introducing them to campus resources. MAGIC is offered twice a year with a limit of 125



students per week. For the past 10 summers, OCAT has graduated over **2000 students** from the MAGIC program! MAGIC alumni also have the opportunity to apply to be Peer Assistants. For summer 2010, OCAT is hoping to transition MAGIC into a "First-year experience." Stay tuned for more information!

Spartan Remix 2009 by Terry Walsh



(From Left) Chris Cater, Megumi Hirohara, Stephanie Davis, Jarvis de la Cruz, and Jez Vedula

On **September 10, 2009** students from all backgrounds converged in the MSU Union for a night filled with culture, welcome and fun, in which over 500 MSU students participated. All four of the *Council of Racial Ethnic Student (CORES)* groups participated in the event: the *Asian Pacific American Student Organization (APASO)*; the *Black Student Alliance (BSA)*; *Culturas de las Razas Unidas (CRU)*; and the *North American Indigenous Student Organization (NAISO)*. Along with the *Office of Cultural & Academic Transitions (OCAT)*, the *Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender Resource Center (LBGT)* were also main contributors to the planning and success of the event to formally welcome and chat with new Spartans. The event began with various groups showcasing their culture in the Union Ballroom, including an interactive traditional Native American drum and dance that got

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"Chat with OCAT" / "Leadership-Career Success Event"

This is the 2nd year for OCAT's "Chat with OCAT." This initiative is aimed in bringing together MSU faculty/staff/students in an informal social environment. Students come to meet the OCAT staff and learn about different opportunities. This year, the OCAT staff utilized these informal gatherings by reaching out to off-campus representatives. During

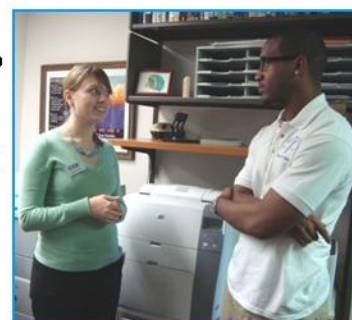


Students attending session hosted by Ms. Dominica Rojas, Human Resources Manager (in blue)

the Homecoming weekend, **Ms. Jessica Stoll** (pictured on the right) a recruiter from CSX, a fortune 500 company, talked to students about potential jobs in the *CSX North American Railroad Corporation*.

During the November "Chat with OCAT," we presented a "Leadership/Career Success" event in which representatives

both on and off campus came to talk to students about how to prepare for their futures. Pictured on the left, **Ms. Dominica Rojas**, Human Resources Manager from *L&S Associates, Inc.*, shared with students "Skills for Corporate America." Other guests included **Ms. Deborah Garcia-Luna**, Acting Asst. Director Office of Legal Affairs for State of Michigan's Dept. of Community Health, who shared strategies for how to prepare for law school.



Cultural Aide, Joel Ruffin talks to CSX recruiter, Jessica Stoll

Also included were on-campus representatives including: **Mr. Darrell King**, Assoc. Director of Multicultural Business Programs, who talked about leadership opportunities in the College of Business, **Ms. Jamila Lee-Johnson**, Career Advisor for Career Services, who shared "Resume Writing & Interviewing Skills" and **Ms. Maggie Chen Hernandez**, Assoc. Director for OCAT, who talked about "How to Become a Cultural Aide." ***Chat with OCATs are on the 3rd Friday of each month!!!**

Cultural Aide Program 2009-2010

This past fall semester, the *Cultural Aide Program* kicked off its 41st year. This year we have 67 Aides who serve as undergraduate student staff members and reside in residence halls across campus. By providing individualized student contact, informing students about the numerous resources on campus, and providing opportunities for students to meet and interact with students of different cultural backgrounds and experiences, Cultural Aides help students make successful social, cultural and academic transitions at *Michigan State University*. As student leaders, Cultural Aides serve as role models, peer educators and a resource for students within the halls aiming to help create an inclusive environment. In addition to their task of assisting students, the *Cultural Aide Program* prides itself on the professional and personal development of these outstanding Aides. The program promotes the importance of cross-cultural communication and interaction along with Academic excellence. **Over half of all our Aides (61%) earned a GPA of 3.0 or higher during Fall 2009**



Fall 2009 Team Coordinators: (Back Row, Left to Right) Giacomo Cimicione, Charlie Brown, Chris Fan, Corey Crutcher (Front Row, Left to Right) Nicole McGowan, Rodney Singleton, Natasha LaGrone, Sungmo Son, Marvin Yates



semester. Almost 1/3 of all our Aides (30%) earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher during Fall 2009 semester while four of our Aides received a 4.0.

In addition to the leadership this program provides students in becoming Cultural Aides, it also provides further leadership advancement as Cultural Aides have the opportunity to move on to become Team Coordinators (pictured above). This year we have nine Team Coordinators who lead a group of Cultural Aides within teams ranging from 4—10 Aides.

To find out where Cultural Aides are placed or to find out how to become a Cultural Aide, visit our website at www.ocat.msu.edu. Also, make sure to check with your Cultural Aide to find out about upcoming programs that each team holds within their residence hall!

C.O.R.E.S Corner

Four OCAT Coordinators serve as advisors to the four student organizations that make up *C.O.R.E.S (Council of Racial Ethnic Students)*. **Pat Dyer-Deckrow** is the advisor for *NAISO (North American Indigenous Student Organization)*, **Mary Phillips** is the advisor for *BSA (Black Student Alliance)*, **Meaghan Kozar** advises *APASO (Asian Pacific American Student Organization)* and **Juan Flores** advises *CRU (Culturas de las Razas Unidas)*. These groups serve as umbrella organizations for several affiliate groups on campus while working with their affiliates to put on



(In this photo, clockwise from Left) Garrett Faulk (NAISO), Megan Garrett (BSA) Radhika Menawat and Etienne Fields (APASO). In the back are Eluterio Moreno and Jessy Reyes (CRU).

programs with rich traditions at MSU. These programs include NAISO's "Pow-Wow," BSA's "Black Power Rally", APASO's "Cultural Vogue" and CRU's "Latin Explosion." For the past two years, OCAT has taken the lead in bringing these groups together—last year in a powerful retreat of unity and this year in a mini-retreat held on **Friday, October 28th**. While the coming together of these groups was demonstrated in the collaborative effort and synergy of last year and this year's ***Spartan Remix***, we are looking forward to what this spring will hold for these groups. Stay tuned!

CORES Calendar:

APASO:

Lunar New Year Show
(February 27th, 6:30 PM @ Auditorium)

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Celebration (April—TBA)

BSA:

"Bamboozled: Revealing the History of Blackface Minstrel Shows and Its Effect on Our Culture"
(February 11th, 6:30 PM @ MCC)

CRU:

Latin Explosion
(February 19th, 6:30 PM @ Auditorium)

DDL

(March 20th @ Kellogg)

NAISO:

Pow Wow of Love
(February 13-14th, @ Jenison Field House)

Meet the OCAT staff!

The OCAT staff would like to welcome you to our office! We are located on the **3rd floor of the Student Services Building in Room 339**. Our staff comprises of a lively bunch of proud Spartans who have been working at MSU for many years. *Interim Director*, Murray Edwards and *Associate Director*, Maggie Chen Hernandez have both been working in this office for over twenty years, while Pat Dyer-Deckrow will begin her twentieth this November! Two of the OCAT staff are working to complete their PhDs (Mary Phillips in *African American Studies* and Meaghan Kozar in *American Studies*).

We embrace the diversity that our staff brings to MSU. We all come with a variety of skills, experiences and unique perspectives. But one thing we share is our devotion to student success.

Please take the time to come visit us and learn about the opportunities that OCAT provides!

www.ocat.msu.edu



(From Left to Right) Mary Phillips, Pat Dyer-Deckrow, Murray Edwards, Leslie Galvez, Meaghan Kozar, and Terry Walsh. (Missing from this photo are Carlos Fuentes, Rob Biddle, Maggie Chen Hernandez, Pam McFadden and Diane Hernandez-Wojda.) (See also photo below of Juan Flores)



Meet our newest OCAT staff member!

Juan Flores was raised in the Southwest side of Detroit. He attained his BA in Criminal Justice and Master's of Social Work from MSU. Throughout his time at MSU he has worked numerous jobs on and off campus but most rewardingly as a *Racial Ethnic Student Aide* for the former *Office of Racial Ethnic Student Affairs (ORES)*. After completing his BA in CJ, he obtained a Graduate Assistantship for the *Office of Migrant Student Services High School Equivalency Program & College Assistance Migrant Program*. Upon graduation from his Masters, he moved on to a full time position as an Academic Specialist for the *College of Natural Science* in the *Center for Student Engagement*.



Christina Lowe helps with ring toss game.



Cultural Aide, Linda Chhong helps with face painting.

Halloween Service Project

Over twenty students participated in this year's "Halloween Service Project" at the *Southside Lansing Community Coalition Community Center* off of W. Holmes in Lansing, Michigan on **Friday, October 30th**. This was the second year that OCAT along with *CORES* groups (*NAISO*, *BSA*, *APASO*, and *CRU*) and *IVAC (International Volunteer Action Corps)* sponsored this volunteer service project. This collaborative effort has once again been an unforgettable opportunity to bring together diverse students. Student volunteers participated in putting together a fantastic Halloween party for kids K-12 at the community center including face-painting, pumpkin decorating, arts and craft activities and more. While last year the seventy-degree weather allowed for over forty volunteers, this year's rain and limited indoor space prompted many student volunteers into having to step down. Nevertheless, all who participated had a great time!

Upcoming OCAT events:



SSI (Student Success Initiative)

This year's *SSI (Student Success Initiative)* began on **Monday, October 12th**. This evening was the "Kick-off" for a series of monthly programs aimed at student success throughout the 2009-2010 academic year. This year OCAT collaborated for the "Kick-off" with *APASO (Asian Pacific American Student Organization)* during APASO's GBM with the intent of collaborating with other *CORES* groups for upcoming monthly SSI programs. Over 200 students took part in the "Kick-off" event that opened with motivational speaker **Mr. Eric Thomas**, *Coordinator of the Advantage Program* and followed with a "Taste of Asia." As a familiar motivational speaker on MSU's campus, Mr. Thomas captured a diverse audience with a message of student success. Following the SSI "Kick-off," the next SSI event "Relax, Release, Renew" was centered on helping students through the stresses of Mid-term exams. Guest speakers

included **Mr. Fred Barton**, from the *Learning Resource Center*, who shared strategies for dealing with test-anxiety, **Dr. Talitha Parish Easterly**, from *MSU's Counseling Center*, who shared tips on relieving stress, and **Dr. Joseph Cousins** from *Asian Pacific American (APA) Studies Program*, who shared massage techniques. Be on the lookout for more SSI programs!



The *North American Indigenous Student Organization (N.A.I.S.O.)* will be sponsoring their **27th Annual Pow-Wow of Love** on **Saturday, February 13 & 14 @ Jenison Field House**. This Pow-Wow will be a traditional Pow-Wow which includes an opportunity to watch American Indians dance, play music and sing. The general public is encouraged to come and view/ buy American Indian artwork, taste American Indian food and listen to Elders talk about Woodland History. MSU Students with student IDs are free. Gates open at 10:00 am both days and on Saturday dancing starts at 1pm and breaks from 5-6:45 pm and resumes at 7 pm. On Sunday, dancing will start at noon and the Pow-Wow will end at 6:00 pm. For more information contact Ashley Ryerse at ryerseas@msu.edu or call (517) 353-7745.

N.A.I.S.O. hopes to see you there!

(Spartan Remix continued)

everybody up out of their seats and moving. The event was designed not only to bring together MSU students, but also members of ethnic student groups across campus. Event co-coordinator **Justin Ford**, a *Communication Arts & Sciences Senior* said, "People got to see lots of different things and all the different floors got traffic. [They were] exposed to a lot of different things that our campus has to offer." All of the *CORES* groups, the *International Students Association (ISA)* and the *LBGT* affiliate groups all had rooms set up in order to share part of their cultural heritage, as well as some fun activities. The night was capped off by having three different rooms of dancing, each highlighting music from different cultures. "Connecting diverse peoples, programs and ideas to enhance student success" is not only OCAT's tagline, but also it was demonstrated through the countless connections made between individual students from diverse backgrounds.

17th Annual Dia de la Mujer

March 20th, 2010

**Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center
Michigan State University**

We are looking for artwork and workshop proposals. For more information, contact Juan Flores at floresj2@msu.edu or visit www.ddlm.msu.edu.



Aide Program's 40th Year Reunion cont.

former elementary music teacher, shared their insight into student leadership during the 2009-2010 Aide Training week while **Ms. Dominica Rojas**, *Human Resources Manager for L&S Associates, Inc.*, was a guest presenter for OCAT's "Leadership/Career Success Event" (see page 2). Currently, the OCAT staff includes three former Aides in Interim Director **Murray Edwards** and Coordinators **Mary Phillips** and **Juan Flores**.

The 40th year Pre-Aide Reunion reception was held on **Friday, September 18, 2009** at the *Radisson Center* in *Lansing, MI*. The event offered current Aides an opportunity to interact with former Aides who shared their words of wisdom and insight into what they had gained from the program. Special guest speakers included Aide alums: **Gerald Evelyn**, **Viphalack Hamilton**, and **Shay Marlowe**. Next fall we will continue the celebration over MSU's Homecoming weekend (October 15-17, 2010). For more information about the *Minority Aide Reunion Weekend*, please visit the "Minority Aide" website at <http://www.msumareunion.org/events.html>.

*Connecting Diverse Peoples,
Programs, and Ideas to
Enhance Student Success*

What are students saying about OCAT?

"MAGIC played a major role with the success in my First year/semester. The biggest thing for me was that MAGIC provided everyone the opportunity to make new friends and learn about other people."

— **Kier Carter**, *Freshman in Marketing*

"Were it not for my interactions with OCAT Aides my Freshman year, I would not be as involved as I am today. The Aides mentored and introduced me to various ways I could develop my leadership skills on campus."

— **Carlos Martinez**, *Junior in Sociology*



Office of Cultural & Academic Transitions

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OCAT Multicultural Center

In **January 1999**, the Multicultural Center of Michigan State University opened its doors after many years of collective advocacy by the *Council of Racial Ethnic Students (CORES)*. CORES successfully convinced the MSU administration that a Multicultural Center was necessary and critical to the implementation of one of MSU's guiding principles: "Advance Diversity Within Community."

Currently, the Center has:

- SPACE available for student group meetings and programs.
- Four COMPUTERS for general student use, where students can do their homework, write papers, check their e-mail, and surf the web.
- Small collection of RESOURCE MATERIALS such as videos of racially / ethnically-themed films, books, and publications (magazines, journals).

The Center hosts a variety of different programs throughout the school year, from academically-oriented presentations to student group meetings to informal social receptions to which everyone is welcome to attend.

The CORES offices (*Asian Pacific American Student Organization; Black Student Alliance; Culturas de la Razas Unidas; and North American Indigenous Student Organization*) are also located within the center.

Use of the Center's space can be requested by completing a "Booking Request Form" which is available at the Center or at <http://mcc.msu.edu/>. Forms must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the requested date.



(from left to right) Terry Walsh, Desiree Tucker, Nicole McGowan, Ivy Qui, and Marvin Yates

Multicultural Center (MCC)

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