

# Office of Cultural & Academic Transitions

## cultural connection

## NEWSLETTER

Fall 2016



Welcome to OCAT's fall 2016 semester newsletter! What an amazing year it has been so far. We are ecstatic to share with you the exciting changes that have taken place within our programming initiatives, our work to empower diverse communities, and most significantly the move towards creating a more welcoming and student-friendly environment within our office space located on the 3rd floor of the Student Services building.

Moving away from the online Cultural Connection e-newsletters, we hope this bi-annual newsletter provides a more comprehensive overview of our programs, services and accomplishments in one stop!



OCAT hosted prospective students from the Milwaukee Academy of Science to lunch, a campus tour and a Q&A session about MSU & OCAT resources.

This newsletter is divided into several different categories that helps explain the purpose of the Office of Cultural & Academic Transitions. These categories include "Cultural Awareness," "Leadership Development," "Academic Transitions," and "Community Outreach." In many instances, these categories overlap where we focus equally on providing cultural awareness to

the MSU community while also supporting and providing our students with the leadership skills needed to create culturally educational programs. We cherish our seasoned leaders whose passion inspires us and embrace our emerging leaders who are increasingly finding their voices.

This newsletter demonstrates the pride we take in programs that have long-standing traditions, as well as our ability to encourage innovation. Perhaps the greatest innovative aspect of this semester has been the redesign of our office space (see image on the left and above). The abstract design of the Sankofa bird coupled with the vibrant choice of colors merges our respect for histories and traditions with the possibilities of change. There have been numerous benefits as a result of the office redesign, one of which is an increase in the flow of student traffic at OCAT. From the start of the semester through the middle of December, we have had over **675 guests** sign-in!

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. We love what we do and hope it shows!



*connecting diverse peoples, programs, and ideas to enhance student success*

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Office of Cultural & Academic Transitions

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
Student Services building  
556 East Circle Dr., Room 339  
East Lansing, MI 48824

(517) 353-7745  
ocat@msu.edu

[www.ocat.msu.edu](http://www.ocat.msu.edu)



## Director's Welcome

**W**ow! I can't believe it's the start of Spring Semester 2017. Fall Semester 2016 was filled with some excitement. We started our initiatives in July and August with the exciting and successful sessions of MAGIC. We had the opportunity to meet, orientate, educate and connect with 200 wonderful new students. I can't wait to review the great grades from their 1<sup>st</sup> semester here at MSU.

Fall Semester started with a "huge bang" with our annual Spartan Remix. This year's event was one of the most well attended and successful events to date. If you missed it, you missed the "true essence" of MSU. We have been blessed with the opportunity to impact hundreds of students through the following OCAT Programs: MAGIC, Spartan Remix, Leadership Institute, Success Series, ICA Program, 'Real Talk', and OCAT Open-house!

Again, the OCAT Staff is committed to assisting you in successfully navigating this university. Please feel free to contact us and if we can't resolve your issue, we will "connect" you to the person(s) that can help! Speaking of OCAT staff, we want to say a fond goodbye to two wonderful OCAT staff members.

We wish all the best to Ms. Leslie Hernandez-Ortiz as she begins her new life in Alabama and Ms. Pat Dyer-Deckrow who has retired after 26 wonderful years at MSU. We will begin the search process for Pat's open position in early spring semester. As we say goodbye to these two women, we are welcoming a new staff member, Mr. Dreux Baker, a former Cultural Aide, who will be working with the Intercultural Aide Program.

Spring Semester 2017, we will again have a wealth of programs including the Success Series (hosted by Eric Thomas) every Tuesday at 6:30pm in Erickson Kiva. Please review this newsletter and our website for upcoming events.

We look forward to seeing you in 2017!

Sincerely,

**Murray Edwards,**  
Director



**Congratulations to Pat Dyer-Deckrow on her retirement after 26 years as MSU!**



**Congratulations to Leslie Hernandez-Ortiz on her move to Alabama after working at MSU for 12 years!**



**Welcome to Dreux Baker, our newest OCAT employee, who started in October 2016!**







MSU Homecoming parade, October 14, 2016

OCAT was involved with numerous initiatives that helped increase an awareness of cultural diversity and inclusion. In addition to supporting specific racial and ethnic communities, we pride ourselves in the opportunities we can bring these communities together. Members of the CORES (Council of Racial & Ethnic Students) worked together with The Alliance of Queer and Ally Students on the "This is Solidarity" banner for MSU's fall Homecoming parade. [For more on CORES, see pages 4-6]

The "Rep Your Culture" poster on the right was a result of "FALL-A-PALOOZA: Beyond the Classroom Tour," the Division of Student Affairs & Services' fall open house that took place on September 23rd in the Student Services building. This event was an expansion of last year's 3rd Floor Loft party.

This interactive poster was an opportunity for students of diverse backgrounds to affirm their cultural pride. OCAT Coordinator, Meghan Kozar served on the 2016 FALL-A-PALOOZA planning committee.



FALL-A-PALOOZA interactive art project

# Cultural Awareness



MSU Retail Services Diversity Training, August 26th

## Diversity Training

OCAT staff members hosted numerous diversity training sessions and served on various panels throughout the semester. A few of these opportunities included:

- Retail Services Fall Orientation
- James Madison College First Year Mentoring Program
- "Taking Charge of Change: Community Organizing and Community Activism" panel
- "The Struggle is Real...Never Give Up!" at the Advocates for Latino Student Advancement in Michigan Education (ALSAME) Conference
- MSU Greenline student supervisors retreat



"Taking Charge of Change: Community Organizing and Community Activism" panel, November 17th



# Cultural Awareness & Leadership Development

One of OCAT's most exciting events has to be Spartan Remix, an outdoor cultural festival that takes place on the Thursday after Labor Day. This year we were blessed once again with an opportunity to bring diverse communities together in celebration of music, art and culture. This event is among the few large scale events at MSU that focuses on cross-cultural diversity. However, did you also realize that this event centers on leadership development? Each summer, both seasoned and emerging leaders devote numerous hours into making this event a success. The planning committee is divided into three subcommittees, which include "logistics," "outreach," and "publicity" and are led by Committee Chairs, who are then supervised by the Remix advisors and Student Coordinator. Simultaneously the entire group works together on the artistic components of the event including, securing performers, artists, poster concept and design, t-shirt design, promotional trailer design and much more!

Throughout the summer, in addition to planning this awesome event, students learn about each other through mini-presentations focused on cultural pride and identity that take place at each planning committee meeting.

**VIEW SPARTAN REMIX  
RECAP VIDEO HERE!**  
(Shot by DPB Productions)

## Get Involved.

- outreach chair/committee members
- logistics chair/committee members
- public relations chair/committee members
- artists
- musicians
- poets
- photographers
- videographers

The diversity of Spartan Remix is unmatched as many of the leaders in the CORES, which is made up of APASO (Asian Pacific American Student Organization), BSA (Black Student Alliance), CRU (Culturas de las Razas Unidas) and NAISO (North American Indigenous Student Organization) along with various student organizations within COPS (Council of Progressive Students) showcase talent from their communities, providing a preview for the larger events coordinated by their communities throughout the year. OCAT's coordinators serve as advisors to the CORES eboards and assist them in all aspects of the organization's planning, implementation, and budgeting of their programs.

[See page five for an overview of fall semester pro-

[www.ocat.msu.edu](http://www.ocat.msu.edu)



Graffiti artist, Freddie Diaz



Traditional Pow Wow dancers performing at Spartan Remix



Some of the members of the 2016 Spartan Remix planning committee



Beatboxer, Mike Lee performing at Spartan Remix



"Vigil of Solidarity"



Interactive art project facilitated by artist and MSU Alum, Adriana Abundis





Api/a dialogues



Night Market



"Our Culture's not a Costume"

## apaso highlights include

- spartan remix
- apaso fall kick-off
- tea time community discussions
- api/a dialogue
- community activism
- msu homecoming parade
- night market
- "our culture's not a costume"
- affiliate roundtables
- cultural vogue planning committee
- ribbon cutting of newly renovated vincent chin heritage room
- and much more!

*Cultural Awareness & Leadership Development*



BSA eboard members at the 44th Black Power Rally



BSA eboard retreat



Performance at the 44th Black Power Rally

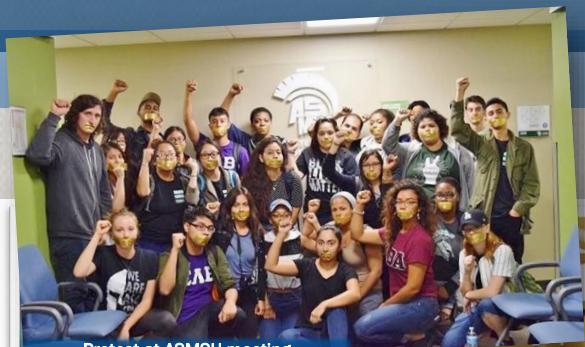
## Black Student Alliance

# BSA

## bsa highlights include

- welcome black week
- spartan remix
- 44th annual black power rally
- "birth of a nation" film screening
- harambee
- community activism
- "our culture's not a costume"
- post-election healing spaces
- msu homecoming parade
- msu vs. u of m tailgate
- ribbon-cutting of new office space in hubbard hall
- collaborations with affiliate organizations
- black on track study and stress relief week
- and much more!





Protest at ASMSU meeting



Latinx townhall



CRU eboard members

## cru highlights include

- spartan remix
- latinx townhall
- organizing campus-wide protests against hate
- 13th annual brown pride
- msu homecoming parade
- “our culture’s not a costume”
- post-election healing spaces
- ribbon-cutting of newly renovated cru room in wilson hall
- bi-monthly general body meetings
- and much more!

## *Cultural Awareness & Leadership Development*

## North American Indigenous Student Organization

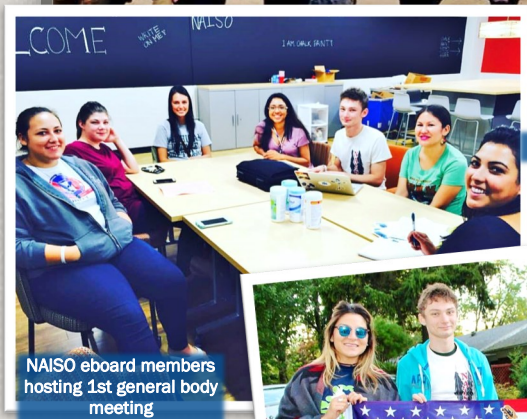
# NAISO

## naiso highlights include

- spartan remix
- “indigenous people’s day”
- msu homecoming parade
- round dance of love
- talking circle
- community activism
- native fall feast
- bi-monthly general body meetings
- “our culture’s not a costume”
- ribbon-cutting of newly renovated naiso room in hubbard hall
- black-ash basket weaving
- de-stress before finals
- and much more!



“Indigenous People’s Day”



NAISO eboard members  
hosting 1st general body  
meeting



MSU Homecoming parade



# Leadership Development

Page 7: Fall 2016

Our 2nd session for OCAT's **Leadership Institute** was offered this fall nearly doubling the number of graduating participants from last year's group. We reviewed our program and made some exciting adjustments, which included opening the program up to freshmen as well as meeting for four consecutive weeks rather than bi-monthly. We also adjusted our topics slightly to include an overall "Leadership 101" and "Professionalism" session in addition to the "Intercultural Competency" and "Responsible Activism." The overall response from this year's cohort was very positive. Here's a glimpse of the feedback we received:

*"It is a great program that allows individuals of all backgrounds to come together and interact w/each other. That is such a beautiful thing. MSU needs more of that."*

*"10/10; Very good; Love the energy; Pertinent & relevant speakers"*

*"Every time I left the sessions, I felt motivated and excited about my life, even if I didn't feel like attending that day."*

*"This is a great experience for everyone. I would definitely love if you did a 2nd session of this in the spring."*

Several of the students who participated in this Leadership Institute opted to continue their leadership development by participating on the "Cultural Remix" planning committee. This large event (which is a smaller spin-off from Spartan Remix) will take place sometime this March.

[www.ocat.msu.edu](http://www.ocat.msu.edu)



"Leadership 101" session at OCAT's Leadership Institute



Fall 2016 Graduating Leadership Institute Cohort



Some members of the 2017 Cultural Remix planning committee

## Intercultural Aide Program (ICAs)

For nearly 48 years, the Intercultural Aide program has been a staple in OCAT for developing outstanding student leaders who have gone on to have outstanding careers. Several of our current OCAT staff members including Murray Edwards, Juan Flores, and Dreux Baker have all served as past ICAs. This year 78 ICAs serve MSU's campus in the residence halls helping students academically, socially and personally.

Current OCAT staff members leading the Intercultural Aide program are Maggie Chen-Hernandez, Carlos Fuentes, Tiffany Toriumi, Rob Biddle and Dreux Baker. Their time is spent supervising, advising, guiding, and developing these amazing student leaders. Through the years, the program has undergone some exciting new changes. This spring, the ICA staff will participate in the arduous task of interviewing and selecting next year's ICAs.



Tour of the OCAT office during Fall ICA training



ICA, Taylor Peterson helping to promote Spartan Remix



2016-2017 Intercultural Aides

For more information on the ICA program, visit: [www.mosaic.msu.edu](http://www.mosaic.msu.edu)



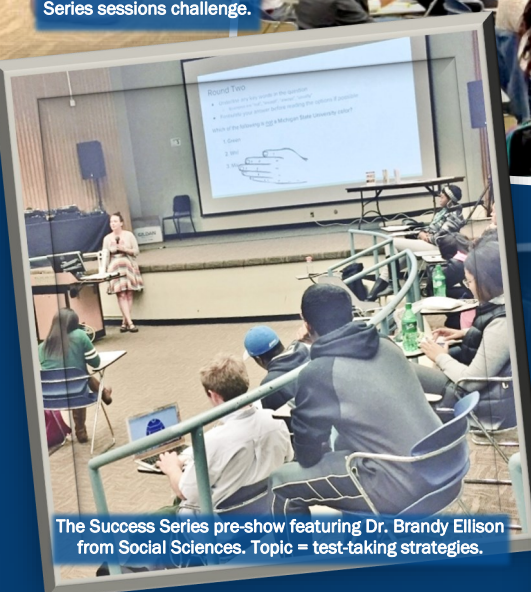
# Academic Transitions



Winners of Eric Thomas' no party/attend Success Series sessions challenge.



Success Series session with Eric Thomas



The Success Series pre-show featuring Dr. Brandy Ellison from Social Sciences. Topic = test-taking strategies.



Students studying at OCAT.



The fall 2016 MAGIC Success Initiative relies on the awesome work of our Peer Assistants.

## Success Series

For a second year, OCAT is blessed that **Dr. Eric Thomas** (aka ET, the Hip-Hop Preacher) has committed another year towards the Success Series. The Success Series is a weekly motivational and support program for MSU students designed to inspire success academically, personally and professionally. Some of the topics for this semester included "mental toughness," "overcoming adversity," and "driven by destiny."

While Eric is available about 90% of the time to present on powerful topics that help students stay motivated and focused, he has also graciously coordinated a diversity of phenomenal speakers to speak at the Success Series in his absence. This year these powerful speakers included Yolanda Moore (two-time WNBA Champion), TJ Tyus (CEO Strength 2 Be) and Dr. Ty-Ron Douglas (Author of "Border Crossing Brothas").

Continuing from last spring, the Success Series begins with a half-hour devoted towards providing students with tips, skills and strategies for their academic success. Once again, we have been fortunate to partner up with Dr. Brandy Ellison from the College of Social Sciences who facilitates these sessions.

[www.etinspires.com](http://www.etinspires.com)

## Studying at OCAT

Another benefit for OCAT's office redesign was the reconfiguring of the office space into a relaxing and study-friendly environment. We definitely saw the impact of changing the environment with a record of over 675 guests that signed in when they stopped by.

## MAGIC Success Initiative

This fall we continued our 1st year follow-up with our MAGIC students by hiring several of our summer Peer Assistants to assist with outreach for our students throughout the academic year. Our Peer Assistants did an excellent job of helping 1st year MAGIC students make a successful social, cultural and academic transition to college life.

[www.ocat.msu.edu](http://www.ocat.msu.edu)



Outreach toward the MSU community took form in many ways this semester, which included both on and off-campus events. Off-campus, Carlos Fuentes once again led a group of volunteers to host a Halloween party for the kids at the South Side Community Coalition. The event included games and prizes, food and a special performance by MSU's Breakdance Club.

Fuentes, along with several campus partners also coordinated *Taking it to the Streets, part II* that took place on October 22nd in the Greater Lansing area.

On-campus, Juan Flores led the 14th Annual Thanksgiving Unity dinner formerly known as "Homies Giving." This event provides a delicious dinner on Thanksgiving day to the many undergraduate and graduate MSU students who are unable to travel home for the short holiday break. The dinner fed over 400 MSU Spartans.

[\[Read more here\]](#)

Thanksgiving Unity Dinner.

Halloween party at South Side Community Coalition.

Spartans Will. Power

# Community Outreach



Inside the South Side Community Coalition.



Serving a delicious meal at the Thanksgiving Unity Dinner



Speaking to a group of prospective MSU students.



# What to expect this semester?

- Reverse Career Fair Student Training (collaboration with Career Services) (January 12th)
- APASO pageant (January 13th)
- MLK Banner Awareness Project (January 16th)
- Reverse Career Fair (January 17th)
- Success Series (Every Tuesday beginning January 17th)
- Intercultural Aide interviews and selection
- Cultural Vogue (February 18th)
- New CORES (2017-2018) eboard retreat (March 25-26th)
- Pow wow of Life (April 1st)
- Spartans Will. Power (April 8th)
- 24th Annual Dia de la Mujer Conference (April 8th)
- 10th Annual Race In the 21st Century America Conference (collaboration with James Madison College) (April 13th)
- OCAT's Academic & Leadership Recognition Dinner
- 2017 MAGIC Peer Assistant Interview and selection
- Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month events
- CORES end-of-the-year banquets
- Cultural Remix
- And much much more!

Check our website [www.ocat.msu.edu](http://www.ocat.msu.edu) for specific information about dates, times, locations as well as any changes.



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