

# Office of Cultural & Academic Transitions

## Cultural Connection

### NEWSLETTER



Welcome to OCAT's 2017-2018 newsletter. Year two of OCAT's renovated office space saw an even greater increase in student engagement tracking over **1570 guests!** The frequency of many of our students assured us that our new space has created a welcoming environment that keeps students coming back to OCAT. One of our purposes in creating this new space was to help students feel welcome at OCAT, their "home away from home."

This year we were busy with our programs that have long standing traditions while always looking at ways to assess and improve the impact we can have toward student success. Each year we also encounter new students who integrate with

involved in new initiatives and opportunities as OCAT has become an MSU hub for all things diversity related.

This year, OCAT staffing underwent some significant changes as we said farewell and sent our wishes for a happy retirement to Carlos Fuentes who had been part of OCAT for the past eleven years. Carlos' role in internationalizing the student experience by building bridges between MSU domestic and international students through service will be sorely missed.

We also said farewell to Juan Flores who had been part of OCAT for the past eight years. Juan left OCAT to be part of the new Detroit M.A.D.E. Scholars program, a new initiative aimed in increasing the retention and graduation for students who have graduated from the Detroit public and charter high schools. Juan's work with outreach to the Latinx community in particular with the DDLM (Dia de la Mujer) Conference, Latinx Student Mentoring

Program, Advising CRU (Culturas de las Razas Unidas) and more will be missed. Luckily, his new work with Detroit M.A.D.E. will keep him connected to OCAT.



our seasoned students creating an exciting dynamic in shaping the direction of our programming efforts. Through our traditional programming, we also find ourselves

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*"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



- Twitter & Instagram @ocatmsu
- Facebook at "Office of Cultural & Academic Transitions"



## Farewell to Carlos!

It is not uncommon for someone to enter OCAT and be greeted by Carlos playing his guitar or singing a Neil Diamond song. Carlos embraces everyday with a joy and an enthusiasm that reaches anyone in his presence. We were able to celebrate Carlos during a retirement send-off amongst faculty, staff and students that he has impacted.

Carlos' years of working and travelling abroad in the military as well as working for MSU's Center for Service Learning & Civic Engagement have provided him with a unique understanding of the importance of learning from other cultures and communities through service. Carlos was instrumental in the foundation of such important community service events including Global Youth Service Day, which is now an annual event at MSU known as "Spartans Will. Power." Along with Luis Garcia, Director of Migrant Student Services, Carlos cofounded International Engagement in Mexico (IEM), a study abroad that has impacted thousands of lives.



## Welcome Michael!

We welcomed MSU & OCAT Alum, Michael Suarez, who served in the interim of Juan Flore's position for half of the year. Michael did an outstanding job creating a smooth transition in picking up where Juan left off.

Michael was a dynamic student leader during his time at MSU. He served as an Intercultural Aide, was part of the CRU eboard, and shined on stage as the emcee in numerous OCAT related events including Spartan Remix and Brown Pride. Although Juan had some big shoes to fill, Michael's work ethic, professionalism and charisma made a lasting impression among the students he worked with and within our office.



Members of the Council of Racial and Ethnic Students (CORES) and the Council of Progressive Students (COPS) joined together to host a wonderful celebration of diverse foods enjoyed by their specific communities. Through a multicultural buffet, students shared an eclectic feast of ethnic foods at a very well attended that took place in the College of Agriculture's Atrium.

# Multicultural Buffet!

Earlier in the year, CORES and COPS groups walked together in the MSU Homecoming parade. Students worked together on a unity banner that read "Existence is Resistance," an affirmation of life amongst the erasure of culture, silencing of languages, and the overall systematic oppression of communities of color. This was the fourth year members of these councils united to walk in the Homecoming parade.



Each year, OCAT coordinates a retreat for our CORES student leaders as an opportunity for newly elected eboard members to begin their leadership with a strong foundation on what it takes to succeed as a student leader. This year members from Black Student Alliance (BSA), Culturas de las Razas Unidas (CRU), Asian Pacific American Student Organization (APASO) and Student Veterans of America participated.

The students had a fantastic time learning about each others' communities and the challenges they face. OCAT's CORES's Advisors led the sessions along with staff from the LBGTRC's Assistant Director, Oprah Jrenal who advises Alliance and Women's Council Advisor, Lydia Weiss, who is the Educational Program Coordinator for MSU's WorkLife Office.



# Leadership Development



Helping our students become the best student leaders they can be is a key ingredient of student success. OCAT staff helps support our students by providing them with leadership support as they navigate what it means to be a leader. Students that have participated in our **Leadership Institute** have taken on a variety of leadership roles at MSU and have excelled in them. One example of an outstanding leader is Arielle Buckley. Arielle, a former participant in MAGIC, went on to serve on the Spartan Remix planning committee. During her participation in the Leadership Institute, Arielle successfully pledged in a sorority, while maintaining a 4.0 semester GPA.



This year, our Leadership Institute graduated 17 students. We were very fortunate to have Chris Hanhan, a Master's student in Student Affairs Administration at MSU. Chris did an outstanding job facilitating training sessions, leading assessment of our programs while providing our students with support and guidance as a mentor and role model.

Award recipients at ASMSU's Multicultural Unity Dinner



Terran Davis, Director of Racial and Ethnic Progressive Affairs for Residence Halls Association, held office hours at OCAT during the fall semester.



Celebrating our OCAT and MOSAIC student staff, interns and volunteers with an appreciation dinner.



## APASO highlights include

- Eboard Retreat
- Spartan Remix
- APASO Fall Kick-Off
- Tea Time Community Discussions
- API/A Dialogue
- Community Activism
- MSU Homecoming Parade
- Winter Gala & Pageant
- Affiliate Roundtables
- Shane Bernardo: Food is Medicine
- Cultural Vogue featuring G. Yamazawa
- Refugee Narratives
- APA Monologues and Reception

*and much more!*



*Cultural Awareness & Leadership Development*

## Black Student Alliance

# BSA

## BSA highlights include

- Eboard Retreat
- Welcome Black Week
- Spartan Remix
- Ice cream social
- Sankofa Summit and Black Resource Fair
- Harambee
- Bi-weekly General Assembly Meetings
- 45th Annual Black Power Rally featuring Angela Rye
- Mr and Mrs. Black MSU
- Community Activism
- Commemoration of the First March
- MSU Homecoming Parade
- Collaborations with affiliate organizations
- Black Leadership and Achievement in the Community (B.L.A.C.) Awards

*and much more!*





## CRU highlights include

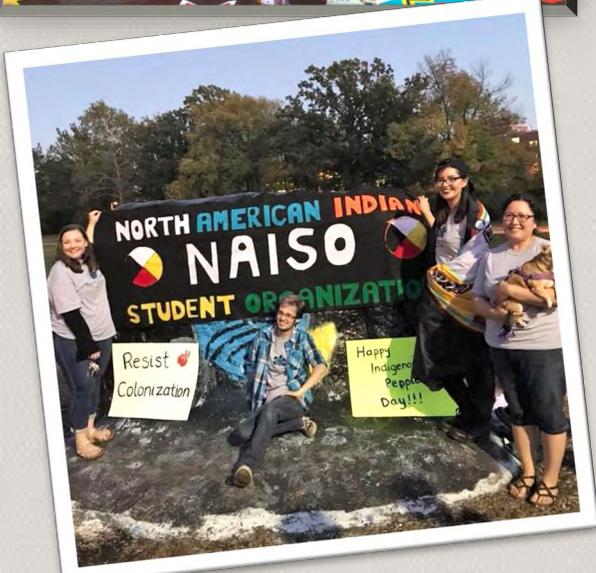
- Eboard Retreat
- Spartan Remix
- Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month Kick-Off
- MSU Homecoming Parade
- Defend DACA
- Bi-weekly General Assembly Meetings
- Organizing campus-wide protests against hate
- 14th Annual Brown Pride featuring Denice Frohman
- Dia de la Mujer Conference (DDLMM)
- Latin Xplosion
- Latino Achievement Gala

*and much more!*

*Cultural Awareness & Leadership Development*

## North American Indigenous Student Organization

# NAISO



## NAISO highlights include

- Eboard Retreat
- Spartan Remix
- “Indigenous People’s Day”
- MSU Homecoming Parade
- Native Welcome Reception
- Community Activism
- Native Fall Feast
- Native Heritage Month Events
  - \* Traditional Cooking Lessons
  - \* Ask a Native Anything
  - \* Screen Printing Workshop
  - \* Indigenous Movie Night
- Collaborations with affiliates and American Indian Studies
- Bi-weekly General Body Meetings
- 34th Annual Pow Wow of Life
- Native graduation

*and much more!*

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After six years of the weather cooperating with us, year seven forced us to move back indoors for Spartan Remix. Our first three years were inside the MSU Union. To our delight the rain location of IM West Turf Arena was ideal, creating a cozy setting for our communities to come together. Through the outstanding work of our student leaders, in particular our logistics committee and student event coordinators, this year's remix was once again a success.

Before the event takes place in the fall, students are tirelessly working on the planning of the event throughout the summer. Many of the students do not know each other prior to remix and as a result of our on-going summer meetings and retreat, the



relationship become stronger. The students who are part of the committee range from brand new student leaders looking to gain leadership experience to more seasoned leaders already active with leadership positions at MSU. It is exciting to witness students working together across difference.

This was also the 10th year anniversary of Spartan Remix and clearly did not disappoint. Highlights from our event included multicultural performances from hip-hop artists to traditional Mexican folklorico dancers and Indigenous Pow Wow dancers to multicultural booths and lots of delicious food! If you plan to be in the East Lansing area during the summer, volunteering to be part of the Spartan Remix planning committee is an exciting way to spend your summers!

And to top off this amazing year, Spartan Remix received an award at the Student Life Leadership Awards for "Internationalizing the Student Experience." How exciting!



# Student Success

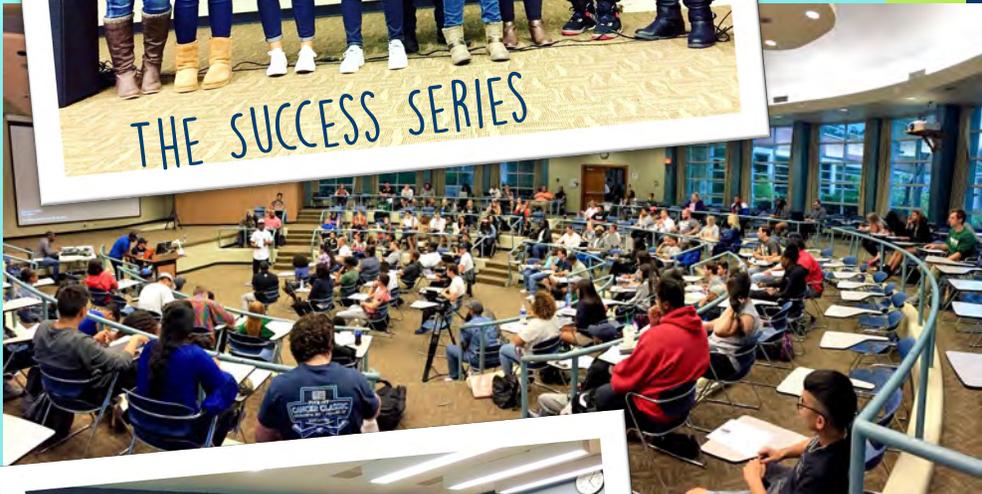


THE SUCCESS SERIES

Student Success is the foundation of our work at OCAT. We would not be here without students. And although our motto within the Division of Student Affairs & Services is “We inspire Spartans to grow,” our students inspire us every day.

One example of our student success initiatives include the Success Series featuring the #1 motivational speaker in the world, Eric “ET, the Hip-Hop Preacher, Thomas” that take places every Monday at Erickson, Kiva.

Other examples include programming initiatives, offering support and creating an environment that you can call home!



SUPPORT!



LATINX MENTORING PROGRAM



YOUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME



LATINO ACHIEVEMENT GALA



# Community Outreach

Our community outreach efforts provide our students with an opportunity to volunteer or be part of an event where they can feel included at Michigan State University. The annual Thanksgiving Unity Fellowship Dinner, formerly known as Homie's Giving provides a delicious Thanksgiving meal to those students unable to travel home for the holiday. Many students, faculty and staff volunteer their time to ensure the success of the event. This event would not be possible if it weren't for the generous donation of many departments at MSU with the largest contribution coming from Residential & Hospitality Services. We also receive a number of turkeys from our wonderful community members!



## MSU students collecting cards for hospitalized kids



Tyler Logan and Yamani Vinson, holding some of the cards they have received in their Halloween card drive. Photo courtesy of Logan and Vinson.



## HALLOWEEN CARD DRIVE



# 35th Annual Pow Wow of Life

*Giving Back to the Earth*

Hosted by the North American Indigenous Student Organization (NAISO) and co-coordinated by OCAT, the annual Pow Wow of Life is an event that has historical, spiritual and social value to American Indian people.

This year's Pow Wow of Life was held on March 31st at Jenison Field House. The event featured several traditional Pow Wow dancing contests, a drum contest, and vendors that showcased Indigenous culture through art.



*Cultural Pride*

*Cultural Learning*

# Cultural Discussions

"DINNER, MOVIE AND DISCUSSION"

FEATURING JUSTIN CHON'S INDEPENDENT FILM, *GOOK* (2017)



Every summer we get to help equip incoming MSU freshmen with the skills needed to succeed at Michigan State University. **MAGIC** or Maximizing Academic Growth In College is an exciting time where future leaders begin their college journey. Our program introduces these fresh-minds to a network of support and resources centered on academic, professional, career, social, and financial success. We encourage students to break out of their comfort zone, meet people different from themselves and find positive ways to make themselves memorable.

Through the help of a network of faculty and staff on and off-campus resources as well as the support of Peer Assistants, these MAGIC students have a support system before their first day of college.



## Maximizing Academic Growth In College



## Maximizing Academic Growth In College

### WORKSHOPS...

- "MAKING THE MOST OF DIVERSITY FOR COLLEGE SUCCESS"
- "PROFESSOR EXPECTATIONS"      "THE REAL DEAL"
- "I WANT MY OWN ROOM!"      "WRITING IN ACADEMIA"
- "HEALTHY CHOICES FOR BODY AND MIND" and more...



# Dia de la Mujer Conference

On April 7, 2018, we celebrated the 25th Annual Dia de la Mujer (DDLM) Conference at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center. Featuring a variety of professional conference workshops aiming both to educate and empower Latinx women, the day was spectacular. This year's theme "Reimagining Latinidad" reminded us that we must celebrate the diversity and complexities of Latinx women.

Each year, the DDLM conference features vendors from the community that include educational non-profit organizations as well as local artists representing their cultures through their art. The packed conference had nearly 500 in attendance that encompassed K-12 girls, college students, mothers, and grandmothers.

The luncheon is always a highlight and featured a phenomenal keynote speaker, Peggy Robles-Alvarado, tenured New York City educator and award winning poet, blew away the audience with her moving and inspiring spoken word poetry. Other highlights to the conference included the recognition of several outstanding leader awards including the Maria Zavala award, named after the founder of the DDLM conference. This year's recipient was Leslie D. Gonzalez, Associate Professor of Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Learning at MSU.





VISIT FROM WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY'S TRIO UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM



VISIT FROM WEST OTTAWA HIGH SCHOOL IN GRAND RAPIDS, MI

# WELCOMING POTENTIAL, FUTURE AND NEW SPARTANS TO MSU!



SPEAKING TO OVER 100 8TH GRADERS FROM SOUTHWEST DETROIT'S CESAR CHAVEZ ACADEMY



SPEAKING TO OVER 100 8TH GRADERS FROM SOUTHWEST DETROIT'S CESAR CHAVEZ ACADEMY



CAMPUS VISIT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN/BLACK PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS DURING MSU'S "FAMILY DAY."



CAMPUS VISIT FROM SEXTON HIGH SCHOOL, LANSING, MI

# Campus Visits



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



*Study space!*



*OCAT Resource Center!*

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