

State University of New York  
College at Cortland

Welcome to the  
2018  
Kente Celebration

Sponsored by:

The President's Office, the Institutional Equity  
and Inclusion Office, the Office of the Vice  
President for Student Affairs, the Office of  
Alumni Engagement and the Multicultural Life  
and Diversity Office

Karibu Karamu

Ya Wahitimu

April 7, 2018

6 p.m.

Corey Union Function



The students who stand before you today are a reflection of hard work, perseverance, and a commitment to education. This class of students have had substantial intentional engagement in diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice work in their experiences here. I can say with great pride that the graduating class of 2018 has been intentional in being inclusive and willing to do the work towards experiencing human and cultural differences, and improving our campus climate. They have held us accountable in making sure our institution does a better job creating the spaces and providing the resources necessary to assure equitable educational experiences for all of our students. We have gathered together this evening to celebrate an exceptional graduating class and Kente participants, who by their sheer number have changed the face of SUNY Cortland for those coming after them. This year's Kente Celebration is the biggest in the history of SUNY Cortland. We are very proud to have worked with such exceptional students and look forward to seeing how they will excel in their career paths and contribute back to their communities. Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," and I am fully confident that the students who are being honored here tonight are all well equipped to go out into this world and change it for the better!

AnnaMaria Cirrincione

Director of Multicultural Life and Diversity

## The Kente Stole

The Kente stole is a rich, multicolored, hand-woven style of cloth that originated in Ghana, West Africa, and is revered throughout the Africana World. It is traditionally worn during important national ceremonies. The colors, patterns, and ideogrammatic images of the Kente stole impart important information about the wearer and highlight the importance of an event or ceremony. The Kente stole is relatively new to commencement ceremonies in the United States and signifies and symbolizes higher education's connection to the rich cultures, intellectual traditions and academic achievements of the Africana World.



## The Kente Ceremony

The Kente Ceremony symbolizes and commemorates the rite of passage for learners and scholars who are transitioning from institutions of higher learning to the next chapter of their lives. Here at SUNY Cortland, we celebrate all students who made this journey despite and in addition to their marginalized identities, experiences of social exclusion, underrepresentation, historical and current inequities in education, and those here who stood as allies and advocates.

# Program

## Welcome

AnnaMaria Cirrincione, Director of MLDO

## Black National Anthem (Lift Every Voice and Sing)

Song by : Jocenelle Alcime

## Keynote

Garry Morgan

## Dinner

Thank you to ASC for their year long support of MLDO programing

## The History of Kente

Gloria Hulede and Devon Sanders

## Distinguished Stole Presentations

Dr. Seth Asumah

## Kente Stole Presentations

AnnaMaria Cirrincione, Lima Maria Stafford,

## Closing Words

Dr. Erik J. Bitterbaum, President SUNY Cortland

# Keynote Speaker



Garry Morgan serves as the Special Assistant for Inclusion and Diversity Education, within the Office for Inclusion and Diversity at Auburn University. In this role he is responsible for formulating and delivering a diversity and inclusion educational learning strategy to inform and drive change; consistent with the University's mission and strategic priorities.

Garry has earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in both Sociology and African American Studies from SUNY Cortland in 2006. He holds two Master's degrees in educational leadership and policy and clinical mental health from the University of Buffalo and North Carolina State University, respectively.

A native Brooklyn-nite, Garry spends his time hunting for the best pizza and bagels in Alabama with his wife Dawn and daughter Maya.

## The Distinguished Honorary Stole



The distinguished stole presentation goes to an administrator who has shown great commitment to the persistence and success of underrepresented students at SUNY Cortland. As the Kente Celebration honors the student journey, we also want to make sure that those who supported that journey are visible as well. We hope that those receiving stoles will wear them in solidarity at the graduation commencements this year and in the future.

We are honored to present this years distinguished honorary stoles to Dr. Alexis Blavos, Dr. Jena Nicols Curtis, Dr. Yomee Lee, Patricia Martínez de la Vega Mansilla and Lima Maria Stafford

Class of 2018



**Kimberly Adiyia** is graduating with a BA: Sociology. Kimberly was a legal intern for the Public Defenders office, Student Delegate at Model United Nations, President of the Pan-African Student Association, member of the Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society and Sigma Alpha Pi Honor Society. After graduation Kimberly plans to attend law school. Dr. Seth Asumah will be presenting the stole.

**Melissa Aguirre** is graduating with a BS: Physical Education. Melissa made the Dean's list for the FA'14, FA'16, and SP'17. Melissa was the treasurer of APEM Club, received the Iris Stedner scholarship, received the Excelsior Scholarship, was a JB Nash award nominee, was a candidate for SHAPE America Outstanding Major of the Year Award, received the EDU 256 Portfolio showcase honor, received the Edward J. Walsh Ed. D'45 Scholarship, and is a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success. After graduation, Melissa plans to become a NYC school physical education teacher while obtaining a masters degree. Melissa also plans to become a certified personal trainer. Nia Blackburn will be presenting the stole.

**Jocenelle Sarah Alcime** is graduating BS: Inclusive Childhood Education. Jocenelle is a founding member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. and created the Pyro Dynasty Step Team. After graduation Jocenelle plans to be happy, empower students of color, do community service, perform in concerts and maybe attend graduate school. LaShawnda McClarin will be presenting the stole.

**Karmelisha Alexander** is graduating with a BA: Communications. Karmelisha was the president of the Black Student Union and a Resident Assistant for 2 years. Karmelisha studied abroad in Costa Rica, attended MLDO's Diversity Conference and Diversity Retreat, and is trained in both SafeZone and Green Dot. After graduation, Karmelisha plans to go to graduate school and seek employment. Shemira Busby will be presenting the stole.

**Hillary Alvarez** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Hillary is a member of Chi Alpha Epsilon Honor Society, was the secretary and then vice president for the Pyro Dynasty Step Team, and was the treasurer, president and then senior advisor for Women of Color. Hillary was also a NUFP fellow, an EOP Summer Institute House Counselor and Associate Coordinator. After graduation, Hillary plans on doing fieldwork or an internship starting in the fall. Sujayliz Alfred will be presenting the stole.

**Kimberly Argueta** is graduating with a BA: Exercise Science. Kimberly served as an EOP tutor, became involved on campus through the Voice Office, and joined Sigma Lambda Upsilon, Señoritas Latinas Unidas Sorority, Inc.. Kim gave back to the Cortland community by holding and participating in different community services. Kimberly's plans after graduation is to shadow a Physical Therapist for graduate school and attend a DPT program in hopes to attain a license in that field. Amber Gratereaux will be presenting the stole.

**Mabel Asare** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Mabel is a member of the National Honor Society of Leadership and Success, a senator for the Student Government Association, and student employee for ASC. Mabel made the Dean's list in FA'17. After graduation, Mabel plans to do an internship in a hospital and then enter into an accelerated nursing program to become a RN. Kathryn Coffey will be presenting the stole.

**Autumn Askew** is graduating with a bachelors degree in Adolescence Education for Mathematics. Autumn has made the Deans list, on e-board for Gospel Choir and takes part in Tae Kwon Do. After graduation, Autumn plans to attend graduate school. Autumn could not attend this evening.



**Issa Ba** is graduating with a BA: Criminology. Issa made the Presidents List, interned at the Public Defenders Office, is a Veteran Resident Assistant and took a Jim Mindell Course. After graduation, Issa plans to attend law school and be a firefighter. Erika Fowler-Decatur will be presenting the stole.

**Antanaya Bell** is graduating with a BS: Sport Management. Antanaya has been the Black Student Union President and Treasurer, participated in the Diversity and Leadership Retreats, is a member of the Tau Sigma National Honor Society and has received the Fay/Wolf Award, given by the Sport Management Department. After graduation, Antanaya will be moving to Texas to be with family and start graduate school. Michael Guity will be presenting the stole.

**Adesola Belo** is graduating with a BA: Political Science. Adesola is a SGA Representative for the Political Science Association, represented SUNY Cortland at the National US Model Congress, was the editing intern for the Center for Gender and Intercultural Studies Department, and received the Outstanding Achievement in Public Speaking. After graduation, Adesola plans to attend CUNY Graduate School for Journalism. Andrew Schubert will be presenting the stole.

**Marcus Billups** is graduating with a BS: Sports Management. Marcus made the Dean's list and the President's list, and is in the top 5% of the graduating class. Marcus became a Transfer Buddy and did an internship at the YMCA. After graduation, Marcus would like to be a program director at the Boys & Girls Club. Tyrell Plaza will be presenting the stole.

**Kyron Blugh** is graduating with a degree in Criminology. Kyron has been an intern for the Cortland Police Department and in 2017, was a 3rd place Mr. Move winner. After graduation, Kyron plans on working as a police officer or a correctional officer. Earlene King will be presenting the stole.

**Madeline Brito** is graduating with a BA: Sociology. Madeline had done internships with the Multicultural Life and Diversity Office and the Study Abroad Office, as an advocate for diversity. Madeline was chapter president for Sigma Lambda Upsilon, Señoritas Latinas Unidas Sorority, Inc., was a part of the Caribbean Student Association executive board, has been an Orientation Assistant, worked as an EOP tutor and started the very first Latin Dance Team in Cortland, Ritmo Latino. After graduation, Madeline plans to go to graduate school. Adalina Ramirez will be presenting the stole this evening.

**Danaiya Byrams** is graduating with a BS: Sports Management. Danaiya is the treasurer of the Sociology/Anthropology Club, was on the Presidents List, volunteers for Loaves and Fishes and fundraises for the Cortland Youth Bureau. After graduation, Daniya plans to attend graduate school. Danaiya was not able to attend this evening.

**Travis Caldwell** is graduating with a BS: Mathematics. Travis was an EOP Counselor/Math Tutor, was part of the Gospel Choir and was a member of the football team. Travis is currently part of Teach for America's 2018 cohort and has been placed in South Carolina. Kerelle Caldwell will be presenting the stole this evening.

**Ismet Cavusoglu** is graduating MSc CLED: TESOL— Ismet is the founder of the Turkish Student Association, Gospel Choir member, won the M.O.V.E, leadership award and maintained a good GPA. After graduation Ismet plans to work at a University or a College. Lima Stafford will be presenting the stole this evening.

**Angie Cayemitte** is graduating with a degree in Sports Management. Angie has done an internship at the SUNYAC, and volunteered to work at the NYC Marathon and Syracuse Women's basketball semi-finals. After graduation, Angie plans to travel the world for a year and then seek employment. Marla Hairston is presenting the stole.

**Rosheia Church** is graduating with a BS: Psychology. Rosheia was a Resident Assistant, was part of the Caribbean Student Association and interned at Planned Parenthood. After graduation, Rosheia plans to move to San Diego to start a career in social work and her journey to motherhood. Marshelle Church will be presenting the stole.

**Francine Crociata** is graduating with a BA: Communication Studies. Francine has done an internship with Alumni Engagement and Special Events, and has been a Resident Assistant and a Teaching Assistant. Francine has also won a leadership award. After graduation, Francine plans to pursue employment. Giovanni Quinones will be presenting the stole.

**Jelani Deas** is graduating with a BS: Sports Management. Jelani made the Dean's list. After graduation, Jelani plans on becoming a head basketball coach of a high school. Jevon Smith will be presenting the stole.

**Jerell DeCaille** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Jerell has made the Dean's list from 2016 to present, is the co-founder/1st Vice President of Know Your Roots, is a NUFP Fellow, interned for the Health and Wellness Office, and was a member of the Men's Basketball SUNYAC Championship Team in 2015-2016. After graduation, Jerell plans to attend the University of Oklahoma for graduate school. Sammy Cayo will be presenting the stole.

**Caroline Depestre** is graduating with a BA: Sociology. Caroline made the Dean's List, is a mentor, has done an internship with International Programs Office and is a member of the step team Pyrodynasty. After graduation Caroline plans to attend graduate school for school counseling. Toni Yancey will be presenting the stole this evening.

**Ameer Ellis** is graduating with a BS: Coaching. Ameer competed in the Track and Field conference championship in long jump. After graduation, Ameer plans to attend Syracuse University to get a Masters of Science in Cultural Foundations in Education. Ernest Dailey will be presenting the stole.

**Brianna Evans** is graduating with a BA: Adolescent Education Social Studies/History. Brianna is a C.U.R.E. scholar, presented at an ethnography conference at UPenn, is part of the Urban Education Club, and has visited NYC schools to speak about Urban Education and C.U.R.E. After graduation, Brianna plans to do a fellowship program at Syracuse University for teaching. Diane Carlin will be presenting the stole.

**Gillian Farnan** is graduating with a BA: History and Professional Writing. Gillian is Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society member, Student Activities Board President, Student Government Association Director of Student Activities and intern at the Harriet and Kenneth Kupferbery Holocaust Resource Center and Archives. After graduation, Gillian plans to either go to graduate school to pursue a Masters in Higher Education Administration/Student Affairs or apply for jobs that would focus on event planning in a college setting. Remi Farman will be presenting the stole.

**Jamila Ferrell** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Jamila has done an internship in Health Promotion, made the Dean's List and has been part of Africana Dance performances. After graduation, Jamila plans to seek employment and later pursue a Masters in Public Health. Dora Bracey will be presenting the stole.

**Timothy Francois** is graduating with a BA: Criminology. Timothy has been a mentor for Compass, a youth assist program, interned at Cortland Prevention Resources for family counseling, served on the committee for MLDO's Annual Diversity Conference and was awarded a plaque from M.O.V.E.. After graduation, Tim plans to work with troubled youths in the inner city community. Lima Stafford will be presenting the stole.

**Chelsea Gifford** is graduating with a BA: English. Chelsea has been a Resident Assistant, Career Assistant, Conference Assistant, COR 101 Teaching Assistant, and Admissions Office tour guide. Chelsea has been part of Alpha Sigma Alpha Sorority, Spectrum, and International Awareness Club. Chelsea is in International Honor Society of International Scholars, National Residence Hall Honorary, International English Honor Society, and National Honor Society of Leadership and Success. After graduation, Chelsea plans to pursue employment. Kasana Milton will be presenting the stole.

**Darnell Gray** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Darnell was a Teaching Assistant for Anatomy, made the Dean's List numerous times, is on track to graduate Cum Laude, and is a member of Eta Sigma Gamma. After graduation, Darnell plans to become a nurse and eventually become a nurse practitioner. Leslie Joyner Gray & Dorothy Joyner will be presenting the stole.

**Amorie Green** is graduating with a BA: English Education. Amorie will be leaving SUNY Cortland as a C.U.R.E. Alumni, was involved with the Voice Office in both the Black Student Union and the Pan-African Student Association, was the VP of DRAMA Dance team, and helped the team be recognized as a Sports Club. After graduation, Amorie plans to move from Syracuse, NY to the NYC area, make connections with urban schools and eventually, find employment as a high school English teacher. Avoni Miguel will be presenting the stole.

**Eryn Griep** is graduating with a BA: Criminology and Political Science. Eryn is a Resident Assistant, Orientation Assistant and a SUNY Cortland NUFJ Fellow. After graduation, Eryn plans to attend Syracuse University to pursue a Master of Science in Higher Education Administration. She has received a Graduate Assistant position in the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities at S.U.. Michael Baker will be presenting the stole.

**Taryn Grimes** is graduating with a BA: Political Science with a concentration in Public Administration and a minor in Economics. Taryn was a Peer Diversity Trainer, a member of the Pan-African Student Association, and an intern for Mayor of Cortland, Brian Tobin. In Public Relations, Taryn was a chair for 2 years and a treasurer for one year. After graduation, Taryn plans to attend graduate school for a Masters in Public Relations. Demeeka Finkley will be presenting the stole.

**Lisa Hamilton** is graduating with a BS: Athletic Training. Lisa has been a Resident Assistant, a part of the Athletic Training program and the Dean's List for four consecutive semesters. After graduation, Lisa plans to attend Physical Therapy school and possibly graduate school for Athletic Training with a graduate assistant position. Lisa also plans to get certified in athletic training, aquatic therapy and instrument assisted soft tissue release technique. Lisa was not able to attend tonight.

**Margarita Harper-Ottey** is graduating with a BS: Biology. Margarita has been an intern for MLDO, a member of the SUNY Cortland Gospel Choir, a NYS registered EMT-B and an inductee of the National Honors Society of Leadership and Success. After graduation, Margarita plans to work as an EMT and then attend Physician's Assistant school in NYC. Dr. Peter Ducey will be presenting the stole.

**Sydney Harris** is graduating with a BS: Exercise Science. Sydney has made the Dean's List, played intramural sports every semester and accepted an internship for 2018. After graduation, Sydney plans to attend graduate school and seek employment. Sydney could not attend this evening.

**Shanna Hatten** is graduating with a BS: Biomedical Science. Shanna has been an Orientation Assistant, a Resident Assistant, a tutor in ASAP, and a treasurer of the Pre-Med Club,. Shanna is doing undergraduate research in Microbiology, doing research with Dr. Christa Chatfield and will be presenting the research at Transformations. Shanna completed a healthcare program in Mexico Study Abroad in Cuernavaca Mexico. After graduation, Shanna plans on attending medical school and pursuing a career in Pediatrics. Judy Hatten will be presenting the stole.

**Stephanie Hector** is graduating with a BS: Early Childhood and Childhood Education. Stephanie has made the Dean's List for six consecutive semesters, and President's List two consecutive semesters. Stephanie was President of Gospel Choir and Newman Club, presenter at the NYS Africana Studies Association, presenter at the Transformations Conference (under the Black Feminist Perspectives.) After graduation, Stephanie plans to attend graduate school at either NYU Steinhardt or Teachers College Columbia University. Stephanie could not attend this evening.

**Rodney Highsmith** is graduating with a BS: Psychology. Rodney was a Resident Assistant for Hendrick Hall for four semesters, President of Beta Theta Chapter of La Unidad Latina Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, Inc., a public relations representative for Women of Color for two years, and a COR 101 Teaching Assistant. Rodney was also recognized by M.O.V.E. for being a Man of Excellence. After graduation, Rodney plans will either include doing an internship or attending graduate school. Estaban Ramirez will be presenting the stole.

**Dominique Hinds** is graduating with a BS: Psychology. Dominique has been an Admissions Office tour guide, a member of the Race Project, a Transfer Buddy and an intern at NYPIRG. After graduation, Dominique plans to get a Masters degree in social work or school counseling. Lima Stafford will be presenting the stole.

**Gloria Hulede** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Gloria has served as the Executive VP of the Student Government Association, has received over six scholarships, has maintained a high GPA and remained on the Deans List. Gloria was also recognized by her major department to be an outstanding student. After graduation, Gloria will be interning with a rehabilitation center in Delaware, and then going to a graduate school to specialize in Occupational Therapy. Alexis Blavos will be presenting the stole this.

**Michaela Hulett** is graduating with a BS: Business Economics. Michaela is a member of Chi Alpha Honor Society and Vice President of Omega Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.. Michaela held two teaching assistant positions. After graduation, Michaela plans to go back home and complete an internship at a private boarding school with the Human Resources Department. Mouath Aboufarah will be presenting the stole this evening.

**Tyriek Hunter** is graduating with a Communications Major in Sports Management. Tyriek was VP for the Men's Basketball Club in 16-17, was the men's basketball videographer, and was the photographer for Spring Fling. After graduation, Tyriek plans to attend graduate school and seek employment. Michael Guity will be presenting the stole.

**Shai'an Irving** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Shai'an has been a Resident Assistant, President of D.R.A.M.A. Dance Team, Student Chair of the 2018 Diversity Conference, a fitness supervisor and a Peer2Peer Mentor. After graduation, Shai'an plans on completing an internship this fall 2018 in London, and then go to school to become a physical therapist. Shaniah Irving will be presenting the stole.

**Kiana Jackson** is graduating with a BA: Science. Kiana is President of Woman of Color, and a Black Bird intern. Kiana studied abroad in China and Taiwan. After graduation, Kiana plans to seek employment. Andy Acevedo will be presenting the stole.

**Oni Johnson-Hackle** is graduating with a BS: Biochemistry. Oni lived and participated in the leadership program at the Leadership House, was a SI leader for General Chemistry I and Biological Sciences II, was given the Vanguard Leadership Award, is a member of the Chi Alpha Epsilon National Honor Society and the National Society of Leadership and Success, was a Green Rep for Shea Hall and was a student researcher for the Biochemistry Department. After graduation, Oni will be working as an entry level medical research assistant at Weill Cornell Medical School in the cardio logical development. Tina Johnson will be presenting the stole.

**Marissa Joya** is graduating with a BS: Exercise Science. Marissa was inducted into the Honor Society of Leadership and Success, is a member of the Cortland's Club Gymnastics Team, a member of the La Familia Latina and made the Dean's List. After graduation, Marissa plans on attending graduate school for Physical Therapy. Santos Claribel Cornejo will be presenting the stole this.

**Dominique Kenyatta** is graduating with a BS: Psychology. Dominique has been a Resident Assistant, SCEMS Observer, COR 101 Teaching Assistant, EOP Tutor and SGA Rep for Women of Color. After graduation, Dominique plans to work full-time in California and begin nursing school in January 2019. Christine Matos and Neve Polius are presenting the stole.

**Deidre Kirkem** is graduating with a BA: Psychology. Deidre was president of La Familia Latina, served as a Residence Counselor at Catholic Charities Lawrence House for patients suffering with mental health, presented at the NYASA conference on stereotypes of the black community, coordinated and presented at Kings and Queens conference with fellow members of the Black Student Union on issues of mental health within the black community. After graduation, Deidre received an offer for a full-time position with Catholic Charities, and will eventually work towards a masters degree. Jacob Wright will be presenting the stole.

**Christina Leonard** is graduating with a BS: Exercise Science. Christina has been an executive board member of the Caribbean Student Association, a member of Club Basketball and an executive board member for Women of Color. After graduation, Christina plans to attend graduate school. Patricia Taveras will be presenting the stole.

**Mackenzie Lewis** is graduating with a BS: Chemistry. Mackenzie has been a Resident Assistant in Randall Hall, made the President's List and the Deans List, is a recipient of the Arden P. Zipp Scholarship, and is performing two independent research projects in Inorganic Chemistry and US Defense methods. After graduation, Mackenzie will be working with the US Defense as an intelligence analyst. Kyra Newcombe will be presenting the stole.

**Cristal Luna Marte** is graduating with a BS: Psychology. Cristal was the Vice President of Women of Color for two consecutive years, was an executive board member of the Educational Opportunity Program and a student panelist. After graduation, Cristal plans on taking a year off and to decide what career path to take. Cristal will be seeking employment and then plans to attend graduate school. Kayla Cordero will be presenting the stole.

**Brianna Martin** is graduating with a BA: English. Brianna is a member of the Gospel Choir, has made the Dean's List and was inducted into the English Honor Society. After graduation, Brianna plans to go to graduate school and get a Masters from the University of Albany, while working at the KIPP Foundation Charter School in Albany, NY. Alex Galan is presenting the stole.

**Stephanie Marini** is graduating with a ME: Teaching Students with Disabilities. Stephanie has made the Dean's List every semester, served as the VP for Alumnae and Heritage of Alpha Sigma Alpha, is currently a teaching assistant for an undergraduate course in the Foundations and Social Advocacy Department and is a graduate assistant in that same department. After graduation, Stephanie plans to find a job as a special educator down in the Hudson Valley area. Deanna Goldstone will be presenting the stole.

**Ursula Mates** is graduating with a BS: Physics. Ursula has been a Orientation Assistant, a COR 101 Teaching Assistant, an Administrative Assistant in Higgins Hall, a Director of The Big Event 2018, and a Nu Sigma Chi Re-founding Sister and Chapter President. After graduation, Ursula plans to attend graduate school in Florida and pursue a position in Higher Education. Marissa Cabrera will be presenting the stole.

**Jahniece McCollum** is graduating with a BA: Professional Writing. Jahniece is a three time winner of the SUNY Cortland Outstanding Writers Award, and was an advocate for the addition of Student Loan Lingo in the College Student Planner. Jahniece also served as the Chief of Staff to the Vice President of SGA, Interim Director of Diversity of SGA and Chair of the Elections Committee. Jahniece has advocated and secured vegetarian and vegan options for students at the dining halls with the creation of Nature's plate at Neubig, has presented at the SUNY Cortland Diversity Conference about the spoken issues regarding Men and Masculinity and is a Resident Assistant at Dragon Hall. After graduation, Jahniece plans to either spend two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Ukraine or two years at an MFA Creative Writing Program. Deidre Kirkem will be presenting the stole.

**Brianna McLaughlin** is graduating with a BS: Community Health and a concentration in Allied Health. Brianna was treasurer for Women of Color for two years, is a member of Eta Sigma Gamma (The National Health Education Honorary) and is currently doing an internship at Northwell's Sports Rehabilitation and Therapy Services as an Occupational Therapy Intern. After graduation, Brianna plans on going to Nursing school. NaQuera Roach will be presenting the stole.

**Mary McNally** is graduating with a MS: Management of Leisure Services. Mary is a Graduate Assistant at SUNY Cortland Outdoor Pursuits, president of Inclusive Recreation Club, intern at the Olympic National Park in Forks, Washington, president of Inclusive Recreation Club and certified Wilderness First Responder. After graduation, Mary will be looking for full-time employment in higher education planning inclusive programs and events. Susan Wilson will be presenting the stole.

**Taylor Miller** is graduating with a BA: Communication Studies. Taylor has been on the Women's Basketball Team and served as their Captain. Taylor is a Dragon Chronicles Writer and Study Breaks Magazine Intern. After graduation, Taylor plans to take a gap year and work, while studying for graduate school entrance exams. Lindsey Minor will be presenting the stole.

**Tre Miller** is graduating with a Bachelor of Science. Tre has been a personal trainer. Tre is doing an internship in the fall. Christian Berenuger is presenting the stole.

**Kasana Milton** is graduating with a BA: Communication Studies. Kasana is a member of Alpha Sigma Alpha and has done an internship at Cornell Statler Hotel. After graduation, Kasana plans on seeking employment in Human Resources or Administration. Dana Milton will be presenting the stole.

**Kevin Morales** is graduating with a BA: International Studies. Kevin was the founder of Ritmo Latino dance club and served as an executive board in 2018 for Ritmo Latino. Kevin made Dean's List in 2016 and the final four for Club Lacrosse in 2015. After graduation, Kevin plans to get involved in the school district back home and work in a health related field. Leonard Urbaez will be presenting the stole.

**Daniel Naranjo** is graduating with a degree in Exercise Science. Daniel is the treasurer of Club Soccer, became a member of Lambda Sigma Upsilon Latino Fraternity, Inc., and worked as a personal trainer at the Student Life Center. After graduation, Daniel plans to work at a gym chain as a personal trainer and continue to further Daniel's education in health and wellness. Chakira Hierro will be presenting the stole.

**Kyra Newcombe** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Kyra has been a Resident Assistant, an Orientation Assistant, a Health Promotions Intern, a member of the Alpha Sigma Alpha Sorority and a recipient of the Leadership in Civic Engagement Award. Brooke Stevens will be presenting the stole.

**Jason Niehr** is graduating with a BS: Physical Education. Jason is a member of SUNY Cortland's chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success. Jason has interned with the Multicultural Life and Diversity Office, was a photographer for the Student Government Association, and served as the treasurer for both Men of Value and Excellence and the Black Student Union. After graduation, Jason plans to student teach and attend graduate school. Jeremy Owusu will be presenting the stole.

**Tytianna Noriega** is graduating with a BA: Criminology. Virginia is the recipient of the Non-Traditional Student Award and did an internship with the Cortland County Probation Department. After graduation, Tytianna plans to work in a juvenile facility with challenged youth. Virginia Noriega will be presenting the stole.

**Sabrina Nunez** is graduating with a BS: Speech and Hearing Science and a BA: Spanish. Sabrina has served on the executive board for La Familia Latina, made the Dean's List multiple times, and received the Peter F. Eisenhardt Scholarship for excelling in the Happiness and Society learning community. After graduation, Sabrina plans to attend graduate school to pursue a Masters Degree in Speech and Hearing Science and would eventually like to begin to practice as a bilingual speech pathologist. Luis Nunez will be presenting the stole.

**Dalton Nyumah** is graduating with a BA: Sociology and Anthropology. Dalton received the EOP Silver Academic Achievement Award SP'14, an Outstanding New Student Award SP'14, and the SUNY Cortland Achievement and Leadership Experiences Series Certificate of completion. Dalton was nominated to the SUNY Cortland Chapter National Society of Leadership & Success, Sigma Alpha Pi (2015), worked as a tutor counselor for LeMoyne College's Upward Bound Summer Program as tutor, and received a Certificate of Appreciation as a tutor counselor in 2016. After graduation, Dalton plans to join the State Police to become a trooper. Robert Nyumah will be presenting the stole.

**Goodnews Oji** is graduating with a MS: Community Health. Oji has been the secretary of the Gospel Choir and PASA, was part of the Blackout for Justice March and volunteered at the Compass Youth Assist program about the risk of alcohol and other drugs. After graduation, Oji plans to do a cumulative project with UNICEF and then open a charity organization that will be reaching out to the poor, provide clean drinking water in rural community areas and also deal with environmental issues and malnutrition. Dr. Jena Curtis will be presenting the stole.

**Shakira Overton** is graduating with a BA: Psychology. Shakira has been president of the Gospel Choir, was part of the Youth Compass Program and has won the Student Appreciation Award. After graduation, Shakira plans to attend graduate school, will seek employment and write a book. Shavonne and Christina Overton will be presenting the stole.

**Jeremy Owusu** is graduating with a BS: Kinesiology. Jeremy has been a Resident Assistant for three semesters at Clark Hall, was president of Men of Value and Excellence 2016-2017, and had the highest cumulative GPA for EOP in 2014. After graduation, Jeremy plans on doing a fitness internship in the city, and jump starting a career as a personal trainer. Afterwards, Jeremy plans to pursue a masters degree in Occupational Therapy. Meagan Zayas will be presenting the stole.



**Kathia Parris** is graduating with a BS: Childhood & Early Childhood Education. Kathia was inducted in the Chi Alpha Epsilon Honor Society and the Kappa Delta Phi Honor Society of Education. Kathia has been a part of the Black Student Union executive board since freshman year, completed a Teaching Fellow Internship in Miami, and is a C.U.R.E. Scholarship recipient. After graduation, Kathia plans to move to NYC to teach and obtain a Masters in History Adolescent Education. Luana Braithwaite will be presenting the stole.

**Grace Piacquadio** is graduating with a BA: Speech and Hearing Science. Grace has held an executive board position in the co-educational service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega. Grace was inducted into Tau Sigma National Honor Society and Alpha Sigma Pi National Honor Society. Grace has also worked with the International Programs Office as the Orientation Coordinator for two semesters. After graduation, Grace plans to attend graduate school to obtain a Clinical Doctorate in Communication Disorders and Sciences, and to work at a hospital with at-need youth and adults. Raquel Asher will be presenting the stole.

**Court Pineiro** is graduating with a BS: Outdoor Recreation. Court has been a Cortland LGBTQIAP+ advocate for two years, presented on “My Life as a Transman” to a number of classes, received a full-time internship with Outdoor Pursuits, worked as a staff member for the Outdoor Education Practicum in the Adirondacks and was awarded a Man of Value and Excellence by M.O.V.E. Kate Coffey will be presenting the stole.

**Leslian Ramirez** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Leslian is on the board and is the Educational Chair of Eta Sigma Gamma, a health honorary society. Leslian has made the Dean’s List in FA’16, SP’17 and FA’17 and made the President’s List FA’16. Leslian has also volunteered with Take Back the Night and Eta Sigma Gamma. After graduation, Leslian plans to do an internship, go to graduate school and seek employment. Anneris Corporan will be presenting the stole this evening.

**Navita Ramprasad** is graduating with a BA: Communication Studies. Navita has interned for the Department of Communication Studies, the Health Promotion Office, and the Blackbird Film Festival. Navita is a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, and the National Political Science Honor Society. After graduation, Navita plans on seeking work in public relations and marketing. Will Blackerby will be presenting the stole.

**Marissa Reno** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Marissa made the Dean’s List, is a member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. and worked as a tour guide ambassador. After graduation, Marissa plans to do an internship. Tatiana Gomez will be presenting the stole.

**Sabrina Ribeiro** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Sabrina has made the Dean’s List every semester, and is a member of the Eta Sigma Gamma Honor Society, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Phi Beta Delta International Honor Society and Alpha Sigma Alpha Sorority. Sabrina is a Resident Assistant and is a recipient of the John Fantauzzi Scholarship. After graduation, Sabrina plans to do community health fieldwork in Belize and eventually attend nursing school. Cristiane Ribeiro will be presenting the stole.

**NaQuera Roach** is graduating with a BS: Early Childhood & Childhood Education. NaQuera is a member of an Honor Society, is an AmeriCorps volunteer and was a student employee of the year. After graduation, NaQuera plans to attend graduate school. Brianna McLaughlin will be presenting the stole.

**Kateri Ruebenstahl** is graduating with a BA: New Media Design. Kateri has worked as an Administrative Assistant and a Graphic Design Intern for Resident Life and Housing, was a founder/president of the Cortland Wishmakers and served as the Art Director for SPEAK Magazine (Vol 21 & 21). After graduation, Kateri plans on earning a Masters of Art in Art Education. Kateri would like to inspire young artists to use their creative outlets as a way to spark ideas, make changes, and start important discussions in society. Melissa Gretzler will be presenting the stole.

**Tyrell Ryan** is graduating with a BA: Mathematics. Tyrell has made the Dean's List and maintained above a 3.3 GPA as a math major. After graduation, Tyrell plans to attend graduate school for teaching mathematics at a high school level and play professional basketball in Spain. Taryn Grimes will be presenting the stole.

**Devon Sanders** is graduating with a BS: Business Economics and BA: Africana Studies. Devon was a founder and president of Know Your Roots, a member of the Leadership House, an intern for the Provost and Risk Management Office, and has performed in the Performing Arts Concert Hall in Dowd. After graduation, Devon plans to continue to build his company, education as a professional actor and his financial wealth. Mom, dad and Dr. Seth Asumah will be presenting the stole.

**Pauriany Segarra** is graduating with a BA: New Media Design. Pauriany has been VP of Sigma Lambda Upsilon, Señoritas Latinas Unidas Sorority, Inc., worked as a Resident Assistant for two years, held internships with both the Marketing Office and Student Government Association, been a member of Ritmo Latino, and received the Prof. Fraser Stokes Exemplary Service Award in 2016. After graduation, Pauriany plans to attend graduate school. AnnaMaria Cirrincione will be presenting the stole.

**Aime Sepulveda** is graduating with a Bachelor of Science. Aime has done community service work and taken on leadership roles. After graduation, Aime plans to attend graduate school and seek employment. Shadeh Camacho will be presenting the stole.

**Tevin Smith** is graduating with a BS: Biology. Tevin is a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success, a member of the SUNY Cortland Track and Field team, and a member of the Biology Club. After graduation, Tevin plans on obtaining a job related to biological sciences and working with a physical therapist or veterinarian. Donna Hallett will be presenting the stole.

**Jasmine Sprauve** is graduating with a BA: History. Jasmine was inducted into Phi Alpha Theta, has worked as a peer tutor, was a research assistant for Dr. Randi Storch (History Department) and is a first generation college graduate. After graduation, Jasmine plans to become a foreign service officer (diplomat) or a flight attendant. Geraldine Granger will be presenting the stole.

**Marquis Standard** is graduating with a degree in Sports Management. Marquis is currently the secretary of the Black Student Union, an intern at a sports summer camp and a member of the Caribbean Student Association and M.O.V.E.. After graduation, Marquis plans to do an internship at a sports summer camp. Zachary Gomes will be presenting the stole.

**Brianna Tartt-Taylor** is graduating with a BS: Childhood & Early Childhood Ed (ECD). Brianna has made the Dean's List and the President's List. Brianna was also the VP of the Student Activities Board, a Transfer Buddy and a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success. After graduation, Brianna plans to attend graduate school and teach around the world. Rosemary Johnson will be presenting the stole.

**Cristina Taylor** is graduating with a BS: Early Childhood and Childhood Education. After graduation, Cristina plans on attending graduate school. Shai'an Irving will be presenting the stole.

**Tashania Treasure** is graduating with a BS: Biomedical Sciences. Tashania has had the opportunity to conduct student research, participated in Transformations, attended a Science Symposium, was president of the Pre-Med Club, became a member of the Beta Beta Beta National Biological Honor Society Epsilon Biological Sciences. After graduation, Tashania plans to attend graduate school and eventually become a general surgeon. Dr. Peter Ducey will be presenting the stole.

**Bailey Ward** is graduating with a BA: Communications Studies. Bailey has been a Resident Assistant, was President of SPECTRUM CGSA, was student speaker at the 2017 Diversity Conference, received the Commitment to Diversity Award from Residence Life and Housing and became Event Coordinator for the Blackbird Film Festival. After graduation, Bailey plans to find a job centralized around event planning. Court Pinero will be presenting the stole.

**Malik Watts** is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts. Malik studied abroad in Costa Rica, was VP of the Black Student Union and was part of the Diversity Conference in 2017. After graduation, Malik plans on changing the world through whatever medium may be available. Michael Watts Jr. will be presenting the stole.

**Soleil White** is graduating with a BA: Speech and Hearing Science/Child Development. Soleil was inducted into National Society of Leadership and Success, and held an internship at the Parker School. After graduation, Soleil plans to continue to build a business and brand and apply for graduate school. Rhonda Smith will be presenting the stole.

**Edward Williams** is graduating with a BS: Criminology. Edward is a four-year athlete on the men's Rugby Team (2016 state championship, 2017 conference championship), made the Dean's List four times and is a member of the National Honor Society of Political Science. After graduation, Edward will seek employment in government or pursue public administration in graduate school. Rob Binnall will be presenting the stole.

**Jacob Wright** is graduating with a BA: Philosophy and Africana Studies. Jacob has been accepted to PIKSI Summer Institute, was a co-coordinator of the Peer-2-Peer Mentor Program, and received an Africana Studies "Uhuru" Award. After graduation, Jacob plans to seek employment and then attend graduate school to get a Ph.D.. Deidre Kirkem will be presenting the stole.

**Toni Yancy** is graduating with a BA: Sociology. Toni is a member of the Educational Opportunity Program, was a NUFP fellow, interned a co-coordinator for the Peer2Peer Mentor Program and has been accepted to the Master of Social Work program at SUNY Binghamton, Columbia University and NYU. After graduation, Toni plans to attend graduate school at one of the institutions listed previously. Natasha Stephens will be presenting the stole.

**Meagan Zayas** is graduating with a BS: Community Health. Meagan found a major that she is passionate about and improved her GPA. After graduation, Meagan plans to apply for advanced nursing programs and/or graduate school for public health. Jeremy Owusu will be presenting the stole.



***It takes a village. The increase in diversity of our student population means the MLDO did not support these graduates alone. The students were asked to tell us about one person, either faculty, staff or fellow student, who made a positive impact on their experience here at SUNY Cortland. This is what they had to say:***

Kimberly Adiyia— **Dr. Seth N. Asumah** has made a positive impact throughout my Cortland experience. He was there for me when I need a listening ear and guided me each step of the way. It is because of Dr. Asumah that I have been able to turn my words into actions.

Melissa Aguirre—**Dr. Matthew Madden** has been an important part of my SUNY Cortland academic career. Coming in as a freshman and not knowing my own strengths, I have been able to see myself grow and prosper with his guidance.

Jocenelle Alcime—**Carrie Rood**, reminded me of how capable I am and empowered me to be a future educator.

Karmelisha Alexander—**Malik Watts** has made this college experience one that I truly could never forget. These past four years have been amazing by simply knowing that I had him by my side every step of the way.

Hillary Alvarez—**My friend group** in general has made a positive impact in my experience as a SUNY Cortland Student. In addition to providing constant motivation and support, they've taught me that despite differences you may have from others, you can still learn from and apply their knowledge to your own growth

Kimberly Argueta- One person who has made a positive impact in my experience as a student at SUNY Cortland is my friend **Nadia Manzueta**. We first transferred in together our sophomore year. Ever since, we have been by eachothers' side motivating one another to finish strong. We still from this day lift each other through our good and bad times. I don't know what my experience would be if it wasn't for her.

Mabel Asare—**Kathryn Coffey**. Even though Kathryn is my academic advisor, we were able to build a relationship where I was able to literally tell her everything ranging from academic, financial, and family issues. There were times I felt so discouraged about school but she always encouraged me and kept me positive. With her guidance, I became so determined and was able to make it on the Dean's List fall of my senior year.

Autumn Askew—**My roommate** has had a positive impact on me and helped me greatly during my time at Cortland. She was there for me since freshman year helping me study. We kept each other on track and she's a great person to talk to.

Issa Ba—**Erika Fowler-Decatur** used to be the curator of the Dowd Art Gallery. As a freshman, she provided me with the warmest transition and welcome into Cortland. Throughout my rocky couple of years in Cortland, she constantly showered me with an abundance of encouragement and positivity. She genuinely made me feel that I had undergrad in the bag, despite the several discouraging obstacles. Erika was the exact pump of encouragement that kept the train chugging and for that, she has my eternal gratitude. Thank you, Erika.

Antanaya Bell—**Mike Guity** has been an inspiration for me because he never gave up when things got tough. I can always rely on him for great advice and to lift me up when I'm feeling down. He is one of the reasons why I am so involved on campus and why I have so much love and passion for the Black Student Union. I want to thank him for being such a great friend.

Adesola Belo—My Professional Writing professor **Dr. Kevin Rutherford**. This spring semester will be the third time I am taking a class with him and I have never felt more comfortable and inspired by a faculty member throughout my Cortland experience. It was during the first class I took with him that I realized I want to become a journalist. For a class project, I learned all about the graduate school I hope to attend. I have also learned how to further develop my writing with his help.

Marcus Billups—**Professor Han**, one of the first teachers I had when transferring here. The memory of him telling the class to treat school as your job always replays in my mind.

Kyron Blugh—**My mother** is the greatest influence on my life. She is a single parent of my sister and I. My mom works hard everyday to make sure she can pay my tuition. She motivates me in every way possible. How can I give up on school when there is someone that is killing themselves to send me to school? This woman leaves herself undone just to provide for her two children. Seeing how hard she works inspires me to be the best man I can, and to work as hard as I can. My mother is a very strong woman and a hard worker. She is everything I want to be in life!

Madeline Brito—So many people have made my experience here at Cortland what it is but the ones who have helped me the most have been **Lima Stafford, AnnaMaria Cirrincione and William Skipper**. They have helped me not only as a student here but as a person. They have opened my eyes to the possibilities of my future.

Danaiya Byrams—One person that has made a positive impact on me is **Ryan Vooris**. Dr. Vooris is always willing to go the extra mile to make sure that his students are engaged in the curriculum.

Travis Caldwell—My **sister** made a huge impact in my whole college career, well to be honest my whole life. She made things perfectly clear for me. She paved the road and gave me the confidence to steer. I knew she always had my back even when she wasn't physically here, she would tell me I would finish and to not worry. It always sounded sincere. At times my efforts were feeble but she had a gift of creating fear knowing we were the first generation and have to tell the world we are here, even through adversity would stand in our way. If you're not useful; you're useless. From those words, I knew to always progress.

Ismet Cavusoglu—**Francis Gravano** I had a very bad headache and needed to go to the emergency room at 10 pm. He agreed to take me there. It was so crowded that we had to wait 2 hours to get a treatment. It was around 2-3 am when we left the hospital. He had to go to work 7 a.m. in the morning, but he still stayed there until I was okay.

Angie Cayemitte—**Ms. Connie Primmer** has definitely helped me from the moment I first transferred to this University. She is always patient and very helpful.

Rosheia Church—The staff member that has made a positive impact on me is **Melissa Da Costa Wilson**. Melissa has always been honest with me and given me feedback to grow. She never gave me advice or feedback that would harm me. She welcomed me into her life with open arms and accepted me without judgement. During my most difficult times, she was there through every step of the way supporting me. Because of Melissa, I am a stronger person, and I have learned how to view life from a new perspective.

Francine Crociata—**Samantha Howell** and **Sue Vleck** had a very powerful influence on my experience. They were always positive and taught me a lot about myself and the career I might go into. I appreciated their help and positivity immensely.

Jelani Deas—The entire **EOP staff**, they were always there when I needed advice for both in life and school.

Jerell Decaille— **Dr. Page Dobbs**.

Caroline Depestre—My advisor/professor, **Dr. Anne Vittoria**, has made a positive impact in my experience as a SUNY Cortland student by enlightening me on feminism and helping me feel like an empowered woman. Having taken all of Anne's classes, I feel like my eyes have opened and I am very grateful to have met her and been able to hear the wise things she has taught me over the years.

Ameer Ellis—**Marques Dexter**, former track coach; for helping me believe I'm capable of achieving anything and redefining my idea of family.

Brianna Evans—**Anne Burns Thomas** and the **C.U.R.E. program** have made a tremendously positive impact on my experience at SUNY Cortland since my first semester when I struggled with the transition from high school to college. With her support, both academically and personally, and the support of everyone in the program, I was able to go from academic probation to Dean's List in less than a year's time and continue to strive academically throughout these past four years.

Gillian Farnan — One person who has made a major impact for me at SUNY Cortland is **Mary Kate Boland**. I'm pretty sure I would have never figured out what I wanted to pursue after college without having Mary Kate in my college career. I had the ability to become close with Mary- Kate when she was our advisor for Student Activities Board. I grew from a programming position to eventually president. Getting to learn the basics for SAB made me truly cherish and value just how much work Mary Kate puts into everything. There is always such a positive vibe that radiates off of her that it has made me realize that there are so many great things and it opened the possibility for me to work at a college.

Jamila Ferrell—**Yomee Lee**, because when I first came to Cortland being a student and a women of color, where there was literally not much diversity here on campus, it made me kind of feel like an outsider where people looked at me and my beautiful locks like I was different. I don't think this campus was very welcoming at first to different cultures and backgrounds. I wanted to transfer, honestly, but what made me stay and continue here was Professor Yomee Lee's Africana dance class. I love her and her dance class. She's such an inspiration and a great dancer. I grew up dancing African dance so when I heard about this class, I joined right away and she made me feel like I was at home and comfortable, which I liked a lot and will never forget.

Timothy Francois— One person who has made a positive impact on me in my experience as a SUNY Cortland student would be my friend **Kevon Foster**. He showed me the ropes to adopting to different cultures and being more open-minded to many new activities around me.

Chelsea Gifford— **Dr. Tyler Bradway**, of the English Department, has significantly impacted my time here at Cortland. Dr. Bradway has helped shaped me into the person and academic I am today. Throughout the various courses I have taken with Dr. Bradway, he has helped me discover my true passion for gender and sexuality studies. He encourages me to be the best student and person I can be. It is because of him that I remain passionate and create goals centered around this specific area of study. I truly credit Dr. Bradway with all of my successes thus far in my academic life.

Darnell Gray—**Professor Carrie George** opened my eyes to loving anatomy, a class in which I feared taking my freshman and sophomore years at Cortland. The knowledge and confidence she instilled in me, while taking her class and working side by side with her as her TA, is something I will carry with me throughout my career and future in the health field.

Amorie Green-**Anne Burns- Thomas** is the director of the **C.U.R.E. Program**. During my two years as a C.U.R.E student, she has pushed me to go above and beyond regarding my academics and being a student leader. Anne provided me with support and guidance through my journey. She has revealed things about me that I did not know myself. I am appreciative for Anne because she believed in me.

Eryn Griep— **Michael Baker**. Mike has always been there for me, regardless if he was my Resident Hall Director or not. I would not be half the woman I am today, without his unwavering support.

Taryn Grimes-**Tyrell Ryan**— Has had a positive impact on my experience at SUNY Cortland because not only is he my best friend but also a major support system. I can count on him to help motivate me and push me to step outside of the box. Most importantly, he has helped me on my journey with building a relationship with God and keeping him first in everything I do.

Lisa Hamilton- Professor **Alyson Dearie**. Alyson has impacted me throughout my time in the athletic training program because she is a very positive person. Her door is always open and she was available to me when I needed to talk. She is able to calm me down during stressful times and she gives great advice. She is the reason I finally decided to go to physical therapy school because she made me think about the long term goals I have for myself. She talks to me with respect and she is a very caring person.

Shanna Hatten—My **supervisors at Career Services** have made such a positive impact in my experience as a SUNY Cortland student because they have always been supportive in my goals. Their motivation has given me the confidence to pursue and obtain numerous leadership positions on campus. **Meredith Morell**, my most recent supervisor, invited me to be the guest speaker at the Student Employees Award Ceremony, where I shared with everyone just how much I grew as an individual working in this office around such uplifting and encouraging staff. Meredith easily became one of the most trusted individuals I have gotten to know in Cortland and I could always count on her for advice. I began working at Career Services my freshman year through work study and ended up developing my confidence and communication skills for the next four years of my life.

Margarita Harper-Ottoy— There have been so many people that have influenced me here at Cortland, so I will single out a few. **AnnaMaria**, for always being a listening ear and motivating me to keep pushing forward, when all I really wanted to do was quit. **Dr. Ducey**, for bolstering my love for biology and for always believing in me regardless of what my academics showed. And to **Druscilla Dickson**, for keeping me accountable for my actions and for never softening the truth.

Sydney Harris—Faculty, **Kate Polasek**. She was my professor for two classes and made me see things in a different light. I could go to her for help with any topic/class and she would be there. Not only was she helpful but was truthful as well. She is very caring and considerate. When I was failing, she helped but made me realize I also had to help myself.

Stephanie Hector—As a fellow SUNY Cortland student, fellow Education major, and as my best friend, **Jocenne Sarah Alcime** changed my life from the minute we became friends. As a transfer student and president of Sigma Gamma Rho, she was a constant role model of how to juggle academics and extracurricular activities. She is always around for a burst of positivity, a laugh fest, or for a shoulder to lean on. I don't think I would have ever made it through Cortland without her, and will always be immensely grateful to have her in my life.

Rodney Highsmith— I think one person who has made an effect on me is **Miguel Elies Montaz**. He is a Cortland alumn and the reason I say he has made a positive impact on me is because he is the first person to show me what brotherhood is and really made open up to people.

Dominique Hinds- **Lima and AnnaMaria**, both who work in the Multicultural Life and Diversity Office. These two women gave me hope in times of doubt, light in times of dark, and always directed me to positive ways of thinking when I was faced with negativity in my life. This made my transition to SUNY Cortland a lot easier because I felt as if I became a part of a family who genuinely cared about me.



Gloria Hulede— **Dr. Alexis Blavos** has made a positive impact in my life because she treated me like a daughter even though I was one of her advisees. She is a kind-hearted, caring and beautiful person who believes in equity and social justice. She helped me succeed academically, and is always available whenever I need her, even when its not related to academic advising. I am very glad I met her during my stay at Cortland, and I will forever be grateful to her.

Michaela Hulett—**Amy Dahlman** has had positive impact on my experience at SUNY Cortland. She has been there to help guide me through any situation whether it be academics or just a personal problem that I am facing, and she wont stop until the problem is solved. It was really great always having someone on my side.

Tyriek Hunter- **All of the women in my family** have had a positive impact on my experience at SUNY Cortland but one woman I have to say who has had the most and has had my back from the beginning is my **mother**. Even when hearing I had to do an extra year, she still stood behind me and helped me not feel negative about it. One thing I have always remembered is what she told me when I was feeling down about doing an extra year. She said: "God gives his toughest battles to his strongest soldiers." When she told me that, my eyes opened up to a lot of new goals and objectives entering my last year at Cortland.

Shai'an Irving— Honestly, there has been more than one person that has made a huge impact on me during my experience at SUNY Cortland but I will just mention two. First, my Residence Hall Director, **Christine Matos**, has been a positive influence by guiding me and helping me with any problems I have brought her way. The second person is my dear friend, **Michelle Candelo**, that graduated last year. She always encourages me to be positive, persevere and to remember the end goal. Both of these people have helped me in different ways to be successful at SUNY Cortland.

Kiana Jackson— **Elite 18**, is a group of individuals who truly made my experience here at Cortland unforgettable! If it was not for this group of individuals, I truly believe that my experience could not have compared to my last four years! Cheers to friends, family and many more experiences.

Oni Johnson-Hackle— One person that has made a positive impact on my college experience is the head of my department, **Dr. Gregory Phelan**. There have been times were I felt that I wasn't going to be successful. I thought that after I graduated I wouldn't be able to get into medical school, graduate school, or get a successful job. But he made me believe that I have the skills and grit to do so. I am forever thankful for that boost in confidence because it has helped me many times throughout my college career.

Marissa Joya—**Professor Manuel Frank**, who was first my professor for statistics in kinesiology, had an immense impact in my time at SUNY Cortland. He showed genuine interest in the success of his students and was always involved with his students when they needed help. He always preferred to be called "Coach" because that is the type of influence he wanted to have. He cared and always pushed me to reach my full potential in and out of the classroom.

Dominique Kenyatta-I am grateful for everyone I've crossed paths with at SUNY Cortland, especially my **staff** at Shea Hall, **Jordan Sanders**, and **Neve Polius**.

Deidre Kirkem—**Dr. Asumah** truly has made a positive impact on me because when I first came here I had no idea where I wanted to go. I made wrong choices for the wrong people. It wasn't until I started taking classes in Africana Studies during my sophomore year, that I actually loved going to class and presenting what I've learned. I started to have an idea of the direction I want to take in life. I also must thank **Dr. Ouellette** for helping me understand that doubting myself is the best way to stop myself from succeeding. They each made me feel proud of myself for doing what I wanted to do.

Christina Leonard—**Dr. Gravani**, has had a positive impact on my life at SUNY Cortland. She has been there for me throughout my time in Cortland.

Mackenzie Lewis—**Kyra Newcombe** has made one of the most positive impacts on my experience as a SUNY Cortland student. She has pushed me to grow, challenged me to become a better person, influenced me to become more involved on campus and has unwaveringly been by my side through it all. She is the most compassionate, genuine, amazing person I know and makes me want to be better myself. I know she may dream of changing the world, but what she doesn't realize is that she has already changed mine.

Cristal Luna Marte—There are multiple people at this school that made a positive impact on my experience as a SUNY Cortland student, like **my friends**. They all have achieved and grown so much these past four years, all while keeping a positive mind. They are an amazing group of friends, that I am so glad I met.

Stephanie Marini—One person who truly made a positive impact on my SUNY Cortland experience is **David Smukler**. He was my undergraduate advisor and was incredibly supportive throughout my participation in the IEC program. He is insightful and shows he truly cares. He is an outstanding professor and an even greater person.

Brianna Martin—My best friend, **Travis Caldwell**, who is a former student, taught me a lot about myself and helped me grow as an individual, not limiting myself to the boundaries society had set for me. I started college with him in 2013 at Morrisville State College, and I will always be grateful for our friendship. I will also never forget his unwavering and annoying ability to ALWAYS tell me what I need to hear and not what I want to hear.

Ursula Mates—**Marinda Suova** has given me many opportunities and acted almost as a mentor to me. She also took the responsibility of becoming the advisor of Nu Sigma Chi and being a resource for us. She is such a positive employee of the Cortland Campus and is such an inspiration with how kind she is. She also opened my eyes to my involvement in higher education and brought about my realization that I want to pursue a degree in Higher Education.

Jahniece McCollum—There is no single person that has been a driving force in my life, but rather a **community** of co-workers, professors, and sisterhood. I think about the guy who encouraged me to reapply for the RA position after multiple waitlisted letters. To my surprise not only did I get the RA job, but this person ended up being my first co-RA. It is the small sisterhood that I found here made up of great women who I can disagree, laugh with and have deep conversations with. Lastly, the professors that have reminded me that I am great and have given me honest realistic advice in my time of need.

Brianna McLaughlin—**Amy Dahlman**, my EOP advisor, has motivated me throughout my college career to become a better student. She pushed me to do things that I thought I was incapable of achieving.

Mary McNally—The first person I met at Cortland, and who still impacts my life today, is my academic advisor and department chair, **Sharon Todd**. Sharon has always fully supported me and gone out of her way to make sure I feel like Cortland is my home away from home.

Taylor Miller—**Lindsey Minor** has shown me what it is to be a true friend. Anytime things got rough for me and I didn't know what to do, I knew I could always count on her for advice and guidance. Lindsey gave me the confidence I needed whenever I was nervous about challenging decisions I had to make. She is a selfless person who aims to better the lives of everyone around her in any way she can.

Tre Miller—**Marc Dearstyne** has made a positive impact in my life here at SUNY Cortland. My first two years of college, Marc was the one who really pushed me to focus on my schoolwork and studies. He was always there for when I needed to talk and when I was in a bad spot. He had a major impact on my life while he was here.

Kasana Milton—One out of many people who have impacted my life at SUNY Cortland was a student I met in my first semester after transferring. **Vittoria Volpe '17** was an RA, an EMS volunteer, member of the Psychology club, a sister of Alpha Sigma Alpha, and I'm sure was involved in two handfuls more of on campus activities. She and I finally spoke to each other after a couple of weeks of scoping out each other. We talked with each other at the dining hall for three hours. We bonded over being multiracial, but "not looking it" by society's standards. Her friendship in Cortland meant so much to me because we helped each other embrace our cultures and embrace our individuality through being there for each other. Tori's friendship is one that will last through the test of time, and I am honored and grateful to call her my sister. Tori's first impression on me at Cortland opened my eyes to all of the good that this school had to offer.

Kevin Morales—The entire **Educational Opportunity Program staff** has had a huge impact in keeping me afloat and on top of everything. Without them I would not have survived a new environment with complete strangers.

Daniel Naranjo—Fellow student, **Joel Hernandez**, has had a positive impact on me since the day I met him. He's become a close companion from the start whom I can connect with at various levels.

Kyra Newcombe- **Brooke Stevens** has made a tremendous impact on my life through her leadership and compassion. She has been my rock and life coach for the past two years here at SUNY Cortland, and has stuck by my side through thick and thin. I know that I would not be where I am standing today if it wasn't for her.

Jason Neih-**Lima Stafford** has played a huge role in my time here at SUNY Cortland. She is a mom and a friend at the same time. She is always making sure that I have my life under control and is willing to help every time it wasn't.

Tytianna Noriega—**Dominique Hinds**, a student, has had a positive impact on my experience here at SUNY Cortland. He always picked me up when I was down and always provided an ear to listen, along with a mouthful of kind, wise words. Surround yourself with people who have the same motivation as you. **Jeremy Jimenez** also had a phenomenal impact on my experience at SUNY Cortland. He was very open-minded towards different cultures, diversity, and upbringings of the students in his class. I can tell he was there to impact his students for the long run and genuinely wanted to see them be great.

Dalton Nyumah- One person that has made a positive impact on my experience here at SUNY Cortland has been **Dr. John Sosa**. He has been a strong guiding light throughout my time here. He has counseled me to make decisions that have proven to be in my best interest again and again. He's a kind and nurturing soul. I would like to give honorable mention to the **EOP program** and all of the staff members who have always been by my side pushing me along as best as they could no matter what was going on. Another honorable mention goes to all those who took the time out of their lives to form a connection with me over the course of my stay here.

Sabrina Nunez- **Nikolay Karkov** was one of my first professors at SUNY Cortland. He helped me transition to the new environment seamlessly. He was the first person to make me feel like I fit in here. He was extremely encouraging and always around to talk, whether it be about school, or about something more personal.

Goodnews Oji-**Dr. Jena Curtis**, has made a positive impact on my time here at SUNY Cortland. She is my advisor and is like a mother to me. She is always ready to help and listen to me when it. She's a strong woman and my role model. I love her.

Shakira Overton- **Lima Stafford** has made a positive impact on my time here at SUNY Cortland. She has helped me become a better president for the Gospel Choir and she has showed me how to be more organized.

Jeremy Owusu—One person who has made a positive impact on my experience as a SUNY Cortland student is **Dr. Page Dobbs**. Dr. Dobbs is an amazing and caring professor who was always there to listen and give advice when possible. The three classes I have taken with her have been great and she has taught me a lot on how to be a better, more caring and patient individual and how to never give up. She does not know this but she has impacted my experience as a student in the most positive way here at SUNY Cortland.

Kathia Parris—All my friends impacted my experience as a SUNY Cortland student because we shared experiences, and adventures I never would have imagined. I have also been impacted by specific professors/faculty members on campus such as **Dr. Brian Barrett, Dr. Anne Burns Thomas, Dr. David Richards, Dr. Brendan McQuade, Amy Dalhman, Marc Dearstyne, and Sandra Wohlleber**.

Grace Piacquadio—One faculty member that has made a positive impact on me is **Mrs. Grantham**, my advisor. She has encouraged me to continue on with my career path, despite some setbacks I encountered along the way.

Court Pineiro—The person who has made a huge positive impact on my life in and outside of my SUNY Cortland experience is **Kate Coffey**. I met her my first year in Spectrum, where she asked me to come in and present to her human sexuality class for the first time. Doing this allowed me to work on public speaking skills while educating others and breaking down common stereotypes about those who identify as Trans\*. I have had the pleasure of speaking to hundreds of students because of her and letting people see who I am and that being trans is only a part of me. It is not all that I am and the same goes for others within the trans community.

Leslian Ramirez—**Dr. Alexis Blavos**, has made a positive impact on my experience because of her positive determination to better Public Health.

Navita Ramprasad—**Jennifer Wilson**, the Associate Director for the communications office has influenced and taught me a lot in my perspective field. During my internship, she guided me and taught me useful information to help improve my writing skills. She made me see that I do have what it takes to be an efficient writer after college. She also gave me reassurance that I should not be scared to graduate and that I am ready for what is ahead.

Marissa Reno—One person who has made a positive impact on me during my time at SUNY Cortland is my advisor, **Dr. Blavos**. She always has open arms and is willing to hear you out, no matter if the situation is related to school or life in general.

Sabrina Ribeiro—My **Residence Life staff** has positively impacted my experience at SUNY Cortland. We all come from different backgrounds and have many demographical differences. However, I have never met a group of people who have been so positive in my life until my last year here. They are not only great staff members and friends, but great mentors. I am one of the oldest on my staff yet my staff members don't let that age difference become apparent. We all use our strengths to help one another and after coming back from abroad and going through culture shock, these individuals served as a backbone for me. As a veteran on staff, it has been a pleasure to not only share my experiences and knowledge but it has been heartwarming to see each and every one of them grow academically and personally. Two individuals on my staff, **Jackie Bors and Kaitlyn Otero**, have shed light into my SUNY Cortland life that I never thought could

NaQuera Roach—During my time at SUNY Cortland, **Diane Richards**, of the Education Department, has positively impacted my experience. During a rough time in my life, she was there and showed me the sincerest empathy and gave me a shoulder to cry on.

Kateri Ruebenstahl—One person who has made a positive impact on my experiences at SUNY Cortland is my Residence Hall Director, **Melissa Gretzler**. While working as a Resident Assistant, Melissa has been a role model in my life as she is always caring, supportive, and pushes me to be the best that I can, both academically and personally. I appreciate Melissa's support and encouragement as she often has confidence in me to take on projects that may be outside of my comfort zone, leading to life changing experiences. My experiences at Cortland would not be the same if it weren't for the immense positive impact Melissa has had on my time here.

Tyrell Ryan—**Taryn Grimes** has made a positive impact on me because she always believed in my ability to succeed at times where I found it hard to believe in myself.

Devon Sanders—**Dr. Seth Asumah** has made a lasting impression on my life. As a young man, I met him as a resident of the Leadership House. I had to take his class and I loved his teaching. From there I was on course to graduate with a Business Economics degree, but not on Dr. A's watch. He would soon encourage me to declare a minor, and then a major in Africana Studies. Being the student that I am, I took the opportunity to learn. It is in this decision that I am most thankful, for it has shaped my manhood. I know now, more than I could have ever learned by graduating with that major a year ago. I thank you Dr. A for this opportunity and every opportunity to come that will sprout from our relationship.

Pauriany Segarra—**Ralph Carrasquillo** has made my experience in Residence Life one of a kind. He always cares about everyone on a personal level and it makes the job that much more magical.

Aime Sepulveda—**Marc Dearstyne** is a positive person and with his positivity he motivated me to never give up and pursue my dreams.

Tevin Smith—One faculty member that made a positive impact on my experience at SUNY Cortland was **Professor Carie George**. Ms. George was one of my first professors when I transferred to Cortland. She was my Anatomy & Physiology I & II professor. She was very proud and encouraging of my love of A&P and firmly believed I would be successful in any career path I chose. Ms. George also cared about my personal life and well being. She always asked about how I was settling into school and she encouraged me to get involved in the campus community, not just in sports. Her impact on my time at Cortland is something I am thankful for and will carry on with me on my journey ahead.

Jasmine Sprauve—My adviser, **Scott Moranda**, has helped me through two major changes and the addition of a minor. Without him, I would probably be going on to my sixth year here at SUNY Cortland

Marquis Standard—One person who has had the most positive impact on me has been **Jaclyn Lawrence**. She was my event manager and she always made me feel like I was ahead of the game. She always pushed me to do my best and gave words of encouragement. She always made me believe that I can make it out in the real world ahead of others.

Brianna Tartt—Taylor—**Professor Kennedy** (in the Childhood/Early Childhood Education Department), not only gave me more insight of what my future holds in the teaching field, but also cared for me during a time where it was needed most. She's a professor that not only cares for her students, but also is an amazing person overall, which impacted me the most during my time here at Cortland.

Cristina Taylor—**Shai'an**— She always tries to get me involved even in the small things. She's like the Yin to my Yang!

Tashania Treasure—I value the contributions of each of my professors equally. Each has had a positive impact on my academic experience and has taught me valuable life lessons. However, one faculty in particular, **Dr. Peter Ducey**, has been particularly encouraging. Dr. Ducey was my professor freshman year for Biology.

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Edward Williams—**My father** had a positive impact on me because he helped me through all my academic hardships and gave me the strength to push through.

Toni Yancy- **AnnaMaria Cirrincione** has been a motivating and inspirational force in my life that inspired me to want more for myself and others. Seeing a Latina woman reclaim her identity through different avenues such as holding a leading position in the MLDO office, continuing her education (PhD) and constantly establishing goals for herself for the betterment of SUNY Cortland, speaks volumes and I am grateful to watch her grow. She has been a great mentor and I am so excited to share my journey into adulthood with her.

Meagan Zayas—One person who has made a positive impact on my experience as a SUNY Cortland student is **Dr. Page Dobbs**. Dr. Dobbs is an amazing and caring professor who was always there to listen and lend advice when possible. The three classes I have taken with her have been great and she has taught me a lot on how to be a better, more caring and patient individual and how to never give up. She does not know this but she has impacted my experience as a student in the most positive way here at SUNY Cortland.

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*C*ortland <sup>SUNY</sup>