

November/
December 2014
Volume 4, Issue 2

2014- 2015 A Look Ahead

New! Starting in spring 2015, the MLDO newsletter will be even more inclusive and will be accepting articles in all languages. If you are interested in submitting an article to the MLDO newsletter in your native language, please email

Rachael.forester@cortland.edu.

All languages are accepted and encouraged! Videos in ASL can also be linked to the newsletter.

Thank you to Kelly Kaminski for this wonderful submission.

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=10152924713964283&like=5576625627332654240>

Save the Dates!

Diversity Conference

Saturday, March 28, 2015
Corey Union

Kente Celebration

Saturday, April 11, 2015
Corey Union

For more information, visit our website or contact MLDO at 607-753-2336
multicultural.life@cortland.edu

Sixth Annual Student Conference on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

In the last six years, the Multicultural Life and Diversity Office has offered students an incredible opportunity to expand their resumes, network with professionals from institutions all over the state, and critically think and educate others on diversity and advocacy related topics. The office is currently implementing its **6th Annual Student Conference on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice: *Show Me Your Brave***.

The 2014-2015 student conference theme: “Show Me YOUR Brave” is meant to inspire students to truly think about the meaning of bravery. We want students to challenge themselves to become advocates, allies and active students in society by engaging in difficult conversations around diversity, avoiding becoming a bystander, speaking up when no one is watching, and reflecting on themselves to see just how big their brave truly is. The theme meaning is deeper than just showing others that “you are” brave, but rather taking ownership of the bravery you have inside of you to show others how big YOUR brave is.

As mentioned above, this academic student conference is a rich opportunity for students to build their resumes for graduate school and future job opportunities (graduate students may also present). The conference is completely student run with all student presenters and a student-centered keynote. Students also get the opportunity to work closely with a faculty or staff member on their campus as they prepare for and attend the conference experience. The conference will be hosted by SUNY Cortland on **Saturday, March 28, 2015**. Our Call for Papers and Presentations (CFP) can be found on our MLDO webpage along with our registration link. All proposals must be submitted to multicultural.life@cortland.edu by February 20, 2015. Registration will be open in the near future. All conference participants, including presenters and attending faculty mentors, must register for the conference.

Check out their video online:

<http://www2.cortland.edu/offices/multicultural/programs/student-diversity-conference/>

Please check the last page of this newsletter for the Portuguese translation of this article.

Spectrum presents the 4th annual Drag Show, Circus Exotica

With over 500 audience members, Spectrum’s 4th annual drag show, Circus Exotica, was a success!

Hosted by SUNY Cortland’s very own Ms. Sherry Pie, the show featured three professional drag queens, Kashi Go’Lean, Eva Destruction, and Isis Vermouth, Big Ang from Mob Wives, and two professional body builders. Students watched performances and asked questions from the performers during an education panel. A big thank you is extended to Spectrum, College Singers, MLDO, SGA, MAF, and CALS.



Spectrum e-board, Ms. Sherry Pie, Kashi Go’Lean, Isis Vermouth, Eva Destruction, Big Ang, and Rob.

Call for Papers and Presentations

If you are interested in presenting at the Student Conference on Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice, please visit the website to submit your proposal. http://www2.cortland.edu/offices/multicultural/6th_Annual_Diversity_Conference/call-for-proposals.dot

Date: Saturday, March 28th, 2015
Time: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Location: SUNY Cortland, Corey Union

Each session gives students an opportunity to share their academic work at an academic conference. Both graduate and undergraduate students are encouraged to participate. *Students must seek guidance from a faculty or staff member at their home institution. The faculty or staff member should mentor the students through the process of writing the conference proposal, organizing a panel or presentation on a specific theme, and presenting their scholarship to an audience.* Presenters are still required to pay the conference fee, prior to attending the conference. To be considered, please submit a proposal with the following information:

- Title of Presentation
 - Presenters
 - Institution(s) Represented
 - Faculty/Staff Mentor(s)
 - Specific Learning Outcomes
 - Brief Description for Conference Booklet
 - References or Works Cited
 - Method of Presentation (i.e. discussion, Power Point, activity, etc.)
 - Audio/Visual Needs
- A one (1) page abstract summarizing your research/findings or 3 pages of an existing research paper which highlights your research and findings.*

Submission: A committee will review the first round of proposals on **February 20th, 2015**. Proposals received after this date will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Proposals should be emailed to Multicultural.life@cortland.edu. Proposals will only be accepted via email and in Microsoft Word format.

For more information, please contact: Multicultural.life@cortland.edu; 607-753-2336

Dr. Tim Davis- Faculty

Dr. Tim Davis has dedicated his life to promoting the cause of awareness of people with disabilities. He has done so in the most creative and far-reaching ways. He has been a crusader for this cause across the country and especially here at the SUNY Cortland campus and the greater Cortland area. Tim's leadership and national recognition gives him a unique platform to create the awareness that teacher candidates need to reach all learners. Tim's involvement at the highest levels of his cause gives our students important opportunities to get immersed in the field of adapted Physical Education.

Cathy Smith- Staff

Cathy Smith works unceasingly to encourage everyone to live healthy, balanced lives. She understands that individuals are multi-faceted and that diversity is an opportunity rather than a problem. Cathy participates in the LGBTQ Faculty/Staff Committee, Relay for Life, and other important projects that embody these themes. Cathy is welcoming, supportive, and serves as a great advocate for students, faculty, and staff at SUNY Cortland.

Unity Celebration

The Deans of Arts and Sciences, Professional Studies, and the School of Education hosted another stellar Unity Celebration. With over 35 attendees, keynote Dr. Sam Kelley, Distinguished Service Professor, and student speaker Leah Gelblat, NASPA Undergraduate Fellow, both gave attendees a lot to think about. Each year, the deans recognize students, faculty, and staff for their outstanding contributions to diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice at SUNY Cortland and the Cortland community as a whole. Please help me in congratulating our well deserving 2014 Unity Champions: Dr. Tim Davis, Cathy Smith, and student, Julia Doret. All of our awardees are deserving and have served SUNY Cortland well in our attempt to be a better, welcoming, inclusive, safe community. Thank you to everyone especially Rachael Forester, Interim Assistant Director and Ann Cutler of the Multicultural Life and Diversity at SUNY Cortland.



Julia Doret- Student

Julia Doret awakens classmates and professors to the issues facing minority students at SUNY Cortland and invites positive change in attitudes toward diversity on campus. She dares to speak out, even when she feels isolated in doing so, because she knows that change can only come through awareness. Here at Cortland, Julia is a part of her Hall Council in Shea Hall and talks with the RAs about what can be done to improve relations. In her opinion, if education isn't teaching people to be accepting and comfortable with other cultures, races, ethnicities, and opinions, it is not enough.

Somos el Futuro



The 2014 spring representatives for Somos el Futuro: Sally Velasco, Lisbeth Ortiz, William Hernandez, Noelle Chaddock, Jessica Perez, David Paulino and Ashley Perez.

“Not only was the scenery breath taking, but they actually had the opportunity to sit in their senator’s chair and mirror the process that the actual senators preform to deliver their arguments.”

-William Hernandez

Representatives from SUNY Cortland had the privilege of attending last year’s Somos el Futuro conference that was held in Albany, NY. The conference was sponsored by the Puerto Rican & Hispanic Task Force and was designed to involve students in the City Universities of New York (CUNY) with a real life example of how legislation is passed in New York. It was only recently that the State University of New York (SUNY) had the opportunity to participate in this conference. Even though SUNY was able to participate, there were only a handful of representatives such as Stony Brook University, SUNY Morrisville, SUNY Oneonta and SUNY Cortland. This was an enlightening experience for our representatives because a number of them had little experience with politics prior to the conference. From how political parties form, to the extensive voting process, most of the content was new to us. What was even more challenging is that each representative that attended the conference had to argue a point of view based on the constituents that they represented.

New York was broken down to a number of districts and was assigned to a representative which mirrored the areas that the senators are responsible for. This required the participants to look up their district and find out as much as they can about the people they represent. At first glance, they had to determine who lived there, what the population size was, etc. Once that was determined, it was their responsibility as pseudo senators to determine whether or not the proposed bill would be in the best interest of their people. This required extensive reading as well as heavy debates. The resources that they had at their disposal were the lengthy bill proposal as well as the contact information of their senator to help guide their decision. Once it had been determined whether or not the representatives would support the bill, they had to present their argument in the actual senate chambers located in Albany. Not only was the scenery breath taking, but they actually had the opportunity to sit in their senator’s chair and mirror the process that the actual senators preform to deliver their arguments. Once all arguments were delivered, a vote was casted to determine whether the proposal was passed or denied. Overall, the conference was an excellent opportunity for individual development and a great avenue to network with influential people in a number of areas. If this article sparked your interest, please feel free to contact William Hernandez at William.Hernandez@cortland.edu to find out more information about the upcoming Somos el Futuro conference in the spring of 2015.

Gender Inclusive Bathrooms for National Transgender Day of Remembrance



On Thursday, November 20, 2014, National Transgender Day of Remembrance, different signage was posted on the single unit restrooms on campus designating them as “Gender Inclusive Restrooms” for the day. National Transgender Day of Remembrance is a day in which communities come together and remember people who identify as transgender, individuals who are gender-variant, and those perceived to be transgender who have been murdered because of hate. We must remember that everyday people who identify as transgender are ostracized, bullied, and denied basic human rights. It is our job to speak up, speak out, and be brave everyday while serving as allies for the community.

Residence Life and Housing, the LGBTQ faculty/staff committee, and the MLDO office created this initiative as the first step in becoming a more inclusive campus. Students who identify as transgender face many challenges, including having to decide what restroom to use. The outcome is, generally, that students do not use public restrooms on campus. Although the majority of students do not have to think about what bathroom to use on a daily basis, this is an issue that a student who identifies as transgender may face. This initiative will move forward with a week dedicated to gender inclusive restrooms in the fall and will, hopefully, lead to a permanent change on the SUNY Cortland campus.

Other events that day included, a vigil walk to the LGBT Resource Center, speeches by Staci Draper and Court Pineiro, and a read out of names of those lost in 2014 for being transgender.



Student, Court Pineiro, sharing his story.

“Let’s Talk About Race”

“We can’t move forward as a human race until we talk about race.”
-student participant



“We need to move from ignoring race, to acknowledging it, and focusing conversations on the issues of race.”
- Miriamu Sillah

The Multicultural Life and Diversity staff presented “Let’s Talk About Race” at the November 5 Wellness Wednesday. The program and conversation were well attended and received by students. Student feedback suggests that these are conversations that need to be happening across the SUNY Cortland campus as well as in the broader community. With race at the center of some of the most contentious events in the country in recent weeks, it was an exercise in citizenship for the students at the “Let’s Talk About Race” program. One student said “we can’t move forward as a human race until we talk about race”. He went on to say that he appreciated learning how to talk about race as a white male because “it is hard to talk about when you are always worried about what you are saying and if you are going to offend someone”. Participants were invited to examine their own race and given permission to be uncomfortable during that examination. Rachael Forester of the MLDO office said “it is not something I have to look at every day as a white person, and frankly, it makes me really uncomfortable”. Mariamu Sillah brought her own wisdom and experience to the conversation sharing “we need to move from ignoring race, to acknowledging it, and focusing conversations on the issues of race.” Sillah felt that the conversation on November 5 surpassed other attempts to talk about race that she had experienced during her time at SUNY Cortland.

Multicultural Life and Diversity will be hosting two more “Let’s Talk About Race” opportunities in Spring 2015. Please make sure to join us! #bebrave



Leah Gonzalez Shares her Experience...



“Her name is Atabey. Atabey is a maternal figure, the breeder of Yocahu and Hurican-creation and destruction. Atabey is so important to me because of the aspects of life that her sons represent. She is a metaphor for my Latina identity, which constantly breeds creation as well as destruction.”
- Leah Gonzalez

My Puerto Rican ancestors, the Taino Indians, engraved petroglyphs in stone to represent different aspects of Puerto Rican myth and culture, and I hold my knowledge of these characters close to my heart. One in particular hangs on a chain in my room as a constant reminder of my identity, and the difficulty that that identity holds. Her name is Atabey. Atabey is a maternal figure, the breeder of Yocahu and Hurican- creation and destruction. Atabey is so important to me because of the aspects of life that her sons represent. She is a metaphor for my Latina identity, which constantly breeds creation as well as destruction.

Creation, because my life as a Puerto Rican has allowed me to build my identity through Sofrito spices and Salsa music. Through constant physical affection that American culture lacks, and through a language that resembles silk when spoken out loud. Destruction, because those same elements of my life have been neglected while growing up in White America. My life as a Latina in SUNY Cortland has been more than difficult. I’ve struggled with finding my place between two seemingly opposing worlds: One that has been engraved in my upbringing, and one that surrounds me daily. I have felt verbal discomfort continually, and I’m only now beginning to learn how to address those who are unaware of their ignorance. It seems this school has yet to find a stable balance of significance between textbook American history and the reality of minority groups throughout time. Luckily for me, I’ve been able to take courses such as Dr. Asumah’s Race & Politics one, where I was taught the darker side of cultural imbalance. With help from various professors and patience through explanation, I’ve learned to create an intelligent diverse identity, one based on a perpetual sadness due to awareness of prejudice. That being said, I feel immense empathy for those who come to Cortland confused about their varying colliding personal identities, because this school isn’t always the most welcoming to the “other” group. To be Latina at Cortland means to be self-aware, to understand that most others are not like you. It means self-exploration that can negatively affect you. It means strength, inner strength and hope for a better diversity system. It means patience in knowing which battles are worth fighting. It means work- working for grades while simultaneously working for self-comprehension. In no way am I saying that Cortland is hopeless- as each year has gone on I’ve met more and more students and professors who are willing to try to understand the complexity of being both Latina and American. I’m fortunate enough to have found an acceptance of my multiple identities. I can only hope that those who have felt as lost as I have throughout my four and a half years at SUNY Cortland will one day be able to discover their own balance between worlds which have yet to fully merge together.

Caribbean Student Association

Over the past month, SUNY Cortland's Caribbean Student Association has been working very diligently to put on events for the campus. Starting on November 1st, 2014, CSA hosted their very first Halloween festival, Spooksville. This free event was open to all students, faculty, and family members, since it was concurrently Family Weekend. Many different clubs and organizations also participated in this event, including BSU, PASA, LFL, Women of Color, Spectrum, Sigma Lambda Upsilon Sorority, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, and members of athletic teams. Within the festival, everyone participated face painting, arts and crafts, fun games; such as bowling and basketball, making scary masks, carve pumpkins, and of course, trick or treat. That evening, CSA collaborated with BSU, SPECTRUM, PASA, and MOVE to host a Halloween Bash party, where the proceeds went to Doctors without Borders. This is an organization that provides medical attention to countries around the world affected by conflict, disasters, epidemics, and are unable to provide adequate health care.

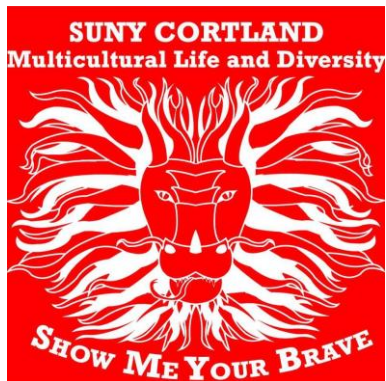
On November 8, CSA also hosted their 11th Annual Music for the Cause Fashion/ Talent Show. This event is one of the biggest productions that CSA has for the fall semester. Preparation for this show began back in September, where they began establishing a theme, finding designers, models, and talents. Both models and talents had countless amounts of practicing hours to prepare for this event as well. Modeling practice was held twice a week for the whole month of October up until the show. Talents ranged from dancing, to poetry, singing, and strolling. The day of the show, putting up all of the handmade decorations took about 3 hours with the help of CSA's loyal members who volunteered their morning. Cortland alumni also took part in the event, holding positions of hosts and judges. At the end of the night, the winners were: Lambda Sigma Upsilon Fraternity Inc., a newly established fraternity on our campus that was founded on November 3, 2014, who took 3rd place, Omega Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. took 2nd place, and Kierrah Titus who stole the show with her amazing rendition of Beyoncé's most famous hits. Proceeds for this event went to the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America.



A message from our office...

Multicultural Life and Diversity want to wish everyone a safe, happy, and healthy winter break.

Thank you for a wonderful semester full of brave moments; moments we are proud to share at SUNY Cortland. Continue to share your stories and continue being the brave students, faculty, and staff we know you to be.
#bebrave



Sixth Annual Student Conference on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

Nos últimos seis anos, a secretaria de cultura e diversidade tem oferecido aos estudantes uma oportunidade incrível para expandir seus currículos, conversar com profissionais de instituições por todo o estado, e pensar criticamente e educar outros estudantes sobre tópicos de diversidade e a defesa de todos humanos. O instituto está a implementar sua 6.ª Conferência Anual sobre a Diversidade, Equidade, Inclusão e Justiça Social: *Mostra-me a sua coragem*.

O tema da conferência: “*Mostra-me a sua coragem*” destina-se a inspirar os alunos a realmente pensar sobre o significado da coragem. Queremos que os alunos tornassem-se defensores e aliados de todos humanos na sociedade, envolver-se em conversas difíceis sobre a diversidade, terem a coragem para não serem um espectador, falando até quando ninguém está observando, e refletindo sobre si mesmos para ver a grandura da sua própria coragem. O significado do tema é mais profundo do que apenas mostrar aos outros que nos temos muita coragem, mas mais tomar responsabilidade da sua própria coragem que um humano tem dentro de você-- para mostrar aos outros como é grande O SUA coragem.

Como já tinha dito acima, esta conferência acadêmica é uma rica oportunidade para os alunos construir seus currículos para a escola de pós-gradua e futuras oportunidades de trabalho (alunos de pós-graduação também podem apresentar). A conferência está completamente feita por alunos com todos os alunos como apresentadores e um discurso centrado para os alunos. Os alunos também têm a oportunidade de trabalhar em colaboração com a faculdade do instituto, para se preparar e participar na experiência da conferência. A conferência será organizada pela SUNY Cortland no sábado 28 de Março de 2015. A Chamada de apresentações (CFP) podem ser encontradas na nossa página do ‘MLDO web’. Todas as propostas devem ser apresentadas ao multicultural.life@cortland.edu por 20 de Fevereiro de 2015. Inscrições serão abertas no futuro próximo. Todos os participantes da conferência, incluindo os apresentadores e participantes faculdade mentores, são necessário registrar-se para a conferência.

If you would like to contribute to the MLDO Newsletter, please email Rachael.Forester@cortland.edu with submissions.