



## Dean's Corner

Welcome back! In this issue, I am pleased to report on recent activities regarding some of our students and faculty and to focus on the work of the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA). This semester, OMA is excited to kick off the 2008–09 academic year in the Kirkhof Center, its new location. In May, OMA moved from Lower Commons to the Kirkhof Center into its newly built and shared space with the Women's Center. On October 7, we invite you to join us (OMA, Women's Center and Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender Office) for a campus-wide Grand Opening celebration.

In June, OMA welcomed Melissa Shelby-Theut, OMA/Excel academic advisor for Freshman Academy. This new position marks an exciting collaborative partnership between the Advising Resource Center and the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Freshman Academy is a support program that offers comprehensive and collaborative services to underrepresented students who have demonstrated strong potential for academic success in college. Students who participate in the Freshman Academy receive intensive academic support while engaging in service to the community and developing skills that will allow them to emerge as leaders in an increasingly global workforce and society.

We invite you join us throughout the year as participants in programs that focus on diversity issues specifically the Professionals of Color Lecture Series. On October 6, the second lecture series, "Does Race Matter?" will open with a review of the Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama's speech regarding race. Immediately following the video is an open dialogue with several distinguished panelists. Please visit our Web site at [www.gvsu.edu/oma](http://www.gvsu.edu/oma) for this event's information.

I would like to recognize and congratulate two Multicultural Cohort Program students, Jeanine Anderson and Markanetta Jones, who recently received scholarships for an LSAT preparation course from Warner Norcross & Judd, a Grand Rapids law firm.

OMA continues to collaborate with faculty members who are doing research related to their academic fields. Dr. Olivia Williams, assistant professor of education, and Dr. Diane Green-Smith, assistant professor of social work, both made presentations at national conferences. Williams' research focuses on segregation (re-segregation) of American schools. Green-Smith's research focuses on HIV/AIDS. Both women plan to share their findings as a part of OMA's Black History Month celebration.

I want to briefly mention about the new Bias Incident Protocol Policy cards. Each office will be receiving new cards. The cards have a new leading line that reads "Bias Incidents - They're No Joke". While GVSU safeguards individuals' constitutional rights and protected speech, the university is also committed to inclusion and equity. Therefore, the university will continue to engage in educational dialogue and seek constructive responses to address bias incidents. I hope that every member of the campus community will partner in these efforts.

Last, as we get closer to the November presidential election, please remember that your vote can and will make a difference. Votes should not be cast on the basis of emotion, habitual disposition, family history or political correctness. We should cast votes based on a respective permanent interest. Please exercise your right to vote.

Warmest Regards,

— Oliver Wilson, Ph.D.  
Dean, Office of Multicultural Affairs

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# Business and Finance Celebrates Diversity

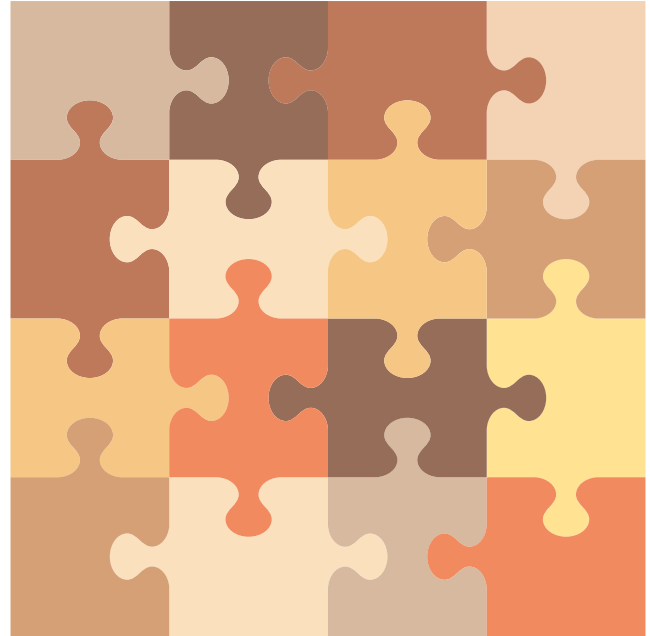
by Martha Moore, Accounting Business Office

In 2007, five staff members from the Business and Finance unit attended the two-day Institute for Healing Racism and were inspired to take action by creating the Promoting Awareness Group (PAG). The mission of PAG is to promote and raise awareness on issues of diversity and inclusion.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs was invited to be a partner of PAG to help implement and facilitate activities that would enlighten the group about inclusion and diversity. The kick-off event was held in June 2007 with discussions surrounding the topics of race and stereotypes. Then, PAG and OMA staff read *How Race is Lived in America*, by correspondents of *The New York Times*.

In June, PAG celebrated its one-year anniversary by hosting a luncheon to plan for the upcoming year. Activities planned for this year include a group reading and discussion on *How Race Is Lived In America*, an ethnic lunch, a geography game and other activities.

PAG thanks Brian Copeland, assistant vice president for Business and Finance, for his continued support, advocacy and participation.



Promoting Awareness of Diversity and Inclusion



Connie Dang

## OMA Staff Serves the Community

Connie Dang was appointed by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm on June 19 as a member of the Advisory Council for Asian Pacific American Affairs. The council was created in 2005 to review and advise the governor of the nature, magnitude, and priorities of policies and issues facing Asian and Pacific Americans in Michigan. The mission of ACAPAA is to advance the full and equal participation of Asian Pacific Americans in "One Michigan."

Asian Pacific Americans are the second fastest growing group in the U.S. and Michigan. As reported by the 2000 U.S. Census, the APA population in Michigan grew to more than 208,000 people, a 101.3 percent increase from 1990. In the U.S., 11.9 million people identified themselves being of Asian descent and 874,000 people as Pacific Islanders, representing about 4.2 percent of the U.S. population. APAs originate from nearly 50 countries and ethnic groups with distinct cultures, traditions and histories. APAs speak more than 100 languages and dialects.

Dang said it will be a privilege to serve the people of Michigan. "I look forward to taking on the challenges as well as the opportunities to build a strong and vibrant community for all," she said. "As Michigan's population increases in diversity, all citizens stand to gain from a better understanding of the APA community. A more accurate public perception of APAs will facilitate coalition building with other ethnic communities, establish more inclusion and acceptance and create a cohesive working, learning and living environment."

## Please join the Office of Multicultural Affairs in extending our warmest welcome to:

### Melissa Selby-Theut



I am a native eastsider—born and raised in metropolitan Detroit. After I graduated from high school, I moved to Chicago to attend Concordia University-River Forest. After earning my bachelor's

degree and teaching certificate, I moved back to the Detroit area to begin my teaching career. I taught literature and composition courses to 10–12th grade students at Oak Park High School.

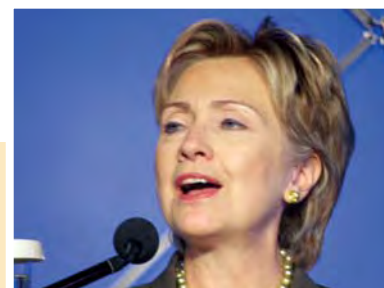
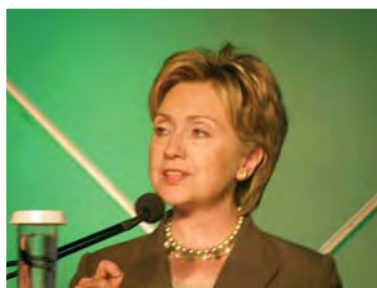
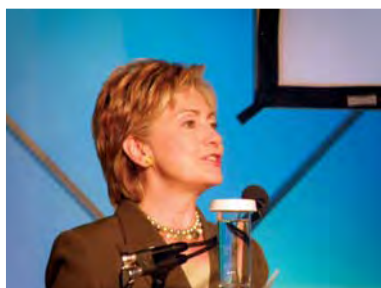
Though I loved my job and knew that I would miss my students, I left Oak Park to pursue a master's of social work degree at Grand Valley. After graduating, I worked as a program developer and therapist. I designed programs for young adults transitioning out of the foster care system and served as a clinical consultant to the Michigan Youth Challenge Academy in Battle Creek. I continue to work with community and state organizations, conducting seminars and planning programs for young people involved in the social service system.

As a proud alumna of Grand Valley, I could not pass up the opportunity to become a staff member. Beginning in 2006, I first served as the assistant director of the Educational Support Program. Recently I accepted a new position, advising students and coordinating the Freshman Academy. This marks an exciting collaboration

between the Advising Resource Center and the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Beginning with the 2008–09 academic year, there will be several significant changes to the Freshman Academy. The new Freshman Academy will be an academic-year support program offered to eligible students throughout their tenure with Grand Valley. Students will receive comprehensive academic support, including advising and tutoring. They will engage in service to the community while building leadership skills, developing professional competency, and participating in activities that promote intercultural awareness. The services offered through Freshman Academy will assist students in achieving academic, personal, and professional success in an increasingly global world.

I am honored to be working with the Advising Resource Center and the Office of Multicultural Affairs to serve the Grand Valley community. Please feel free to stop by the Office of Multicultural Affairs to visit, make an appointment, or ask questions at any time!



## Hillary Clinton at 2008 GEAR UP Annual Conference

Hillary Rodham Clinton's (D - NY) surprise appearance at the NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference in Washington, DC received a standing ovation from over 1,200 GEAR UP participants. Although Clinton's stage appearance was brief, her passion and commitment for making a difference in the lives of youth captured the audience's attention as she thanked and recognized the GEAR UP Community for ten years of efforts around the United States to

provide opportunities for our youth to have access to education.

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federal grant-funded program through the Department of Education designed to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

Bobby Springer, Associate Director of Multicultural Affairs oversees the Grand Valley State University program partnership with the State of Michigan and Grand Rapids Public Schools. Bobby attended the NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference in Washington, DC, whose theme was *Celebrating Our Past Shaping the Future*.



# Office of Multicultural Affairs

## Fall 2008 Programs and Events



**September 17**

### **Professionals of Color Lecture Series**

**Maria Echaveste**

Location: 250 Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

Time: 4–6 p.m.

**September 15  
through October 15**

### **Hispanic Heritage Month**

For a complete listing of events visit [www.gvsu.edu/oma](http://www.gvsu.edu/oma)

**October 6**

### **Professionals of Color Lecture Series**

#### **Panel Discussion on “Does Race Matter?”**

Location: 250 Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

Time: 3–6 p.m.

**October 7**

### **Open House Celebration for the Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Gay, Transgender Office, Office of Multicultural Affairs and Women’s Center**

Location: 1240 Kirkhof Center

Time: noon

**September 20**

### **Annual Intercultural Student Reception**

Location: 250 Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

Time: 4–6 p.m.



#### **OMA MISSION STATEMENT**

*The mission of the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) is to serve as the flagship for diversity initiatives with institution-wide cooperation for developing policies, practices and programs that fosters a climate of inclusiveness. OMA promotes a welcoming environment for faculty, staff, students and community partnerships.*

#### **Office of Multicultural Affairs Staff**

Oliver Wilson, Dean  
Connie Dang, Interim Director  
Bobby J. Springer, Associate Director  
Melissa Selby-Theut, OMA/EXCEL Advising  
Coordinator, Freshman Academy  
Sarah Flinders, Database Coordinator  
Goldie Pritchard, Graduate Assistant

For the latest news and events, check us out on  
the Web! [www.gvsu.edu/oma](http://www.gvsu.edu/oma)

Archived copies of the OMA's newsletters can be  
accessed through our Web site address above.

#### **VISION**

*To promote acceptance and appreciation of  
an inclusive campus community that values  
the diversity of people, backgrounds and  
perspectives of each individual.*



#### **Our Contact Information**

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