

Dean's Corner

It is with much pleasure that the Office of Multicultural Affairs welcomes you back to the 2009–2010 academic year!

This fall semester, I begin by recognizing the historic nature and outcome of the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election. I commend our students for taking active roles in supporting the candidates of their choice. Their involvement demonstrates civic engagement and participation in a just and democratic process of electing leadership. I look forward to their continued involvement and civic engagement during college and after graduation. We know this historic moment will be a significant part of “shaping lives, professions and societies.”

To kick off the semester, please join the OMA by participating in some of our annual signature program celebrations. The Intercultural Student Reception will be held on Thursday, September 17. Also, Hispanic Heritage Month starts on

September 16 with many meaningful events. Please refer to OMA's Web site, www.gvsu.edu/oma, for details regarding these upcoming activities.

On the note of change, OMA welcomed four new staff members this past year: Gricelda Estrada and Kristie Scanlon, assistant directors; Juanita Davis, Freshman Academy coordinator; and Linda Rettig, database coordinator. This fall, Christina Jackson, an alumna of GVSU and the Freshman Academy program joins the office as a graduate assistant. Their biographies are highlighted inside this newsletter.

There are a variety of exciting initiatives that will bring significant change to the OMA starting this semester. The office has completed a self-study report and participated in the UniLOA Assessment, coordinated by the Division of Student Affairs. These processes will help to ensure that OMA meets established standards

of quality and that it continually evaluates the goals recommended for our office. From these assessments come recommendations for improvements or enhancements to existing policies, programs, services and facilities.

OMA staff members will continue to seek collaborative opportunities with Grand Valley's administration, faculty, staff, students, residential community and external community to assist with transforming tomorrow's leaders.

Thanks for your continued support and best wishes for a successful and productive academic semester.

Warmest Regards,

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

OMA staff members,
 left to right:
 Sarah Flinders, Linda
 Rettig, Bobby Springer,
 Gricelda Estrada, Kristie
 Scanlon, Juanita Davis,
 Connie Dang and
 Christina Jackson.



Welcome New OMA Staff Members



Juanita Davis
Freshman Academy coordinator



Gricelda Estrada
assistant director



Linda Rettig
database coordinator



Kristie Scanlon
assistant director

I am a native of Chicago. I attended Triton College in River Grove, Illinois, where I received an associate's degree. I transferred to Grand Valley and earned a bachelor's degree in history. While at Grand Valley I had the pleasure of studying abroad at the American University of Cairo in Egypt; the experience was phenomenal.

I have worked in various aspects in the education field for the past seven years, including as a paraprofessional, middle school teacher and cheer leading coach, and later as an academic advisor at the college level.

Away from work, I have had the pleasure of being a group facilitator and counselor for the Young Ladies Christian Council (women ages 18–21) and Sophisticated Young Ladies (ages 12–15) at Renaissance Church. I have also served as president of the education ministry at Renaissance Church, where programs were devised to prepare high school students for college.

My personal experiences and education have afforded me the opportunity to now work as the coordinator of the Freshman Academy. Working with the Freshman Academy students has been wonderful. It has also been a pleasure to work with the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Advising Resource Center as a resource for the students.

I believe education has the power to change lives and communities, and it is this belief that guided me into the field of higher education. I'm a first-generation college graduate, and a life-long learner. I earned a bachelor's degree in business administration at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. As an adult working professional, I attended Grand Valley and earned a master's degree in education.

Over the last nine years, I have worked in education at various levels. I worked as a counselor with at-risk youth, providing educational guidance and life-skills training; and for a state university in Wisconsin, developing cultural programming, and providing academic support to students and the community. I married and moved to Michigan in 2005, and have continued my work in higher education here in Grand Rapids. I joined OMA in September 2008.

As I embarked on my personal educational journey, I was fortunate enough to have people along the way who helped me reach my goals through support, guidance and encouragement. My goal while at GVSU is to provide the same to our students, and to present them with learning opportunities that will allow them to grow, and take charge of their own education.

In January 2008, I joined the Office of Multicultural Affairs. I had worked as a library associate when I first came to Grand Valley in 2007.

I have a master's degree in education and am a certified teacher. My classrooms have always focused on the individual and our strengths. As a teacher, I incorporated and expanded the theme of celebrating and valuing our differences in my classrooms. I am very excited to be part of the Office of Multicultural Affairs where I can grow and share my experiences.

I will be participating in the GVSU's Padnos International's Faculty/Staff Exchange Grant Program to Ghana, Africa in August. While there I will be working with the University of Cape Coast on a multicultural project, touring the slave trade castles, and getting to know the culture. Upon my return, I am planning on sharing my knowledge and experience about Ghana at Grand Valley's Black History Month Celebration in February 2010.

My home life revolves around my four children, ages 15–20. With my children very active in sports, I spend many hours in the bleachers cheering them on. However, I still make time to attend as many Laker basketball games as I can. Go Lakers!

I am excited to join the Office of Multicultural Affairs. I was born and raised in Greenville, Michigan, and am the youngest of three daughters. I earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Grand Valley and a master's degree in social work from Western Michigan University.

Before coming to GVSU, I served in a variety of roles, including assistant director of Admissions and Orientation, assistant director of Student Activities and Leadership Programs, and executive director of Student Life.

When I am not at work, I enjoy spending time with my husband and our 15-month-old daughter, Katie. I love to cook and will watch anything on The Food Network. I also enjoy photography, scrapbooking, Lake Michigan and Tigers baseball!



2010 Martin Luther King Day of Service

Bobby J. Springer, associate director

The Michigan Campus Compact Campus Engagement Fellows Program awarded GVSU one of five competitive reimbursement grants given to MCC campuses.

The program seeks to build a sustainable culture of service-learning and civic engagement at each of the five campuses that received a grant. GVSU will use its grant funds to coordinate the first MLK Day of Service in 2010. The funding will allow two student leaders to receive training as a Campus Engagement Fellows team member.

The MLK Day of Service will introduce 100 students—50 GVSU students and 50 students from the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs/College Day (GEAR UP/CD) in Grand Rapids Public Schools—to various service learning and civic engagement initiatives. Grand Valley students will participate in activities designed to increase awareness of disadvantaged youth in Grand Rapids, and the GEAR UP/College Day students will receive a hands-on service-learning experience.

“Service learning experiences for many students can be a first-time occurrence,”

said Bobby Springer, GEAR UP/CD coordinator. “The MLK Day of Service program will greatly expand the learning already discussed over the summer through the pre-college GEAR UP/CD program in a unique hands-on way. The students will know firsthand the community engagement message lived by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.”

Working in conjunction OMA and Student Life, two GVSU student leaders will engage the campus and the community in the MLK Day of Service. The MLK Day event will include a local community service project and an afternoon of reflective activities led by trained GVSU students.

“We believe this joint learning venture will be an excellent opportunity for GVSU students to increase participation in winter activities and it will provide both student groups the opportunity to understand the concepts for cultivating active citizenry,” said Valerie Jones, assistant director of Student Life.

The grant’s success will come to fruition through the collaborative partnership of OMA and Student Life through the dedicated leadership of the following staff members: Bobby J.



Springer, associate director of Office of Multicultural Affairs and coordinator for GEAR UP/CD; Valerie Jones, assistant director of Student Life Leadership & Service Initiatives; and Bumni Fadase, Student Life coordinator for the Community Service Learning Center.

2009 Hispanic Heritage Celebration

Gricelda Estrada, assistant director

During Hispanic Heritage Month, the United States celebrates the culture, traditions, struggles and achievements of U.S. residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, OMA has developed a month-long series of events designed to be engaging, educational and intellectual programming. Join us for this celebration! For a full listing of our events, see page 6 or visit the OMA Web site, www.gvsu.edu/oma.

The national tradition started in September 1968, when Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week. Twenty years later the observance was expanded to a month-long celebration from September 15–October 15. September 15 was chosen as the starting point for this celebration because it coincides with the independence of five Latin American countries.

The Freshman Academy

Juanita Davis, academic advisor and coordinator of Freshman Academy

The 2008 Freshman Academy is a cohort program comprised of 70 very gifted and promising students. The program is designed to provide a source of support to its students as they transition from high school to college. There are several requirements for the program, including attending intercultural events, workshops and advisor meetings; participating in study tables; and volunteering.

Last semester, several students were honored for going above and beyond the program requirements. Angie Huddleston and Brionka Mosley accumulated 30 volunteer hours each. Misty Gancarz attended four career/personal development workshops. Maricela Gonzalez and Brittany Rucker each attended six intercultural events. Latrice Jones received the “Koleta Moore Award” for Academic Excellence. V’Lecea Hunter received the “Oliver Wilson Award” for perseverance.

I am extremely proud of all of the students who participate in the Freshman Academy. I look forward to great things happening during the 2009–2010 academic year.

Reinventing the Multicultural Cohort Programs to Achieve High-Impact Learning Outcomes

Connie Dang, director

OMA’s Multicultural Cohort Programs (MCP) aim to build a community of diverse learners who will thrive together and teach one another. Research suggests that an important factor in student retention, persistence and success is the fostering of an environment that encourages students to connect with peers, faculty and staff members.

Based on their majors, first-year students may participate in one of four cohort programs: business, science, teaching and higher education (encompasses the undecided and other disciplines). These cohort programs function as learning communities, providing “safe places” for freshmen students to transition from high school to college; fostering peer-to-peer support; sharing information; and forming networking connections.

More importantly, the MCP offer a cohesive and comprehensive experience linking student development services with co-curricular activities and academic learning. This year, several dimensions of learning outcomes—critical thinking, self awareness, communication, diversity,

citizenship, leadership and relationships—have been integrated into the program’s structure. These learning outcomes create a framework for developing co-curricular experiences and opportunities for students to engage in meaningful connections across campus. Please visit our Web site at www.gvsu.edu/oma to learn more about the cohort programs.

Collaboration is the key to success for the MCP. When administrators, faculty and staff from academic departments and student services units work in partnerships, we can design high-impact learning experiences that provide students with greater opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to successfully complete college and lead in a global and knowledge-based economy.

This fall, OMA welcomes 126 incoming freshmen into the cohort programs. We invite you to work with us to build a seamless transition from high school to college to career for these students and current members of the programs.

communication

diversity

relationships

self awareness

critical thinking

leadership

citizenship

Professionals of Color Lecture Series 2009–2010



Barbara Martinez Jitner

“Wall of Shadows: From the Statue of Liberty to the Border Wall”

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

4–5:30 p.m.

Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center, Allendale

The real life hero of Jennifer Lopez’s film, *Bordertown*, Martinez Jitner posed as a factory worker on the US/Mexico border in order to uncover a dark world of grueling poverty and sexual abuse that leads to murder. The film was inspired by Martinez Jitner’s critically acclaimed documentary, *La Frontera* which was released in 2007. Barbara Martinez Jitner is one of the first Latina executive producers of a prime time network television series. Martinez Jitner is also the first Latina ever to be nominated for both a Golden Globe and an Emmy as an executive producer/writer/director for a miniseries, *American Family*. Jitner shares her film, *Wall of Shadows*, and discusses both sides of the wall. She poses questions of who we are and where we are heading as America decides to complete or tear down the wall.



William F. Pickard

“Entrepreneurship in the Global Economy”

Thursday, November 5, 2009

6–7:30 p.m.

Loosemore Auditorium, Pew Campus, Grand Rapids

Presented in collaboration with Seidman College of Business



William F. Pickard, Chairman and CEO of VITEC, has a 30-year background as an entrepreneur. He focuses on innovative business development, team building and long-term strategic planning in his various enterprises. Dr. Pickard holds a bachelor’s degree from Western Michigan University, a master’s degree from the University of Michigan and a Ph.D. from Ohio State University. William F. Pickard is Chairman and CEO of Global Automotive Alliance, six manufacturing entities with eight plants in four states and Canada. He is on the Board of Directors for numerous other organizations. He is also a member of the Detroit Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Dr. Pickard will use his personal and professional background to address the role of the entrepreneur in today’s global economy.

Events are free and open to the public. Parking is available in Lot K on the Allendale campus and in the Front Street Lot on the downtown campus for community guests. For individuals requiring special accommodations and/or parking permits, contact the Office of Multicultural Affairs at 616-331-2177 or oma@gvsu.edu.

For complete event information visit our Web site at www.gvsu.edu/oma.



Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

September 15 – October 15 2009

Spotlight Productions: *Bordertown*

September 7–12 • 9 a.m., noon, 3, 6, & 9 p.m.

Kirkhof Theatre

A powerful story of life on the border between the United States and Mexico, *Bordertown* stars Jennifer Lopez and is inspired by true events.

Immigration Forum

September 14 • 6–9 p.m.

Loosemore Auditorium, DeVos Center, Grand Rapids

Panelists: Richard Kessler, attorney; Andrew Schlewitz, GVSU Latin American Studies professor; Jeff Smith, griid.org; and Mary Vaccaro, Catholic Information Center.

Hispanic Heritage Kick-Off

September 14 & 15 • 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Cook Carillon Tower

Meet the GVSU Latino student organization, listen to great Latino music and learn more about the 2009 Hispanic Heritage Celebration.

Wall of Shadows: From the Statue of Liberty to the Border Wall

September 16 • 4–5:30 p.m.

Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

Film maker and human rights activist, Barbara Martinez Jitner will share her film, "Wall of Shadows" and speak on the topic of a wall on the US/Mexico border.



Latinos: Beyond Tacos and Sombreros

September 21 • noon–1:00 p.m.

Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

Juan A. Colon will explore the stereotypes and preconceptions about Latinos and Latino culture.

Voices of Immigration: The Challenge of Being a Foreign Writer in America

September 24 • 11 a.m.–noon

Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center Hemil Garcia Linares will share his experiences as a non-American author in the US.

Cartoneros

September 28–29 • noon & 3 p.m.

Loosemore Auditorium, DeVos Center

A film about the Argentinian economy, an emerging occupation and sustainability.

Latinos in a US Society Used to a Black-White Paradigm

September 30 • 4–5 p.m.

Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

Dr. Enrique E. Figueroa explores the Latino perspective of race relations and discrimination that moves beyond the historical White-Black paradigm.

Conversation about Cartoneros

October 6 • 4–5 p.m.

Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

Interview, via SKYPE, with Ernesto Livon-Grossman, director of Cartoneros.



The Power of We: Leadership for our Diverse Communities

October 14 • 4–5 p.m.

Cook DeWitt Building

Ms. Juana Bordas will speak on valuing diversity and multicultural leadership. Valuing diversity is an opportunity to grow, be proactive, and become a more effective leader. Through an interactive exchange we will celebrate our personal heritage and then expand our ability to honor the traditions of others. We will share specific strategies to increase our ability to lead and build community in our increasingly diverse society. A special emphasis will be on understanding the leadership practices in communities of color.



Discovering the Meaning of Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) through Altar Making

October 27 • noon–1 p.m. • OMA, 1240 Kirkhof Center

October 28, 29 • noon–2 p.m. • Grand River Room, KC

Attendees will create pieces like flowers, masks, and papel picado art that can be added to a collaborative altar display in the Kirkhof Center. Featuring local artist Erick Pichardo. RSVP to oma@gvsu.edu or 616-331-2177 is required for October 27.

Please visit www.gvsu.edu/oma for complete event information.

Visit Zumberge Library from September 15–October 15 to see the Hispanic Heritage Month display and learn about Hispanic Heritage resources at GVSU.

Join the Latino Student Union for their Annual Dinner and Dance.
September 26 • 6 p.m.–1 a.m.
Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

Events are free and open to the public. For information on parking or for individuals requiring special accommodations, please contact the Office of Multicultural Affairs at 616-331-2177 or oma@gvsu.edu or estrادgr@gvsu.edu.

Sponsors: Women's Center, Women's Commission, Inclusion and Equity, Latin American Studies, College of Education, Housing and Residence Life, Honors College, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Modern Languages and Literatures, Pew Student Services and Padnos International Center.

My Educational Journey at GVSU

Christina Jackson, graduate assistant

As an undergraduate student, I learned that the offerings of love and education were necessary for my survival. Meeting passionate and knowledgeable people granted me the opportunity to grow in ways that I never even dreamed about.

I knew that I wanted to help people but I wasn't sure how. As a freshman, I declared psychology as my major, because I knew that psychologists helped people and that is what I wanted to do. I struggled through psychology and became unsure of my options. As a student in Freshman Academy, I became quite familiar with the campus and its resources. I learned who I could go to for help in regards to what my next move should be. The academy's study groups helped but I still had not found a good fit at Grand Valley, and I ended my first semester with a 1.8 grade point average.

The Freshman Academy advisor suggested that I find community, so I joined the Black Student Union. Being a member of BSU sparked my interest in multiculturalism. I identified as black but my non-straight identity created a level of complexity that some of the members were unable to embrace. I continued searching for community and I found it in Out and About, Grand Valley's gay-straight student alliance. Through those experiences, I learned what I could do, and how I could help.

Through this work I learned to educate and also to love and embrace my own dimensions. Subsequently I joined more student organizations. I also had the opportunity to work with several departments, including the Office of Multicultural Affairs.



I am not sure what my ultimate career goal is; however, my background in sociology and the scholarly work of some of my favorite authors suggests that I will publish articles on identity. I am sure that working as a graduate assistant in OMA will allow me to explore other avenues of interests.

When I started at Grand Valley in 2003 I didn't know anyone who had earned a master's degree and now I am a master's candidate. My journey has been full of surprises. I am anxious and excited for what comes next.

Office of Multicultural Affairs • Fall 2009 Programs and Events

**September 15
through October 15**

Hispanic Heritage Month

Visit the OMA's Web site for a complete listing of events,
www.gvsu.edu/oma

September 16

Professionals of Color Lecture Series

Barbara Martinez Jitner, "Wall of Shadows"

Location: 2250 Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

Time: 4–5:30 p.m.

September 17

Annual Intercultural Student Reception

Location: 2250 Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

Time: 4–6 p.m.

September 21

Diversity Brownbag Series

Juan A. Colón, "Latinos—Beyond Tacos and Sombreros"

Location: 2250 Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

Time: noon–1 p.m.

October 27

Diversity Brownbag Series, RSVP required

Erick Pichardo, "Discovering the Meaning of Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) through Altar Making"

Location: OMA, 1240 Kirkhof Center

Time: noon–1 p.m.

November 5

Professionals of Color Lecture Series

Dr. William Pickard, "Entrepreneurship in the Global Economy"

Location: Loosemore Auditorium, DC-122E,

Pew Campus - Grand Rapids

Time: 6–7:30 p.m.

November 19

Diversity Brownbag Series

Racial Profiling—Myth or Fact?

Location: OMA, 1240 Kirkhof Center

Time: noon–1 p.m.



Office of Multicultural Affairs Staff

Oliver Wilson, dean
Connie Dang, director
Bobby J. Springer, associate director
Gricelda Estrada, assistant director
Kristie Scanlon, assistant director
Juanita Davis, OMA/EXCEL advising coordinator,
Freshman Academy
Christina L. Jackson, graduate assistant
Sarah Flinders, multicultural assistant
Linda Rettig, database coordinator

For the latest news and events, check us out on
the Web! www.gvsu.edu/oma

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

OMA MISSION STATEMENT

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.

OMA 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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