



Student Spotlight: Bilquis Alsoofy

Kristie Scanlon, Assistant Director

Bilquis Alsoofy is making the most of her college experience and is enjoying every moment.

A graduate of Coldwater High School, Alsoofy began her career at Grand Valley State University in the fall of 2006, along with her sister Petra. Alsoofy immediately fell in love with the campus and felt at home with the peaceful and calm surroundings.

Alsoofy participated in the Oliver Wilson Freshman Academy Program, a summer program with a goal to help students transition into the university. She was also hired as a student worker in the Office of Multicultural Affairs, where she still works today.

Over the years Alsoofy has been involved in a variety of student organizations and campus departments including the Muslim Students Association, Creative Academic Networks, the Multicultural Cohort Programs and Grand Valley Disability Advocates. She will graduate in May 2011 with a major in sociology and a minor in psychology and is looking forward to an exciting career.

Grand Valley has become a family affair for the Alsoofys. In the fall of 2008, her younger sisters Kaifa and Saltana also enrolled at GVSU and are following the advice from their older sister: "Get involved, try new things and step out of your comfort zone."

Director's Corner

Connie Dang, Director

On behalf of

the Office of Multicultural Affairs staff, I would like to welcome you to the 2010–2011 academic year. We are looking forward to an exciting year on Grand Valley State University's campus as the university commemorates 50 years of shaping lives. On this celebratory note, OMA staff members have worked hard to bring a variety of meaningful programs and activities.

To kick off the new year, please join us at the annual Intercultural Student Reception, which will be held on September 16, to welcome incoming students, new faculty and staff members. Next, Hispanic Heritage Month will be observed starting on September 13 with many inspiring events. "Life Journeys" will be held in conjunction with the GVSU 50th Anniversary Celebration and is a visual showcase of the stories of GVSU's faculty and staff members, students and alumni. A reception featuring a display of these captivating stories will take place on September 14 with opening remarks from President Thomas J. Haas and Vice Provost & Dean of Students H. Bart Merkle.

In honor of GVSU's 50th anniversary, the Office of Multicultural Affairs collaborated with the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies, Inclusion and Equity Division, LGBT Resource Center, Women's Center and visiting University of Michigan artist-in-residence Jeffrey Steiger to produce an exciting diversity theatrical endeavor. Steiger will facilitate dialogue with groups of faculty, staff and students to learn about their experiences



and challenges in the classroom and workplace. These individual stories and dialogues will be incorporated into an original production to depict classroom dynamics, departmental climate and work-life at GVSU. The original production will be performed November 2–3.

Another noteworthy event hosted by Alumni Relations and OMA in conjunction with the anniversary celebration is the Multicultural Cohort Programs Alumni Networking, which will be held on November 11 at the Alumni House. The event features a panel discussion of alumni from the four Multicultural Cohort Programs and will be facilitated by Ray Bennett, a Multicultural Business Education Cohort program alumnus and senior vice president at Marriott International.

In partnership with Seidman College of Business, OMA will present Doug Glanville for the Professionals of Color Lecture Series on November 4. Glanville is a former Major League Baseball outfielder who now serves as president of GK Alliance, LLC. Please refer to OMA's website, www.gvsu.edu/oma, for details regarding fall events and activities.

This fall, OMA welcomes 108 freshmen into the Multicultural Cohort Programs. OMA is dedicated to providing students with a positive, supportive and academically challenging environment and will assist students throughout their college education. The OMA staff extends an invitation to all students, faculty and staff members to stop by and visit the office. Our door is always open. Hope to see you soon!

Warmest regards,

*Connie Dang,
Director, Office of Multicultural Affairs*

Ambassador and Peer Mentoring Program

Kristie Scanlon, Assistant Director
Christina Jackson, Graduate Assistant

The Office of Multicultural Affairs is excited to announce its new Ambassador and Peer Mentoring Program. This program provides an exciting leadership opportunity for students and allows them to get involved with the campus community, increase their cultural competency and strengthen their communication skills.

Student volunteers are selected and trained to serve as representatives of OMA at a variety of campus events, meetings and workshops. This program helps to increase the visibility and awareness of OMA and its programs, as well as provide students with valuable leadership experience. Students may also serve as Peer Mentors to first-year or transfer students to help with their university transition.

"I really like the trainings and workshop sessions that are offered. It has helped me to become more culturally aware and appreciate the diversity at Grand Valley."

—Angela Cluley

The goals of the program are to increase student involvement and participation with the Office of Multicultural Affairs, to provide valuable leadership training and to connect Ambassadors to new students at the university. Through participation in this program, students are able to build cultural awareness, enhance their leadership skills, network with other student leaders and gain volunteer and community service hours.

Nikita Bradford, a junior majoring in international relations said: "Being an OMA Ambassador has been a great experience. I have been able to get involved with OMA events as well as meet a lot of new people."

Angela Cluley, a sophomore majoring in chemistry said: "I really like the trainings and workshop sessions that are offered. It has helped me to become more culturally aware and appreciate the diversity at Grand Valley."

Students who are interested in participating in the program should contact OMA at 331-2177 or visit www.gvsu.edu/oma to complete an application form. Faculty and staff members are also encouraged to nominate students for the program.

Wade H. McCree Scholars Program: Fostering Future GVSU Scholars

Gricelda Estrada, Assistant Director

I have the privilege of coordinating the Wade H. McCree program, a pre-college program serving more than 500 students. The program consists of three separate pre-college groups located in Muskegon, Grand Rapids and Holland.

Through the Wade H. McCree program, OMA is able to reach out to high-achieving students from underrepresented backgrounds early in their education and provide them with the tools, encouragement and resources to continue to be high achievers throughout high school.

Since 2008, the program has seen more than 60 Wade H. McCree students enroll at Grand Valley. The program's objectives include enhancing student preparation for post-secondary education, increasing a student's sense of self and encouraging enrollment at Grand Valley.

Over the last year, the program changed dramatically to ensure that Wade H. McCree scholars were aware of their career options, and of their ability to succeed in higher education. This was done through structured programming presented by volunteers from Grand Valley and the Grand Rapids community.

Our success this year was directly linked to the strong connections that developed between the Wade H. McCree students, program coordinator and speakers. These individuals educated, inspired and empowered the Wade H. McCree scholars.

For the 2009–2010 academic year, Wade H. McCree students had an opportunity to connect with Grand Valley faculty and staff members, students and community members who generously gave up their Saturday mornings to share their knowledge, stories and support with these aspiring scholars. A special thank you to all the individuals who donated their time to support the ambitious efforts of the 2009–2010 year:

Monica Allen, Seidman School of Business
Renee Hampton, Spectrum Health
Frank Coronado, Career Services
John Zaugra, Counseling & Career Development Center
Mary Sharp, Counseling & Career Development Center
Heather Fowler-Voshel, Financial Aid Office
Erika Wallace, Financial Aid Office
Officer Betsy (Ann) Snoeyink, Public Safety
Amy Jasinski, College of Education
Elyse Reese, College of Education
Tom Owens, College of Education
Latino Student Union
Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority



From Left to right: Bobby J. Springer (Grand Valley State University); Dr. Mamie T. Thorns (Saginaw Valley State University); Daniela R. Garcia (Social Policy Advisor for Pete Hoekstra); Dr. Pamela Bellamy (Michigan State University); Matthew Chaney (Ferris State University)

NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual National Conference in Washington, DC

Bobby J. Springer, Associate Director

As a congressional champion for the GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), U.S. Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-Pennsylvania) encouraged all GEAR UP Programs to make appointments to meet with the U.S. representatives and senators who serve their communities. The NCCEP/GEAR UP visit to Washington, D.C. underscored the important agenda of keeping our members of Congress apprised of the progress that GEAR UP is making in expanding college access and readiness for our nation's students.

On July 20, meetings were held with the following congressional offices: Rep. Pete Hoekstra (Daniela Garcia), Rep. Vern Ehlers (Rachel Fenton), Rep. Dale Kildee, Sen. Carl Levin (Jackie Parker) and Sen. Debbie Stabenow (Ilana Levinson).

During the meetings, it was stressed how essential GEAR UP is for the students and their families. The services provided by GEAR UP helps students succeed in higher education and beyond. We thank our congressional delegation and their office staff members for their time and advocacy on behalf of education initiatives in Michigan. It was greatly appreciated.

How is GEAR UP developed in Michigan?

The Michigan College Day Program is implemented by each of Michigan's 15 public universities and was expanded through a federally funded GEAR UP

grant. The six-year, \$18 million grant began in 2006 and is matched 100 percent through State of Michigan College Day appropriations, institution funds, Michigan Department of Treasury and EduGuide.

The GEAR UP/College Day Program is a statewide sustained collaborative effort that provides early intervention services and a scholarship component to Michigan's low-income, underrepresented students and their parents. The program adopts and serves entire classrooms of students as cohorts beginning in the seventh and eighth grades that have at least 50 percent of enrolled students eligible for free and/or reduced-price lunch. These students are now in the 11th and 12th grades. A student enrolled in GU/CD continues to receive comprehensive supplemental academic and personal development support services through the program staff while participating in the cohort program.

Additionally, professional development opportunities are provided to the GU/CD teachers. The emphasis of the development opportunities is to enhance teacher skills and abilities when working with targeted students. Among the offerings is the annual Equity within the Classroom Conference, which is hosted annually as a collaborative effort between Michigan's KCP Initiative and the state's public and independent colleges and universities.



My National Conference Experience

Maria Perez, Senior,
Accounting & Finance Major

I was given the opportunity to be part of the 2010 NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference this year that took place in Washington, D.C. I work with the GEAR UP program here at Grand Valley, so this conference was the perfect opportunity for me to interact with GEAR UP staff from around the nation.

GEAR UP is a national program that provides college-prep courses to low-income, underrepresented students. Its mission is to increase the number of underrepresented students that complete high school and prepare to enroll and succeed in college.

As a student I do not get many opportunities to travel for free, especially to conferences, so when I was given this wonderful opportunity to go to Washington D.C., I took it! Many of the wonderful workshops and presentations were led directly by the GEAR UP professionals who shared their strongest programs, most successful partnerships, and best institutional practices. I definitely learned a lot and will incorporate many new ideas this year into our Grand Valley program.

With dinners and socials, every day was filled with networking and professional development. After the conference concluded for the day, I had the opportunity to walk around and take pictures of the White House and Washington Monument, and visit museums.

I am happy and thankful to have had this experience and opportunity as an undergraduate student. I met great people and made new friends, visited many historical sites, and had the opportunity to educate myself further in the field I am interested in.

Office of Multicultural Affairs

Fall 2010 Schedule of Events

September 13 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.	Hispanic Heritage Month Kick Off Cook Carillon Tower
September 14 4–6 p.m.	Hispanic Heritage Celebration: Life Journeys Reception 1240 Kirkhof Center
September 16 4–6 p.m.	Intercultural Student Reception Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center
September 22 7–9 p.m.	Hispanic Heritage Celebration: Serenade Under the Moon Loosemore Auditorium & DeVos Courtyard
September 28 12–1 p.m.	Diversity Brownbag: Hollywood and the Mexican Revolution 1240 Kirkhof Center
October 7 4–5 p.m.	Hispanic Heritage Celebration: Night of Dancing Eberhard Center
October 14 4–5:30 p.m.	Professionals of Color Lecture: Identity and Dislocation featuring Achy Obejas 2263 Kirkhof Center
November 2 4–5 p.m.	Diversity Theatre: Stories from Grand Valley Cook-DeWitt Center
November 3 4–5 p.m.	Diversity Theatre: Stories from Grand Valley Loosemore Auditorium
November 4 6–7:30 p.m.	Professionals of Color Lecture: Life, Baseball, and Business featuring Doug Glanville Loosemore Auditorium
November 11 5:30–7 p.m.	MCP Alumni Networking Alumni House
November 18 12–1 p.m.	Diversity Brownbag: Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts 1240 Kirkhof Center

Visit www.gvsu.edu/oma or call 616.331.2177 for complete event details.

Office of Multicultural Affairs Staff

Connie Dang, Director
Bobby J. Springer, Associate Director
Gricelda Estrada, Assistant Director
Kristie Scanlon, Assistant Director
Christina 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.

About Us

The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) fosters a respect for and an appreciation of the history, tradition, and culture of different ethnic groups and empowers ethnic minority students to be active participants in Grand Valley's community through programs that promote academic, social, and cultural development for students.

OMA's vision is to promote acceptance and appreciation of an inclusive campus community that values the diversity of people, backgrounds, and perspectives of each individual.

Guiding Principles:

- Fosters a campus climate that respects and appreciates the history, culture, and traditions of various ethnic groups.
- Empowers students to be active participants in the Grand Valley community.
- Stimulates and encourages intercultural awareness and dialogue among university members.
- Takes an active role in promoting academic, social, cultural, leadership and professional development for students.

The OMA staff serves as a resource for students, faculty, and staff on issues of inclusion, diversity, multiculturalism, and interculturalism.

Our Contact Information

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OMA News is a bi-yearly publication of the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Project Manager/Editor: Kristie Scanlon

Design and Production:
Ruth Oldenburg, Rainstick Studio

