WELCOME

Spring semester is underway despite the inclement weather and record setting snowfall that fell at the start of this semester. However harsh the weather, I am inclined to believe that this is going to be a great semester!

Over the past couple months, I had the opportunity to connect with many students who shared their interest in starting new student organizations, suggest new events, express interest in student employment, and ask questions about how they can get more involved on campus. Their enthusiasm is captivating, and their energy is exciting.

A high priority of mine has been to do a lot of listening and learning about the experiences, needs, and interests of our multicultural students on campus. Given the feedback, one specific theme that continues to rise to the top is an interest among our students to build connections with other students-of-color across the campus and to strengthen that community.

I have no doubt that as our office fine tunes our programming and services, we will be able to respond to their feedback and foster that community that our students have envisioned. As we do so, I encourage our students to reach out and get involved with our programs. Our community needs you, and we look forward to seeing you! Have a great semester!

Sincerely, Dang Yang, Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs

STAY CONNECTED

The Office of Multicultural Affairs invites you to stay connected with us! Get updates about upcoming events, hear from our students, and re-discover our ongoing initiatives.

Follow us on social media and get immediate updates about our events, activities, and our students!

OMA LISTSERV

Sign up for the OMA ListServ, a bi-weekly electronic publication that provides timely information about upcoming events that are sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Although, many of our events and activities are open to all faculty/staff & students across the university, the primary purpose and audience for this electronic publication will be to disseminate information to the multicultural students we serve and their respective student organizations. Of course, any UWEC student, faculty, or staff may subscribe to this ListServ.

What would you like our ListServ subscribers to know about? We invite UWEC departments to submit events, activities, or notifications through our ListServ for our readers. Submit your items HERE.
Hleda Lor, a sophomore student studying Education, described her academic advisor, Yia Lor, as kind, patient, organized, helpful, and supportive. While Hleda discussed her appreciation of Yia's efforts to support her, what really stuck out was how she felt connected to her because of their shared Hmong heritage. Yia Lor advises students pursuing Education and Human Sciences in the Advising, Retention and Career Center. She came to college with the aspiration of helping those within her community.

Yia grew up in Eau Claire and attended Regis Catholic High School where she was one of very few Hmong students in a predominantly white school. What Yia noticed growing up was how many of the professionals around her were also white.

Yia remembered a time when she visited UW-Eau Claire for a pre-college program. There, she was introduced to Charles Vue, the Assistant Director for the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Seeing a Hmong man working in higher education was a pivotal moment in her life that not only challenged the way she viewed herself but also inspired her to pursue education.

Her journey in higher education started as a UW-Eau Claire student where she majored in a Social Work. From there she went on to earn her Master of Social Work degree from UW-Madison. She then worked at the Eau Claire Area School District as a Social Worker, where she provided assistance to students in need within the schools she served. However, she was particularly impactful on the Hmong children who saw her in that professional role and as someone who understood their background through shared experiences.

Now Yia finds herself in a similar role here at UW-Eau Claire advising the next cohort of students majoring in Social Work, Education, and other helping professions. As she was once inspired by a Hmong man in higher education, she now provides others with inspiration to achieve their goals and make a difference.

Advice from Yia Lor:
"One of the best advice I received when I was a college student was to network. Join a student organization. Say yes to that research or internship opportunity. Surround yourself with people who are different from you and those who will challenge your thought process. The more people you know, the more opportunities present themselves. Someday, you may know someone who knows someone who knows someone else who just so happens to be the personal assistant to Uma Thurman (true story!)."

Describe your major and why it appeals to you.

I am studying information systems. This appeals to me because I get to use technology to solve business and consumer problems. I like my major because it gives me the business perspective I need, while still letting me use technology, which is something I am passionate about.

What do you participate in outside of classes (clubs/organizations/research, etc.) / and, why are these activities important to your overall learning?

I am the president of African Student Association as well as the director of programming for the Black Student Alliance. I also participate in an LTS leadership experience on campus. I love being a part of these organizations because it pushes me out of my comfort zone and I get to be a part of a team that affects change.

Within ASA, I get to share my culture with the UWEC community, as well as build lifelong relationships with other African / UWEC students. BSA gives me a space to interact with other students of color on campus and learn from each of their experiences. LTS leadership experience gives me the tools and training to learn more about myself and become a more effective leader.

Have you participated in an internship or co-ops?

Last summer I had an internship with Ernst and young Minneapolis, working as a risk advisory intern. This summer, I will be at PWC Minneapolis, working as cybersecurity and privacy intern.

What experiences at college standout most for you so far?

My experience participating in leadership roles have really stood out for me. I got to learn about myself, the beauty of working with teams, and learning about other people.

A second experience that stood out for me was representing the college of business in Canada, at a case competition in February. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity for me and I got to see a different version of myself, working under pressure and interacting with others under pressure as well.

What has been your favorite OMA event so far and why?

African dinner program (in partnership with OMA) and seeing our vision come to life! This was very rewarding, and I loved being a part of an amazing team that produced the event. Understanding teamwork and realizing that you can achieve whatever you want to achieve if you are determined to get it done was especially powerful.

I also really loved the black history month celebration, Harambee. It was a night to celebrate black excellence and it’s cool to see how everyone came together to celebrate that.

What are your initial career goals after you receive your degree?

I am hoping to start off as a Risk Advisory Consultant or Security Consultant. Hopefully it will be somewhere with warmer weather.
The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) joined the University’s 2018 graduating class of 669 students to celebrate the graduation of 17 students-of-color at OMA’s Graduation Reception on December 21, 2018 in the Ojibwe Ballroom of Davies Student Center.

This event began with each graduate presenting a rose to a member of the audience that helped to make the student’s graduation possible. Pachia Xiong recognized that this celebratory event would not have been possible without “the tireless and unwavering support of her family, friends, faculty, staff, and administrators in her life.”

Dang Yang, Director for OMA, welcomed an audience of 130 attendees at the Graduation Reception event to help celebrate the graduation of 48 UW-Eau Claire multicultural students. This fall’s graduation class included 3 Native American students, 7 Black/African American students, 9 Latinx students, and 29 Asian & Southeast Asian students.

Distinguished guests including faculty and staff across campus, Dr. Tamara Johnson, Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Student Affairs, and UW-Eau Claire’s Chancellor, Dr. James Schmidt listened to keynote speaker, Dr. Heather Ann Moody’s message to the graduates. Dr. Moody, Assistant Professor of American Indian Studies (AIS), gave reflective and inspiring remarks about the “Future of Humanity.”

After the keynote address, OMA staff presented graduation stoles to all the graduates; one Excellence in Service Recognition award to Teresa O’Halloran, Director of the Affirmative Action office; and two outstanding leadership awards to two graduates, Pachia Xiong and Gary Butcher, II.

OMA credits this year’s success to our student interns who assisted in planning and implementing the graduation reception event. Pa Kue Vue, OMA’s Program Assistant commented that, "we had a great group of interns that were really flexible in their roles and helping. It was a long day, but we truly appreciate everyone who stayed until the very end to help finish up the event.”

Overall the graduation reception created an atmosphere of family and support for students of color. Many students reflected on how OMA provided programming to support them academically, culturally, and socially. Charles Vue, a senior Student Services Coordinator shared, "through the support of the OMA office, students grow and learn in their new home-away-from-home to become a UWEC graduate."
BLUGOLD DIALOGUE SERIES

Under the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), "Blugold Dialogues" is a series of conversations designed to give community members the opportunity to discuss and contribute to creating a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive campus community. These sessions are open to all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and local community members interested in joining the discussion. From different opportunities and challenges of today’s social justice movements to addressing the impact of local and state policy implementation, each program will have one or more presenters that will discuss the significance of these topics, relevant initiatives, and how these topics relate to UWEC. Our goal is to facilitate important dialogues regarding issues impacting our collective experience on campus and beyond.

*Not all OMA Interns pictured

OMA INTERNSHIPS

The Office of Multicultural Affairs provides over 5 different internship opportunities to over 10 students who are at least a sophomore in standing. These internships are 1 academic year long and begin right before the fall semester starts. Through this internship, we provide monthly large group professional development training to our interns and staff, bi-weekly one-on-one meetings with an assigned OMA staff, monthly small team bonding activities, and several opportunities for creativity and fun! Our internship applications for all positions re-open every March through Handshake.

This program focuses on enhancing our intern’s ability to accomplish our office strategic goals and build community and solidarity within the Multicultural community at UWEC. One of the main goals of our internship program is to enhance community relations and raise awareness about the services OMA provides and the student population that we serve. During our monthly trainings we invite offices and departments across campus such as: The Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, Career Services, Campus Police, and other student support services and resources. These trainings allow our student leaders to get acquainted to our campus and the resources available to better serve in the capacity of an OMA student intern.

MULTICULTURAL STUDENT ORGS.

Over the course of the year, OMA hosted Multicultural Student Organization (MSO) training seminars, where Executive Board Leaders from OMA’s five multicultural student organizations came together twice a semester to learn from each other, share information, and discuss their needs. These student leaders represented the African Student Association (ASA), the Black Student Alliance (BSA), Hmong Student Association (HSA), Inter-Tribal Student Council (ITSC), and the Student Organization of Latinos/as (SOL).

As this is the first year MSO training seminars are being held, it required some refining and adjusting as the year progressed.

"The first couple sessions, we [student org leaders] didn’t get as much time to meet and talk with the other org leaders," said Nkauj Naag Lee, President of the Hmong Student Association (HSA). "But I really like the last one we did [in March]."

Over the course of the year, topics such as leadership, budgeting and fundraising, event planning, and succession planning were discussed.

According to Lee, the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with other students was what brought her to these MSO training sessions. "Having that time to talk with each other was really beneficial," said Lee. "Personally, I like being engaged with other students of color and getting to know other student orgs."

Dang Yang, Director for OMA, co-facilitated the training seminars with the OMA staff. "This event is the type of initiative that was a direct result of student feedback," said Yang. "The student organizations had articulated a need to become connected with Student Senate and for opportunities to come together."

According to Yang, the goals for these training seminars are to provide timely updates and information to student organization leaders and to provide the tools, resources, and ideas about promising practices.
The National Black Student Union Conference (NBSU) brings together (but not limited to) Black undergraduate and graduate students from across the United States for an exciting and stimulating three-day learning experience. The conference involves a combination of seminars, panels, workshops, and keynote addresses involving thought-leaders from academia, community organizations, and government. On November 16, 2018, twelve UWEC students attended this event and they learned a range of things during this conference.

For example, the Career Forums Session allowed UWEC students the opportunity to network with seasoned professionals in health care, legal/public policy, and corporate/entrepreneurship careers. These interactive conversations gave students different tools and strategies they could implement in order to be more successful in their chosen fields of study and practice. Some of these strategies included: dress for success tips, understanding the value or obtaining internships versus unrelated jobs, and how to be more proactive in meeting goals/meeting project deadlines. This was immensely valuable, as it taught students the benefit being prepared not only for their future career opportunities but for everyday use, as they continue to grow and develop skills to be more effective student leaders, both academically and in their student organizations.

Another session that added value to UWEC students were the community improvement forums. This part of the conference focused on African American Student Recruitment and Retention, in addition to Careers in Education. Bringing students to this conference every year is an amazing opportunity for them to connect with their peers in meaningful ways. Furthermore, many of the outcomes and benefits associated with students participating in this conference, directly align with UWEC high impact practices. Indeed, student feedback from the NBSU conference experience is always positive, with more students wanting to attend each year. All in all, participating in this conference was very beneficial and the outcome from having had this experience continues to align with the UWEC’s strategic guide post goals.

Scholarship Recipients (in no particular order): Diversity - Eleni Seyoum, Iman Dikko, Bella Sackey; Dr. Tamara A. Johnson Black Excellence - Ariyana Dryden; Dr. Tamara A. Johnson Success - Youssra Bentaalla; Alumni of Color Social Justice and Inclusion - Olu Famule; Jim Vance Memorial Scholarship - Sofia Earle

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2019

In celebration of Black History Month, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, in partnership with several departments and student organizations, hosted a variety of events around campus during February, ranging from guest speakers to a dance class to scholarship recognition.

To kick off the month, EDISA, OMA, and BSA held its 2nd annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration. This year, Joanne Bland, Civil Rights Activist and former Director of the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute, spoke at the event on the importance of and history behind civil rights and how it resonates with today’s social justice movements. The celebration also featured the presentation of the 2019 MLK Social Justice Leadership Award and student performances.

Other activities for Black History Month included an "Eau The Places You’ll Go" Study Abroad Panel featuring African Countries, a Blugold Dialogue presentation on "Black Mental Health Matters," and an African Dance Class that was fun and energizing.

To wrap up the month of events, OMA, ASA, BSA, and campus co-sponsors hosted "Harambee," a signature celebration event that included musical performances, dinner, and the recognition of students, faculty, and staff. A new and exciting piece to this event was the inclusion of the Titambe West African Dance Ensemble of Minnesota, who did an amazing drumming and dance performance that also engaged the audience in African rhythm, fun and dance.
**SPRING 2019**

**March 16, 2019**  
Hmong Student Association: 29th Culture Core Conference  
Davies, Ojibwe Ballroom | 12pm

**March 20, 2019**  
Blugold Dialogue Series: Fat is a Social Justice Issue, Too  
Centennial 1204 | 4-5pm

**April 29, 2019**  
Korean Traditional Drumming Workshop  
Campus Mall | 4-5:30pm

**April 30, 2019**  
Blugold Dialogue Series: LGBTQIA+ Within the AAPI Community  
Centennial Hall 1204 | 4-5pm

**May 1, 2019**  
Taste of Asian American Cuisine  
Davies, The Dulany Inn  
11:30am + 12:30pm  
$11.25/person at the door

**May 6, 2019**  
Movie: Saving Face + FREE  
Davies, Woodland Theater | 4pm

**May 7, 2019**  
Scholar Day  
Davies, Dakota and Alumni  
3:30-5:30pm

**May 8, 2019**  
Outdoor Festival  
Garfield Avenue | 4-8pm

**May 9, 2019**  
Panel Discussion  
Centennial Hall 1204 | 4pm

**May 13, 2019**  
CelebrAsian Banquet + RSVP REQUIRED  
Davies, Ojibwe Ballroom | 5pm

**May 24, 2019**  
OMA Graduation Reception, Spring + RSVP REQUIRED  
Davies, Ojibwe Grand Ballroom  
5pm | Graduates, please arrive by 4:45pm

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**Submit a Faculty, Staff or Student Feature for our Quarterly Newsletter**

**Submit an event or program for the Bi-Weekly OMA ListServ**

**Subscribe to our Bi-Weekly ListServ**

**GET INVOLVED**

**GOT A QUESTION? CONTACT US!**

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