

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Students share their summer experiences
- Spotlight on AOP student leaders
- Summer program article and pictures
- Mr. Gantt shares words of wisdom
- Chi Alpha Epsilon Inductees
- AOP Scholarship winners

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## From the Director's Desk



Calvin Gantt, AOP Director

One of the bonuses of working within a college environment is that every year brings with it a new set of students who bring their own unique traits and skills to the fabric of the community that currently exists. As the Director, this process begins with the launch of the admission season in November, and culminates with the AOP Summer Program and those students who choose to begin their educational journey with us. It is the energy that these students bring to the campus that rejuvenates us and reminds us that the mission of the AOP department continues to be relevant in terms of providing educational opportu-

nities to first generation college students. In this edition of the AOP newsletter, you will be introduced to these tremendously bright and talented students who join the legacy of gifted students who have added (and continue to add) so much to the wider college

community. You will read about students who are not only talented academically, but students who also understand the need to balance their academic expectations with developing their own leadership styles along the way. This edition will also highlight some of our current students and their leadership activities, involvement in XAE Honor Society, as well as our 2009-10 AOP Scholarship winners. Enjoy this comprehensive snapshot of AOP and the spirit of community, leadership and compassion that we add to the Geneseo community as a whole.

## The Value of Opportunity

*By Calvin Gantt, AOP Director*

One of the greatest joys of serving as the Director for the Access Opportunity Programs (AOP) is that I have a chance to see how students from very similar academic backgrounds define the word opportunity as it pertains to their own personal and academic development. Much has been written about the impact of socioeconomic status (SES) on student success, but over the course of the last eleven years, I have seen students overcome what to others might be insurmountable odds in order to complete their degree at SUNY Geneseo. For some, opportunity is defined by how they take advantage of every support service offered; not only by the AOP department,

but also by the College. They see College as a new lease on life that they cannot allow to pass them by for fear that the chance won't soon come again. For others, opportunity means that they are, for the first time, responsible for their own actions – both good and bad. According to C. W. Mills, however, "Freedom is not merely the opportunity to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the opportunity to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, to argue over them -- and then, the opportunity to choose." And lastly, there are those who define opportunity in terms of letting things happen to them, as opposed

to making things happen. These students are best served, not by waiting for extraordinary opportunities, but by seizing common occasions and making them great. There is an old adage that states, "Weak men (women) wait for opportunities; strong men (women) make them happen". As the Director for the AOP department, it is my responsibility to provide for students as many opportunities as I can to write the script of their own lives. It is the responsibility of the individual student, however, to decide whether they will add something to the community or take away from it. It is my sincere hope that they will opt to do the latter.



# How Did You Spend...

I was an administrative student intern for my school district (Long Beach on Long Island) and it gave great insight to the teaching profession. (I am an Adolescent Education Major).

- Dayshawn Simmons

This summer I experienced the world of Health Care. I was an intern for Greater New York Hospital Association, and I interned at Mount Sinai of Queens in Information technology. My internship consisted of working on physician's computer hardware failure as well as working on a dashboard for executives to base decisions on. I incorporated different information from various departments such as operating room to ensure that executives can



*Vipul Chandhok (lower left) and Rejoice Owusu (next to Vipul) in Washington, D.C.*

make decisions upon what days surgery is utilized the most and what can they do to improve patient care. I also shadowed other areas such as pharmacy, operating room, administration and others. I met a lot of different people from other schools in other states and I learned so much. Being an intern for Mount Sinai opened up my mind and made me realize that health care is not simple; it's complex in every aspect, and every department has something to give for health care to succeed. I was also lucky to go on a trip to Washington D.C. with Rejoice Owusu (EOP—Class '11), another fellow AOP student, to meet health care administrators and politicians. We went on a tour of the White House and we got to speak to President Obama's Political Director, Patrick Gaspard. It was, overall, a fun experience and I am now aware of many problems that effect health care. From this experience I am now the Webmaster of M.A.P.S., the Minority Association for Pre Health Students. This is a great opportunity for me to enhance my skills with technology.

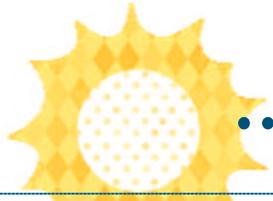
- Vipul Chandhok (EOP—Class '11)



This summer I had the pleasure of working with 88 pre-freshmen with the AOP summer orientation program. I served as the Activity Coordinator and a peer mentor. This job allowed me to work closely with the students, aiding them with their transition to college, specifically Gene-seo .

- Shedia Christopher (TOP—Class '11)





## ...Your Summer Vacation?

I had a very productive summer. I had the opportunity to intern at a law firm for Anthony S. Bottitta, Esq. Being a lawyer for forty years, Mr. Bottitta was a living archive for me. He taught me a lot when it comes to the legal system and its branches. I got to work under his supervision, which allowed me to participate in sending letters to other law offices, getting parties together for closing (when purchasing a house), getting in contact with other attorneys in the Real Estate field, and gaining a real sense of what a lawyer does. The highlight of my internship is that I got to go a criminal court as his assistant as a result of his client's son being accused of stealing. Working on the case, we had the felony reduced to misdemeanor charges which are less severe. I learned a lot and I would gladly work there in the future.



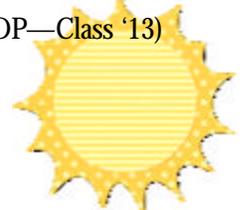
- Cladia Plantin (EOP—Class '12)

My summer wasn't interesting at first. Even though we flew back to Taiwan and I got to see my family, I didn't have a great plan for my break, so I was drifting for a couple of days until I finally woke up and asked my mother if I could help out at her company. She said okay, so my schedule was finally filled with something.

My mother works for McGraw Hill, the American publisher. Where I helped out was the Taiwan branch where my mom is the general manager. The first day was just getting to know what I should do. The ladies there gave me several tasks, such as sorting different documents and printing/scanning paperwork. I was happy to have completed them all successfully.

During the following weeks, I'd go to the company at 8:00 in the morning with my mother and look for areas to help in. After completing a lot of filing, I got a new job in editing. The editing department needed drafts to be proofread; and due to my mother's trust in my English ability, she asked if the people in that area wanted a hand, and I was accepted. Looking over those encyclopedia-like drafts on biology was actually pretty interesting, though sometimes I'd start to feel dizzy with the scrambled tiny fonts. It felt great when I found mistakes to correct, but the best part was that I was trusted by others who were willing to give me these important drafts to proofread for them. They would probably proofread them several more times, but I'm glad to just be part of that process to make it readable to the public. The whole experience of "helping out" in my mother's company was relatively amazing, but I'm pretty sure it wouldn't be the same if I was an actual employee. Still, I learned some things from this experience, like how the system works in a company (sort of), and how to build relationships within a workplace. I just had a fantastic time.

- Chen Tsu Sydney Liaw (TOP—Class '13)



For the most part, I spent my summer vacation working. My older brother and I got involved with our town's Chamber of Commerce and volunteered our services. Every Tuesday night we would participate in our town's "Cruise Night." People from all over Long Island would come and exhibit their cars. As part of the Chamber of Commerce, my brother and I helped set up (including put up the barricades and closing the streets), prepare flyers, collect money from the cars (\$5.00 per car to get in), hand out the flyers and raffle tickets, and close down (including taking down the barricades and sweeping the streets). In addition, my brother and I worked for a party rental company. We would set up, supervise, and break down inflatable's (those big bounce houses).

- Justin Nakrin (TOP—Class '13)

# AOP Student Accomplishments



**Tiffany L. Elliot** submitted a paper on “Going Green” and received a scholarship worth \$2500 towards her tuition. **Congratulations, Tiffany!**

**Shedia Christopher**, a junior Sociology major and an RA in Onondaga Hall, has been accepted into the 2009-2010 class of the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators Undergraduate Fellows Program. **Congratulations, Shedia!**



*SMDEP students in front of the Capitol Building, Washington, DC.*

teach in both medical and dental schools. SMDEP activities encourage all of us participating to continue with our aspirations and at the same time take positive constructive steps towards preparing ourselves academically for admission to medical and dental school. I will forever be thankful for this opportunity.

Also during the summer I spent three weeks working at a dental office learning the business side of owning a dental office. - Dionicia Torres (TOP—Class '12)

This summer, I had the opportunity to attend the Summer Medical Dental Education Program at Howard University. Howard University SMDEP has maximized my college experience by defining what matters most in my growth as a health professional. Howard University SMDEP was six weeks well spent taking courses, meeting friends, and exploring a new terrain. As I reflect upon the workshops and clinical experiences, I believe more and more in the power of my choice. Howard University SMDEP is an opportunity dressed in work, but what career in the medical fields does not require determination, dedication, self discipline, and effort?

In addition to the unique educational opportunity, I had the opportunity to become exposed to the expertise of educators at Howard University, who



*Dionicia (bottom right) with SMDEP students at the National Zoo in Washington, DC.*

## AOP Student Leaders Make Things Happen at SUNY Geneseo

AOP students are among the most active in leadership positions on the SUNY Geneseo campus. Here's a highlight of just some of the AOP student leaders on campus and their current activities.

- Malissa Rivera (EOP— '10):**
- RA in Wyoming Hall
  - Member of Geneseo First Response
  - Member of the President's Commission on Diversity and Community

- Dayshawn Simmons (TOP—'13):**
- RA in Dante House
  - Vice-Chair of Inter-Residence Council (IRC)
  - Student Senator of the Geneseo College Senate
  - On the Board of Directors for Campus Auxiliary Services

- Cladia Plantin (EOP—'12):**
- SA Representative for Black Student Union
  - Secretary of French Club
  - Hall Council in Steuben Hall

## Record Number of Students Inducted Into Chi Alpha Epsilon National Honor Society

Chi Alpha Epsilon (XAE) is a national honor society established in 1990 at West Chester University of Pennsylvania by Dr. Elbert Saddler. It was created in order to recognize the academic achievements of students admitted to colleges through opportunity programs such as EOP, HEOP and TOP. There are eighty-three (83) chapters nationwide. Geneseo's chapter (Alpha Psi) was chartered in October, 2000. Membership is offered to current students who have earned a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher for two consecutive semesters. This year, forty (40) AOP students were eligible for induction into the Society and twenty-four (24) of them chose to accept the honor. This was the largest number of students to be inducted in the history of our chapter. Alpha Psi chapter has now inducted 140 AOP students into XAE since its establishment on the SUNY Geneseo campus. The new members were formally introduced and "pinned" by a significant person in their lives at the Annual AOP Recognition Ceremony on April 30, 2009.

This year's induction ceremony took place on Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup> in the College Union's Hunt Room. The actual ceremony is closed to the public and is a

solemn ritual meant to impress upon the new members the responsibility they have for both their own continued academic achievement, as well as their obligation to encourage the academic aspira-



*Chi Alpha Epsilon Inductees at the Spring 2009  
AOP Recognition Reception, April 30, 2009.*

tions of other AOP students. To that end, an Honor Roll is read at the ceremony, with the names of all students who achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher at the end of the Fall 2008 semester. That list was quite long this year – 40 students, in addition to those who were inducted, so we are looking forward to an even larger class of inductees in April, 2010.

We offer our warmest congratulations and best wishes for continued academic

success to the following new members of Chi Alpha Epsilon:

Jamie Abreu  
Amy Chan  
Vipul Chandhok  
Qin Chen  
Ulyses Colon  
Trishana Crooks  
Callie Eidler  
Jasmine Frye  
Ronnica Girgis  
Calvin Goldman  
Fiona Harvey  
Sungyong Hong  
Guangchong Li  
Deanna Long  
Andre McDuffie  
Mekal Ogbeab  
Danielle Orsini  
Pamela Reyes Mercedes  
David Schweizer  
Catherine Veytia  
Sylest Williams  
Wei Ting Wu  
Magdalena Zambrano  
Chen Zhou

## Congratulations to our AOP Scholarship & Award Winners!

For many years, AOP has been able to offer a number of financial awards and scholarships to its students, thanks to the generosity of alumni, faculty, staff and friends of AOP. At this past spring's Annual AOP Recognition Day, we were able to present awards to nine very deserving students. We received a total of 87 applications for the seven competitive awards – the largest number of applications in our Program's history. Winners were selected by an impartial and dedicated group of Geneseo faculty and staff – Dr. Christina Geiger, Dr. Andrew Herman, Ms. Fatima Rodriguez-Johnson, Ms. Anna Kline, Ms. Joyce Miller and Mr. Jerry Wrubel. This year's winners are as follows:

### **AOP Service Award**

Ronnica Girgis  
Haisu Qu  
Malissa Rivera

### **Aspiring to Excellence Scholarship**

Qin Chen

### **Dr. Charles Bailey Service Award**

Malissa Rivera  
Miranda Van Ommeren

### **May-Parker Academic Achievement Scholarship**

Jacob Griffin

### **Leadership Award for Students of Caribbean Descent**

Fiona Harvey

### **Dr. Ramon Rocha Memorial Scholarship**

Ronnica Girgis

### **EOP Memorial Scholarship**

Dan Lin  
Curtis LeClair  
Haisu Qu  
Fiona Harvey

This year was the inauguration of the AOP PRIDE Award, given to a male and female AOP student who has demonstrated personal responsibility, initiative, determination and effort. The winners of the AOP PRIDE Award are: Scott Snowden  
Tela Troge

*Congratulations and continued success to all of our scholarship winners!*

# 2009 AOP Summer Program

By Gabriel Iturbides, AOP Counselor

The 2009 AOP summer program started this year the same way it starts every year in similar summer programs around the state. The students arrive from all over the state, including the biggest of cities and the smallest of towns. Half arrived by a chartered bus from NYC, while the others arrived on their own, or rides from loved ones. They all arrived with a look I had seen many, many times before. It was the look that screams, "What am I doing here?"

At the end of July 1998, I embarked on a very similar program. I was about to begin my college career at St. Bonaventure Universities' HEOP summer program, a program very similar to Geneseo's AOP program. I was 17 years old and was about to go through almost exactly what this past summer's AOP students went through, which included attending a Math class, a Writing class, workshops upon workshops and the dreaded 3 hour long study hall in the library. I remember the feeling I had when I arrived on campus. It was a very unsettling feeling for a long time. A feeling that screamed I am so excited, but it also screamed, "What am I doing here?" Sound familiar? That summer, I learned that I was not as strong a writer as I thought I was. I also learned that the way I studied in high

school was not the way to study in college. That summer put me through a crash course of what life was supposed to be like when I officially started school in the Fall of 98', but if it wasn't for that summer, I don't know if I would have made it past my first semester of college.

One of my favorite parts of that summer was the fact that I was away from home and could do "almost" anything I wanted without having to answer to my parents. Of course, we had our peer mentors and counselors to put us in line, but it definitely wasn't a parent type of feeling. That was a great feeling! My most favorite part about that summer were the relationships I formed with the people that I met. That first week we were all excited to meet each other. None of us knew each other and no one else was on campus so we had no choice, but to hang out with each other. The first week was brand new and exciting. The second week was very similar, but some people had created their own groups of people they wanted to hang out with. There were also those occasional "lovebirds" that thought they had found their soul mates. The next couple of weeks were full of hard work in the classroom and evening shenanigans in the residence halls. We were 17 and 18 year

olds that were supposed to be adults, but were stills kids at heart.

That last week, was very different from the first. Some wanted to go home, but most of us were sad that the summer was over. Some cried the last day because we were leaving friends that we had made. The funniest thing is that we were all going to be back together in about three weeks. For those who have ever participated in a summer program like this, does it sound similar? I'm sure it does.

Long story short, it has been 11 years since I started that summer program. I have a strong bond with my classmates from that summer. Some have become more like family, while others have kept in touch with me here and there. It was an experience that not many people get to live through. That summer, I worked hard in my classes, made amazing friends, and realized that I did have what it took to be a successful college student.

Congratulations to all of Geneseo's AOP students! You are now part of a fraternity of students that have completed very similar programs at other SUNY's and private colleges around New York State. Welcome to SUNY Geneseo and make the best of every situation that comes your way.

## AOP Welcomes the Class of 2013!

This year, AOP boasts a high-achieving incoming class that brings to SUNY Geneseo a diversity of leadership abilities and experiences that we believe will help them succeed personally, academically, and socially.

The Class of 2013 hails from a mixture of high schools that have prepared them well for the academic rigor of college life. Following is a list of those high schools :

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| Archbishop Molloy<br>Ardsley<br>Bayside<br>Brentwood<br>Bronx Prep<br>Brooklyn Tech<br>Cardozo<br>Catherine McAuley<br>Catholic Central<br>Celia Cruz Bronx HS of Music<br>Churchville - Chili<br>Clara Barton<br>Commack | Cushing Academy<br>Delaware Academy<br>DeWitt Clinton<br>East Islip<br>EBC/DHS for Public Service<br>Bushwick<br>Edgemont<br>Fordham Prep<br>Francis Lewis<br>Freeport<br>Garden City<br>Gates-Chili<br>Geneseo Central<br>Great Neck North<br>Guilderland Central<br>Half Hollow Hills West<br>Herricks<br>Honeoye Central<br>Horace Greeley<br>HS for Law Enforcement<br>HS of Telecom Art & Tech<br>Hunter College High School<br>Hutchinson Tech<br>Iona Prep<br>Irondequoit<br>Islip<br>Ithaca<br>Jamesville-DeWitt<br>Jericho<br>Kenmore West<br>LaGuardia<br>Long Island City | Lyons Central<br>Malverne<br>Mercy<br>Monsignor McClancy<br>Mt. Mercy Academy<br>Murrow<br>Naples Central<br>New Hyde Park Memorial<br>New Rochelle<br>New Utrecht<br>Newcomers<br>North Rockland<br>Notre Dame<br>NY Museum School<br>Our Lady of Lourdes<br>Our Lady of Mercy<br>Oyster Bay<br>Penfield<br>Penn Yan Academy<br>Plainview-Old Bethpage-JFK<br>Preston<br>Queens HS for Science<br>Queens HS Tech Lib Arts<br>Sacred Heart Academy<br>Saint Michael's Academy<br>Scarsdale<br>Schenectady<br>School of the Arts | Sci Tech & Research Erasmus<br>Smithtown East<br>Somers<br>St. Agnes Academic<br>St. Francis Prep<br>St. Vincent Ferrer<br>Stuyvesant<br>Teachers Prep<br>Tenafly<br>Uniondale<br>Urban Assembly Academy of Gov/Law<br>Valley Stream South<br>Vandermeulen<br>Wantagh<br>Westhill<br>Westtown School<br>William H Taft<br>Williamsville East<br>Williamsville North<br>Wilson Magnet |
|---|--|---|--|

We are excited about the Class of 2013 and are expecting great things from you!

# Scenes from Summer 2009



### Moving In and Getting Settled



### Enjoying Field Trips



### Hard at Work



### Making New Friends

## SUNY Geneseo

Isom E. Fearn Access  
Opportunity Programs  
S.U.N.Y. College at Geneseo

Phone: 585-245-5725

Questions? Feedback? Please Contact:  
Patricia González  
[gonzalez@geneseo.edu](mailto:gonzalez@geneseo.edu)

We're On the Web!

[www.geneseo.edu/~aop](http://www.geneseo.edu/~aop)

### IMPORTANT DATES - FALL 2009

OCT.	2	F	Deadline to submit Graduation Application for Class of 2010	NOV.	2-6	M-F	Academic Advising Appointments for undeclared sophomores & juniors (students with less than 60 cumulative credits as of beginning of Fall 2009 semester)
	6	Tu	<b>One day sign-up for EOP Cash Advance # 2 (off campus students only)</b>				
	12-13	M-Tu	<b>FALL BREAK – No Classes</b> (Residence Halls remain open)		9-13	M-F	Academic Advising Appointments for freshmen
	21	W	Mid-Semester (1 <sup>st</sup> Half-Semester Ends) Academic Advisement Begins for Spring 2010		13	F	<b>AOP Freshman Pass/Fail Decisions Due</b> Last day to withdraw from class and receive "W" on transcript
	23-24	F-Sa	Parents Weekend		20	F	<b>Advance Registration for Spring 2010 ends</b>
	25	Su	<b>Midterm Grades to be Posted on KnightWeb</b>		25-29	W-Su	<b>THANKSGIVING VACATION – No Classes (Residence Halls close at 10:00 a.m. on Wed.)</b>
	26-30	M-F	Freshman Meetings w/ AOP Counselors to review Mid-term grades				
NOV.	2	M	<b>Advance Registration for Spring 2010 Begins on KnightWeb.</b> <b>Please Note: Check Registration Status on MyGeneseo/KnightWeb to confirm day and time you will be allowed to register and to check on whether there are any holds on your account that will prevent registration. All first year, undeclared second year AOP students, students on Academic Probation and any student with a cumulative GPA less than 2.3 MUST schedule an advisement appointment in order to obtain their ALTER NATE PIN which is required for on-line registration.</b>	DEC.	1	Tu	Application deadline for admission to the <b>School of Business</b> (South 100) or <b>School of Education</b> (South 200) degree programs
					14	M	Last day of regularly scheduled classes
					15	Tu	Study Day – no classes or exams
					16	W	<b>Final Exams begin</b>
					20	Su	<b>Deadline for payment of bill for Spring 2010 by advance-registered students</b>
					22	Tu	<b>Final Exams End</b>
					23	W	<b>Residence Halls close at 10:00 a.m.</b>

Have a Wonderful Semester!