



## Get Involved!

We hope you enjoy the inaugural issue of the United Voices Newsletter. We aim to uplift the voices of the AOP and Geneseo communities alike through creative expression. You can get involved with the United Voices Newsletter in one of three ways:

1. Join the club we meet biweekly on Wednesdays at 3pm
2. We are always looking for submissions for song recommendations for our study playlist, recipes for homemade or traditional meals, television shows, movies, art and more
3. Subscribe to our mailing list by sending an email to [mlewis@geneseo.edu](mailto:mlewis@geneseo.edu) or follow us on instagram at [@unitedvoicesaop](https://www.instagram.com/unitedvoicesaop).

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As the old saying goes, *every cloud has a silver lining*. In this time of the Covid-19 Pandemic that we are living through, it is more important than ever to keep this idiom at the top of your consciousness. Just so that everyone is clear, the gist of this saying is that difficult times always lead to better days. This year has been very challenging for various reasons. The obvious health care implications, the economic downturn, and the social unrest brought on by the extra judicial killing of unarmed black men in numerous municipalities have all been theoretical clouds that 2020 has forced us to deal with.

As a college student in these turbulent times it is important to keep your perspective about what you set out to accomplish when you decided to start your academic journey. None of us could have predicted the current state of affairs when most of you began your college careers. The one thing that was predictable is that college is hard. The endeavor of achieving a college degree is difficult and presents many challenges to reach the finish line. Previous generations of college students have dealt with wars, oil embargos, economic recessions, and various forms of civil unrest over the last few decades. Those earlier generations produced college graduates and leaders that overcame the obstacles that were standing in the way of their goals. The global pandemic is an obstacle that has not been seen for over a century. A playbook for how to deal with this extreme obstacle does not exist. Booker T. Washington is quoted as saying “. . . *that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one achieves in life as by the obstacles which he (she) has overcome while trying to succeed.*” If Washington’s words are true, then your generation will be some of the most successful people to ever live. I know that is hyperbole but it stands to reason that if you can stay focused on your goals during this rocky time, the reward will be great when life gets back to normal.

The Access Opportunity Program (AOP) is interested in your academic, social, and emotional success and well-being. Our primary goals are simple. Identify quality individuals who have an interest in scholarship and provide the appropriate level of support that each individual requires to help them achieve a bachelor degree in their desired program of study.

You may not be aware of the history of AOP but as a student in this program you are part of a success machine. AOP has produced thousands of success stories over the many decades of its existence. My main objective as the new Director of this storied program is to keep the success train rolling. Along with the AOP staff members I am committed to your success but we cannot be more interested in your success than you are. It is and will continue to be difficult to stay focused but just like previous generations, you are up to the task. You have all of the attributes of the success stories that came before you. We know that you possess the capability, resilience, ingenuity, and optimism to get through this tough time. We believe in you!

The days may be cloudy now but better days are just on the horizon. If you begin to feel down about the turbulent times, we are here to support you. If you do not feel comfortable talking to your AOP counselor, find someone else to confide in because help is available. If you are having a bad day here or there, try to remember that feeling you had when you received your acceptance letter to SUNY Geneseo. Try to remember those feelings of happiness and confidence that moment produced in your life. You have to find something good in the current situation to keep you motivated to persist. The silver lining is near. - Mr. Marcus Watts

# COMMUNITY BUILDING

## What Does AOP Mean To You?

It is that remedy to pre-college jitters, a chance to pursue higher education when statistics display "a likely" pitfall after high school. AOP is alternating who serves the food, or dry-erase markers that sit out uncapped for hours because students are studying too hard. AOP is advocacy, it is emotional, it is heart-wrenching and often unheard. Most importantly, AOP is fly like fervors in the heat and is an ever changing platform for its advocates to keep building on. Without the advocates, AOP is only a poster dream, people should keep advocating.

-Anonymous

AOP helped me make the first big steps into my future. I had no idea what college was going to be like. I was so scared and anxious. AOP has been there for me every step of the way. In times like these, where everything is uncertain, AOP has helped me find ways to keep moving forward and to follow my dreams. As cheesy as it sounds, I truly don't think I'd be where I am today without AOP. I am so grateful for all AOP has done for me. Words could never express my gratitude.

-Patricia Figueroa TOP Class of 2022

## Friend Making Tips

*Making new friends and connections can be a challenging task whether you're shy, an introvert, or it's overwhelming. With this current pandemic, it makes making friends even more difficult. Many are conflicted about coming out of their shell to go meet new people or to keep their distance and remain safe. Here are a few tips that can help you or someone you know and be covid friendly!*

**Tip #1:** Check out the different clubs, organizations, and events on campus. I know we get nearly 50 emails per day or more and it can be hard to get through them all, but if you have the time, look at some clubs that may interest you. Make a shortlist of the different events that interest you or send an email to a club and let them know you are interested in. You can find out the meeting times and attend their events and other activities, in person, or over zoom. However, that does not mean you have to officially commit to that club. If you feel the club is not for you, that is okay. You can move on to the next club that interests you until you find THE club for you. Even if you decide to not join a specific club, you can still connect with someone in that club/event. If you recall them talking about something that also interests you that they are in,

you can email them/private chat them on zoom for more information. A friendship could start to form as you bond with them over other similarities besides the club or current event.

**Tip #2:** That leads me to my next tip, reach out to someone! I know it is easier said than done but you can start off small. Whether it is someone in your club or someone you walk past every day on your way to class, some icebreaker games are a good way to help form friendships. You may notice you pass someone everyday and you guys are in the same class or live in the same hall, and you notice they always wear a T-shirt with the logo of your favorite band, you can start up a conversation on the side. You can start a conversation on a topic that you are familiarized and comfortable with talking about. Before you know it, the conversation will continue smoothly as you guys continue to talk. You may even find out that you guys have more in common than you thought.

**Tip #3:** Reach out over social media! Whether over Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, etc, someone may have a particular fun fact about themselves in their bio or on their account that you can relate to. Whether it be film, sports, games, music, art, anything at all that could help be a starter topic for a bonding conversation. Soon before you know it, the 2 of you could be bonding over different deserts when the conversation started about loving the same basketball team.

**Tip #4:** BE FRIENDLY! Remember to approach someone with respect and courtesy. Even if you may have something in common with someone, it is important to approach them respectfully and kindly.

**Tip #5:** Go at your own pace! If you want to try one club per week, meet one new person per week, etc, go at the pace that is best for you. Don't feel you have to overwork yourself to meet 5 people per day. If you want to meet 10 people or 1 person per day that is okay. It is your experience and you can decide how you want to go about it. As long as you're safe, having a good time, and comfortable with yourself and your goal.



*Meeting new people can be challenging and making the first move could be even more challenging, especially in this season. But with the right amount of help and self-confidence, you can put yourself out there, meet new people, and find what and who is right for you in your personal life. Have fun, stay positive, and do your thing!*



# **SELF-CARE TIPS**

## **Helpful Study Tips for Quizzes & Exams**

**Tip #1:** Go over your notes! Now I know this is common advice given for students to study, but hear me out! Go over your notes with a friend or someone you are acquainted with within your class. Sometimes you may have missing notes or information, so to go over your notes with someone else who takes good notes is a good strategy. If you do not know anyone in your class or your friend has holes in their notes well, schedule office hours with your professor or your teaching assistants. You may have misguided information and these tips are a good way to get clear and direct information and instructions from the source.

**Tip #2:** After you are confident that you have all the notes and information you need, create a study guide! You can do so on Google Docs, word, etc. You can do this with fellow peers or by yourself in your free time. Don't put everything in word by word, do your best to condense the information and pick out what is most important and relevant. **DO NOT** wait till the night before the exam to make your guide! You may have a lot of notes and to condense it all for a study guide may take more time than you think, and you don't want to accidentally pull an all-nighter. Gradually start making your guide so you can add what needs to be added as time goes on and give yourself extra time to fully understand the topic. This way it goes into your long-term memory and you'll have more space to take in more information.

**Tip #3:** This tip could be substituted for Tip #2 or you could do both if comfortable. This tip may work best for your 2nd, 3rd, or 4th exam/quiz for a class or if you have a professor you've had before and have prior awareness of how they set up their exams. It may not always work depending on if your professor switches the set up of questions but regardless it's still a good study method to keep in mind.

Make your own practice exam/quiz. Meet up with fellow peers and all make up a few questions similar to how your professor makes up questions and together, you guys can make a practice exam to help give yourselves an idea of what the exam may look like and how to handle different question setups and trick questions. Then you guys all take the practice exam individually and once finished you guys can go over it together. See what you got wrong, what confused you, what you need more clarification on. So if one friend made a question on different soil types, and you got that question wrong, that friend can help you further understand the question/topic and vice versa. You guys will be teaching each other and yourselves at the same time.



## What Can I Do To Help Manage This Difficult Time?

In uncertain times, one of the tactics that have been employed to create some sense of control over my life is to be fully attentive to all of the things that I can control. Organizational skills become very important during uncertain times. Obviously, you should have your coursework organized in a way that makes your life easier.

Do you have a calendar/organizer that has the entire semester mapped out?

Have you visited each of your professor's office hours? Do they know your name?

Do you go to every class?

Clean your house (including the bathroom) regularly.

Fold or hang up your clothes when you are done with your laundry. (Don't live out of the hamper)

Make your bed daily.

Create a workout routine. (Run, Walk, Weights, Aerobics, Dance, Spinning, etc.)

Meditate.

Practice Yoga.

- Mr. Marcus Watts



# Seasonal Recommendations

## Holiday Inspired Recipes

### **Black Cake:**

Caribbean culture staple, often served during Thanksgiving and Christmas.

<https://food52.com/recipes/78421-black-cake>

### **Southern Baked Macaroni and Cheese:**

A staple in soul food and southern culture served during multiple occasions such as Sunday Dinner, Holidays, and Birthdays.

<https://www.sweetteaandthyme.com/southern-baked-macaroni-cheese-soul-food/>

### **Turkey Meatloaf:**

Looking for an alternative to the regular bird dish for the holidays, try the unbelievably moist turkey meatloaf recipe below.

<https://www.inspiredtaste.net/21535/unbelievably-moist-turkey-meatloaf-recipe/>

## Mood Setting Songs

1. Ambition - Wale featuring Meek Mill & Rick Ross
2. DNA - Kendrick Lamar
3. Tyrant - Kali Uchis
4. Daisy - Ashnikko
5. 3005 - Donald Glover
6. Roxanne - Arizona Zervas
7. Boasty - Wiley ft. Idris Elba, Stefflon Don, Sean Paul
8. Drogba (Joanna) - Afro B

## Binge Worthy Shows

1. How to Get Away With Murder
2. Greys Anatomy
3. Ratchet
4. The 100
5. Parks and Recreation
6. New Girl
7. Criminal Minds