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Scholarship Center On the Move

The York College Scholarship Center buzzed with activities this past spring. On February 8th, 2018, the office hosted the first Student Scholars Day event at York College. Presenters represented three main areas important for students to be involved in so they may be better qualified for competitive scholarships: Study Abroad (Dr. Hamid Bahri, Department of Foreign Languages, ESL, and Humanities), the College Honors Program (Dr. Jong Ill-Lee, Chemistry) and Undergraduate Research (Mr. Rudolph Nisanov). The event was moderated by Dean Donna Chirico.

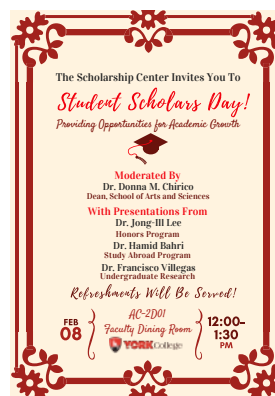
There were 121 scholars who attended and received this vital information to grow, develop, and become the best scholars they can be at York College. The students asked thought-provoking questions and were very engaged in the topics brought by presenters. They now know what steps they must take in order to participate in Undergraduate Research. They also know that there are research opportunities for all disciplines, not just in the sciences.

Dr. Bahri spoke to the students about traveling the world in Study Abroad programs. Students can

connect with hundreds of opportunities within CUNY, such as courses in France, Moldova, China, Australia, just to name a few, available at the CUNY website on Travel Abroad.

Dr. Lee encouraged all the students present to participate in the York College Honors Program. Students can contact the program, get support, and receive assistance to help build up their GPA and other requirements to participate in the program.

Soon after the panel, Julissa Contreras and Alexa Maurer (Scholarship Cen-



Continued on next page ▶

Deadline!

All items for the **Fall 2018** issue of **Academic Affairs Update** should be submitted to Marcia Moxam Comrie (mcomrie@york.cuny.edu) by **September 28, 2018**. Text should be sent in MS Word. Photos should be sent as separate hi-res files (preferably not less than 1MB).



Left to right: Donna Chirico, Hamid Bahri, Jong-III Lee, and Rudolph Nisanov.

Scholarship Center

Continued from previous page

ter) began assisting students with scholarship applications for travel abroad opportunities, providing students support to complete their multiple applications in a timely fashion. Nine students applied to the national Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, and six students were selected—four were offered partial funding for their travel program and two were waitlisted. The four who were offered funding are Emanuel Garcia (\$3500—Republic of Moldova),

Charles Clink (\$2500—Republic of Moldova), Ashleigh Brown (\$4000—United Kingdom), and Charles Kellerman (\$2500—Republic of Moldova). Some of the students also received the CUNY Global Chancellor's Scholarship for Study Abroad, York College's Study Abroad Scholarship, and others. Many students here at York can look forward to their programs in different countries thanks to the scholarships provided.

While providing support to the numerous students coming to the office for study abroad scholarships, the Scholarship Center also collected applications for the York College Foundation Schol-

arships. Students are recognizing how easy it is to apply through the York College Scholarship Center's website and applicants have increased from 50 students last spring to 85 students this spring.

The Scholarship Center provides many services to students: it disseminates information about both internal and external scholarship opportunities and works with students on application essays, encouraging and supporting scholarship applicants throughout their application processes. It also helps students highlight the challenges they overcame on the way to winning scholarships and share the enriching experiences afforded by their awards. ■

Black Voices in the Media

By **KEILA OTTERO**, Student Journalist

York's second *Black Voices in the Media* event, "Media Bias: Impacting Perception and Public Opinion of the Black Community," was held in the York College Faculty Dining Room on February 22. The event included a panel discussion of the ways media bias affects how the world sees the African-American community. The Delta Sigma Theta Sorority joined up with the Epsilon Pi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and The Links Incorporated Greater Queens Chapter to sponsor the panel.

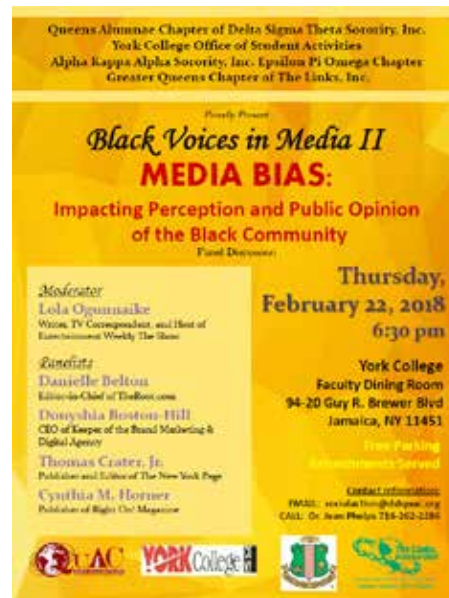
Panel participants included Danielle Belton, who is known as the editor and writer of the blog *The Black Snob* and is currently Editor-in-Chief of the popular Black news site *The Root*. She was joined by marketing specialist Donyshia Boston-Hill, who has worked with HOT 97 and the New York Knicks. A third panelist was the well-known writer and entertainment editor, Cynthia Marie Horner. She has quite a reputation in the music industry due to her work at *Right On!* magazine from 1976 to 2005. The final panelist was Thomas Crater Jr., founder and owner of the Southern Queens-based publication *The New York Page*. The panel moderator, Lola Ogunnaike, has worked with CNN and *The New*

York Times. She is the current host of *Entertainment Weekly: The Show*, a weekly series that follows the most current stories in the entertainment industry.

Ogunnaike asked the panelists if the media was biased towards the Black community. Belton without hesitation responded "yes." She then went into greater detail. "There is some debate about whether the bias is unconscious bias or overt, but I say why not both," Belton said. "It is a little bit of both, which is wrong at times." The panel then discussed preconceived notions about minority groups that show up in interview questions and media discussions. If a reporter has some issues with a person of color or with a certain group, they may neglect that person or treat them in a hostile manner.

"We know it exists," said Crater when asked his opinion on media bias. He added that it has been hard trying to publish his weekly news due to this bias, even in his own field. He stands firm in his belief that local media needs to reassure community members that they are being heard.

"I do believe there is media bias. Sensationalism sells," said Boston-Hill. "If we are not telling the stories, we are only reporting the stories." Boston-Hill noted that local reporters must cover certain topics no matter how uncomfortable they may be. She reminded the audience that the people who get in front of the



camera or behind the mike were not the final decision makers on what gets reported. This reality was what pushed her to make sure she had the final say on what she reported to make sure that her reporting was the truth.

“There are people above the reporters and a lot of those people are the ones that make the decision,” said Cynthia Horner as she chimed in on Boston-Hill’s point. “The stories [often] have to mirror what the company’s policy and branding are supposed to be.” Horner added that in situations like these, many reporters are put in an awkward position. This is especially true with African-American reporters. They often must choose between the community and their company. “Do you try to push what we, people of color, are doing or do you follow orders and keep a job?” asked Horner. An example of the dilemma that she mentioned was the cancellation of *News One Now*, hosted by Roland Martin, which was cancelled in December 2017 due to poor ratings (as Martin was allegedly told).

The panel noted the excitement over the premiere of *Black Panther*, a smash hit Marvel action film with an extensive Black cast. The film displays the true beauty and artistry that people of color can achieve if given the chance. “That is an entertainment film,” said Horner. “It is not the first movie that I’ve seen that deserved the kind of star-power that it received.” Belton noted that the huge hit was not due to the talent alone. “Black Panther wouldn’t have been as successful as it was, if it wasn’t for social media,” said Belton, speaking about how technology helped with spreading the word and advocating for the film in the African-American community. Ogunnaike responded that with social media “you can pull the emotion out of the conversation and just attach analytics to the conversation.”

Another topic that drew a lot of attention was the Florida schoolshooting that occurred on Valentine’s Day. Ogunnaike asked Donyshia Boston-Hill how things could’ve been different if the students standing up and protesting the shooting were Black, instead of predominantly White or fair skinned. The moderator compared the response to the shooting



Left to right: Danielle Belton, Cynthia Horner, Lola Ogunnaike, Thomas Crater, and Donyshia Boston-Hill.

with how Black Lives Matter was shown and perceived. “Maybe we should take the color out of it,” said Ogunnaike. “I know it is hard to say but there is definitely a need.”

Boston-Hill brought up the “police factor” throughout the Black Lives Matter (BML) protest. There was barely any police representation during the protest after the Florida mass shooting, which was not true during the BML protests. “The police factor changes the conversation across the board and nationally,” said Boston-Hill. Her comment evolved into a conversation as to why the police come out in greater force when it comes to people of color.

“When something is presented with a White face it is as if it washes any sort of impropriety or questioning away, like you completely trust it,” said Belton. “When someone has a black face on a movement it is like it inherently comes with all the negativity and the stereotypes that people have against Black people.”

Regarding social media, Horner said people should pay greater attention to what is broadcast throughout social media and different social sites or web pages. After all, this is how people in this age of technology get their news. “We have so many ways to get information, which

makes it criminal for somebody NOT being able to discern what they should be covering.”

All panelists agreed that people should use social media as their go-to source for news. However, they should also let reporters and certain networks know when something is done right or could have been done better. This is especially true when it comes to the African-American community and getting their voices heard. ■

Kudos!

The National Association of Social Workers in Moldova (NASWM) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Interior to start providing mental health trainings to the police force in Moldova. The NASWM was launched two years ago in Moldova with support from Project Casa Mare and York College. York College social work students contributed to the development of the new training through related work they were completing for class projects. Student presentations, which were shared with social work colleagues in Moldova, formed the basis of the training program.

Geology Students Embark on Site Visit

On April 28, 2018, geology majors in the Soils Mechanics (Geology 342) course taught by Professor Walter Jones made a field trip to the Port Authority Technical Center (PATC) in Jersey City, New Jersey. In addition to visiting the laboratory facilities of the Port Authority, students also visited the Jersey City headquarters of Warren George, a long-established drilling company. Students in attendance at the visit were: Sebastian Augustin, Farzana Akther, Karima Ali, Joshua Alvarado, Jasmin Budhan, Bjorn Forde, Allen Michael, Gugu Ginindza, Arian Gonzalez, Mildred Selby, Kalah Bailey, Leonardo Sanchez, and Mansi Thakker.



Representative drilled core samples prepared to undergo geotechnical tests to assess the subsoil load-bearing capacity.

At PATC, Robert Gill, Geotechnical Laboratory Supervisor, greeted the group and began with a tour of the concrete and asphalt testing operations. The group witnessed the demonstration of several concrete compression tests. An application of one of the major topics in the course, field compaction of soils used for backfill, was demonstrated with a modified Proctor compaction test. Mr. Gill then brought the group to the geotechnical laboratory to explain the triaxial and consolidation testing equipment. He showed the class several samples from ongoing and past projects undertaken by the Port Authority Geotechnical Department, including post 9-11 rock cores from the World Trade Center (a section of which was graciously donated to the York College Earth and Physical Sciences Department).

Gill, who holds a BS with majors in both Geology and Environmental Studies from SUNY Binghamton and has been with the Port Authority since 1993, discussed several of the Geotechnical and Environmental Projects he has personally worked on. He advised the students to obtain and upgrade as many certifications as possible to enhance their careers (NICET, ACI, NJLSRP program, etc.), including the Professional Geologist license required after 2016 in New York State.

Mr. Gill escorted the group to the headquarters of Warren George, one of



Concrete strength measuring tool. Also ideal for rock core compression tests routinely needed for determining foundation strength concerning load-bearing capacity.

the oldest and largest geotechnical drilling companies in the United States. Drs. Schleifer and Khandaker worked with Warren George in connection with the City Water Tunnel #3 project in the past and provided geotechnical assessment of several thousands of feet of drilled core samples to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP). Bob Stothoff, General Manager, Warren George Drilling Company, arranged a tour of the Warren George drilling facilities. The students were impressed with the extent to which they operate “over water” and with the equipment required to conduct this type of activity. Mr. Stothoff also arranged for two staff members to set up an auger to drill 5-10 feet into their yard solely for the benefit of our geology students. York students were able to watch sampling techniques as well. Dr. Timothy Paglione (Chair, Earth and Physical Sciences) thanked Mr. Stothoff, saying “It is increasingly important, with newly-enacted licensing requirements etc., that our geology majors be exposed to their field outside the classroom as much as possible before they graduate. Your permitting this visit did much towards that goal.” ■



York Geology 342 students with Professor Walter Jones (rear row, 5th from left) and Geotechnical Personnel from Port Authority and Warren George Drilling Company (rear row, 7th through 9th from left).

Mathematics & Computer Science On the Move

In 2017 and 2018, the Mathematics & Computer Science Department has been adding to its already long list of faculty accomplishments. Dr. Radoslaw Wojciechowski, currently on sabbatical, has organized two international conferences in mathematics:



“Analysis and Geometry on Graphs and Manifolds,” International Conference at the University of Potsdam, Germany, July 31 to August 4, 2017. Sponsored by the DFG, NSF, the University of Potsdam and the Simons Foundation. Co-organized with Matthias Keller (University of Potsdam) and Daniel Lenz (University of Jena).

“Explorations in Geometric Analysis - Discrete and Continuous,” International Conference in Honor of Jozef Dodziuk’s 70th Birthday at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, January 25 to 26, 2018. Sponsored by the NSF and the Simons Foundation. Co-organized with Ara Basmajian (Hunter College and the Graduate

Center), Jeffrey McGowan (Central Connecticut State University) and Mahmoud Zeinalian (Long Island University and the Graduate Center).

Dr. Virginia Thompson and Dr. Vivien Wang each received a grant in Spring 2018. These are:



York College and Queensborough Community College”. March 2018: \$10,000.

Virginia Thompson: CUNY Collaborative Open Educational Resources in STEM (COERS) Program, “Increasing the OER Capacity of Pre-Calculus Courses at York College and Queensborough Community College”. March 2018:



Vivien Wang: CUNY Research in the Classroom Grant, “The Multivariable Statistical Analysis: Big Data of Taxi-cab Mobility Application Model”. Spring 2018: \$7,500.00

Lastly, the following articles/papers were recently published:

D’Alotto, L., Sergeev, Y., “Cellular Automata and Grossone Computations”, *Information and Complexity*, Ed. by M. Burgin, and C. S. Calude (2017). *World Scientific Series in Information Studies-Vol. 6*, World Scientific Publishing, Singapore, Chapter 13, pp. 316-337.

D’Alotto, L., (2017). “Finite and Infinite Computations and a Classification of Two-Dimensional Cellular Automata Using Infinite Computations, Parallel Computing Technologies”, *14th International Conference, PaCT 2017, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, Proceedings*, V. Malyskin (Ed.), Springer LNCS 10421, pp. 183-195.

Matthias Keller, Daniel Lenz, Marcel Schmidt, Radoslaw K. Wojciechowski. “Note on uniformly transient graphs.” *Rev. Mat. Iberoam.* 33, no. 3, 2017: 831-860.

R. Nath, J. A. Sellers, “Abaci structures of (s, m) -core partitions.” *Electronic J. Combinatorics* 24 (2017) P1.5

Radoslaw K. Wojciechowski. “The Feller property for graphs.” *Trans. Amer. Math. Soc.* 369, no. 6, 2017: 4415-4431. ■

York Gets Third Grant from Volunteer Services for Children

In 2016, Volunteer Services for Children (VSC) gave York College an initial grant in the amount of \$75,000 to purchase a state-of-the-art flight simulator, called a Red Bird. Students in the Aviation Institute are able to practice flying on the realistic-feeling “plane,” including taking off and landing.

In 2017 the organization added another \$50,000 to furnish the room with desks, chairs and two large wall-installed monitors where students can see an “airport runway” as they take off and land; and finally, in the winter of 2018 VSC gave the college a final \$30,000. This most recent grant will help fund a drone program planned by the Aviation Institute.

“I would like to thank Greg Wiske, treasurer of VSC, and the entire organization for their generosity to York College,” said Mondell Sealy of the Office of Institutional Advancement, who wrote proposals for the grants totaling \$155,000. “These funds have and will continue to enhance the educational experience for students in aviation at York.”



Ribbon-Cutting (left to right): Dr. Chris Hsu, Dr. Marcia V. Keizs, Greg Wiske, and Mondell Sealy



Graduating Senior Heading to Two Graduate Schools Concurrently

Ality Aghedo is a man on the move. A Geology (Earth and Physical Science) major, Aghedo is now enrolled in two graduate programs at two separate universities.

First, Aghedo was accepted into Johns Hopkins University for a Master of Science in Environmental and Policy Studies, pending his final grades from York. His undergraduate research background and experience, which he shared in an interview with a Johns Hopkins Graduate School adviser who contacted him prior to making a final decision, contributed to his admission to the program. Aghedo presented geological research at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America in 2016 and 2017.

As if that master's degree weren't enough of a challenge, the hardworking scholar also applied and was accepted for an MBA program at Regent University's School of Business and Leadership. The latter program he will attend on an online basis. A Christian university based in Virginia Beach, Virginia, Regent University has both online and on-campus options. It promises that students will grow as scholars, Christians and people.

Born in Edo State, Nigeria, Ality came to the United States at the age of 26 when he won the green card lottery (officially known as the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program), which grants permanent residence to randomly selected applicants from certain countries. He has taken full advantage of this opportunity. Coming to York, he says, has been very beneficial to his goals.

"A lot of people don't know the benefits of [attending] a small college," said Aghedo. "We get [an] opportunity to network and get scholarships and research opportunities. Right now I'm participating in three research projects."

Aghedo has engaged in meaningful research under the mentorship of Dr. Ratan Dhar in environmental science; Dr. Susan Letteney in social work, Dr. Nicholas Grosskopf in public health, and Dr. Nazrul Khandaker in sediment research, among others. He also values the general mentorship of Dr. Victor Ramsey of Health and Physical Education and Gerontological Studies.

"Ality comes up with a burst of energy, and knowing him for over four years as student and mentee, I haven't noticed any dissipation of enthusiasm when it comes to academic components and student services," said Dr. Khandaker. "Strikingly, he maintained a sustained growth over the years, expanded [his] professional network through attending annual meetings of the Geological Society of America (GSA), and participated in strategic GSA campus representatives gatherings."

For his hard work, Aghedo has been amply rewarded with scholarship and research funding. He has been awarded \$14,800 by the U.S. Department of Energy; \$7,500 by the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP); and \$3,500 for an International Research Scholarship from the CUNY Research Foundation.



Ality Aghedo (far left) working with a group of geology undergraduates in Professor Khandaker's laboratory for sediment analysis.

He was also a non-contracted United States Army Cadet Command ROTC member and received a certificate of achievement for exceptional performance and dedication to the CUNY Army ROTC program. Upon completion of his double master's degrees, Aghedo plans to apply to a doctoral program at Harvard University's Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences.

"I want to be a research scientist and a professor," said Aghedo. "My double master's degrees will enhance my career prospects, enable me to be more creative, provide opportunity to be mentored by great research scientists, and increase my opportunities in the future including getting acceptance at Harvard University for a PhD."

York has prepared him well for all this. In addition to research in his department, Aghedo has delved into fields outside of his geoscience major. His research with Drs. Grosskopf and Letteney includes "Sex Ed in the City: The Self-Perceptions of Primary Care & Disclosure to Health Care Providers among Sexual Minority Women: A Systematic Literature Review" and "Recommendations for Routine Male Circumcision: A Systematic Content Analysis of State Departments of Health Websites." He hopes to present these works in progress at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality in Montreal, Canada this November.

He has also published in peer-reviewed journals as a co-author with mentors such as Dr. Nazrul Khandaker in the Earth and Physical Education department:

<https://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2016AM/webprogram/Paper278980.html>

<https://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2016AM/webprogram/Paper285719.html>

<https://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2017AM/meetingapp.cgi/Paper/303434>

A real renaissance man, Aghedo is well on his way to achieving his dreams. ■

Why African American Studies?

By **KWAHNEISHA FESTUS**, Student Journalist

Professor Andrew Jackson, a York College alumnus, always asks his Introduction to Black Studies students the same question: “Where were you introduced to Black People? Students usually yell out “slaves and the slave trade.” However, Professor Andrew Jackson reminds them that people don’t start off as slaves and that everyone was lied to.

Professor Jackson, who participated in an African-American Resource Center event on why people need black studies and why it is important, believes that African-American history has missing pages that a Black Studies program at York College could fill in. Professor Jackson was joined on the panel by Distinguished Lecturer Ron Daniels, Professor Mychel Namphy, and Professor George White, moderator for the event. The event was held on February 6, 2018, 12-2 pm in the African American Resource Center, AC-3B04.

According to the panel, Black Studies must go back and teach students about the history of the world and how African Americans fit into that world. “I think that Black Studies is a phase that we have to go through, but it not the last step,” said Dr. Namphy. “It has served as a corrective to what has been done so far.” Professor Jackson suggested that Black Studies should start with a look at history. He also suggested students must know world history as well. In this area, Jackson says, start with Africa, even though society does not want you to start there. They always want students to start with Europe.

Black Studies does not focus on one particular group of people. It can be about Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latino, and African-American people and their culture. All of these cultures trace back to the slave experience. “We can’t neglect ancient African History,” says Jackson. “You can’t neglect the contributions we made to America, to the Caribbean, and to Central South America and not talk

about the African people. Unfortunately, we have been divided amongst ourselves, with the divide and conquer mentality. We don’t know enough about each other because we are not conditioned to talk with each other.”

Professor Namphy basically agreed with Jackson’s point. However, he wanted to add one more key concern. “When it comes to Black Studies, we are talking about white people and what they have done to dominate the world for the last 500 years,” Namphy says. “This is the reason for Black Studies. That is the essence!” Professor Namphy also noted that some black people don’t seem to want to be black. They are running away from the idea that they are of color. They want to be everything but black. “You are looking at a fool,” says Namphy.

Black people are “mental slaves” today because they don’t tend to appreciate who they are as African people. Every other major culture celebrates their heritage by going back to visit the homes of their ancestors. However, many African people just never do that.

Many key people have influenced Black Studies. Unfortunately, some may get swept under the rug and not really spoken about at length. According to Dr. Daniels, Haki Madhubuti had a lot to do with the Black Arts Movement. Another person the panel believed influenced Black Studies was Elijah Muhammed, who was a black-American religious



Left to right: Professors Mychel Namphy, Ron Daniels, George White, and Andrew Jackson

leader. He led the nation of Islam from 1934 to when he passed away in 1975. He mentored people like Malcolm X, Louis Farrakhan, and even the boxer Muhammed Ali.

Not only are there people that influenced Black Studies, but there are also events that contributed to the idea of Black Studies as well. Professor White said that the Haitian Revolution is an important event that contributed to Black Studies. “The Haitian Revolution was the first Revolution to create the first democratic nation of former slaves to rebel against your slave owners,” says White, chair of the History, Philosophy and Anthropology Department.

Jackson sees Black Studies as important because it can teach students what they are not generally learning in school. “Until they modify and re-edit the course work from elementary to high school, where you can learn about the first five presidents of the United States being slave holders, where you can learn about your contributions to the world, and go back and start world history in Africa and not Europe, and American History where the contributions of enslaved Africans have helped to build this nation, then we have a need for Black Studies,” Jackson says.

Jackson was shocked that some of his Introduction to Black Studies students didn’t know who Medgar Evers and Paul Robeson were. Some students even questioned why Martin Luther King Jr. has a holiday. The students in his class can only mention names like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Frederick Douglass, George Washington Carver and Booker T. Washington. He says that some students “don’t know any of the movements, none of the struggles nor any of the history or the culture of the people, or anything about their ancestors.”

Jackson also believes that a Black Studies course should be required for anyone that is attending college, no matter where they come from or the language that they speak.

“It would change your whole world view,” he says. ■

TRIO and Student Success

By **KEILA OTTERO**,
Student Journalist

Many students feel immense pressure when they leave the safety net of high school and enter college. Some may feel insecurities in their choice of study, while others may struggle with economic or emotional support. That is where York's TRIO Program can often come into play. Students who take advantage of this program gain support, knowledge and confidence in becoming better versions of themselves during their college years and beyond.

Students who sign up for the TRIO Program may have problems with public speaking, leadership skills or even test anxiety. This program helps students through various workshops that target different challenges. The program is based on the belief that college should be fun, but that it can be so only if the students have ways of dealing with moments of stress.

May Thu Thway, 21, a junior majoring in Health Science, spoke about the immense support York's TRIO Program has given her. Besides participating in TRIO's workshops, Thway communicates regularly with the staff and counselors and stays involved in the TRIO Student Club as its Vice President. This has helped her grow in character and confidence.

"I was able to overcome my fear (of public speaking) and be confident in myself due to being involved in the TRIO Club leadership training," said Thway.

The TRIO Student Club and the TRIO Program created and recently hosted the Second Annual TRIO Cultural Awareness Day. Members represented their countries and culture through dance, song and cuisine. TRIO Cultural Awareness Day is a celebration of the diversity within York College and the program. Attendees at the delightful event saw colorful balloons and even more colorful presentations at each table. Among the nations represented were Ecuador, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Ireland and Puerto Rico. "I feel proud to par-

ticipate in the TRIO Cultural Awareness event. It was a great opportunity for me to represent my culture to fellow classmates," said Syeda Hussain, 21, a junior majoring in Mathematics Education. "It gave me a sense of belonging."

Hussain also spoke on how the TRIO Program has been a big part of her self-improvement. This is especially true when it comes to the assistance she receives from her math tutor. "Doing a session with him is like discussing my ideas with a more mature mathematician," said Hussain, who also mentioned how her TRIO Counselor, Ms. Dwon Campbell, has personally helped her throughout the years. "She understands my strengths and weaknesses," said Hussain. "She helps me arrange my classes according to [my] strengths."

Thway and Hussain discovered TRIO through classmates and friends who were part of the program. For Thway, the program helped her academically through its counseling services and tutoring. "Academic and personal counseling from Ms. Christina plays a big role for me to stay optimistic and continue to improve myself," said Thway. "The emotional support from the TRIO staff, especially from TRIO director (Dr. Theresa Curry) helped me with my fear of communicating and letting my voice out."

Dr. Curry, director of the TRIO Program, saw the importance of the TRIO Cultural Awareness event as a chance to raise student awareness about the impact of various cultures and beliefs

on York students. "The purpose of this event is to increase the awareness of the differences in cultures such as ancestry, beliefs, values, habits and many other factors," said Curry. According to Curry, the event was designed to decrease stereotypes by assembling diverse ethnic groups that learn from one another.

Curry explained that the TRIO Student Club mission was to revitalize and inspire club members and to optimize their self-esteem. She wants them to believe that they can accomplish their personal and professional goals.

"The teaching and guidelines I continue to practice [are those] which [were] offered to me, to be helpful to others and to set goals and reminders to make sure I get it done," said York College 2017 graduate and TRIO alum Devika Baldeo.

Both students interviewed for this piece are a part of TRIO's Student Support Services (SSS), but TRIO also has a York Enrichment Services (YES) program. The YES program is for the students within the Center for Students with Disabilities. TRIO SSS has been at York for over 39 years, but YES is still the newcomer after 22 years. Both services give students assistance in the academic areas and on a personal level. The support system and growth within TRIO is successful, if alumni involvement is any indication of success. Many TRIO graduates have either returned to serve the students at their alma mater or have found ways to help others after graduation. ■



TRIO Cultural Awareness Day celebrated the many cultures at York College and in the TRIO program.

Essay Contest Winners Travel to National Museum of African-American History and Culture

In Fall 2017, the York College Common Reader Program sponsored a student essay contest for its 2017-2018 Common Reader, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The book, by Michelle Alexander, argues that mass incarceration of African-Americans is a direct offshoot of the same racism that enabled slavery and led to the institution of Jim Crow segregation laws enacted in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For the essay contest, students were asked to respond to the question, “How is mass incarceration today related to slavery?” Five

winners received a prize of an expenses-paid trip to the National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

On January 24-25, 2018, the students, accompanied by Professors Cynthia Haller (English) and Christina Miller (Library), traveled by van to Washington, D.C., where they enjoyed dinner out together in Georgetown and did some sight-seeing as well. The majority of the time, however, was spent at the museum, where expansive video- and audio-enhanced exhibits traced African-American history. One room in the museum

evoked the feeling of being in a slave ship, with reports of the conditions of the ships played out loud as visitors perused the historical exhibits, drawings, and artifacts chronicling the history of slave passage. Photos of separate drinking fountains for blacks and whites documented segregation’s legacy, and the fight for civil rights was well chronicled. As student Luis Portorreal commented, “the museum educate[s] students on the realities lived by African Americans not so long ago as a way to prevent history [from] repeat[ing] itself.”

The entire third floor of the museum celebrated African-American contributions to U.S. culture through visual arts, music, theater, and other creative forms of human expression. Student Melissa Berkley noted, “[the] museum is very dear to me because I love the culture. This culture is what I grew up with and the culture that is in my genes. I eat, live and dream about this culture and get excited to learn new aspects of that culture.” Berkley added that the trip also provided her with an opportunity to get to know other students outside of class: “Interacting with others helped me realize that York College is more than just school and work.”

A highlight of the museum was the Contemplative Court, a light-filled area for reflection with a circular waterfall flanked by the words “Let justice roll down like waters.” The visit was a moving experience for all, and an excellent way to explore further the themes discussed in the 2017-18 common reader, *The New Jim Crow*. ■



Left to right: Melissa Berkley, Rosa Feria, Latoya Mann, Tehya Harris, Cynthia Haller, and Luis Portorreal

Kudos!

The Military and Law Enforcement Veterans Association (MILEVA) recently held its 4th Annual Women Recognition Award. One of this year’s honorees, **Margarett Alexandre**, RN, PhD was honored

for her humanitarian work in Haiti with the community of Grandbois, L’Artibonite. Margarett Alexandre is a professor in York’s Nursing department who, over the



years, has taken dozens of students on study abroad excursions to Haiti for practical nursing experience. Students get hands-on experience providing clinical care for children in an orphanage as well as adult community residents in need of preventive care and supportive care.



The #MeToo Phenomenon

By **KWAHNEISHA FESTUS**, Student Journalist

The #MeToo movement began when sexual allegations came out about movie mogul Harvey Weinstein. In October 2017, several publications ran stories about accusations of sexual harassment/sexual misconduct committed by Weinstein. More than a dozen women came out and accused producer Weinstein of not only sexual harassment, but rape assaults. Weinstein was eventually dismissed from The Weinstein Company, the business he founded with his brother, and expelled from the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Science. The allegations soon became a rallying cry for women everywhere to come forward and tell their own stories as the victims of sexual harassment, and the movement has shone a huge light on sexual harassment in the workplace across the spectrum.

As part of the Journalism Program Enrichment Seminar Series, Professor William Hughes recently moderated an event titled, “Women in Journalism: Before, During and After the #MeToo Movement.” The April 17 panel in the Faculty Dining Room at York College, featured Hughes as moderator to journalist Helen Benedict and two working journalists and graduates of York College, Sadeef Kully (2009) and Mehrunissa Wani (2011).

The panel described how allegations against Weinstein triggered the #MeToo social media campaign and many other sexual abuse allegations against powerful men around the world, called the ‘Weinstein Effect’.

“The ‘Weinstein Effect’ showed [us] that this isn’t an intractable problem,” Mehrunissa Wani says. “These men will be exposed.”

Social media has become a mighty tool when it comes to sexual harassment in the workplace. Harassment can range from an incident in the office, studio and any other place to all over the internet. Social media has not just provided outlets for workplace interaction to occur, but provides platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, among others, which give people an opportunity to post sexual comments and pictures. The popularity of these websites has enabled sexual harassment in the workplace to flourish in a different environment.

“Feminists have been having a #MeToo movement for decades,” said Helen Benedict. “Women have been pissed off for much longer than that and there have been books about it and there have been articles about it and there have been films about it. But that was before Twitter and that was before Facebook. And that was before Trump, which I think is part of it too.”

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. All of these activities tend to create a hostile or an offensive workplace.



Left to right: Panelists Sadeef Kully, Helen Benedict, and Mehrunissa Wani

“What turns a sweet baby boy into a predator?” Benedict asks. “He isn’t born that way and where in our culture are we teaching men to treat women so badly?”

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects people from sex discrimination in the educational programs and activities at institutions that receive federal financial assistance. Campuses throughout the United States are required to provide students with Title IX courses, informing students how to feel safe. Title IX programs also provide many resources for those victimized by sexual harassment or sexual assault.

“Campuses all over the United States have Title IX and that’s really a big issue,” says Wani, who recently worked at *Forbes* magazine. “We have a lot of women coming forth and saying, ‘Yeah, me too.’”

The idea of the #MeToo movement was not just getting women to come out and tell their stories. It has to be a process that unfolds over time to improve workplace conditions for women. All the panelists wanted to be “hopeful” that the movement would get more and more women to come forward with their stories. “I just hope this movement, this Weinstein Effect, this #MeToo movement continues to live and thrive,” Wani says. Sadeef Kully chimed in by saying that she was “hopeful yet practical” when it came to the idea that the #MeToo movement was going to change anything.

When it comes to students going into the field of journalism, there are things they should be sensitive to during their first year on the job. Panelists suggested they should look at the organizations they are applying to and look at their weaknesses. “Make suggestions on what you can do to improve and not just criticize,” says Benedict.

For journalists to write about sexual harassment victims appropriately, they must treat the victims with sympathy as opposed to suggesting that they are lying. Each case should be taken seriously no matter the race, gender or religion or the victim. Also, journalists should allow the victims to speak about how they want to protect themselves.

The final piece of advice offered by the panel to journalists-in-training was to get to know exactly who they will be working with at a news agency. ■

York Fine Arts Gallery Features Southeast Queens Exhibit

From January 9-April 21, 2018, the Fine Arts Gallery at York hosted the exhibit “A Locus of Moving Points”, sponsored by York in collaboration with the inaugural Southeast Queens Biennial. The Biennial exhibit, organized by No Longer Empty’s 2017 NLE Curatorial Lab in partnership with York College Fine Arts Gallery, was curated by Sarah Fritchey, Corrine Y. Gordon, Audra Lambert, Rebecca Pristoop, Niama Safia Sandy and Anastasia Tuazon.

For its theme, the Biennial focused on the idea of movement as an organizing principle for understanding Southeast Queens. For one thing, Queens is a gateway for travel (by air and land); for another, it is home to many communities of immigrants, making it a generative locale for cultural production and exchange. This concept finds its roots in the writing of Bell Hooks, a feminist visionary activist and author, who speaks to the transformative potential of shifting one’s focus to consider the margin and center—not as disparate parts,

but as making up a whole body. Locus, from the Latin for “location” or “place,” is used in geometry to refer to “the set of all points (usually forming a curve or surface) satisfying some condition.”



Artwork by Shervone Neckles, *Give and Take/Terciopelo: Touched*, 2014-16, Mixed media: velvet, embroidery thread, embedded spices and herbs, fabric trim and notion



Sana Musasama, *Sugar vs. Sap*, 1992, Ceramic mixed media

Combined, these concepts suggest an active way of seeing that dismantles the notion of a dominant center by shifting perceptions of what makes up both center and periphery.

“A Locus of Moving Points” featured the work of three generations of artists with deep connections to Southeast Queens, who have never exhibited at York: Damali Abrams, Natali S. Barbee Bravo, Janet Henry, Rejin Leys, Gloria Maximo, Sana Musasama, Shervone Neckles, Odathrowback, Okechukwu Okegrass Ofiaeli, and Elizabeth Velazquez. A commissioned participatory work by Odathrowback resulted in a permanent gift to the York College Public Art collection.

Working across media and disciplines in the visual, performing and literary arts, the artists highlighted in the exhibit assume roles as activists, educators and advocates for bringing the arts directly to the communities in which they live and serve. Mapping the shifting presence, histories and creative production of the African, Caribbean and Latin American diaspora through the arts, the exhibition serves as a time capsule for a variety of social, cultural and political developments through the lens of artists who have been shaped by Southeast Queens.

Dr. Margaret Rose Vendryes, Chair of the Performing and Fine Arts Department and Gallery Director at York College, remarked on the importance of the York gallery and this exhibition to Southeast Queens: “The Fine Arts Gallery at York College is one of only two professional visual art exhibition venues in Southeast Queens. As a vibrant part of what the York College Department of Performing and Fine Arts has to offer both town and gown communities, the Southeast Queens Biennial will create valuable new connections.”

Further information about the exhibit can be found at <https://www.york.cuny.edu/academics/departments/performing-and-fine-arts/news/southeast-queens-biennial> ■

Professor White Discusses Black Women Stereotypes in Media

By **KWAHNEISHA FESTUS**,
Student Journalist

On March 29, Professor George White, chair of the History, Philosophy, and Anthropology Department, conducted a public lecture, “Five Controlling Images of Black Women in the Media,” where he discussed five controlling images of Black women in the media and why these stereotypes persist. In the 2009 film *Precious*, Mo’Nique’s character is a perfect example of one of the five controlling images of Black women: The Matriarch. In the movie, the mother, played by Mo’Nique, convinces her daughter, Precious, that she was just not good enough. The character is domineering and abusive towards her daughter and always tells her that she is stupid. In reality, the Mo’Nique’s character was to blame for most of the shortcomings in her daughter’s life.

Just like the matriarch, there are four other controlling images of Black women regularly found in the media. They are the Mammie, the Welfare Queen, the Jezebel and Black Lady (Sapphire). “These are more than just stereotypes,” said Dr. White. “We use the language or the rhetoric of controlling images to connect the stereotypes to the idea of power. People use stereotypes to exercise power, to dictate certain social outcomes. It’s not a matter of mocking or making fun or belittling someone, but it is a service of power to reach specific ends.”

Mammie and the Matriarch come across as opposite images. The Mammie, the oldest stereotype, was seen as a caring and nurturing slave. Her job was to take care of the slave owner’s family more than she did her own. On the other hand the Matriarch is hard on her family and can be the reason why her family members fail at life. Filmgoers see these characteristics in the role Mo’Nique played in *Precious*. The Matriarch is often seen as the type of woman that pushes Black men to leave their families. “Mammie is significant because this is the role model to which all Black women are supposed



Professor George White explains common stereotypes of black women in the media.

to aspire,” White says. Actress Hattie McDaniel was best known for her role as “Mammie” in the 1939 film “Gone with the Wind.” She won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress the following year, making her the first African-American actress to win the prestigious award.

Black women in the music industry often are expected to use sex to sell records. This is an example of the Jezebel image, which often comes across as sexy and trashy. For instance, Nicki Minaj, a rapper, was criticized because of her video “Anaconda.” Her actions in the video depict explicit sexual content. According to Professor White, Minaj had a rebuttal for the people who criticized her. She posted a picture of a *Sports Illustrated* cover with swimsuit models, to her Instagram account. The caption under the photo read: “What do these women in swimsuits have to do with a sports magazine?” “At least we can say that Nicki has a talent,” White says. “Nicki is trying to market this talent and she uses this sexually explicit image of herself to do that. What’s the difference between the swimsuit models and Nicki? What is the difference?”

The Welfare Queen is tied to the demands of Black women for access to state resources and to working class Black

women specifically. However, the majority of people on Welfare are white, according to Professor White. To demonstrate his point, he showed an image of Linda Taylor, who was an American woman charged with committing extensive Welfare fraud. She became identified as the original “Welfare Queen.” “Because of white guilt in the 1960s federal and state governments created programs to give help to the poor,” says White. “But the Welfare Queen abused the program by gaining more than what she was entitled to because she was too lazy to work. She scammed the government and taught her children to be as lazy and corrupt as she was.”

Professor White showed a clip of the actor Craig T. Nelson admitting taking Welfare support in his younger years. “I’ve been on Welfare and Food Stamps,” says Nelson in the clip. “Did anyone help me out? No?” Prof. White pointed out that Nelson never seemed to be viewed as taking a handout just because he was White. “It’s okay for Craig Nelson to be on Food Stamps and have been on Welfare at one point in his young life, but no one gave him a handout,” says White. “So these other people (African American) are asking for a handout. It’s like no, they are asking for the same thing that you got.”

The last controlling image is the Black Lady (Sapphire). She was supposedly a middle class lady or a professional black woman who came across as strong and overly aggressive. She was not afraid to go against men for jobs. She is what some may denigrate as “a man eater.” According to White, the Black Lady is used to punish other Black women for their achievements and their success.

The bottom line is that media has never been truly kind or fair with Black women. The stereotypes discussed by White take potentially positive or nurturing abilities and cast them as a negative or destructive force. And, like all stereotypes, every controlling image suggests a one-dimensional character, as opposed to a real and complex human being. ■



Hard Work and Determination Paying Dividends for Scholar Athlete

By **KEILA OTTERO**, Student Journalist

Jeremy Sapeg, a student athlete and Reserved Officers Training Corp (ROTC) representative at York College, is a freshman from the Bronx who majors in Business Administration.

Sapeg begins his days at 3:30 in the morning when he leaves his home on Fordham Road to catch the D train by 4:00. He changes to the F train in Rockefeller Center, gets off at Parsons Boulevard, and then makes his way down to the Health and Physical Education building by about 6:00 am.

Sapeg sets up for physical training (PT) with the ROTC officials from 6:30 to 7:30 am, either at the field at York or at Liberty Park. After that he attends his classes from 9:30 am to about 4:00 pm. When there is some free time between classes he heads back to the Health and Physical Education building to join in the afternoon practices “just to kill time.”

At about 6:00 pm, Sapeg either hangs around at the Health and Physical Education complex or trains with his Track and Field team, already up and running. Although he is currently participating in Track and Field, Sapeg has also been a swimmer for about eight years now.

Taking on a new sport, he says, is to better his energy and running for ROTC. Finally at around nine or 10:00 pm, Sapeg leaves campus and treks back to the Bronx in what at times becomes a two-hour ride.

Not many college students would travel as far as Sapeg does to get to and from school. But he embraces the grueling schedules and has a distinct reason for selecting York as his College.

“I’m a SEEK student” says Sapeg. “They cover the college in full and my family isn’t financially stable. College is expensive, even CUNY. York was one of my only options.”

Sapeg was raised by his grandmother. He relies on her support and the sup-

port of his sisters to move forward. “The Bronx has a certain reputation,” he says. “So I kind of lived up to said reputation. Nothing bad, just certain situations you wouldn’t expect a person like me to be in.”

Sapeg’s interest in the Army began when he was in high school, during a presentation by the JROTC, the junior level of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps, that immediately caught his attention.

“Dang, I want to do that!” he recalled thinking, and since then has been a part of ROTC training/services.

Sapeg’s road to success hasn’t always been easy. In his sophomore year of high school, his family was going through a struggle and he thought he would find a way to help out by shoplifting from a local food store. He got caught by the owner who proceeded to question him. The manager noticed that in the school ID, Sapeg was in full military uniform. He explained he was a JROTC cadet. The manager reportedly told him, “You got to do better kid,” and let him go. Sapeg turned his life around and got better grades and changed his ways.

He is now an ROTC representative at York and a member of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) as well. This semester Sapeg’s hard work finally paid off. He was given a contract by

ROTC that grants him guaranteed acceptance into the Army with full tuition pay, a book stipend, and a paid job on campus. Head Swim coach Samantha Oyola could not contain her excitement as she recapped Sapeg’s accomplishments this past swimming season, especially during the CUNY Athletic Conferences/swimming championship. “When he did his 100 and 200 freestyle heats, WOW! He dropped a lot of time and he was really keeping up with all the competitors, it was really exciting,” Oyola explained, adding that he has grown as a swimmer in just one semester at York. According to the coach, Sapeg “went from a shy kid to the athletic, social young man that is regularly checking in to talk with the athletic staff.”

Head Athletic Trainer Amy O’Connor also talked about Sapeg’s assertiveness and dedication.

“He is still here with the other students making his loud voice known,” says O’Connor, with obvious pride. O’Connor says that Sapeg is often still on campus after his classes end before finally calling it a day.

Jeremy Sapeg hopes all this work and sacrifice helps him become the first male in his family to graduate from college. He knows already that “life at York College is going to be great” for him. ■



Sapeg trains regularly as a member of York’s swim team.

The Lavender Line: Coming Out in Queens

On Tuesday, November 14, 2017, York College launched its version of the Queens CUNY-wide photographic exhibition, “The Lavender Line: Coming Out in Queens.” The exhibition brings the Queens CUNY campuses together to chronicle the rich and often overlooked LGBTQ history of the borough of Queens. “The Lavender Line: Coming out in Queens” exhibit was launched at the Queens Museum in the summer of 2017 and continues on each campus with additional material particular to that campus. The York College version of the exhibit included archival material as well as current contributions from the York Sexuality and Gender Acceptance Club (SAGA) to increase awareness of the LBGQTQ presence on campus and to foster a Queens-wide alliance within CUNY.

The launch of the exhibit featured a panel of students, all members of SAGA. They spoke movingly about their own experiences of coming out in Queens, and discussed the ongoing journey of

building a visible and safe presence at York. Councilman Daniel Dromm attended the event, discussing his vision in donating his collection of memorabilia and photographs to the Wagner Collection at LaGuardia Community College, and what it meant to him to see students at York furthering this vision with their own photographic and performative contributions to the exhibition. The installation of the exhibition was led by Dr. Margaret Rose Vendryes, Chair of the Performing and Fine Arts Department. The launch was attended by several members of the York College community, including President Marcia V. Keizs. ■



Attendees at the Lavender Line event

Kudos!

Dr. Elizabeth Alter's research on fish evolution in the Congo River was recently featured at Live Science: <https://www.livescience.com/57948-water-walls-spur-evolution-of-fish.html>. In the York College Faculty Experts Guide online, Professor Alter describes her work as follows:

“My research uses molecular phylogenetic methods to understand the evolutionary histories of species and populations, particularly in the marine environment. This work examines the genetic vestiges left by past environmental and ecological conditions and is integrative in nature, drawing from evolutionary genetics, phylogenomics and population modeling. Previous work focused on reconstructing evolutionary history in marine mammals, including developing a novel method for estimating the molecular clock for the hypervariable mammalian control region. A new line of research is concerned with environmental metagenomics and environmental DNA to aid ecosystem management and conservation efforts.”



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Geology Major Jasmine Budhan Wins Brownfield Scholarship

Jasmin Budhan, geology major, has received The New York City Brownfield Partnership (NYCBP) scholarship for 2018. Jasmin was the recipient last year as well. Currently Jasmin is the president of the York College Geology Club and joined several past geology students including Zarine Ali (now working with the Environmental Protection Agency), Avanel Cunningham (now Riely and working as a K7-12 Earth Science Teacher), and Sasha Kissoon, who also received this prestigious award. Presently Jasmin is working with Dr. Nazrul Khandaker on locally-derived sediment samples and preparing an abstract to be presented at the annual meeting of the

Geological Society of America, to be held in Indianapolis, early in November 2018. Her research is aligned with NYCBP's overarching mission to engage college students in environmental geology-related topics.

The NYCBP scholarship fund was named after Abbey Duncan, an avid environmentalist, talented dancer, and tireless community supporter. The Partnership's Abbey Duncan Brownfield Scholarship is an annual program designed to provide financial support to undergraduate and graduate students pursuing careers in the brownfield industry, which focuses on redevelopment of lands with known or suspected

pollution from previous industrial or commercial use. This year's Big Apple Brownfield Awards ceremony was held May 1 at New York Law School. ■



Jasmin Budhan (center) at the award ceremony

Martin Atangana Public Lecture Addresses Poverty in Africa

By **KWAHNEISHA FESTUS**,
Student Journalist

Dr. Bekeh Utietiang Ukelina grew up middle-class in Nigeria, and moved to the United States after high school. He remembers a fairly normal childhood with quite a few of the basic comforts of life. However, the life and economy in Nigeria seemed dramatically different when he went back 15 years later in 2010.

“In the neighborhood I grew up in, we had running water, we had paved roads, we had constant electricity, we had television in our home, we had phone lines, we had a family car,” said Ukelina at a recent York College Black History Month event. “It was a normal middle-class neighborhood. When I went back in 2010, things did change. Power was no longer constant, was very erratic, roads were full of potholes; most of them didn’t look paved anymore because they had not been fixed in a very long time. Schools were failing at this time.” A number of students at York were able to relate to the shock of going back to their native countries and finding more poverty than they remembered.

Dr. Ukelina was the sole guest for an event on the impact of Africa’s development and decolonization, part of the Professor Martin Atangana African and African American Public Lecture Series, held February 22, 2018 in AC-4M04. Dr.

Ukelina is a professor at SUNY Cortland. The series is named in memory of the late York College History professor, Dr. Martin Atangana, who at the time of his death was chair of York’s Department of History, Philosophy and Anthropology.

Dr. Ukelina defined “development” as an international, state-directed intervention that has a goal of ordering progress towards a universally accepted standard of living. Every year supposedly billions of dollars go to Africa for development. Ukelina wonders how all that funding gets spent. “So you think by now, going back to my neighborhood, things would have really changed.” Ukelina says. “And it would be much better than the time I was growing up, but that wasn’t the case.”

Dr. Ukelina questioned, “Why is Africa poor?” After all, these countries have many natural resources. In fact, 37% of all the natural resources in the world are in Africa. Yet, Africa is poor due to political corruption. Ukelina sees many African leaders as morally questionable. “They are corrupt,” he says. “Is corruption only in Africa? Is there no corruption in the United States? Don’t we have bad leaders in the US? Yes, we’re speaking about a lot in the US Congress.”

The term decolonization is defined as the unravelling of imperial control over a territory or place. Some may think that decolonization has to do with just politics, noted Ukelina. He reminded the audience that it can be economical, or even religious in nature. “Decolonization is complex and continuous,” he says. “It is a challenging task. Sekou Toure of Guinea warned that it is easier to build railroads, ports etc. than to change the minds of the colonized.” According to Ukelina, decolonization has caused development to become an imperial structure, contributing to making Africa indebted and poor.

Structural Adjustment Programs are loans that are provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, given to countries that may experience economic crises. They are created with the goal of being able to re-



Dr. Ukelina, a professor at SUNY Cortland, presented this year’s Martin Atangana Public Lecture.

duce the financial issues that the country borrowing may have. “Structural Adjustment Program (SAPs) is making African people poorer,” Dr. Ukelina noted.

Dr. Ukelina said that Agrarian Bias may be the magic bullet that can end Africa’s poverty and food shortages. A focus on the cultivation of land can stabilize the state, as well as mitigate rural-urban migrations. ■

Kudos!

Thanks to the diligent work of the faculty and staff of the **Physician’s Assistant Program**



(Department of Health Professions), the program has received re-accreditation by The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) for a full 10-year period.

Alumni Kudos!

York alumnus **Durrell Washington ’17**, who recently earned a Master’s in Social



Work at Columbia University, was selected to have an article published in the 2018 issue of the annual Columbia Social Work Review. The article, “Mass Incarceration:

Brief Overview of the United States Criminal Market Economic System and Its Effects on Black and Brown Bodies, with New York State Policy Recommendations Using Family Reunification Programs and Policies to Address Recidivism Rates,” was selected from hundreds of submissions as one of only six articles to be published.

York College Nursing Students Enjoy Service Learning in Haiti

For the sixth consecutive year, York College nursing students have taken time out of their summer to volunteer their burgeoning healthcare skills in Haiti.

Once in Haiti, the students work alongside healthcare professionals for the service learning experience they will never forget.

“They get on-the-ground experience in providing care and education to an undeserved, under-resourced population,” said Dr. Margaret Alexandre, York College faculty mentor who organizes and supervises the annual study abroad experience with students.

Dr. Alexandre’s students do basic nursing care for children and adults at the Centre de Sante de Carries. It is one of the few free healthcare facilities in the area. The clinic is funded by various faith-based missionaries and organizations.

This year’s group of eight nursing students from the class, Nursing 450, once again participated in hands-on care and preventive training to residents visiting the clinic. Training included hand hygiene to prevent transmission of disease, high blood pressure and self-breast exam. At the elementary school nursing students provided education on dental care and male and female hygiene.

The York Nursing group, which was in Haiti from June 9th to the 17th, distributed dental and hygiene kits to the students. They spent time with groups on opposite sides of the age and health spectrums. They enjoyed volunteering at the local orphanage—including playtime with the children; and worked on arts and crafts. They also had the opportunity to work with the nannies at the orphanage and provided post-stroke care training to the care providers at the senior home.

But it wasn’t all work and no fun for the dedicated trainees. These nursing students made time to immerse themselves in the Haitian culture, people, sites and especially the delicious cuisine for which Haiti is known.

The students who participated were Christine Bastien, Desiree Chase, Mavis

Frimpong, Brittany Fullerton, Aerren Kublal, Philip Mangey, Darien Trinh and Allysha Veeria, along with their faculty member, Dr. Margaret Alexandre, whose dissertation was, “The Lived Experience of Traumatic Amputation for Haitian Adults.”

“The Haiti trip has helped greatly in solidifying the instructional and informational teaching of the York College Nursing Program,” says Philip Mangey. “It was a very practical experience on how to navigate the spectrum of the different socio-economic statuses as well as cultural diversity in action all within a foreign language.”

Mangey added that the experience has prepared him “to be able to function within the healthcare arena of New York City.

Queens has been described as the most culturally diverse place on the planet and as such we need to be culturally competent to provide effective services,” he further explained. “Haiti has helped to make things clearer for me; that healthcare is a simple need and there is no reason to take a simple pro-

cess and make it complex.”

Indeed, Mangey found so much value in the experience, it has transformed his thinking.

“I plan on using this experience as foundational knowledge on how I pursue Nursing in the US and most importantly, it has birthed a great desire for foreign healthcare need,” he says. “It may not resonate well with most people if I say I will focus on foreign nations but in reality with the growth of commerce and technology the world has become a small global village. We have to be cognizant of our neighbors’ need and able to meet them timely because this safeguards our health and security in the US.”

Christine Bastien was equally moved by the experience.

“My expectations of Haiti were met and surpassed,” she says. “I have found my motivation and have seen where possibilities can lead. I have seen how a welcoming community can impact someone and create this opportunity for mutual progress.”

Allysha Veeria also discussed the import of the trip not only for its health-



Left to right: Allysha Veeria, Mavis Frimpong, Christine Bastien, Brittany Fullerton, Desiree Chase, Dr. Margaret Alexandre, Aerren Kublal, Darien Trinh, & Philip Mangey

care value, but for helping a new language skill as well.

“Haiti and the residents taught me an abundance of knowledge from the moment I landed,” says Veeria, president of York’s Nursing Club. “I’ve learned a decent amount of a new language—Creole. It was easy to pick up because everyone around us spoke it; and I could communicate on a basic level with them. This new skill-set I’ve obtained can be expanded on and will be able to assist me in my nursing career if I have to communicate with patients or medical professionals who speak creole.”

Veeria says her “take away from the trip” is a newfound appreciation for humanity and the nursing profession.

“It is how you treat someone during their darkest times that sets the benchmark,” she says. “As nurses, every day we work to raise that benchmark. In Haiti, we came in with our set standards and they had their set expectations from us. In my opinion, our team exceeded both the benchmarks we’ve set and their expectations of us. When you have a great team and a great team leader, anything can be done.” ■

Kudos!

Congratulations to **Varsha Misir** of the Class of 2018 for her outstanding success, not only for her outstanding work as a Teacher Education major, but also in earning a Teaching Fellowship from the Practice Makes Perfect organization for aspiring teachers!



Khandaker Honored By Geological Society of America

The Geological Society of America (GSA) has named Dr. Nazrul Khandaker (Earth and Physical Science) as one of its Distinguished Service Award recipients for 2018. The Distinguished Service Award was established by the GSA Council to acknowledge exceptional service to the Society. The award will be presented to Dr. Khandaker at the Presidential Address and Awards Ceremony, Sunday, November 4, 2018 during the 2018 GSA Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.



at the Presidential Address and Awards Ceremony, Sunday, November 4, 2018 during the 2018 GSA Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.

At the conference, Dr. Khandaker will also be holding a topical session on Geoscience Education. His project “Recruiting and Retaining K9-16 Students through Field-and-Laboratory-based Geoscience Experiences” has earned nine high-level professionally known cosponsors including the Council On Undergraduate Research Geosciences Division, National Association of Geosciences Teachers, GSA-supported Divisions -Geology and Society, Geoscience Education, Geology and Health, Quaternary Geology and Geomorphology, Environmental and Engineering, and Sedimentary Geology.

Since 2004, Khandaker has been directly involved with the GSA to provide access

and opportunities for K9-16 students, particularly those interested in broader aspects of geoscience-related topics, to present their field-and-laboratory-based research outcomes at professional conferences and to learn from each other. So far, well over 400 students from the US and abroad have taken advantage of this opportunity and participated in topical sessions.

In an urban setting such as New York City, where geosciences content is provided to students via Regents Earth Science in K9-12 as part of the science curriculum, the applied knowledge-based understanding of the various geoscience concepts seem to be lacking from the students taking year-long Regents classes. Students often find important content such as rocks and minerals, management of natural resources, natural hazards, plate tectonics, earthquakes and historical geology to be purely descriptive and often not linked or appealing to their inner curiosity and interest in the actual applications. Present-day extreme weather phenomena, environmental degradation, increased mega-flooding events, landslides, access to fresh drinking water, build-up or upgrading of aging infrastructures, etc. are closely tied to geological processes and anthropogenic practices.

Field and laboratory-based research such as that promoted by Dr. Khandaker’s program helps students observe and

connect geoscience concepts and understanding of the various phenomena, including representative case studies, to validate geoscience as a transformative discipline and its interdependence with other STEM disciplines such as physics, chemistry, and biology. The future geoscience workforce needs to be trained from as early as the K9-12 grades via an integrated earth science curriculum that allows an open access to field-and research based content, creates inquiry-based knowledge, promotes group dynamics, and instills a sense of belonging. Given that over 70,000 K9-12 students took the Earth Science Regents examination last year in New York City alone, it will be worthwhile to work with the new cohort and provide them with a variety of learning tools to engage, inspire and attract them to the future geoscience-related workforce build-up.

York’s geology discipline continues to be in the forefront of conducting geoscience education outreach and is nationally known for its uninterrupted participation in the annual meetings hosted by the GSA. In addition to hundreds of K9-16 students presenting their research through a series of high-profile topical sessions, over 50 York students since 2004 have taken advantage of these geoscience informative research forums, benefiting through their experiential learning and enriching their professional networking skills. ■

York College Professor Scores Prestigious Award...Again

Dr. Vadim Moldovan, associate professor of Social Work at York College, was recently awarded a second Fulbright Fellowship to continue his scholarly and humanitarian work in the Republic of Moldova.

Dr. Moldovan, along with faculty colleagues at York College, had been taking a growing number of York and other CUNY Social Work students to Moldova for several years when he extended it to include History majors as well. In the summer of 2017 he took nine students from York and in summer 2018 about a dozen accompanied him on the scholarly jaunt.

Social Work students invariably return to campus enthusiastic about the enhanced clinical experience the study abroad program in Moldova provides, which they say would take years to gain at home. In Moldova, [York's] students have said, the experience is "super hands-on" giving them access to the orphanages



and prisons vital for aspiring social workers' experience.

Asked what he intends to do with this rare, second Fulbright Award, Professor Moldovan was decisive in his intentions.

"The Fulbright Scholar Award will be utilized to investigate and promote best practices for social work reform in Eastern Europe on the platform of a long-standing and productive relationship between York College and the Free International University of Moldova," he explained. "The objectives include a revision of social work curricula as well as activities related to social work profes-



sionalization, legitimization, and practice—in urban and rural areas."

According to Dr. Panayiotis Meleties, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at York College, this second Fulbright Award benefits students and York's reputation.

"Prof. Moldovan is a dedicated scholar and York Faculty member," said Dr. Meleties. "With this second Fulbright award, he earns recognition and support for his continued work to enhance the experience of students and expand the international partnerships of the social work programs and disseminate best practices in the field, in improving human life."

Indeed, Dr. Moldovan has said as much.

"As before, the Fulbright experience will enrich social work pedagogies, curriculum innovation, and program development at York College," said the dedicated professor and native of the Republic of Moldova. ■

Renaissance Woman Studies Abroad in Italy

Simone Solomon '18 spent part of her winter break engaged in a study abroad program at LdM (Lorenzo de Medici) Institute in Italy. She is also applying to graduate school, had a part-time job, an internship, is a York Student Government senator, has been on both the Swimming and Tennis teams and runs her own online business. And she has done all that within only two years at York College.

"It can be overwhelming at times," conceded Solomon.

Solomon, who attended two other colleges before transferring to York from SUNY's University of Albany, arrived at York in the spring of 2016. She quickly settled into an easy scholastic rhythm, while also carving out time for the co-curricular engagements she's now known for.

"York is the best experience I've had," said Solomon. "I've had more opportunities and the best guidance here."

In Italy, Solomon completed a writing class in Italian Languages – in English. She also made friends with her American peers; and was one of only three African-American participants enjoying the transformative experience.

"It was amazing," Solomon recalled upon her return to York. "There were 150 students from all over the United States. I made friends with people from Minnesota, from Wisconsin, Illinois... now I want to go to Moldova in the summer."

The Moldova study abroad program comes out of the York College Social Work program, through which many



Simone Solomon (right) with a friend at the Leaning Tower of Pisa

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social work students and recently, even history majors, have participated. Social work professor Dr. Vadim Moldovan, along with Dr. Selena T. Rodgers, have taken dozens of students to the Eastern European nation over the past decade.

Because Moldova is the poorest nation in all of Europe, the needs are great and thereby provide intense hands-on experiences for social work students.

Solomon, who plans to attend graduate school in the fall of 2018 to pursue the MSW degree, is hoping to get acceptance into the Howard University program, for which she has “advanced standing” that would allow her to graduate in just one year. At Howard, she also hopes to join the AKA sorority and has a long-term goal of earning a PhD and becoming president of an HBCU (such

as Howard). She believes she can be an asset as an academic leader.

A York Trio program participant, Solomon has also attended a Thurgood Marshall conference and says she is devoted to her online shopping site, Shop Unsaid (shopunsaid.bigcartel.com). “It is my baby,” said Solomon, who is also busy researching scholarship funding for her graduate education. ■

Earth Science Student Has Transformative Study Abroad In Spain

Mayra Guaman is a York College freshman literally on the move. The Earth Science major recently spent a week on the study abroad of a lifetime in Majorca, Spain.

“It all started with a class in environmental science,” said Guaman of her summer 2018 academic sojourn. “I met a professor named [Dr.] Ratan Dhar who saw a lot of potential and dedication in me. After taking classes with him and spending time in his lab, he got to know me more and how hard-working I am. So one day he proposed that I apply for study abroad in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.”

Dr. Dhar concurred. “I selected her because I had her in two classes and she’s very thorough,” he explained. “She wants to learn. She writes very well; she’s articulate and quantitative and spontaneous.”

But a career in the sciences was not what Guaman’s Ecuadorian mother had in mind for her daughter. Like so many immigrant parents, she wanted her daughter to choose a more familiar career path.

“My mom wanted me to choose business or law,” she said. “But I’m speaking with new people about environmental issues, solutions and plans to take care of marine life, [which] confirmed my passion for environmental health science.”

Accordingly, she applied for a Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) scholarship and interviewed with Dr. Neil Phillip at Bronx Community College. Dr. Phillip and Dr. Dhar have had a fruitful research partnership over the years and Guaman has now become a beneficiary of their scholarly alliance.

“It was so exciting,” Guaman reflected upon her return to York. “Dr. Dhar and I saw this opportunity to study abroad as something that will open my eyes and motivate me to continue the

long path towards my career. At the same time, I will use all the knowledge and apply the things that I learned during the study abroad [trip]. There aren’t enough words to describe the wonderful experience I had in Palma de Mallorca and the opportunities that opened.”

The observant young scholar also noted that there are two different kinds of people who explore the island: “those who explore with money and those who explore with heart.”

“Those who explore the island with money are not compassionate about the conservation of the island,” she noted. “Those people spend resources like there is no tomorrow, not knowing the negative environmental impact that they have in nature.”

But all environmentalists are not created equal. According to Guaman, she met people who are professionals in the same field she’s now pursuing as a student and they are not practicing what they preach.

“They are careless about the environmental problems,” she said. “Those people with a lot of knowledge in environmental science disappointed me because [they know] the issues of the island, [but] they were wasting resources.”

Guaman knows better and will do better, according to Dhar. “She has huge potential to become a true environmental scientist,” said her confident mentor. ■



Mayra Guaman with Dr. Dhar



Installing weather station in San Calletano School

<http://www.york.cuny.edu/academics/academic-affairs>

Professor Adams Releases New CD

Music professor Mark Adams (Performing and Fine Arts), a pianist and composer, has just released his seventh CD of jazz and other music forms; and it hits all the right notes.

Adams, who teaches piano at York, and who has toured the world as a musician both with his own and as part of many renowned musicians' bands, never fails to deliver. He has performed in Broadway productions and in productions at York College's Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center, delighting fans with his talent wherever he goes.

His latest effort, "I Forgot to Remember to Forget" runs the gamut from smooth jazz, for which he is mostly known, to a jazz-infused rap number featuring Leonard Collier (AKA Young Wess). Collier, a gifted artist in his own right, is a graduate of York College, Class of 2017.

With "Woke," the first song on the new CD and "Fight the Good Fight," (the second song), Adams addresses police brutality and other political issues of the day, invoking the names of Sean Bell, Eric Garner and Sandra Bland, two of whom died during encounters with police and one of whom died in custody following a police stop for a minor traffic violation.

With cover art and photography by Fine Arts Professor Nina Buxenbaum, the album draws one in for a closer look. On the cover, Adams is rendered in Buxenbaum's signature style, figurative and representational; and the back cover features a smiling photograph of the musician, also taken by the respected fine artist Buxenbaum.

The 12-song album includes many delightful numbers including the title track, "I Forgot to Remember to Forget," as well as "Hindsight," Latin Mi," "Check Your Soul," and others. Among the musicians and vocalists who appear on the album are York's own Jonathan Quash as well as jazz icons Roy Ayers and Ron Carter. Adams also acknowledges his daughter Marleigh Adams, his "inspiration for everything," on the CD.

Lest we forget to remember, many of York's dedicated professors are multi-faceted artists bringing more than the basics to their classrooms and also enhancing their colleagues' campus experience. Mark Adams' new CD is one such reminder. ■

