Greetings from the Office of Multicultural Student Programs and Services (MSPS). Currently, we are running out of ink and paper for our printers which can only mean one thing, finals are approaching! As we continue towards the end of the semester let’s reflect on some of our most recent events, and look towards the number one reason anyone attends college; Graduation!

On March 27, 2019, the office held its 13th annual Excellence in Collegiate Education and Leadership (ExCEL) Awards Program in Stern Ballroom, which was first held in Physicians Auditorium in 2007. This year we honored 35 students, staff, faculty and community members for their commitment to creating a campus environment that promotes diversity and excellence. These recipients were chosen from more than 100 nominations.

Continuing along with our traditional programming, such as ExCEL, we decided to try something new and held our very first field trip to Carowinds on Saturday, April 6, 2019, for our Mentoring Matters mentees and peer mentors. The Mentoring Matters Program is an annual initiative sponsored by our office to help SPECTRA students make early connections to enhance their academic success during their first year at the College. Its one of the ways that faculty, staff, students, and alumni can make a positive impact in the lives of incoming SPECTRA students at the College of Charleston.

Pictures of these two amazing events are below along with articles spotlighting our graduating AALANA students; Chak Or, Adeyemi Oduwole, Pablo Palacios, and Omar Valencia. All four of these students are seniors who will be participating in one of our four Multicultural Graduations this year. Therefore, be sure to scroll all the way to the bottom so that you can save the dates and celebrate all of our wonderful student’s accomplishments and achievements.

Remember to follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @cofc_msp to stay up to date. Our e-newsletter will be posted on our website and social media accounts. See you again in the Fall and thanks for reading!

Sincerely,
The Office of Multicultural Student Programs and Services
CONGRATULATIONS, RECIPIENTS!

Outstanding Students of the year
School of the Arts – María Carrillo-Marquina
School of Business – Renee Fraley
School of Education, Health, and Human Performance – Chak Or
School of Humanities and Social Sciences – Delaney Wallace
School of Languages, Cultures, and World Affairs – Alex Mielcarek
School of Professional Studies – Amber Leighton
School of Sciences and Mathematics – Adeyemi Oduwole
Honors College – Megan Minchak
Graduate School – Emily Jaskwhich

Outstanding Faculty of the Year
School of the Arts – Charles Calvert
School of Business – Rene Mueller
School of EHHP – Keonya Booker
School of HSS – Kris de Welde
School of LCWA – Juliette Bourdier
School of Sciences and Mathematics – Ashley Lavender
Honors College – Christine Finnan
The Graduate School – Susan Simonian

Outstanding Student Awards (specialized)
Female Student Athlete of the Year – Bri Sullivan
Male Student Athlete of the Year – Jarrell Brantley
Septima P. Clark Award – Sophia A. Emetu
Eugene C. Hunt: Graduating Senior – Victoria O. Bailey
Eugene C. Hunt: Rising Senior – Kassidy Sullivan
Lucille S. Whipper Award – Michael Simmons
Stephen Osborne and George Watt Bonner Leader – Bianca LaPaz
SCAMP Student of the Year – Amanda Anyim, Keyaira Morgan

Outstanding Staff Awards
Outstanding Staff Member of the Year – Lisa Christian and Sheree Grant
The Unsung Champion – Mary Bergstrom
Excellence in Customer Service – Alexandra Lile

Other Award Categories
Safe Zone Advocacy Award – Tessa Torgovitsky
Demetria N. Clemons Distinguished Mentor Award – Kenyatta Grimmage
Good Neighbor Award – Dorothy Harrison
Eddie Ganaway Distinguished Alumni Award – Derrick Williams ’99
Administrator of the Year Award – Myra Seaman

The Presidential Legacy Awards
The President Leo I. Higdon Outstanding Leadership Award – Patrick Smith
The President Theodore Stern Visionary Award – Demetria Noisette Clemons
The President Harry Lightsey Humanitarian Award – Ian Braddock

SCAMP Students of the Year
Amanda Anyim and Keyaira Morgan

Stephen Osborne and George Watt Bonner Leader
Bianca LaPaz

Outstanding Faculty of the Year
School of Sciences and Mathematics
Ashley Lavender

Outstanding Staff Member of the Year
Lisa Christian and Sheree Grant

The Unsung Champion
Mary Bergstrom

Excellence in Customer Service
Alexandra Lile

President Theodore Stern Visionary Award
Demetria Noisette Clemons
As his time at the College of Charleston rapidly comes to a close, Chak Or reflects on his time on campus in the Charleston area. He has loved the “sense of community” that he found by getting involved in a variety of organizations and groups on campus. Chak was part of Teaching Fellows, Call Me MISTER, Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity, and served as an orientation intern, as well as working at the Early Childhood Development Center. The sense of community he feels is a direct result of making an effort to “get to know professors and peers” and the more intimate size of the College made that possible. In May, Chak will complete requirements for a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and plans to teach at a Title I school in Charleston. His accomplishment will make him the first person in his immediate family to graduate with a four-year college degree.

Chak unwinds and “let's go” by taking runs to the Battery or Colonial Lake which he says is a perfect recipe for “clearing his head.” He also appreciates exploring new restaurants and other activities that might be off the beaten path. Chak says that students should “expect the unexpected, but to be bold and take risks.” He goes on to say, “Challenges allow you to speak up for yourself as the unexpected gets thrown at you.” Further advice to entering freshmen would include telling students to get involved in the “classroom, with the professor, peers, and with your RA because those are all networking opportunities.” He concludes with encouraging students to get to know the staff in the Multicultural Student Programs and Services office and the Office of Institutional Diversity because those spaces “provide support and resources for minority students.”
Few students manage a schedule as packed as Omar Valencia. During his time at the College of Charleston, he has maintained a full-time class schedule, worked multiple jobs, been involved in a variety of campus organizations, and performed in vocal and musical ensembles on and off campus. Omar credits his experience performing as some of his most memorable at the College. He says, “I will miss performing the most and having access to practice rooms 24/7.” It is rare to see him without a smile on his face, which is contagious to all around him. In May, he will graduate with honors with a Bachelor of Arts in Music and a minor in Mathematics.

After graduation, Omar will continue to work for a company that teaches financial literacy to families. Currently, the company has five offices in the area, and Omar hopes to help the company reach its goal of having 30 offices to serve families by improving their financial health. He would consider himself a success financially if he manages to make enough money “to start scholarships at the College of Charleston for DACA students.” He feels there is so much “untapped talent in that population” that cannot pursue a college degree because of the lack of financial resources. Omar says his other successes are measured by “setting a good example for my siblings and making my parents proud.”

As Omar prepares for graduation, he has some advice for entering freshman. He says, “Take classes seriously from the beginning, don’t wait until you are in trouble academically to start working hard in your classes. Most importantly, “be involved in what interests you or what you love.” His last piece of advice for students is to “study abroad; it will change your life and make sure you apply for the scholarships that will make the experience possible.”
In May, Pablo Palacios will become the first in his family to earn a four-year college degree, and he will graduate with honors. He joined the student body at the College by way of Williamston, a small town in South Carolina outside of Greenville. He describes the College as a “small pocket of utopia, where he felt like he was in a protected bubble.” That bubble allowed Pablo to explore a wide range of diverse topics and to meet a variety of people from many backgrounds. He was even able to travel abroad to Spain where he continued to explore cultures outside of his own. When Pablo crosses the Cistern, he will have earned a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology.

When not involved in his academic studies, he finds that he is his happiest and most at peace doing yoga. Some of his friends and fellow interns in the Office of Sustainability got him interested, and he continues his practice to stay centered, flexible, and relaxed. After graduation, Pablo hopes to relocate to a larger city like Boston, Chicago, or Seattle to work for a non-profit organization. He says, “I'm ready to be somewhere cold.”

As Pablo prepares to graduate, he has reflected on the essential lessons he has learned as a student outside of his core area of studies. He feels that he has learned to "practice empathy more easily and to imagine issues and opinions from someone else’s perspective. “He would like entering freshman to really “get to know the people in your classes especially in your major.” Those are the people that "you will share most of your time with while a student." He would also like to advise students to “not finish the courses in your major so quickly.”
During the 2019 ExCel Awards Ceremony, Adeyemi Oduwole received the Outstanding Student in the School of Math and Science Award which he describes as the highlight of his college career. He made his way to the College of Charleston via New York City, which he considers home. In May, he will be graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and has also completed requirements for the Pre-Med track. He received acceptance letters from several medical schools; New York Medical College, Hofstra University, University of Southern California, and Northwestern University. He is still waiting on notification from Columbia University, Brown University, and Emory University. When asked about whether he was concerned about making the right choice for graduate school, Adeyemi will let his philosophy guide him. He says “everything might not happen on your own time, but will happen when they are supposed to happen. When it is the perfect time.” Adeyemi hopes to return home to New York to continue his education, so that will play a part in the decision.

Adeyemi is most pleased with his time at the College because he can reflect on his growth over time and the change in his attitude about how he approached his work. He went from doing “what I did just to get by, to excelling.” Some of his early challenges in college guide the advice he would give students entering as freshman. First, he says that it’s important not to overload yourself during freshman year so you can adjust to college. Second, he encourages students to make the trip over to MSPS early in their college career to make connections with staff that will be able to guide and support them. Adeyemi says, “Reach out to people early who can help” and adds “don’t be afraid to ask questions because when you ask, you get answers.”
MENTORING MATTERS TAKES CAROWINDS

On Saturday, April 6th, twenty-six mentees, and peer mentors spent a fun-filled day at Carowinds Amusement Park enjoying rollercoasters and other cool rides. The trip reward was for students who committed to mentorship (by consistently attending mentor meetings and bonding activities) for one academic year.

Thank You to the College of Charleston’s (70) Faculty, Staff, and Administrators (26 are new mentors); and 15 peer mentors (12 were SPECTRA LEADers or past SPECTRA students) who mentored our SPECTRA students. Many first time mentors are from the Divisions/Departments/Offices of Business and Auxiliary Services, Information Technology, Marketing and Communications, Student Health Services, Office of Institutional Diversity, Dean of Students and the Division of Student Affairs and Department of Biology. We are delighted with the new additions and much-needed support. Mentoring Matters could not continue to be successful without the aid of returning mentors in our academic schools. Go Cougars!!!