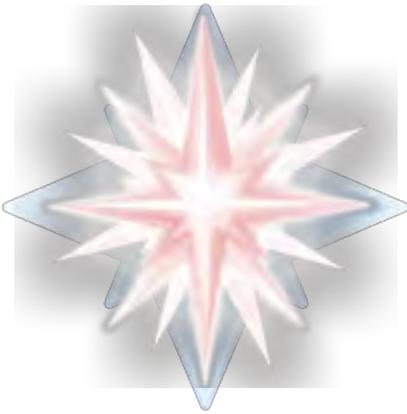


# **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM**

## **NEWSLETTER**    **SPRING 2014**

Developed by: Jennifer Walrath



## **EOP Shining Star**

*Ashley Benson*

**Determined** - That is the first word that comes to mind which most appropriately describes EOP's Shining Star Student for the Spring 2014 semester. Ashley is extremely determined to earn her Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education, and consistently exhibits a strong determination to achieve all of the goals that she sets for herself, and works hard to overcome any obstacle that she is faced with. For the past two consecutive semesters, she has earned Dean's List, and Dean's List Honorable Mention recognition. Ashley will be inducted into the Chi Alpha Epsilon National EOP Honor Society during a special ceremony which will be held during this coming fall semester. She has also received a Certificate of Achievement Award in recognition for her outstanding academic performance from the SUNY Office of Opportunity Programs.



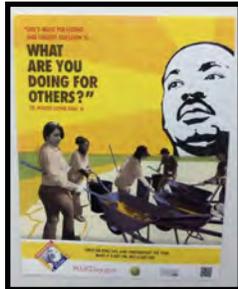
In addition to being a successful full-time student, Ashley has also been working extremely hard at two jobs. Derwin Bennett, Director of EOP, recently made this statement in regards to Ashley; "Ashley truly works hard at giving every aspect of college life maximum effort. She is challenging herself to do better! Her hard work, dedication and persistence has produced favorable results. We believe there is no limit to Ashley's potential to achieve. We support her efforts as she continues to challenge herself for the betterment of her future. Ashley's selection as EOP Shining Star Student for the Spring 2014 semester is very deserving!"

Ashley is a Schoharie County resident and graduated from Middleburgh High School. She recently stated, "I am the first female from my family to graduate high school and to further my education by pursuing a college degree. During my time as a student at SUNY Cobleskill I have achieved many things that I am proud of. Some of the things I've achieved include attending leadership conferences, volunteer work in my community, recognition on the Dean's List, and becoming successful in the Bachelor's program for Early Childhood. My future plans are to continue and complete my Bachelor's degree, then I hope to find a teaching position in my community."

Congratulations Ashley on being selected as our EOP Shining Star for the spring 2014 semester! We are so proud of your accomplishments, and to have you as an EOP family member!



# MLK DAY OF SERVICE 1/20/14



The Spring 2014 semester began with a Day of Service in Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Countless faculty, staff, and students participated by volunteering to serve in the campus dining hall facilities, as well as several other volunteer opportunities to commemorate the day.



# EOP in the Cobleskill Community



SUNY Cobleskill

On the first Saturday of the spring semester, twelve SUNY Cobleskill EOP students along with Sr. Counselor Jennifer Walrath, spent several hours volunteering at the local elementary school running carnival games, craft activities, face painting, and hosting a Valentine card making station at the annual C.R.E.S.T. (Cobleskill-Richmondville Elementary Support Team) Winter Carnival for local families.



Participants included: top row L-R; Oscar Aguero, Lawale Nagnango, Jose Gonzalez, Salaam Hargrove, Damaris Crawford & Mrs. Walrath. Middle row L-R; Diana Ramos, Francesca Carvajal, Arielle Kayitaba, & Peggy-Lynn Paffenroth. Kneeling in front L-R; Jordi Aristy, Hernesha Florestal & Cody Cheung.





# Educational Opportunity Program

EOP welcomed three new students into our family during the Spring 2014 semester.



Olaide Owolabi



Jeremy DeGrace



Shanice Johnson

## The Opportunity to Achieve

*We present you with a gift. In turn, you are charged with creating a path, transposing the path predictors have postulated for you. Know that the path you map out for yourself will be looked upon by those that precede you. Let your efforts be your voice, and persistence be your resolve. Let your hopes and dreams, and those of your family, be realized through you.*

Fulfill Your Promise! - EOP Director



On Thursday, January 23rd, we held our full enrollment EOP meeting to welcome back all our students, and provide opening words of encouragement, and reminders to have a great start to the semester.

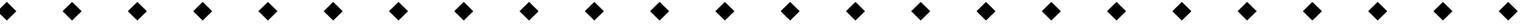


# Educational Opportunity Program



SUNY Cobleskill

Several EOP students participated in multiple workshops as part of a Leadership Series developed by the Student Life Center during the Spring semester.



EOP is proud of our three family members who were honored at the Excellence in Student Leadership Awards Ceremony and Dinner held on Monday, March 31st, 2014. Congratulations Jennifer, Oscar and Anthony!



Anthony is shown in photo at left along with Mr. Steve Ackerknecht, Vice-President of Student Affairs, Mr. Dunn, and Dr. Debra Thatcher, Acting College President. (Also shown in photo below)





# Educational Opportunity Program

## Alternative Spring Break

Anthony

Oscar Aguero and Anthony Echevers, both second semester freshmen, spent their spring break week (March 15th– 22nd), making a difference in the lives of others. They were among a group of over 400 young leaders from across the country who volunteered their spring break to help make a difference in communities nationwide with Break A Difference; representing 150+ colleges and universities, from over 30 different states and 5 countries. We are so proud of these young leaders, and anticipate that they will both continue on a life-long path of service.



“One of the most rewarding and enjoyable experiences I ever had as a volunteer was participating in the Alternative Spring Break. This experience made me realize how much impact a volunteer can have on a persons life. This experience gave us the opportunity to work with the boys and girls club of Newark, NJ where we helped kids with their homework, and most importantly made them laugh. That entire week made me realize that volunteering is not just something, it is like my religion.” ~Oscar Aguero

Oscar



EOP staff and students participated in the annual campus clean-up day on April 9th.



# Educational Opportunity Program



SUNY Cobleskill



On Saturday, April 12th, a large group of SUNY Cobleskill students including many EOP family members, traveled to SUNY Cortland to participate in the 5th Annual Student Conference on Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice. This conference was an opportunity for students to develop and nurture skills that will help them in both their professional and academic lives, and to share their personal stories with their peers.



EOP had a blast participating in the annual Ag Olympic activities that were held in the old quad on April 24th. Chelsea and Hernesha made friends with a goat (photo at right) then cheered on Cody, along with Mr. Tusang and Mr. Dunn, during his turn in the post throwing contest. (photo at left)



Hernesha raises her arms in victory after successfully getting over the hay bale!



Mr. Dunn practiced his "milking" techniques with a bucket of water, and also tried out the post throwing contest (photos at left). Mrs. Walrath had fun demonstrating her post throwing skills too.



Cody takes a flying leap (photos above) then makes it to the top of the bale, which Chelsea was also able to conquer. Hernesha took a turn at the pedal tractor pull.



# EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

*"I have studied and created Art for most of my life, dating back as far as I can remember to the age of 4. I grew up having a family of artists, my brothers being the most prominent influences in my artistic vision, I started working from their work and drawing nude figures they had in their sketchbooks; then studying art at Brooklyn High School of the Arts, I was introduced to not only an inside view of the art world, but what comes along with it - creative freedom. I found art to be what defined me most. I looked for many opportunities to study art. I experienced my first big break when I was awarded a scholarship to learn at Brooklyn Museum of the Arts. This brought me new inspirations from art around the world, seeing different styles and techniques, culture to culture really opened my eyes to all the unlimited possibilities. A perfectionist you can say, I went through the crumple and toss phase but grew to trust myself a bit better. It was in my second year of junior high school at Arts and Letters that I was able to take an off-site class with FIT. I had found my passion and I wanted more. I found my true artist here at LaGuardia and developed my own style. I studied alongside other artists, and rather than feel competitive, I felt home. Artists such as Basquiat, Haring, Monet, and Matisse were introduced to me and their span of influence helped me grow and see my art as not only a skill but a craft. "Amy" and "Club 27" were some of my first oil paintings and I fell in love with the amount of expression I was able to include in these. Oil has become my favorite medium for its great blend of coloration, and use of different stroke styles. "Haring on Haring" was a portrait I had exhibited at The New York Historical Society at Saturday Academy, it was meant as homage to Keith Haring. Overall I enjoy becoming a better artist and being my own inspiration." ~Khalif Thompson*

Khalif



**"PETIT- FRERE DESIGN"** A START TO A LIFELONG OF VISUAL INSPIRATION CAST DOWN FROM HER GHANAIAN AND HAITIAN HERITAGE. AN ART PASSED THROUGH HER FAMILY'S GENERATIONS IS NOW AT YOUR DISPLAY. THIS DESIGN IS FROM A YOUNG SUNY COBLESKILL DESIGNER **GABRIELLE PETIT-FRERE** THAT CHOOSES TO LIVE HER LIFE WITH CREATIVITY AND WITH STYLE THAT'LL KEEP HER INTACT WITH HER TRUE HERITAGE.  
(EXCERPT FROM SPRING 2014 STUDENT FASHION SHOW PROGRAM)



# EOP STUDENT SHOWCASE



*"I have always loved animals but when Fezzick came into my life Christmas Eve of 2012, I never thought he would have changed my life in so many ways. Fezzick, was a dog that came off Craigslist, and with a past that was obvious of abuse, he needed me as much as I needed him. After I saw how great he was at responding to any sort of emotion from me, I knew that he would be great at helping and healing others. I looked into the evaluation test for Therapy Dogs International and set it as my goal to train him to be able to pass the evaluation. I walked him everyday around as many other dogs and people as possible, taught him the "leave it" command, and basic manners. The one worry I had on the test, and was not sure he would pass, was when I had to hand the leash over to someone else. Fez did not like to leave my side and he sure was not okay with leaving me and walking away with some stranger. When the day came for the evaluation I had to drive to another town. When I walked in, I saw a lady behind a desk and an elderly lady sitting in a wheel chair. Fez shocked me with what he did next. He went right over to the lady in the wheel chair and put his head right in her lap! He passed the evaluation without any problems and with great praise from the judge. Fezzick is not only my emotional healer, but soon will bring support to others at hospitals, nursing homes, and anywhere else in the community that may need him."* ~Siera Ellis



Siera with Fezzick



EOP family member and freshman culinary arts major, Demetrius Simmons, had the opportunity during this spring semester to compete in the Northeast Regional competition for the International Gastronomical Society Chaine des Rotisseurs "Jeunes Chef", in which all contestants had to produce a three course menu.

*"The competition was based on a "Mystery Basket" which means there are items/ingredients that are in the basket and we have to use each item/ingredient in our dishes. It is very similar to the famous TV show on Food Network named 'Chopped'. Our ingredients were Trout, Lamb, Artichokes, and Berries. It was my time to shine and do right for everyone who was cheering me on, and believing in me. After the competition I felt accomplished and honored. I had represented my school well and I did the best that I could have done, that is what matters the most to me, and it is also something that I learned leaving the competition. It was a feeling like no other."* ~Demetrius Simmons





# Honors and Achievements

SUNY Cobleskill



## Spring 2014 Inductees

Siera Ellis  
Scott Parslow



## **RECOGNITION DINNER HONOREES**

The EOP Spring Academic Recognition Dinner was held on April 17, 2014 at Justine’s Restaurant in Cobleskill. Honored during the evening were 10 students who made the Dean’s List, and 18 students who earned Honorable Mention Dean’s List status for the Fall 2013 semester. Congratulations to each of you!

### Fall 2013

#### **Dean’s List 3.5 - 4.0 GPA**

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Oscar Aguero    | Siera Ellis       |
| Ashley Benson   | Scott Parslow     |
| Autumn Bratcher | Julian Pinto      |
| Shane Caroppoli | Katherine Reisen  |
| Taylor Drake    | Chelsea Valentine |



#### **Dean’s Honorable Mention List 3.0 - 3.49 GPA**

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Jiordi Aristy         | Jose Gonzalez      |
| Fidelfa Bailon-Bustos | Pedro Henriquez    |
| Robert Botha          | Lauren Iacovano    |
| Cody Cheung           | Elizabeth Rawlings |
| Imani Danielson       | Nathan Mastenbrook |
| Delilah Diaz          | Amy Meyer          |
| Denielle Dix          | Alexis Nunez       |
| Anthony Echevers      | Tishawn Smith      |
| Yolanda Gallardo      | Rebecca Sturn      |



# Educational Opportunity Program



SUNY Cobleskill



Spring Semester Academic Recognition Dinner attendees and award recipients. (Photo above)



5 EOP family members earned Certificates of Completion recognizing their participation in the Spring Leadership Workshop Series. Students pictured from left to right along with Mr. Dunn, Mrs. Walrath and Mr. Bennett are; Anthony Echevers, Khalif Thompson, Lawale Nagnango, Cody Cheung, and Hernesha Florestal. (photo at left)



2013 graduate and EOP alum, Cesar Herrera, was our special guest at the dinner, and shared his story of how EOP has made a positive impact on his life.





# EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM



EOP co-sponsored the annual end of the Spring Semester Fiesta along with Academic Affairs, and the Cultural Diversity Committee. Despite the chilly weather, students, faculty and staff still enjoyed delicious traditional foods, and dancing to a live Mariachi band.



L-R: Dr. Susan Zimmerman, Provost, Derwin Bennett, EOP Director, and Kelly Yacobucci, Co-coordinator of the event.



Congratulations to the following students who were recognized as 2014 Spring Semester Students of the Month:



Cody Cheung  
February  
Animal Science



Socorro Marin & Aneury Colon  
March  
Paramedic



Lawale Nagnango & Hernessha Florestal  
April  
Social Science & Animal Science

# CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!



SUNY Cobleskill

EOP is so proud of the following family members who graduated this Spring:

Robert Botha  
Dionaise Carty  
Denielle Dix  
Taylor Drake  
Jimmy Hill  
Jason Jackson

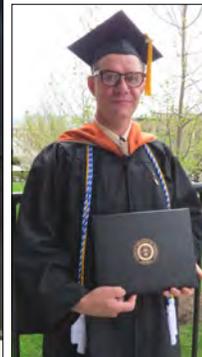
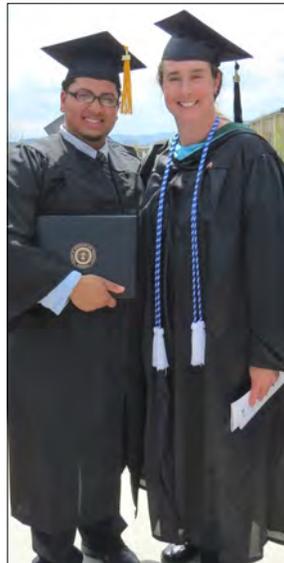
Talehia McCants  
Ruyert Parra  
Scott Parslow  
Terrance Phinney  
Jasminn Ray  
Rebecca Sturn

Zachary Vickerson



***Congratulations!  
Today is your day.  
You're off to Great Places!  
You're off and away!  
You have brains in your head.  
You have feet in your shoes.  
You can steer yourself in any  
direction you choose.***

**~Dr. Seuss, "Oh, the Places You'll Go!"**





# Educational Opportunity Program



May 2014 SUNY Cobleskill EOP Graduate Talehia McCants is a published author! Her first novel, *Paradise and Nightmares*, was published on June 3, 2014. Congratulations Talehia! Your EOP family is so proud of you!



The EOP Office is excited to introduce our 2014 Summer Program Peer Counselors/Tutors!

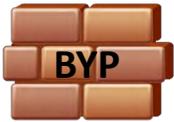
Standing, left to right: Katherine Reisen, Oscar Aguero and Hernessha Florestal  
Sitting, left to right: Olaide Owolabi, Jose Gonzalez, and Francesca Carvajal

# Campus Leadership

## Resident Assistants Spring 2014

Talehia McCants, Tishawn Smith, Jordan Cross,  
Anthony Echevers, Jose Gonzalez

### Brickyard Point Student Union Spring 2014



Jennifer Payano, Talehia McCants,  
Brittany Haywood & Demetrius Simmons

### Residential Life Night Host Spring 2014

Ruyert Parra

### Spring 2014 Wellness Center Peer Educators

Anthony Echevers, Ruyert Parra, Katherine Reisen

# Athletics & Recreation 2013-2014

Alexis Nunez Named SUNY Cobleskill  
Men's Basketball Team's  
Most Valuable Player

5/14/2014 Press Release

The SUNY Cobleskill Department of Sport & Exercise announced today that junior Alexis Nunez, White Plains, N.Y., White Plains, N.Y., has been named the men's basketball team's Most Valuable Player for the 2013-14 season. Nunez was honored with the award at the college's annual Athletic Awards Convocation.

The White Plains, N.Y. native earned Third Team All-North Eastern Athletic Conference (NEAC) Team honors this season leading the Fighting Tigers back to the NEAC Men's Basketball Championship Tournament this season as the team won eight of its last nine games to finish the season with an 11-13 overall record, the most wins since the program joined the NCAA Division III ranks in 2008.

This season in 23 appearances, including 22 starts, Nunez averaged 13.9 points, 4.2 assists, 3.2 rebounds and 1.3 steals per contest while shooting 42.5% from the field, including 33.8% from three-point range, and 76.1 % from the free throw line. Nunez led the NEAC in minutes played per game averaging 36.0 per game this year while ranking: fifth in assists, eighth in free throw percentage and eleventh in points per game.



### MEN'S BASKETBALL

Alexis Nunez

### MEN'S SWIMMING

Vamadi Golo

### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Samantha Davis

### MEN'S TRACK & FIELD

Taylor Drake and Jason Jackson

### CROSS COUNTRY

Christopher Cancilla Jr. and Kelvin Mejia

### MEN'S SOCCER

Musa Njie

### CHEERLEADING

Alondra Nunez and Samarra Parker

### BASEBALL

Oscar Aguero, Aneury Colon,  
Dominick Jahrling, Omar Rodriguez



SUNY Cobleskill



**EOP STAFF AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

Van Wagenen Library- 2nd Floor  
142 Schenectady Ave.  
Cobleskill, NY 12043  
T- 518-255-5836  
F- 518-255-6221  
[eop@cobleskill.edu](mailto:eop@cobleskill.edu)  
M-F 8am-4:15pm



**Derwin Bennett**  
*Director*  
BennetDD@Cobleskill.edu

518.255.5838  
Room 206



**Jennifer Walrath**  
*Senior Counselor*  
WalratJL@Cobleskill.edu

518.255.5830  
Room 207



**Paul Dunn**  
*Counselor*  
DunnPL@Cobleskill.edu

518.255.5817  
Room 205



**Catherine Krajewski**  
*Keyboard Specialist I*  
KrajewCI@Cobleskill.edu

518.255.5836  
Library- 2nd Floor

