Welcome Week
August 21-28, 2010
Visit the welcome week website for a full list of events
www.welcomeweek.vcu.edu

Mosaic Week
September 7-9, 2010
www.omsa.vcu.edu

Staff Information:
Beverly A. Walker, M.Ed
Director
Faith A. Wilkerson, M.Ed
Assistant Director
Ijuanee I. Isom, B.S.
Education Support Specialist
Arianna Pieragostini
Graduate Assistant
Maria Altonen
Graduate Assistant

Did You Know?
The OMSA website is a great central location for many scholarships, including the Presidential Awards for Community Multicultural Enrichment (PACME) and the Bumsicle-Watstein LGBT Award?
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Office of Multicultural Student Affairs
Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Services
University Student Commons :: 907 Floyd Ave., suite 215
P.O. Box 843080 :: Richmond, VA 23284-3080
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VCU is an EEO/AA institution. MSA0910-185
**Spring Recap**

**Black History Month**

In the United States, Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history. The event grew out of "Negro History Week," the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month.

Throughout the month we had brown bag discussions, films and a great cultural excursion tour on the African American history of Washington, DC and Northern VA. OMSA also teamed up with several student organizations and university departments to provide the VCU community with a comprehensive calendar of events.

**Presidential Awards for Community Multicultural Enrichment (PACME)** & Burnside-Watstein LGBT Award. These awards were given to individuals recognized for their continued support in the areas of unity, building community and cross-cultural initiatives.

2010 PACME Winners:
- Joseph Lyons
- Dr. Suzanne Barbour
- Rachel Kopelovich
- Sarah Watson

2010 Burnside-Watstein LGBT Award Winners:
- Jane Allman
- Emmett Hickman
- Sarah Watson

For a copy of all previous OMSA cultural month calendars please visit: www.omsa.vcu.edu/poster_archive.html

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**Meet Our Graduate Assistants**

**Maria Altonen**

Maria was born in Ijup, New York but was raised in Williamsburg, Virginia. She graduated from George Mason in 2008 with a degree in integrative studies with a concentration in social justice. Maria came to VCU to pursue a master in urban planning with a focus in housing policy. In addition, she will be earning a certificate in gender violence and intervention.

In her free time, Maria loves being around her family, being outdoors, and volunteering. She also describes poetry as a second passion to her interest in social justice.

Maria is excited about working with OSMA this year and is looking forward to meeting incredible people, and having a positive impact on the VCU campus and in the Richmond community.

**Black Caucus**

President Eboni Glenn

The purpose of Black Caucus is to serve as a vehicle through which traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups of African, African-American, Caribbean, and Hispanic descent can voice African-American, Caribbean and Hispanic concerns and opinions about conditions and decisions, which affect their existence at Virginia Commonwealth University. Black Caucus is committed to enhancing their social environments and political involvement and strengthening cultural awareness for all students on campus.

Last year also marked a great scholastic achievement for Alex as she joined the Opera Project Co-Chair. As Operations Co-Chair, Alex continued to expand programs and will be working on this year's event. In addition to her education, she will continue her work as a server at the Cheesecake Factory.

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**Fall Preview**

**Hispanic Heritage Month**

From Sept. 15-Oct. 15, OMSA celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month. We join forces with our Latino organizations to offer a variety of events to expose the university community to the Hispanic culture. It is also a celebration of the anniversary of the independence for five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

**Virginia Credit Union – Financial Success Summit**

The Virginia Credit Union is holding a one-day financial literacy conference for VCU students on Tuesday, Oct. 12, from 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. in the University Student Commons. Fun and informative seminars throughout the day include: avoiding identity theft, budgeting, solving the mystery of credit reports, making smart decisions when buying a car, investment fundamentals and planning for financial success.

**Mosaic Week: Sept. 7-9**

Join OMSA as we give students, faculty and staff an opportunity to meet and learn about multicultural organizations at VCU. The events begin Sept. 7, with an OMSA Open House from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. in Room 215 of the University Student Commons and end with a Welcome Back! LGBT Ice Cream Social from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. inside Shaler Court Dining Hall. Log onto www.omsa.vcu.edu for all event info!

**LGBT History Month**

LGBT History Month is modeled after Black and Women’s History Months. LGBT History Month’s achievements of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. The Month will consist of a variety of workshops, films, discussions, events, speakers, and panels that focused on raising awareness on a community and a history that is largely overlooked. Log onto www.omsa.vcu.edu for all event info!

**Community Service**

Throughout the 2010-2011 academic year OMSA will begin to revamp its presence within Richmond and its surrounding counties. We want to begin strengthening young peoples sense of civic engagement and community, and to help them achieve the knowledge, functional, developmental and social goals. On Aug. 30, 2010, OMSA joined in partnership with the VCU School of Nursing’s Community Nurse Organization, VCU Center for Health Disparities, the U.S. Army, VA Premier Health Plan, Inc. and George Wythe High School, to hold a school supply drive. The event will take place at George Wythe High School from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

For a list of needed items and drop-off locations please visit www.omsa.vcu.edu or call us at (804) 828-OMSA.

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**Cultural Org. Inner Circle**

**Intercultural Festival: Alex Paul, President**

Each year, the Intercultural Festival, a VCU tradition, is held in April as a celebration of VCU’s diversity that VCU exemplifies and emphasizes. VCU hosts cultural dancing performances, student art exhibitions, a fashion show, and a multicultural dinner. OMSA has provided incredible food and fun year after year, this year, every event brings together both students and the community in a constructive, fun way.

Alex started as the Volunteer Chair of the 2009 Festival and this past year, she joined the Operations Co-Chair. As Operations Co-Chair, throughout the year, she was responsible for all OMSA Cultural events and will be attending the Fall Festival this year. In addition to her education, she will continue her work as a server at the Cheesecake Factory.

As president of the Intercultural Festival Planning Board for the 2010-2011 year, Alex’s main goal is to adapt a “back to basics” approach. She also wants to have more focus on communication within the mix, the OMSA staff. Through her efforts, Alex is hoping this year’s Intercultural Festival will be the most successful yet.

With a brand new planning board, they are sure to be fresh ideas and perspective to grow the organization in different ways. Alex has a passion for ICC because she believes the reverse is a choice. Cultures don’t need to be isolated or watered down because of the differences that make us all amazing and exciting. After working on this project for two years, Alex is looking forward to getting started.

If you are interested in involving your student org in the Festival, or getting involved individually, please email icf@directory.vcu.edu.

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**Faculty Spotlight**

**Shawn Utsey, Ph.D, Chair of African American Studies**

Dr. Utsey received his Doctorate in Counseling Psychology from Fordham University in New York City and as been the current Chair of the African American Studies department since 2007. The department continues to encourage students to become involved by attending many of their lectures, programs and films. Dr. Utsey cites his greatest professional achievement as being the driving force behind the now well respected, Journal of Black Psychology. As the former Editor-in-Chief, he was able to bring the journal to international recognition and received acclaim from the Thomson Scientific Review, which focuses on objective means to critically evaluate the world’s leading journals.

The department will begin its community outreach efforts by starting an African American Studies Saturday Academic for elementary and middle school students. The primary goal is to increase awareness of African American issues within the community while keeping the tradition of community action alive and well. The department, in conjunction with the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, also plans on continuing a wonderful event for the VCU community entitled Black History in the Making, where we will celebrate the achievements of VCU faculty, staff and students. The event will take place in February in the University Student Commons.

In the coming months, the African American Studies Department will be changing its name to Africana Studies. Dr. Utsey said the same better reflects the department's focus on the African diaspora. He stated, “The name and research will go beyond the life and history of African Americans and extend to those of African descent around the globe.” He feels it is important for students to understand the black experience doesn’t begin with slavery.

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**Arianna Piaiagostini**

Arianna is currently a second-year graduate student in the master of art education program. In 2008, she graduated from Syracuse University with a BFA in art history. Through her studies, she has developed an increasing interest in multicultural education and museum studies. Although Arianna was born in New England, she grew up in Northern Virginia and enjoys meeting new people and trying new things. She has a passion for sailing, and since she was a child and also enjoys traveling. She looks forward to working as a graduate assistant in the OMSA Office and learning more about, and working with VCU’s diverse student body.
Fall Preview

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Virginia Credit Union – Financial Success Summit
The Virginia Credit Union is holding a one-day financial literacy conference for VCU students and alumni. The conference will be held on Saturday, Oct. 18, from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. in the University Student Commons. Fun and informative seminars throughout the day include: avoiding identity theft, budgeting, solving the mystery of credit reports, making smart decisions when buying a car, investment fundamentals and planning for financial success.

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Community Service
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Save the Date

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Become an OMSA Volunteer
The Volunteer Team is designed to provide students with experiential learning opportunities related to program and evaluation, networking, cultural awareness and appreciation. Want to become a member? Check us out at www.vcu.edu/services/volunteer.php.

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Welcome Week

The Faces of Diversity
Fall 2010 Issue

VCU Virginia Commonwealth University