

Student Spotlight: Hector Garcia

Kristie Scanlon, Assistant Director



Hector Garcia has benefited from strong role models in his life, but the strongest support has come from his family.

Garcia is a 2011 graduate of Grand Rapids City High School. He said he is grateful for the supportive teachers who helped him along the way. Through the encouragement of a teacher, Garcia applied and was admitted to the competitive school during his junior year. At City High, he turned his focus to academics and his future.

"I stopped focusing on sports and made a complete commitment to my school work," Garcia said. "I got a 3.7 GPA my fall semester and I was so proud."

Garcia described his family as his strongest support system. "My family is very supportive of academics. From the time I was little, my dad was encouraging me to study hard and do well. I am so thankful for his guidance," he said.

Garcia is majoring in mechanical engineering and hopes to work in that field after graduation. He is the current president of Phi Iota Alpha Fraternity and is also active in Sabrosismo, a performing arts organization that educates audiences about Latin culture through dance. Last summer he worked with the GEAR UP program as a student mentor. "Grand Valley is the right place for me to be. I know I will be successful here and will achieve great things," he said.

GEAR UP Celebrates New Grant Year

Bobby Springer, Associate Director

In fall 2011, the Office of Multicultural Affairs received funding to implement the GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). The program goals are to educate GEAR UP students and families on the importance and accessibility of a college education, provide academic support and guidance to make college enrollment and retention achievable and increase student and family capacity to make college affordable, allowing students to enter the collegiate process and leverage financial options.

The program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the State of Michigan's Department of Workforce Development Agency/King-Chavez-Parks Initiative.

This past summer, 145 rising eighth grade students from six Grand Rapids Public Schools middle schools (Alger, Burton, Gerald R. Ford, Harrison Park, Riverside and Westwood) spent three days and two nights on Grand Valley's campus. They heard presentations about admissions and financial aid, computer literacy, diversity initiatives, and WGVU radio and television. They also participated in campus tours and recreational activities.

The students especially enjoyed the three daily meals prepared by Campus Dining and late night Papa John's Pizza. They had very memorable experiences interacting daily with Grand Valley students in what was a lifetime experience for both groups of students.

Following the visit to Grand Valley, Gwen Heatly, career/college pathways coordinator at Harrison Park School, wrote the following testimonial in reflection of what she heard from the students about their experience: "Thank you so much for making the GEAR UP program available to our seventh graders here at Harrison Park. The overnight campus stay was wonderful, and I am looking forward to building on that experience in the upcoming school year! I also want to thank the student chaperones for their time and dedication, especially those who shared personal stories of overcoming obstacles to reach their goal, which served as inspiration for our students. Please let me know how I can engage our students and parents right from the start of the 2012-2013 school year, to prepare them for the next steps toward achievement through the GEAR UP program!"





Native American Student Association Spring Pow Wow

Kristie Scanlon, Assistant Director

The Native American Student Association (NASA) at Grand Valley hosted its annual Spring Pow Wow on April 21, 2012. The celebration was a great success, as more than 700 people attended.

This year marked the 13th Spring Pow Wow held on the Performing Arts Field on the Allendale Campus. The goal of the Pow Wow was to help celebrate and bring awareness to Native American culture, while educating the campus community about Native traditions, culture and heritage.

The Pow Wow began at 1 p.m. with the first of two Grand Entries, followed by the veterans song, flag song and welcome song. The Pow Wow was host to 12 drum groups, some traveled from Wisconsin, Illinois and Canada. There were more than 100 dancers who participated in various styles of dance including traditional, grass dance, jingle dress and intertribal dance.

Stacey Ettawageshik, president of NASA, said, "I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the planning of this Pow Wow. I am so thankful we have the support of the university and the Native community."

Planning for the 2013 Spring Pow Wow is underway. If you are interested in being involved in the program, please contact NASA at gvsu_nasa@yahoo.com.



Linda Ray Office Coordinator

Linda Ray, a resident of Muskegon, joined the Office of Multicultural Affairs staff in January 2012. She began her career at Grand Valley two years ago in the Human Resources Office.

Prior to Grand Valley, Ray worked for the Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce as manager of diversity initiatives. Ray was very instrumental in bringing awareness and inclusion to West Michigan people of color and women-owned businesses. Her dedication and passion for diversity and inclusion helped prepare Ray for her current role in OMA.

A graduate of Baker College Ray hopes to return to school to earn a bachelor's degree in human resource management.

Ray enjoys spending time with her 16-year-old son, Trevon, tea-cup Chihuahua, Cesar, and participating in Zumba classes.

Study Abroad Experience in South Africa

Dmitri Westbrook, Liberal Studies Major
Chicago, Illinois

Studying abroad was something that I was always curious about. I wondered if it was something that I could afford and enjoy. I know some people who did not study abroad and they regret it. I chose to go to South Africa because it was the only trip that offered Women and Gender Studies courses. The trip was led by the Women's Center and WGS Program. I knew that I was going to be the only man on this trip, and that did not bother me at all.

Once we arrived in South Africa, I was already in love with the country. We were in Johannesburg for three days and Cape Town for nearly six weeks. As a group, we completed many different activities such as learning about the history and culture of South Africa, mountain climbing, sightseeing, and working with sixth graders from Manenberg, in Cape Town. Working with the sixth graders was the best part



of the trip because my colleagues and I formed strong bonds with all of the young students we met.

Of course, being the only man on this trip has its ups and downs, but I was on this trip to accomplish a mission. I wanted to demonstrate to the African students that I am a good man who

stands up for women's rights. I am an activist for human rights in general, but more men need to be involved in the fight for women's rights in order to see more equality. This trip was a blessing overall and I will never forget having this experience.

Patrick Wilson GEAR UP Project Coordinator

Patrick Wilson, originally from the west side of Detroit, works in the Office of Multicultural Affairs as a project coordinator for GEAR UP.

Wilson earned a bachelor's degree in health communications and a master's degree in education from Grand Valley. During his time in college, Wilson worked closely with many diversity and inclusion efforts. He was one of the founders the student organization C.L.O.U.D.N.I.N.E. He also established Cultural Competence, a business intended to promote diversity and inclusion through its growing program, "Culture Shock."

"I am determined to help students attain their maximum academic, professional, social and intercultural potential," he said. "My goal is to provide students with professional and cultural strategies to enhance their collegiate success."

"I strive to create learning opportunities for students and staff members through innovative and effective programming. I believe that learning is a lifelong process that leads to success in professional and personal ventures, and an improved quality of life."





Fall 2012 Schedule of Events



September 13
4:00 – 6:00 pm

Intercultural Student Reception
Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center

September 17
12:00 – 1:00 pm

**Hispanic Heritage Month - My Study Abroad
Experience in Peru & El Salvador**
2215-2216 Kirkhof Center

September 19
11:00 am – 12:30 pm

**Hispanic Heritage Month - A New Home in Michigan:
The Mexican-American Experience in Muskegon**
2204 Kirkhof Center

September 26
12:00 – 1:00 pm

Diversity Brown Bag: Making the Latino Vote Count
2270 Kirkhof Center

October 3
4:00 – 5:30 pm

**Professionals of Color Lecture Series: Women and
Minorities in the Political Arena**
Speaker: Patti Solis-Doyle
Cook-DeWitt Center

October 8
11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Hispanic Heritage Month: Precious Knowledge
2215-2216 Kirkhof Center

November 8
12:00 – 1:00 pm

Diversity Brown Bag: American Indians Today
2204 Kirkhof Center

November 12
4:00 – 5:30 pm

Professionals of Color Lecture Series: Global Unity
Speaker: Billy Mills
Cook-DeWitt Center

Visit www.gvsu.edu/oma or call 616-331-2177 for complete event details.

Office of Multicultural Affairs Staff

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Oliver Aguilera, Multicultural Assistant
Linda Ray, Office Coordinator

For the latest news and events, check us out on the Web www.gvsu.edu/oma

Archived copies of the OMA's newsletters can be accessed through our Web site address above.

About Us

The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) fosters a respect for and an appreciation of the history, tradition, and culture of different ethnic groups and empowers ethnic minority students to be active participants in Grand Valley's community through programs that promote academic, social, and cultural development for students.

OMA's vision is to promote acceptance and appreciation of an inclusive campus community that values the diversity of people, backgrounds, and perspectives of each individual.

Guiding Principles:

- Fosters a campus climate that respects and appreciates the history, culture, and traditions of various ethnic groups.
- Empowers students to be active participants in the Grand Valley community.
- Stimulates and encourages intercultural awareness and dialogue among university members.
- Takes an active role in promoting academic, social, cultural, leadership and professional development for students.

The OMA staff serves as a resource for students, faculty, and staff on issues of inclusion, diversity, multiculturalism, and interculturalism.

Our Contact Information

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