

Student Spotlight: Brandon Fitzgerald



Brandon Fitzgerald is a junior majoring in nursing, and an eastsider by heart. Born and raised on the east side of Detroit, Fitzgerald graduated from Henry Ford High School in Sterling Heights. He said he chose Grand Valley for a multitude of

reasons, but what sealed the deal happened during a campus visit.

Fitzgerald had a slight accident with a skateboarder while on his campus tour during Battle of the Valleys weekend.

"When the kid hit me, he quickly jumped off of his long board to ensure I was OK," he said. "It was in that moment that I knew everyone cared about not just themselves but others, and this was the place for me."

Fitzgerald said he chose nursing as a major because he considers himself a helper.

"I also lost a very close family member to cancer when I was younger. Seeing my family member in the hospital and all the work put in to provide such a great quality of care for myself and my family was what made me choose nursing," he said.

Aside from nursing, Fitzgerald is also passionate about in higher education and helping students.

Fitzgerald not only stays busy with classes, but he is also very active in many student organizations. He is the president of the Multicultural Cohort Program, student senator on the Diversity Affairs Committee, Homecoming coordinator for the Laker Traditions Team, and a member of Act on Racism and Loud N' Queer. He had served as a Resident Assistant, Community Council Advisor, and Transitions Leader. Fitzgerald joked, "Oh, I also plan on being president of Grand Valley one day."

Office of Multicultural Affairs Graduate Intern

During this fall semester, the Office of Multicultural Affairs has the privilege of providing a practicum internship to a College Student Affairs Leadership Program graduate student. Emily Davis will be spending her fall semester with the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

"Hi all! My name is Emily and I am a second-year CSAL graduate student, with an assistantship in housing. I completed a bachelor's degree in journalism and French from Central Michigan University, and I am from the greater Grand Rapids area. I am very excited to work in OMA this semester and anxious to learn and help with new projects.

I am very interested in working with diverse populations and helping people learn more about people who are different from themselves.

When I graduate from Grand Valley, I would like to work in housing, multicultural affairs or academic advising. One of my biggest passions is helping students connect to resources and find ways to make their college experience the best one possible; if I can do that in any way, I will be happy!"



Hispanic Center's Supporting Our Leaders (SOL) Summer Intern

This summer, the Office of Multicultural Affairs hosted an intern from the Hispanic Center's Supporting Our Leaders (SOL) program. Jeanette Rivera spent her summer assisting OMA Assistant Director, Allison Roman. Over 15 students from the SOL program participated in placements all over GVSU.

Bridget Salisz, Youth Advocate and Data Monitor of the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan said, "The continued partnership with Grand Valley this year for our summer internship program has been amazing. Our hope is that these partnerships provide a positive first-work experience for our youth. Jeanette has grown immensely in her independence and confidence as a result of being placed in the Multicultural Affairs Office. The projects she has worked on have improved her skill set and helped her prepare for future opportunities."





Laker CONNECTIONS: Mentor Programs for Students of Color

"Laker CONNECTIONS" are mentoring programs, specifically designed for students of color. These programs Brothers Black Male Scholars Initiative, Hermanos and Niara are designed to connect students to the campus and larger community through relationships, access to programs, social activities, service learning and support services.

Brothers: the Black Male Scholars Initiative

Brothers: the Black Male Scholars Initiative connects Grand Valley students with experienced students, faculty and staff mentors. Mentees in the program will take part in academic, cultural and social activities designed to increase their academic success. While academic success is the No. 1 priority, we will also offer opportunities to enhance a student's personal and professional development as well.

Jamar Ragland, "Black Male Scholars provides me a solid and lasting support system at Grand Valley."

Patrick Wilson, "We are determined to make sure these BROTHERS not only succeed at GVSU, but in their communities, families and professions"

Hermanos Mentoring Program

As an academic mentoring program, Hermanos matches Grand Valley students with experienced student and faculty mentors. Hermanos mentees take part in academic, cultural and social activities geared toward academic success. Now in its third year, Hermanos offers monthly group activities and the opportunity to meet with faculty or student mentors for personal, academic or professional development.

Its mission is to empower, advocate and educate new and returning students who identify with the Latino culture as they pursue social and academic endeavors. Hermanos aims to increase Latino male retention, progression, graduation and leadership through the implementation of effective programming, community outreach, and the support of faculty/staff mentors.

NIARA Mentoring Program

The mission of the NIARA Mentoring Program is to help women students of color enhance their college experience by building meaningful relationships with professional women of color and strengthening community connections on- and off-campus. Students have the opportunity to participate in monthly meetings and monthly lunch meetings. NIARA seeks to support students holistically by supporting their personal, professional, and academic development.

Vision: The program is designed to increase the satisfaction and retention of these women. NIARA's vision is to create opportunities for all women students of color to excel academically, socially and culturally.



Brothers: Black Male Scholars Initiative Advisors
L-R: Patrick Wilson and MarcQus Wright



Hermanos Mentoring Program Advisors
L-R: Salvador Lopez and Carlos Martinez



Niara Mentoring Program Advisors
L-R: Allison Roman and Takeelia Garrett



MI GEAR UP Students Travel to Washington, DC

Twenty three MI GEAR UP student from Grand Valley State University got a chance of a lifetime this summer when they were able to travel to Washington, DC for five days. Students visited universities, the United States Capitol, the White House, National Memorials and multiple Museums during their stay. Students also got the chance to meet Congressman John Lewis of Georgia.



Student Reflections

My trip Washington, D.C., with GEAR UP was a great experience. On our first day we visited Howard University, which provides a lot of opportunities for its new students. For instance, if you have a really good GPA, SAT or ACT score you can get a full-ride scholarship to attend. Also, Howard graduates a high percentage of students of color, the most in the world in business, engineering, law and medicine.

We looked at the White House. We didn't actually get to go inside the White House, we were outside the gate. The White House actually looked a lot smaller in person. The next day we visited the Lincoln Memorial. We walked upstairs to see the actual statue. It was fascinating to read all the articles on the walls beside the statue. We also visited Arlington National Cemetery. We witnessed the changing of the guards at the tomb of the unknown soldier. We also got to see the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial. It was amazing seeing the statue at night. Behind the statue there were stone walls engraved with his quotes. I had a great experience being able to go to D.C. with the GEAR UP Program.

—Nyasia Montgomery, Class of 2017

This was the most amazing trip I have ever had. The universities were amazing. The memorials were powerful and inspiring. My favorite part of the trip were the visits to the White House, Lincoln Memorial, Marine Corps Memorial, National Air and Space Museum, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, and Arlington National Cemetery. The changing of the guard at the tomb was the best. This trip opened my eyes to the world. Nothing will be able to top this trip!

—Armando Miguel, Class of 2017

Washington, D.C., is an amazing tourist attraction for many but for a group of Grand Valley GEAR UP students, it was a hands-on learning experience. During the trip I saw a lot of diversity, not only in Washington but some of the GEAR UP students were from the University of Michigan-Flint. On the trip we went to Georgetown University, where we visited the lecture halls, monuments and saw eager college students. Another university we went to was Howard University, the college just for me. It was founded in 1867 for black students to attend college after the Civil War. The first four students admitted were white. Washington, D.C., was an amazing learning experience for me and the GEAR UP group. I am glad that I went on this trip, it was a growing experience I am glad to have a sneak peek of what I want my future to be like.

—Chelsea Fleming, Class of 2017

PROFESSIONALS OF COLOR LECTURE SERIES

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2014
6-7:30 P.M.



Community organizer, journalist and political activist Rosa Clemente will be coming to Grand Valley State University this fall to deliver a powerful keynote entitled: *Presente! Latinos y Latinas in the 21st Century*.

Clemente was nominated by the Green Party as a vice presidential candidate in the 2008 election. Along with Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, the pair became the first women of color ticket in American history.

For more than 15 years, Clemente has been a community organizer and activist, and a featured keynote speaker, panelist and political commentator. In 1995, she developed Know Thy Self Productions, which has since produced four major community activism tours. She also consults on issues such as hip-hop activism, media justice, voter engagement among youth of color, third-party politics, intercultural relations between African Americans and Latinos, immigrants' rights as an extension of human rights, and universal health care.

Clemente's academic work has been dedicated to researching national liberation struggles inside the U.S., with a specific focus on the Young Lords Party, Black Panther Party, and Black and Brown Liberation Movements of the '60s and '70s, as well as the effects of COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) on such movements. She has written extensively on Afro-Latino identity and politics, sexism within hip-hop culture and hip-hop activism, media justice and African American and Latino unity.



Congressman Lewis and Michigan State University, Grand Valley State University and University of Michigan-Flint

FALL 2014 Schedule of Events



Tuesday, September 9	Intercultural Student Reception 4–6 p.m. Kirkhof Center, Grand River Room
September 15–October 15	Community Service: School Supply Drive for Migrant Children
September 15–19	Latino Americans: Episode 1 & 2 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1240 KC
September 22–26	Latino Americans: Episode 3 & 4 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1240 KC
Friday, September 26	The Power of the Latino Vote with Milinda Ysasi-Castañon (GVSU '03) Noon–1:30 p.m.
Thursday, October 2	Professionals of Color Lecture Series: Rosa Clemente 6–7:30 p.m. Kirkhof Center, Grand River Room
October 6–10	Latino Americans: Episode 5 & 6 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1240 Kirkhof Center
Monday, October 13	Re-Thinking Columbus 5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m. DeVos Center, Loosemore Auditorium
Tuesday, October 14	Unaccompanied Children Noon–1:00 p.m. DeVos Center, Loosemore Auditorium
Wednesday, November 5	Professional of Color Lecture Series Presents: An Evening with Anton Treuer 6–7:30 p.m. Cook-DeWitt Center
Saturday, November 8	Native American Student Association (NASA) Day of Service 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Norton Mound National Historic Landmark
Monday, November 3– Sunday, November 9	Native American Film Festival: Smoke Signals 11 a.m., 2 p.m., 5 p.m., 9 p.m. Kirkhof Center Theater
Monday, November 10– Sunday, November 16	Native American Film Festival: Skins 11 a.m., 2 p.m., 5 p.m., 9 p.m. Kirkhof Center Theater
Wednesday, November 19	Diversity Brown Bag Series Presents: The Native American Mascots: Tribute or Stereotype? Noon–1 p.m. Kirkhof Center, Room 2204
Wednesday, November 19	Gi-gikino'amaage-min: Defend Our History, Unlock Your Spirit Native American Urban History Project Campus Dialogue 6–8 p.m. Mary Idema Pew Library, Multipurpose Room

Office of Multicultural Affairs Staff

Connie Dang, Director
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Allison Roman, Assistant Director
Kristie Scanlon, Assistant Director
Oliver Aguilera, Multicultural Assistant
Linda Ray, Office Coordinator
Kayla Jones, Graduate Assistant

For the latest news and events, check us out online at www.gvsu.edu/oma
Archived copies of OMAs newsletters can be accessed via the above website.

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 all 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 members on issues of inclusion, diversity, multiculturalism and interculturalism.

Our Contact Information

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