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## Diversity Center

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# at the center

with Virgil Jones



Virgil Jones  
Director of Diversity Center

## The Diversity Center

welcomes the campus community back for the 2008-09 school year. Each year the staff and I have lofty goals of attracting new people to the Diversity Center and different events held across campus. Our mantra is "the more the merrier!"

This year we have added some cosmetic touches to the office to open up the space and make it look and feel more warm and cozy. We are

hoping that these changes, better event marketing, and outreach to students will allow us to reach more people on campus.

This year is filled with new people, new events and new ideas! We have added several new members to our office staff. Laura Shilling joined our office this fall as our new administrative assistant and continues to be a beacon of light in our office. Rebecca Mendoza, Julio Zelaya, Elizabeth Coco, and Hamada Omar are new student assistants in our office. We are also fortunate to have veteran student assistants like Pa Kou Moua, Lauren Matykowski, Obus Okoh, and Jeanifer Poon returning for another year.

If you are looking for one good reason to visit, you should know that we are partnering with the Writing Center to offer writing tutor assistance to Gusties Monday through Thursday! Please keep a lookout for other upcoming events and stop in sometime to meet the staff.



Diversity Center Staff

Top L to R: Jeanifer Poon, Rebekah Mendoza, Pa Kou Moua, Elizabeth Coco, and Obus Okoh  
Bottom L to R: Director of Diversity Center Virgil Jones, Lauren Matykowski, Hamada Omar, and Administrative Assistant Laura Shilling

## Returning Staff!

The Diversity Center welcomes back our veteran student assistants, Pa Kou Moua, Lauren Matykowski, Obus Okoh, and Jeanifer Poon for another year.



### PA KOU MOUA

Hi everyone! I'm Pa Kou Moua and I'm a junior from Manitowoc, Wis., majoring in sociology/anthropology and Japanese studies. Some of the organizations that I'm involved in are the Asian Cultures Club (ACC)

and Orgullo Latino Association (OLAS). I love meeting people in the Diversity Center. The people that I meet in here are so full of ambition and energy. The Diversity Center is the place to be!



### LAUREN MATYKOWSKI

I'm Lauren Matykowski and I am a junior from Minneapolis. I am a Russian studies major with history and peace studies minors. I play the oboe in the Gustavus Wind Orchestra, am a member of The Crossroads

Program, and am a co-president of the Russian Club. I like working in the Diversity Center because it is truly a great place to be and a great resource for the campus.



### OBUS OKOH

My name is Obukowho Okoh. I am from Delta State in Nigeria. I am a sophomore and my major is international management. I like playing soccer for fun. I am in Pan Afrikan Student Organization (PASO),

Investment Club, and International Culture Club. The Diversity Center is a comfortable place for me to hang out with my friends. I like working in the Diversity Center because everybody is nice.



### JEANIFER POON

Hi everyone! I am Jeanifer Poon from Brooklyn, New York. I am a junior nursing major at Gustavus. On campus, I am involved in the Big Partner and Little Partner Program, Africa Partners Medical, The Crossroads Program, and

Operation Smile. I work in the Diversity Center because I enjoy speaking, learning, and helping people.

## New Staff!

The Diversity Center welcomes five new members to its staff. Elizabeth Coco, Rebekeh Mendoza, Julio Zelaya, Hamada Omar, and Administrative Assistant Laura Shilling bring new energy to the Diversity Center. Their passion, ambition, and enthusiasm are a welcomed addition. Stop by and meet the new faces!



### LAURA SHILLING | Administrative Assistant

Hi, I'm Laura. My family and I moved to Le Sueur four years ago. I have a background in elementary education and taught first grade for nine years. Working with college students is a definite change! I am thrilled to be working in the Diversity Center because the people who stop in are amazing.



### ELIZABETH COCO

I'm Elizabeth Coco, but everyone calls me Coco. I'm from Velletri, Italy, and moved to Northfield, Minn., last year to complete my high school education and begin college in the United States. I would like to become an high school English teacher; therefore I am an English and secondary education major! I am part of WAC (Women's Awareness Center) and Q&A (Queers and Allies) student organizations. When I learned my job on campus was working at the D-Center, I was extremely enthusiastic because I knew I would meet many interesting and amazing people. Ultimately it is a serene and safe environment, which is why I love it so much!! The D Center rocks!!!!



### REBEKAH MENDOZA

Hi! My name is Rebekeh Mendoza. I was born and raised in California and am a first-year student. My plan is to double major in history (focus in East Asian studies) and Japanese studies. When I found out I was working in the Diversity Center I immediately thought of the E Pluribus show put on by I Am... We Are (you know: students looking cautious or scared when they walked by). Regardless, I think the D-Center is a great place to find out about multicultural events, just hang out and do some homework, or get some tutoring, plus Virgil and Laura are great!



### JULIO ZELAYA

Hello I'm Julio Zelaya. I am a first-year student from St. James, Minn. and striving for a political science major. The rugby team, College Democrats, and Swing Club keep me busy. The D-Center also keeps me busy, and I enjoy being a part of entertaining conversation with all the beautiful people.



### HAMADA OMAR

My name is Hamada Omar, I'm from Minneapolis and a junior at Gustavus. I play football at Gustavus and I'm part of the Pan Afrikan Student Organization (PASO). I enjoy working at the D-Center because it gives me the chance to interact with people and help advertise diversity on campus with a great passion.

# RHEA MUCHALLA

*student profile*



**It's the beginning** of the end! The end of my time as a Gustie, that is. The day a square, black hat flies off my head and I find myself in the "real world" is fast approaching. But for now I'm here in my fourth year as a Gustie. It's cliché I know, but it REALLY does feel just like yesterday that I found a way to fit all my stuff into one little dorm room and realized that I'd never have a curfew again. I've grown exponentially in my time here with the help of a lot of great people and a lot of great opportunities on this campus. I couldn't have done it all without a lot of support, and a place to help me bounce back in those moments when my springs feel sprung out. For me, the Diversity Center is that place. Whether I'm in need of a friendly face, advice on life, or just a place to feel comfortable in my own skin, I turn to D-Center and the people I've found there. The Diversity Center is also the umbrella for some of the activities and organizations that have helped shape me, like I AM . . . WE ARE, the Womyn's Awareness Center, and of course Zeta Chi Phi. In my time here, I've had the ability to reach inside myself and see what I'm made of, and I must say it's some pretty good stuff. So as I get ready to work hard and fully enjoy my last year, I can also say I'm ready for the real world and whatever it may hold. ■

*"In my time here, I've had the ability to reach inside myself and see what I'm made of, and I must say it's some pretty good stuff."*

*"When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak."*

— Audre Lorde  
writer and activist

## spotlight on

**World Watch** and **Cultural Connections** are brought to you by *Crossroads*. Through their shared interest in world cultures, languages, and contemporary global issues, members work to develop a broader understanding of the world in which they live and contribute to the education of the College community as a whole. Think Globally, Act Locally—*The Crossroads Program*.

### World Watch

#### **Ethiopia, Africa: Famine Looming** —

The United Nations on Tuesday warned that a shortage of food and water was worsening the effects of a searing drought in Ethiopia's restive Somali region. According to OCHA, some 4.6 million people in Ethiopia need emergency assistance while another 8 million require immediate food relief due to the drought.

#### **North Korea: Weapons Program** —

North Korea has expelled UN monitors from its plutonium-making nuclear plant, officials said on Wednesday, accelerating moves to restart an atom bomb project it had renounced under a disarmament-for-aid deal.

#### **South Africa: President Resigns** —

South Africa was plunged into political turmoil recently when President Thabo Mbeki announced that he would quit within days, following a call by the ruling African National Congress (ANC) for him to resign.

### Cultural Connection

**October 2 — Gandhi's Birthday (Indian)**

**October 9 — Yom Kippur (Jewish):** The Day of Atonement is the holiest and most solemn of all days in the Jewish year.

**October 28 — Diwali (Sikh, Hindu):** Week-long festival for the Hindu New Year.

## goings on

### Diversity Center Calendar

October 5

**Family Weekend Dinner** | 4:30 p.m.

October 9

**End of Ramadan Banquet** | 7 p.m.

October 10–15

**Queers & Allies Coming Out Week**

### College Calendar

October 2

**Last Days of Old Beijing** | **Book Signing** | 6:30 p.m.

**Homecoming Variety Show** | 7:00 p.m.

October 3

**Homecoming Bonfire** | 9:00 p.m.

October 4

**Arboretum Open House** | 10:00 a.m.

**Homecoming Parade** | 11:00 a.m.

**Homecoming Football Game** | 1:30 p.m.

**Celebrate Gustavus: Oktoberfest** | 4:00 p.m.

October 7

**Meditation** | 7:00 PM

October 12

**International Learning & Service Program BBQ**

October 14

**Meditation** | 7:00 p.m.

October 21

**Meditation** | 7:00 p.m.

October 25

**Topsy Turvy Mouse** | 8:00 p.m.

October 28

**Meditation** | 7:00 p.m.

October 31

**Topsy Turvy Mouse** | 8:00 p.m.