Welcome Back!
By Cece Sowemimo

Welcome back to Gustavus! I hope you all had a great and revitalizing break. As I sit in front of the computer, I am trying to decide what I should write about. There is so much that has happened and is happening, and we are only in the second month of the year.

As some of you may know, February is not only the beginning of spring semester, but also a month that has been set aside for Black history. Black History Month is a time to remember all the people who have made important contributions and changes to society throughout the history of the African Diaspora. It is a time to remember not only the most well-known Black people in history, but also those whose names rarely appear in our history books. Everyone knows of Harriet Tubman and Martin Luther King Jr., but have you heard of Dred Scott, Sojourner Truth, or Ralph Bunche?

Every year, there is a debate over whether it is fair or useful to designate a month to recognize the history of one race. Concerning that argument, I agree a little bit. We should recognize these individuals all year round because African American history is American history; this includes the good, bad, and ugly parts of our country’s history.

This month, the Pan-Afrikan Student Organization will be putting on different events to share a part of the Black culture.

- Saturday, Feb. 13: Spoken word by Voices Merging in the Courtyard Café
- Wednesday, Feb. 17: Spades night in the Dive
- Saturday, Feb. 20: Hip Hop and African Modern Dance lessons in Kresge Dance Studio (reservations are required. Sign up in the Diversity Center)

This month, take the time to learn about Black history; learn about someone you did not know about. Then take that extra step to learn more about your own history. By looking at and learning from the past, we can move toward a brighter future.
The Pan Afrikan Student Organization is composed of a diverse group of students who have an interest in the Pan-African culture. Our organization’s mission is to educate the Gustavus community on cultures of Africa and the Black Diaspora. We embrace and celebrate African culture by using our events as an outlet to inform the Gustavus community on the Pan-African culture.

We kick off our year with “Gustavus Day of Fasting” in honor of the Islamic holiday of Ramadan. Participants refrain from eating and drinking from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Our next event is Our Story Conference, which promotes awareness of the struggles and accomplishments of African people. Past years’ topics have included “The Biblical Basis of Pan-Afrikanism,” “An American Dilemma: The Growing Gender Gap in the African American Community,” “Debt Forgiveness for Underdeveloped Nations,” “Dispelling the Myths of Blacks in Our Society: Race Matters,” “Affirmative Action,” and “Interracial Relationships.” In addition, we celebrate Kwanzaa, a festival featuring African American culture celebrated between Christmas and New Year. In February, we celebrate Black History Month, which is a time to commemorate African Americans who have changed the world. We celebrate this memorable time by hosting events such as spoken word, African modern and hip hop dance workshops, and a soul food dinner.

African Night is when we celebrate all African cultures through musical performances, food, dance, and a fashion show. The last event for the year is Hip Hop Night, where we explore all expressions of hip hop. The event highlights artists from different musical backgrounds. In past years, we have had singers, rappers, emcees, DJs, and dancers.

Our organization is an outlet for students, regardless of racial or ethnic background, to come and be a part of a group that seeks to educate the Gustavus community on Black culture. We provide a comfortable atmosphere where students can be themselves and collaborate with other students to achieve the common goal of UNITY.

The Dean of Students’ Office oversees programs and services that support students’ education and development both inside and outside the classroom.

- Members of the Dean of Students’ Office guide, support, and challenge students in taking full advantage of a Gustavus education.
- They provide advice, support, and assistance to students and student groups and respond to inquiries from students, parents, and others about college policies and procedures.
- Staff responsibilities include responding to emergency situations and personal matters.
- The Dean of Students’ Office often functions as a resource and referral agency for parents and students. If you don’t know to whom to direct your inquiry or opinion; if you are unsure which office or program might handle a particular matter, or if your issues are multifaceted and you’re not sure where to begin, the Dean of Students’ Office might be a helpful place to start.

The Dean of Students’ Office is located on the upper level of the Jackson Campus Center and is open M–F, 8 a.m.–4:45 p.m. Students and/or parents are welcome to schedule an appointment—call 507-933-7526.

Jeff Stocco, dean of students and vice president for student affairs, works with many talented and committed staff in student affairs. Come see Jeff if you don’t know how to resolve a problem!

Deirdre Rosenfeld, associate dean, loves to support, mentor, advise, and advocate for students for any reason, especially relating to judicial matters or Student Senate.

Steve Bennett, assistant dean, helps students to reach their personal and academic goals by providing support, guidance, and referral to both on-campus and off-campus resources.

Deb Swanberg, administrative assistant, supports the deans in their work with students, parents, and colleagues, and also serves as the office manager.

Jan Lutz, administrative secretary, provides administrative support and coordinates communication related to the management of the College conduct system.

Emily, Jamie, Meghan, and Rebecca, student employees, greet visitors to the office, help to answer their questions, and direct any concerns to the appropriate dean.
Hi, my name is Jeanifer and I am senior nursing major at Gustavus Adolphus College. My experience here at Gustavus has been an amazing one.

Though I have run into a lot of obstacles throughout my college career, the strong support from the staff, professors, and my friends has helped me to get past many of those hurdles. And the Diversity Center has been a big part of that.

I was first connected to the Diversity Center when I was a first-year student. I received an invitation to attend the Mentoring for Student Success Retreat (then called the Student of Color Retreat), and I’m glad I did. I met a lot of fellow first-years whom I have stayed in contact with or have become really good friends with. It was at the retreat that I was also paired-up with an amiable mentor, Lois Peterson. I still go to her to talk and to ask for advice.

After the retreat, the D-Center has become one of my niches on campus where I can go to relax and do my homework. I am also currently on staff in the Diversity Center, working in the office as an administrative assistant.

My hope for the future is to become a travel nurse.

“Listen to everyone, refrain from reacting, go to your quiet corner and make your own decision.”

~ Goldie Hawn
World Watch and Cultural Connections are brought to you by the Crossroads Program. 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

China: More tainted milk — Chinese authorities have found more cases of milk products contaminated with the toxic industrial chemical melamine, state media has reported, more than a year after a nationwide scandal sickened thousands of infants. According to reports on Monday, food products from three companies were found laced with the chemical.

Turkey (Istanbul): Security summit — Turkish, Afghan, and Pakistani leaders are to gather in Istanbul for a regional security summit that focuses on Afghanistan, followed by meetings with the Iranian vice-president and the Chinese foreign minister. The summit on Monday brings together Abdullah Gul, the Turkish president; his Afghan counterpart, Hamid Karzai; and Asif Ali Zardari, the Pakistani president. The summit will pave the way for an international conference on Afghanistan to be held in London, with the aim of setting a timetable for transferring responsibility for some areas to Afghan government control.

Middle East: Push for peace — Israel's leader declared his country's permanent claim to parts of the West Bank, angering Palestinians again and complicating efforts by the U.S. Mideast envoy—though the same claim was also made by previous, more moderate premiers. Timing and context lent weight to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to two Jewish settlements and his declaration that they would remain in Israel forever.

“Our message is clear: We are planting here, we will stay here, we will build here. This place will be an inseparable part of the state of Israel for eternity,” Netanyahu proclaimed.

Cultural Connection

February 2 — Imbolg (Wicca): “Imbolg” comes from the archaic Gaelic expression “in the belly,” which signaled the first stirring within the womb of mother earth. Corn dolls are burned as offerings to the sun to hasten his return.

February 8–14 – Random Acts of Kindness Week (International): Established in 1995, the movement inspires people to share kindness with one another as they discover the power these acts have to effect positive change as relationships are created and community connections nourished.

February 14 – Losar (Tibet): Pre-dating Buddhism, the Tibetan New Year is called Losar and is celebrated for fifteen days by blessings, visiting, feasting, and cleaning to prepare for the new year.

February 17 – Ash Wednesday, Lent Begins (Christian): The ash symbolizes sorrow for wrong doings, and foreheads of churchgoers are marked with the shape of the cross with ashes as a sign of penitence.

February 28 – Kalevala Day (Finland): Elias Lonnrot, a country doctor, folklorist, and philologist compiled the Kalevala, Finland’s national epic, in 1835.