UPCOMING SPRING EVENTS!!!

DECEMBER
12 Emerging Leaders Program Application Deadline
21 Ronald E. McNair Academic Year Application Deadline
6 ELP Workshop Series
17 Application Deadline for Susan B. Anthony Institute Research Grants

JANUARY
18-19 CDR/MSAB Leadership Retreat
21 Martin Luther King Jr. Day & Commemorative Address with Andrew Young
25 Study Abroad Expo 2 PM - 4 PM Hirst Lounge

FEBRUARY
2 Ronald E. McNair Achievement Summer Program Application Deadline
14 Application Deadline for Susan B. Anthony Institute that passes Grantees for Associates, Graduate and Undergraduate Students
6 ELP Workshop Series
8-16 Spring Break
19 ELP Workshop Series
TBA Academic Achievement Reception

MARCH
2 ELP Workshop Series
17 OMSA Senior Dinner
18 Commencement Ceremony

APRIL
18-20 MVP Weekend
5 Black Students’ Union and Lambda Upsilon Lambda’s Health Fair
19 Spanish and Latino Students’ Association Tropicana
16 ELP Workshop Series
30 ELP Workshop Series
TBA ECO Battle of the Classes

MAY
17 FDI Post- and Pre-Doctorate Fellows
18 Commenence Ceremony

PAGES 6 & 7 Diversity Initiatives Across Campus
PAGE 8 200 Feet Above the Ocean
PAGE 9 FDI Post- and Pre-Doctorate Fellows
PAGE 10 M. K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence
PAGE 11 Kudos

PAGE 12 Upcoming Events

THE FRONT LINES OF DIPLOMACY

“O ne day you are the number one diplomat in the world,” explained former Secretary of State Colin Powell, “the next day you’re just another guy.” Thus began General Colin Powell’s keynote address before the hundreds of students, alumni, and parents that packed the Palestra during this year’s Meliora Weekend. Powell is most renowned for becoming the first African-American to be chosen by the President of the United States to serve as Secretary of State. Before that, he had risen to the highest position in the U.S. military when appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1991, only 40 years after the military was officially desegregated.

“I was a ‘C’ student in college”, said Powell as he described his humble beginnings as a university student in New York City. Though he was an average student in the classroom at The City College of The City University of New York, he excelled in the ROTC program, which proved to be his gateway to a career in the military.

His service in Vietnam, West Germany, and South Korea would earn him a total of 11 decorations, including a Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Soldier’s Medal, and Legion of Merit. However, Powell’s superior performance during military missions could only be matched by his astuteness in the halls of Washington that would earn him respect and recognition among powerful politicians.

The pinnacle of his military career came in 1991 when he became chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff during the Gulf War. Ten years later he would return to the Middle East, but on a different mission. This time, he was to command American foreign policy through the front lines of diplomacy in the war on terror.

While the country was undergoing some of the most pressing times in history, he was making ties with key allies in the Middle East to fight the controversy as war in Iraq

The straightforward and honest manner, which characterized his years in the American spotlight, shined through during his speech as he described his transition into retirement. One of his first shocks came when he took a commercial flight from New York to Washington D.C., and was forced to endure his speech as he described his transition into retirement. One of his first shocks came when he took a commercial flight from New York to Washington D.C., and was forced to endure a different mission. This time, he was to command American foreign policy through the front lines of diplomacy in the war on terror.

The front line of United States policy to the world during his time in Washington was one of an African-American who came from a family of Jamaican immigrants in the South Bronx. His intelligence and perseverance allowed him to ascend to the highest offices in both Washington and the military. General Powell made it clear that the America he envisioned would not lose its fundamental elements.

“This is the same America that welcomed my parents here 80 years ago. As long as we don’t lose that, we will prevail.”

By Martin Fernandez ’08
In order to make this climate survey a success, we need your enthusiastic support and help with encouraging all students to complete this on-line survey. Your participation in this process will assist tremendously in helping to create a clear understanding of students' concerns—both positive and negative.

To learn more about the work of the College Diversity Roundtable and the activities planned for the 2007-08 academic year, please feel free to contact co-chairs Beth Olivares (bolv@mail.rochester.edu) and Norman Burnett (nbbt@mail.rochester.edu) or visit our website at http://www.rochester.edu/College/roundtable/.

As always, we look forward to your feedback regarding the newsletter and hope that the content will motivate students to become more involved in all aspects of campus life. Please enjoy the Chronicle and best of luck with your upcoming finals. Meliora!

Sylvia Guerra
Renea Faulknor
Phillip Dumouchel
Amanda Case
Alyea Canada
Jessalyn Ballerano
Lauren Yoder
Patricia Santos
Michael Russell
Journey Posyavin
Fabiola Paredes
Yordanosse Yeneneh

-- Peer and inter-group relations
~ Prior experience with regard to: race/ethnicity, gender, religion, political/social ideology and economic standing

orme of the areas covered in the climate survey will focus on the following:
- Prior experience with regard to: race/ethnicity, gender, religion, political/social ideology and economic standing
- Diversity programs on campus
- Peer and inter-group relations
- Classroom environment
- Expressions of innovativeness and prejudice
- Learning and developmental outcomes

The OMSA staff would like to congratulate you for a job well done and encourage you to keep up the good work.

Jennifer Franco '09
Sara Guo '09
Franchesa Guzman '09
Oscar Herrera '08
Joseph Hino
Porshea Lewis '08
Amanda Mack '08
Ashanti O'Steen '08
Christopher Palomino '08
Yahaira Quinones '08
Maria Rosa '09
Kwame Swain-Morris
Christina Wong
Shawna Worth '09

Christelle Domercant '08
Robert Duran '97
Oscar Figueroa '08

Jessica Chery '09 on her Ronald E. McNair Scholar summer research project in the Virology and Immunology Department at the University Of Rochester Medical Center.

Christelle Domercant '08 on her Ronald E. McNair Scholar summer research project when under the guidance of her mentor, Prof. Maryarin McCab.

-- Resources for students, faculty and staff alike.
- To provide students with timely information about opportunities and initiatives that support diversity and enhance the quality of life for undergraduate students.
- To focus its energies and resources on creating and maintaining a climate survey of the undergraduate student population, as well as a series of focus groups on a variety of topics. The survey will help us to come to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that face our student body in order to provide us with comprehensive self-assessment information that will guide us in making informed decisions about future programs and initiatives that support diversity.

During the 2007-08 academic year, the College continues to focus its energies and resources on creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive community for all students. In this spirit, I am delighted to announce that during the Spring 2008 semester, the College Diversity Roundtable (CDR) will be implementing a climate survey of the undergraduate student population, as well as a series of focus groups on a variety of topics. The survey will help us to come to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that face our student body in order to provide us with comprehensive self-assessment information that will guide us in making informed decisions about future programs and initiatives that support diversity.
Tthis past summer I lived in Bahrain, a country in the Persian Gulf, for a month and a half on my own where I interned with Shamil Bank, a leading Islamic commercial and investment bank. It was an incredibly and unforgettable summer. The offer for this amazing opportunity originated in December of last year through a friend who works in the banking field in Europe and the Middle East, whom I have known since my junior year in high school. Since then, I have continuously kept in contact with him and I consider him my mentor. He is the person who advises, guides, and motivates me in my educational and professional paths. I want to strongly emphasize that it is essential to keep in touch and follow up with all the people you meet in life and not to lose contact with them. This was certainly significant in developing the great friendship and connection that I have with my mentor.

Meanwhile, back at the University of Rochester for the spring semester I continued to stay connected with my mentor as the plans for my summer developed. Although I received other internship offers from banks back at home in New York City, the opportunity in the Middle East was the one that I desired the most. About a week before leaving Rochester for the summer, I received the great news that my internship in Bahrain was finally confirmed. At the end of May, I embarked on my adventure to the other side of the world, with no expectations, but an open heart and mind to all experiences.

In Shamil Bank, I worked with the Private Banking Department and the bank’s management team at the main branch in Bahrain’s capital, Manama. I worked from Sunday through Thursday, with my weekend being Friday and Saturday. This one of the most interesting cultural differences. The key aspect of my internship was completing intensive research and training on Islamic banking and finance practices. Studying and learning about this booming industry firsthand while being in the financial center of the Middle East was the most fascinating to me. The concept of Islamic banking and finance, which is founded upon Islamic principles, was also very interesting. In addition I studied the components and structure of investment products and completed rotations through several of the bank’s departments. I had the experience of being on the Central Bank of Bahrain and the Bahrain economy and researched local competitors in the Islamic banking and finance field. While at Shamil Bank, I also made many extraordinary friendships with the great group of individuals from different backgrounds that I worked with. I always looked forward to work each day and to interacting with everyone that I met. To this day, our friendships have remained strong despite the thousands of miles separating us.

Aside from the professional experience in Bahrain, it was also a priceless social and culturally-enriching one. I truly loved the country, the people, their friendliness, their warmth and hospitality, the diverse cultures, the delicious Middle-Eastern food, and everything magnificent that Bahrain has to offer. Every day was a new beginning for me, another opportunity to experience as much as I could from the wonderful Arab culture and learn about it. I did not let any misconceptions of any kind stand in my way of intermingling with those around me. During my stay, I felt that I was part of a family with the friends that surrounded me, despite the fact that I lived completely on my own. Since I had my own car, every day I made plans to go and explore a different exotic place in Bahrain and see as much as possible. Although I did not have a map, I ventured out on my own and always made it to where I wanted to go. Getting lost was all part of the experience and simply made it more exciting and memorable.

One of my most adventurous memories was when I visited the Tree of Life. I decided to visit this famous tree that grew and survived in the middle of the desert without any known source of water. On my way back, I decided to make a turn on the tiny single road in the middle of the desert to take pictures of the sand dunes, but I missed the road by a couple of inches and my car sank into the sand. Despite the breathtaking sunset on the horizon before me, I was completely alone in the desert with temperatures soaring above 110 degrees Fahrenheit and, not to mention, my car was stuck. After waiting for what seemed an eternity and unable to control my nerves, I was finally rescued. A truck was finally able to pull my car out of the sand with a rope and I was safely on the road again.

Being back on campus this fall semester has been a new beginning for me in many different aspects. To continue learning more about the Arab culture, I am now taking Arabic and want...
of my opportunity abroad to make the most of it and I believe this is what we should do with our educational, professional, and personal goals. As a Colombian, I am very proud to accomplish what I did on the other side of the world. We all have the potential to do so in our lives and grow as great individuals. Motivation and high aspirations for what we want to realize is the key to achievement.

**SUNSHINE ON THE STREET**

By Martin Fernandez ‘08

“Y ou are the dirt underneath the totem pole.” These were the words spoken to an audience of 316 anxious interns who were about to begin their internships on Wall Street. This was my first day as part of the Sponsors for Educational Opportunities (SEO) program. The SEO program, which aims to prepare minority undergraduates for successful careers in the financial industry, is one of the most competitive and demanding internship programs on Wall Street. Training begins long before you arrive at your first day on the job. From online finance courses and countless hours of Excel training, the program aims to prepare its interns with all the tools necessary to have a successful internship and a full-time offer at the end of the summer. Each student is required to bring The Wall Street Journal to every training session and they are expected to know their top stories of the day. In addition to the technical skills, they instill the values of discipline and hard work that are essential to survive the long hours, the tedious tasks, and the stresses that are typical of the internship. The direct, no-nonsense approach that mentors take towards the interns is similar to the work environment that is found in most investment banks.

After about two weeks of training with SEO at the beginning of the summer, I was ready to begin my ten-week internship at Barclays Capital. Armed with the SEO training and one semester of Finance and Accounting, I walked into a battlefield full of veterans of the financial industry making six- to seven-figure salaries. On my first day on the job, I was seated at a station with four computer screens and a telephone that had more buttons than the elevator in the Empire State Building.

My job, as described to me on my first day, consisted of “analyzing” companies in the airline industry making six- to seven-figure salaries. On my first day of the internship, I was to continue to do so during the remaining two years at the U of R. I came back extremely energized, enthusiastic, and motivated from my summer. What effectively worked for me to acquire and experience the most from my experience was having a firm believer that “life is 10% what happens to you, and 90% how you respond to it.” I respond to it in a positive way. I took charge.

**Joseph Hill, Ph.D.**

(Yale ‘07, Anthropology), the post-doctoral fellow at the Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African-American Studies at the University of Rochester, is an anthropologist studying religious knowledge and authority in mystical Islamic movements in West Africa. Hill’s dissertation is entitled “Divine Knowledge and Islamic Authority: Religious Specialization among Disciples of Basya Nias.” This publication discusses how several kinds of largely informal religious educations contribute to establishing centers of authority, governance, and globalization outside, beyond, and hidden to any nation-state. Hill is currently revising, for publication, several articles that develop the themes from his dissertation. One examines the use of discursive and practical paradoxes in mysticism to mediate, yet preserve, contradictions between competing principles and interests. Another discusses how private relationships of Sufi désormais in Senegalcomplicate the notion of secular state sovereignty. Joseph Hill’s current book project combines ethnographic methods with a study of Arabic manuscripts from private libraries, presenting Islamic specialists as organic intellectuals mediating between local African practices, nation-states, and larger Islamic literary traditions and communities. Before studying Islam, Hill studied musical performance in Senegal and this long interest in aural culture continues to inform his examination of how mystical practices such as chanting produce religious and communal experiences.

**Julia Rabig, Ph.D.**

(UPenn ‘07, History) is the post-doctoral fellow at the Center for the Study of African-American Politics. She recently earned her Ph.D. in history from the University of Pennsylvania. Julia’s dissertation, entitled “The Fixers: Devolution, Development, and Civil Society in Newark, New Jersey: 1960–1990,” surveys the city’s high rates of unemployment, dismal public health, intense segregation and failing public schools that led one major magazine to declare the city “the worst of all cities” in 1975.

While documenting the conditions that contributed to Newark’s decline, her research also explores the social and civic life that flourished before and after the 1967 riot, as civil rights activists, black power advocates, corporate executives, and religious institutions reconstituted urban civil society through a series of contentious alliances. By focusing on resident’s relationships with state and federal officials, she shows how grassroots experiments in housing and economic development cultivated new political constituencies and shaped the course of urban policy. Newark’s story, she believes, offers lessons for any nation-state. 09

**Ayana Weekley** is a doctoral candidate in the Feminist Studies Program in the Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies Department at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri in May 2002. Ayana’s dissertation, entitled “Now That’s a Good Girl: Discourses of African American Women, HIV/AIDS, and Respectability,” examines popular discursive representations of African American women and HIV/AIDS, beginning in the mid 1990’s. The thesis argues that this time period is particularly important for several reasons. First, during this time period, there was a perceived shift in the trajectory of the HIV/AIDS epidemic from affecting mostly gay men to impacting poor communities of color, often discussed as the “changing face of the epidemic.” Second, in the mid 1990’s, there was a marked rise in discourse of black gender and sexuality couched in issues of respectability and the need to rebuild black families with strong black male patriarchs at the lead. This concurrent shift in HIV/AIDS discourse and a reinvestment in black politics and social justice activism can be seen in the dynamic civic life that flourished before and after the 1967 riot, as civil rights activists, black power advocates, corporate executives, and religious institutions reconstituted urban civil society through a series of contentious alliances. By focusing on resident’s relationships with state and federal officials, she shows how grassroots experiments in housing and economic development cultivated new political constituencies and shaped the course of urban policy. Newark’s story, she believes, offers lessons for any nation-state. 09

**PRE-DOCTORATE FELLOW**

Joseph Hill teaches a Mauritanian digital photography class on the streets of Dakar.

FALL 2007 UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER OFFICE OF MINORITY STUDENT AFFAIRS
Terror and shock did not even begin to describe my feelings. It was not as if I could say “no,” or else my internship would go down the drain, especially since I needed to successfully complete (aka survive) the training for me to get my offshore oper- ate offshore license. After 12 hours of trying my best to survive, I successfully finished and got my license to operate offshore. My summer was filled with experiences such as this. If someone ever predicted what I had done this summer, I would have totally disagreed with them. However, my limits were pushed and I learned about my strengths and weaknesses. Overall, I found out just how much I loved doing what I did.

One of my favorite trainings was my last training to get my license to operate offshore. They sent me to a “water survival training” and everyone conveniently forgot to explain what it was. I showed up one morning to this huge facility outside of Houston, Texas, only to find out that they were literally going to teach me how to survive a helicopter crash or oil rig explosion. This meant one of two things: either someone was going to demonstrate everything and I would watch, or I was going to do everything and hope that I really did survive. The latter was true and this was bad news for me since I swim like a rock. The training was simple as my instructor said, “Paulina, we are just going to strap you up and throw you in that fake, plastic chopper you see in front of you. We will raise it up, dump you into the water while you are still strapped in, flip the chopper around, then you have to just simply get yourself out. Oh, by the way, you have about ten seconds to get out. And when you master this, we will have you do the same thing blind folded.”

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Second to this project, I created an auditing pro- gram to ensure that service companies that worked to support BP in the Gulf of Mexico were in compli- ance with the permits and regulations set by BP and government agencies. Another fun project was the Lolas Project, where I developed an effluent testing procedure for a brand new desalination unit that no one has ever built before. This desalination unit was specifically designed for a production facility that was expected to start producing by summer of 2008. This was an exciting project because no one had ever worked on what I was doing. Being able to develop an eff- fluent testing procedure for this mon- strous unit and having it work was very satisfying.

Simply put, I loved my experience this summer. What attracted me to the petroleum industry were the engineering challenges. The industry is hungry for new technologies that would help them operate in areas that were never economically feasible before. BP was a great company to work for and gave me an opportunity to work on real issues that impacted people and the economy. I always knew that whatever I was going to learn on this project was an honor and could not be a regular nine to five office job. I love working in the field, working with my hands, working on different projects, and having the ability to work in any part of the world I fancy. I enjoyed the adrenaline rush associated with drilling and pro- ducing oil. The training was intense.

One of my favorite trainings was my last training to get my license to operate offshore. They sent me to a “water survival training” and everyone conveniently forgot to explain what it was. I showed up one morning to this
Dr. Beth Oliviara was promoted to Assistant Dean for Diversity Initiatives for the College of Arts & Sciences and the School of Engineering at the University of Rochester. Beth’s new position recognizes her role in advising and mentoring a diverse array of students through the McNair Program and Kearns Center. Her further responsibilities include continuing her role as Co-Chair of the College Diversity Roundtable and serving as a member of the University’s Diversity and Inclusion Outreach Initiatives Committee. In addition, Beth oversees the College’s partnership with the Merchants of Hope. An Education in Entrepreneurship project at Thomas Jefferson High School, and our new Upward Bound projects that were awarded $2 million from the United States Department of Education for high school students. She is also involved in making recommendations to the Dean regarding policies and programming that would enhance the diversity of the College’s curricular and co-curricular offerings, as well as ensure an inclusive, friendly environment for all students.

Anthony Plonszynski ’06 ’07 (W) is an Academic Advisor for the McNair Program and Kearns Center. Anthony works as a counselor for students who are seeking to pursue graduate degrees in any discipline and work in the areas of science and engineering. Anthony is also the program liaison for the Merchants of Hope. In addition, Anthony works with the Office of Admissions to host the Youth Lifeline America, Free Football and Life Skills Camp at the UR.

Charlana Simmons ’02 ’04 is an Educational Coordinator for the McNair Program and Kearns Center. For both of the programs, she is responsible for recruiting and working with students on the graduate school application process. She also coordinates the tutoring program for the Thomas Jefferson High School students in the Merchants of Hope program. Additionally, she creates and updates publications for the McNair Program and Kearns Center and represents both programs in speaking and presentation engagements. Charlana currently attends the Margaret Warner School of Education and Human Development. She is studying to complete a doctorate in Education with a concentration in Teaching and Curriculum.

Monique “Nikki” Terry ’02 is an Academic Advisor for The College Center for Academic Support (CCAS). Nikki works with all undergraduates in the College, those pursuing degrees in Arts and Sciences, as well as those majoring in Engineering. She also assists with Orientation and some special programs related to Engineering such as the 2007 FIRST LEGO LEAGUE (FLL) Power Puzzle Championship Tournament. FLL is an exciting international robotics program that ignites an enthusiasm for discovery, science, and technology for children between the ages of 9 to 14. Please contact her at mterry@ur.rochester.edu if you would like to become a volunteer!

Ghislaine Radegonde-Eison has been promoted to the position of Program Manager. Currently, her goals for the Institute are to develop a communication network of colleges, nationally and internationally, that offer African and African-American studies courses and programming. Ghislaine serves as a liaison to pre- and post-doctoral fellows during their application process and during their academic stay at the University. She manages the Institute’s administrative and financial aspects, finalizes plans, including work-in-progress seminars of pre- and post-doctoral fellows and faculty for Institute sponsored lectures. The Institute’s programming continues to expand under the leadership of Jeffrey Tucker and is assisted by Gail Figgins, who assures that all Institute operations run smoothly. Ghislaine is pursuing her master’s degree in Human Development at the Warner School.

Gail L. Figgins recently joined the Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African-American Studies as their Secretary. Her primary responsibility is providing organizational and administrative support. Gail’s most recent project at the institute “Religious Cultures of the African Diaspora: New Trajectories of Inquiry” involves a speaker series featuring lectures, research and a roundtable discussions on topics of the African diasporas.