Passport to Africa celebrates 13 years of providing educational and cultural enrichment programs

Africa, the second largest continent in the world where 10th of the world’s population resides and about one thousand indigenous languages spoken, is perhaps, one of the most misunderstood regions of the world. To dispel the myths, the School of Continuing Education and Workforce Development in collaboration with the International Council, the United African Organization (UAOC) and the Alleluia an African Centered Village held the 13th Annual Passport to Africa to help participants understand Africa’s contribution to the world. The program met one of the primary functions of a community college by offering continuing education programs through seminars, workshops or lectures that center on educational and cultural enrichment for the community.

On behalf of the United African Community Organizations (UAOC) and the National African Organizations (NAO), I wish to thank and congratulate Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) and the International Council for yet another superb Passport to Africa event under the able leadership of Dean David C. Butty,” said Saubu Johan, President of UAOC. “Each of these 13 years has brought great significance and unforgettable memories which will remain indelible in our minds. Each Passport to Africa has its own significance for us as a community and this year is no exception. We have, as a community, upon the completion of this year’s marvelous event, agreed that, the 2015 Passport to Africa is the most organized, orchestrated, and captured every member of the audience’s attention to the fullest. The entire program’s flow was seamlessly on point and every performance, erudite and meaningfully educational. The wealth that every audience member left with, doubtlessly, in our humble opinion, is the educational values embedded in each segment of the program regarding the continent of Africa and her people. “The music and dance of Africa allow participants to appreciate the numerous countries and the rich cultures these represent. Through these modes of communication, expression, participants are able to recognize, compare and contrast the distinctions between African cultural institutions and the diversity of cultures in Africa.

“We the Okachamnu dance group of Michigan wish to use this medium to express our profound thanks to you and WCCCD for inviting us to perform for the college during Passport to Africa,” said Dr. Raphael Okonkwo, President of the Okachamnu Group in Michigan.

“The children had a lot of fun performing and meeting new people and learning new things about their home land. Thanks to you, the children have this profound sense of belonging now and are now talking about the event next year. The African marketplace resembled open markets in many African cities. “Thank you for allowing me to be a vendor. I hope to see you again in 2016,” a vendor wrote.

Kristina Borch and Brennan, two U.S. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Uganda and Kenya respectively, and presented on their experiences in Africa had this to say: “We enjoyed ourselves at the event. We hope all of us sparked the interest of even more students and guests on all aspects of Africa.”
MEET

Lubna Khachich is one of our international students from Lebanon who currently serves as the President of the International Student Organization (ISO) here at the District. The ISO supports and services the social and programmatic needs of international students and students interested in global perspectives. The group engages the WCCCD community through hosting programs and events celebrating our diverse cultural backgrounds. The students also support one another by facilitating workshops that address the unique challenges international students face.

Lubna is from one of the 19 countries our international students represent and she shares her intent and experience below:

“I chose Wayne County Community College District because I heard about the excellence and high standard of the Nursing program that the College offers. Since I joined the College in 2014, I have been exposed to good education and I strongly believe that my goal will be achieved at WCCCD.”

“I heard about the excellence and high standard of the Nursing program that the College (WCCCD) offers....”

Khachich, WCCCD Student
PONDERING ON AMERICAN ENGLISH

Lilian Gitau

There is a common joke in my country that talks about a candidate who was sitting for an English Exam. He could not remember the past tense of the word “think”, so he was talking to his friends how the question was so difficult. He said “I thought and thought and thought... I ended up writing “thanked.”

My first English class proved different to the English learnt from my home country. As an international student, I had to experience the feeling of being rejected, being laughed at by my professor and my fellow students. My accent amused everyone in the oral communication class. Back in my mind, I knew I had the authority of speaking grammatically correct English. I had not realized that American English and British English are different. I had to stop using “I beg your pardon sir or madam” when I could not be understood. I found the words used by Americans like “what’s that? What did you say? Say that again? very rude and disrespectful.

International students are not familiar with the American English accent; this result is not surprising at all. This is because most of the international students usually learn British English, which is a little different from the American English in term of stress, intonations and pronunciations.

Being from Kenya, the education system requires all students to learn English as the official language and Swahili as the national language. Students are also required to learn foreign languages that include French, German, Spanish, Arabic and Latin. On top of all the school curriculum requirements, we have our mother languages. I consider this as languages and not dialects because they have different intonations and pronunciations as well as vowels and alphabets. In the elementary school, one is required to learn the mother language, which is one of the spoken languages from the 42 tribes of Kenya. No one tribe can understand each other.

As an international student, my dilemma comes when I have to think in my mother language, “Kikuyu”, translate in Swahili, then translate it in British English and lastly in American English. How I wish I could just think in American English. According to research, English is one of the world’s hardest languages to learn. I am privileged to have improved in American English among other languages.

Wayne County Community College has helped me pursue my career goals. I am honored to have met a diverse international office staff and students who have offered a lot of help and support. This has made my life easy. I sincerely appreciate all the support given.
**Form I-94 Automation**

In an attempt to streamline the admission process, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) started implementing the automated version of Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, at air and sea ports of entry. Foreign travelers entering the United States at air or sea ports of entry will be able to access their electronic Form I-94 by visiting www.cbp.gov/I94. Upon inspection at the point of entry, CBP will give foreign travelers a tear sheet with instructions on how to look up their electronic Form I-94 on CBP’s website. From this website, they can print out their Form I-94 in paper format. For more information regarding CBP’s I-94 automation or to access your electronic Form I-94, please see CBP’s News Release or visit their website at www.cbp.gov/I94. For more information on USCIS forms and procedures, please visit www.uscis.gov or call our toll-free National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.

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**Electronic Immigration System (ELIS)**

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) ELIS is a user-friendly system created to streamline the application process for immigration benefits. It allows eligible foreign exchange students (in the case of Wayne County Community College District – F1 Students) to e-file a Form I-539 application to extend, change or reinstate their nonimmigrant status. These answers should give Designated School Officials (DSO) and foreign exchange students a better understanding of USCIS ELIS and how USCIS handles the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Form I-20, the Arrival-Departure Record Form I-94, and other documents. For more information, visit our website at http://www.wcccd.edu/students/inter_students.htm

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**International Education Week (IEW)**

International Education Week (IEW) is Wayne County Community College District’s opportunity to celebrate the myriad of global dimensions as well as the benefits of international education and related experiences, broadly defined — from study abroad to international perspectives within the District, both in and out of the classroom.

The International Programs office in collaboration with the International Education Committee coordinates IEW to generate enthusiasm, broaden horizons, encourage new ideas and spark interesting dialogues within the District. With a variety of events to promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation in our community, participation in international education is vital to the success of WCCCD’s mission to empower individuals, businesses and communities to achieve their goals through excellent accessible sevices, culturally diverse experiences and globally competitive higher education and career advancement programs.

International Education Week is a joint initiative of the U.S. Departments of State and Education. It was first held in 2000 and today is celebrated in more than 100 countries worldwide. The next International Education Week is scheduled for November 11-15, 2013.
According to Global Detroit, Metro Detroit has the world’s largest concentration of Albanians outside of Europe. While Macomb county has the highest current concentration of Albanian immigrants locally we have seen a few Albanian students come through our doors, one such student is Alda Jance, who writes the following about why she came to WCCCD and her experiences thus far.

“I chose WCCCD because it gives me the best value for my money. It has great teachers who teach at the level of standard four year college. The student-teacher ratio is small giving me greater access to my professors. The quality of education is high and the school fee is low. I also chose WCCCD because of its student diversity. I love meeting new people from different parts of the world. I am pursuing associate of science in preparation for a degree in Clinical Laboratory Science at a four year college. I became interested in CLS after taking a Biology class which included the lab. I had a very interesting time in the lab and decided that I wouldn’t mind working in a lab for a living. I have been to the United States before for my High School Education. I am well aware of the high standard of education in this country. I also chose the United States so as to have opportunity to expand my network of people and friends. I heard about WCCCD from my cousins living in the United States. I told them I wanted to get great education in the U.S without spending too much money and WCCCD was recommended to me. The school structure and the students interest me. I am free to choose from five campuses and the class time ranges from morning classes to evening classes. It gives me the flexibility to make a schedule that works for me. The students of WCCCD are as different as you get. Meeting people of different nationalities and experiences is very rewarding to me. My most immediate future goal is to get my Associate Degree from WCCCD and transfer to a four year college to get my Bachelors in CLS.”

International Students Attended a Global Conference held in Detroit

At WCCCD, the educational experience of our students is enriched by the presence of students from around the world. They bring new perspectives, cultures and languages to our campuses and communities. Together with study-abroad opportunities, this international exposure provides students the global awareness that many employers demand as they face the increasingly global competitive trade and investment landscape. International students have an equally important impact off-campus. According to the 2014 Open Doors Report, the foreign students expenditure in the state of Michigan is about $926.9 million. On Friday, four of our international students joined hundreds of others for a conference organized by Global Talent Retention Initiative of Michigan (GTRI), an East Lansing organization founded to retain international student talent as a strategy for economic growth in the United States. The conference featured resume and cover letter writing, H-1B (work visa) application process, strategies for securing jobs in the United States, and industry-specific questions and answers sessions.
For two consecutive years, the Michigan Chronicle has chosen members of Wayne County Community College District’s International Council – Omobonike Odegbami (2014) and Mawine Diggs (2015) as Women of Excellence. These women now join a group of 350 of Southeast Michigan’s most-influential women.

Omobonike Odegbami currently serves as the Vice Chancellor of International Programs and Mawine Diggs is the Campus President/Chief Academic Officer of the Eastern Campus.

The Michigan Chronicle Women of Excellence Awards celebrate local African-American women who inspire others through their vision, leadership, exceptional achievements and participation in community service. The women who are chosen for this award are champions of economic empowerment, the backbone of religious and educational organizations and the driving forces in politics and community service in southeast Michigan. The Michigan Chronicle is one of the region’s oldest, most respected African-American newspapers.

SERVICE IN THE CITY

The Wayne County Community College District’s International Student Organization joined the Detroit Young Professionals for a community service program called “Service in the City: Share Your Love @ Covenant House” on February 14, 2015 in recognition of Valentine’s Day. The international students pledged to engage in community service this school year and the Detroit Covenant House was their first project where they assisted the residents with their Assisted Daily Living (ADL) chores. The Covenant House provides shelter, educational and vocational programs, as well as other support services, to help area youth overcome hurdles such as homelessness, unemployment, inadequate education, violence, drugs, and gangs.
VINCENT WHO?
The International Programs and Global Partnerships office in partnership with the Eastern Campus hosted “Vincent Who?”, a documentary about Vincent Chin. Chin was the young Chinese American man who was brutally killed in 1982 in a hate crime by out-of-work Detroit autoworkers who blamed the Japanese auto industry for their woes. After getting into a fight with Chin, who was celebrating his upcoming wedding, in a strip club, two men beat him with a baseball bat on June 15. He died four days later of his injuries. His last words before slipping into a coma were, “It’s not fair.”

According to the “Vincent Who” website, VINCENT WHO? explores this important legacy through interviews with the key players at the time as well as a whole new generation of activists whose lives were impacted by Vincent Chin. It also looks at the case in relation to the larger narrative of Asian American history, in such events as Chinese Exclusion, Japanese American Internment in WWII, the 1992 L.A. Riots, anti-Asian hate crimes, and post-9/11 racial profiling.

GHEBREBRHAN OGUBAZGHI
Professor Ghebrebrhan Ogubazghi, who has worked as a researcher and educator in Africa for more than 30 years, shares his experiences in conducting research under difficult conditions. He presented a brief description of seismic monitoring in eastern and southern Africa. Dr. Ogubazghi covered the status of research infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa, challenges of conducting research in sub-Saharan Africa, innovative ways of

Who is an International Student?
With the introduction of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), it has become a bit confusing to many as to who is considered an international student. Wayne County Community College District is authorized under Federal Law to enroll nonimmigrant students. For the District, an international student is a student that has left his or her country, or territory of origin, and moved to the United States with the singular objective of studying. These students are here with an F1 (Student) Visa and are supported through the International Programs office for admission, retention, and compliance. The District also has foreign students who are non-citizens enrolled in classes but who have not necessarily crossed a border to study. These students may be permanent residents, students on other types of visa, or undocumented students. Citizenship, or lack thereof, is commonly used as a defining characteristic of an international student but it is important to know the difference so that we can appropriately guide the students to the office where they can be assisted. Tuition for all students (except international students as defined above) at Wayne County Community College District is based on residency at the time of registration.
Hi, my name is Halima Mohiuddin; I migrated to Detroit from Pakistan in 1999. I am currently part of the Fiscal Accountability Operations Team at WCCCD, an institution serving an extensively diverse student body from all over the globe. Modern technology has shrunk the world into a global village making it inevitable to ignore the increasing cultural diversity in the society. It has become critically important for large number of people to work together in order to build communities that are powerful enough to attain significant change. The International Council at WCCCD encourages cultural groups from diverse backgrounds to join forces, and become more effective in reaching common goals by utilizing their unique strengths and appreciating their differences.

The International Council tirelessly gears its efforts to creating awareness and bridging cultural gaps through several programs and events enriching community life throughout the year. Promoting non-mainstream diverse groups into the center of civic activity facilitates coherence and also helps prevention of racial and ethnic divisions.

Intercultural competency through learning and life experiences is important for success in our complex heterogeneous world. International Council itself is a reflection of true global diversity and appreciates the significance of pluralism and mutual understanding. I am humbled to be a part of the International Council and hope to serve the community alongside the team of highly seasoned professionals. I have an MBA in Finance & Banking from Lahore School of Economics and another one concentrated in MIS from Davenport University. I am also pursuing a third Masters in Healthcare Management also from Davenport University. I have been involved in devising and marketing executive development programs for prestigious organizations like The World Bank, Nestle, and P&G along with several other S&P 500 corporations in South East Asia. WCCCD is the absolute best platform for me to contribute towards rebuilding the community because of its impressive track record of equipping our youth with the knowledge and resources they need to thrive in life. I hope to make significant contributions in materializing the WCCCD vision in the future.
## Summer 2015 Offerings

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For more information, please call 313-496-2759