The Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Pastor Emeritus of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago posed with members of the International Council. Rev. Wright visited Wayne County Community College District where he spoke at the Downtown Campus as part of the Global Conversations Series. He addressed students and community members on his global perspective such as cultural excursion through the art, inclusion and diversity; and the tolerance of other cultures. Rev. Dr. Wright is known for his global initiatives to Africa, the Caribbean and Brazil, and his lectures have helped many travelers make the connection between their faith, history and heritage.
Study Abroad to Rome, Italy

For art lovers and curators, Rome holds the key to the paintbrush. It is the city where Michelangelo, Raphael, and other world renowned artists whose creations are considered among the greatest works of art humankind ever created. It is a city of art history, and where most go to brush up on their ideas of architectural designs. The arts, the ancient ruins, and everything that Rome has to offer moved Tracey Jackson to describe her participation in the Wayne County Community College District’s (WCCCD) recent study abroad trip to Rome, Italy, as one that she will never forget, and a trip she will talk about for years to come.

She said during the trip her fellow WCCCD schoolmates became her family away from home and she learned to appreciate her own country more now that she was in a foreign country. “Although it was the rainy season in Rome, the rain did not put a damper on this wondrous educational experience of my lifetime! It was almost as if it were a dream and, when I reflect back on my pictures/videos of the beautiful sites we visited, I still am not quite ready to awaken,” Jackson said.

Jackson was one of 32 students from WCCCD who spent a week of intensive educational and cultural study in Rome, Italy, as part of the District’s study abroad program. WCCCD students have visited and studied in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, The United Kingdom (England), France, Ghana, West Africa, Greece, and India. The trip to Rome was made possible through an educational partnership with Sapienza University, one of Rome’s oldest institutions of higher learning.

“My trip to Rome has enlightened me in so many ways and has afforded me the opportunity to not only see the world in a broader sense but to also change my own world, and my way of thinking as it relates to other cultures. Even though I was not very fluent in the language, I do know that “smiling is certainly universal” and I did a lot of that,” Jackson added.

Victoria S. Loomis said the city and its people captured her enthusiasm. “We walked for hours and hours. It was an unbelievable opportunity to get the real “feel” of Rome. Looking in shop windows, peering through restaurant doors, passing natives on the streets, seeing the very fountains that define Rome, put me in a frame of mind which I have never experienced before. I actually felt that we had turned back the clock and lived a slice of life before Christ. Although there are many other fascinating places and events, I appreciated being able to study Italian. The classes were intensive but they enabled me to have some sort of a working knowledge and basic communication. We learned an awful lot in only one week. I know that the three coins I tossed into the Trevi Fountain assure that I will return. I will not only cherish this venture, I already long to repeat it. Thank you WCCCD for this gift. I will treasure it always.”

For Guadalupe Martinez, the art and culture combined have left him with an impressive memory. “The art as well as the culture was a major thing that I took away from the trip,” said Martinez. “The whole city itself was a piece of artwork, from the ancient ruins to the modern look of some buildings and transit systems. Rome in any light could be painted and look amazing, with all the fountains, the gardens as well as Spanish Steps and the Coliseum.”
Wayne County Community College District’s School of Continuing Education in partnership with The Michigan Citizen, Detroit Public Schools, United African Community Organization (UACO) and the Alkebulan Village, this year celebrated the ninth year of Passport to Africa when more than 2,000 people converged at the Downtown Campus for a day of music, singing, dancing, and storytelling and to browse the African marketplace. The event began with the parade of elders, clad in traditional African performances of the libation ceremony; a ceremony designed to ask the ancestors for their blessing; and to remember those that have gone on before. The libation ceremony unites the past with the present, acknowledging the ancestors’ contributions to the future, and is celebrated and performed by many countries in Africa.

Sheryl Jones, Director of the Office of History, Society and Culture, Detroit Public Schools said, “The Ninth Annual Passport to Africa event... was an overwhelming success. Our students and teachers greatly benefited from the immersion in African culture. Many things went very well, to name a few: your staff was efficient in assisting students to the busses, and eating all the wonderful Taste of Africa food that was delicious. The performances were inspiring and entertaining, the souvenir bags filled with educational information, a puzzle and snacks were perfect and your security personnel were professional and courteous. We are most appreciative of our partnership with Wayne County Community College District and look forward to future collaboration." Passport to Africa has always been a teaching resource, where the Downtown campus comes alive with the sights, sounds and majesty of Africa. Participants learn about the history and culture of Africa and listen to native Africans share stories of their homeland, past and present. The annual event is offered at no cost and is open to the public.

A partnership the University of Ghana is the latest among more than eight such collaborations between Wayne County Community College District and foreign counterparts. The long-term partnership with the University of Ghana in West Africa will focus on socio-economic issues facing Ghana and the United States.

Rev. Jim Holley and WCCCD faculty member, Asabigi Kanzoin, spearheaded the effort. We hope this is an opportunity for students from both institutions to learn how Ghananians understand international issues and how those perspectives differ from American perspectives.

As part of the agreement, both institutions will promote the development of joint studies, research and training activities, and other educational programs of mutual interest.
Home Away from Home

Alice Nalubamba

My time at Wayne County Community College District really inspired me in so many ways and helped me get to know a lot of people. I am originally from Zambia a country located south of Africa. I came to Wayne County Community College District in 2008 to pursue a career in Nursing. My experience at WCCCD has been one that I will never forget. As an international student I got to meet a lot of people from different countries as well as learn a few things about their culture. As I pursued my educational goals I realized that choosing Wayne County Community College District as my college was one of the best decisions that I ever made. The Instructors at the college are wonderful, inspiring and helpful people, who are always willing to help students excel academically. I am highly satisfied with my decision to study at WCCCD and count it as a privilege to be here.

Unlike most of my fellow students, I also got the opportunity of working with the Vice Chancellor, Ms. Omobonike Odegbami and other staff members from the International and Global Partnership Programs at Wayne County Community College District. I had the best time helping other students like me get through their first year of college as I understood how challenging it was for them to adapt to a culturally and academically different environment. The International and Global Partnership Programs' office was a good source of information that helped me make the transition into academic and cultural life in the United States.

My educational goals had a few bumps along the way but that never stopped me from going for what I have always wanted to do. As many other students know that it’s not easy being in school because one is faced with a lot of challenges starting from class schedules to class assignments, exams, to mention but a few. But who said that it was going to be easy? It takes a lot of determination and self-discipline to be successful in school. I am thankful to everybody that helped me on my way up and will always be thankful to Wayne County Community College District as my college was one of the best decisions that I ever made. The Instructors at the college are wonderful, inspiring and helpful people, who are always willing to help students excel academically. I am highly satisfied with my decision to study at WCCCD and count it as a privilege to be here.

Farwell to WCCCD

Modupe Anifowoshe

My fellow international students of Wayne County Community College District, it’s been an honor serving as the President of Wayne County Community College District International Student Association for the past year. Being the president and also being an intern in the office of the Vice Chancellor of International Programs and Global Partnership has given me a lot of opportunity to meet people from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, participate and organize various cultural and educational programs and also granted me the opportunity to work with well rounded individuals and professionals.

Some changes I have seen taking place this year alone have been the partnerships and associations that have been formed with various campus constituencies. I strongly encourage all international students to serve as ambassadors for WCCCD in the international arena and be politically aware of issues affecting international students in this country.

This is a bittersweet moment for me as I am excited about the new adventures and opportunities I will be facing however, at the end of this semester; I will be receiving my Associate Degree in Liberal Arts and will be continuing my educational journey as a Psychology major at Western Michigan University. I wish the next President a successful term and thank the International Education Committee members, staff in the International Programs and Global Partnership offices, the entire Student Services staff, Mrs Omobonike Odegbami for being a great mentor and Dr. Curtis Ivery for the support given to me.

International Students Luncheon

In Spring 2011, the International Programs and Global Partnership office in collaboration with the International Education Council at Wayne County Community College District established an International Student Mentoring Program where members of the International Education Council served as mentors to international students assigned to them by the Vice Chancellor of International Programs and Global Partnership.

The purpose of the International Student Ambassador program is to introduce an immediate support network for incoming international students before they have had the opportunity to build friendships within their own peer group. This will help them get to know the ropes of life at WCCCD, culturally and academically, so that they have an enhanced experience and are better enabled to achieve their full academic potential.

Each mentor has been assigned at least two international students. It is important for the International Student Ambassador mentors to maintain some level of contact with the students assigned to him/her. Of course students are free to call their Mentor as often as they choose.

However, it is anticipated that only in cases where the student is experiencing ongoing difficulties will this occur.

In essence, the International Student Ambassador Program at WCCCD is designed to help new international students settle into college life by providing signposting and assistance through support.