Times of Opportunity
The Official Newsletter of the Educational Opportunity Program at SUNY New Paltz

EOP Students Return to the Headlines!

Student Profile: Wendy Rodriguez

by Chris Whitaker

Wendy Rodriguez is a role model for how to become an involved and accomplished student leader. She is currently a senior in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at SUNY New Paltz with a major in Finance. Wendy moved from the Dominican Republic to the Bronx when she was eight years old. Later, she studied drama at Talented Unlimited High School in the Upper East Side of Manhattan where she was involved in many extra-curricular activities. "I've always been involved in something since I've been in school. It helps me to stay busy... and mature," said Rodriguez. Her involvement has continued with her education at SUNY New Paltz. Below are some of the things she has participated in and hopefully these may inspire some of our readers to try them out also.

In the past two years, Wendy has worked in Residence Life first as a Resident Assistant (RA) and then as a Community Development Assistant (CDA) in which she was concerned primarily with the safety and maintenance of the building for Biever Hall. Working for Residence Life was a challenge that demanded more of her than she expected at first. Wendy felt she benefitted the most from the intense training provided and from working with other people. Rodriguez said, "People came to me for help and answers and looked to me as a resource. This kind of responsibility really helped me to grow from the experience."

Wendy's student leadership skills have been furthered by her participation in the Model New York State Senate Session developed by the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force. Each year, a group of Latino students from CUNY and SUNY campuses meet in Albany to debate a legislative issue. The topic for 2001 was campaign finance reform. "It helped widen my horizons and to see how money is distributed to the candidates. Some politicians have their own money and this was about making the electoral playing field more level," explained Rodriguez. Besides learning about what it is like to be a New York State legislator, Wendy also had the opportunity to meet NYS Assemblyman Roberto Ramirez in New York City and to hear NYS Assemblywoman Carmen Arroyo in Albany at a formal dinner. Rodriguez observed, "They were very encouraging and proud of what we were doing..." Assemblyman Ramirez gave us the message (continued on page 2)
The Light Paintings of Dai-Rong Zheng

by Sandra Faerman

Dai-Rong Zheng graduated from SUNY New Paltz in May of 1999 with a BFA in Fine and Performing Arts/Photography. His unique form of art, called Light Painting, combines both painting and photography and was developed over time. Dai-Rong's journey began far away in Fuchow, China, a small farming village where he was born. In this tiny village, everyone knew everybody else and no one owned a television, a telephone, or a car. There were only farms and mountains and beautiful rivers. Here, people worshipped their ancestors. Dai-Rong's maternal grandfather was an oracle, a prophet who could tell people things about themselves and their future. In keeping with his culture, Dai-Rong connects past to present by combining the two mediums of drawing and painting.

Dai-Rong left his village in 1982 when he was eight years old and arrived in the Bronx with his mother and two sisters. Eventually, the family settled in Chinatown where Dai-Rong's artistic talents were discovered in junior high school. A teacher showed his drawings to a guidance counselor, Maria Ting. Ms. Ting happened to have a BA in Art and an MA in Counseling and knew that his artwork was special. Ms. Ting got to know Dai-Rong and suggested he attend a special school for art, the Graphic Communications Art High School in Manhattan. Up to this point, Dai-Rong's medium had been drawing. Then he was accidentally placed into a photography class where he developed his first picture. He said he saw the whole landscape and the reality of what he had shot earlier: a single piece of white paper became a whole new world. It was at that moment that Dai-Rong decided to become a photographer.

Dai-Rong won many awards while in high school. But after a while, he became less interested in taking pictures and more focused on creating them - thus his special technique. Maria Ting turned out to be an important influence in Dai-Rong's life and art. Up until the time they met, he enjoyed drawing but did not think of himself as a talented artist.

The inspiration for Dai-Rong's art came from wanting to find out who his father was. A few years after Dai-Rong arrived in the United States, his father became ill and died a short time later. Dai-Rong never got a chance to know him well. He worked on his Light Painting technique for six or seven years in an effort to learn more about his father. Dai-Rong said, "My Light Painting images are the combination of photography and painting existing in the same dimension. I appreciate the expressiveness in painting and do not separate painting from photography. Photography is a form of art that enables me to express the beauty of one's body, thought, and unlimited movement."

Dai-Rong came to the SUNY New Paltz Educational Opportunity Program as a transfer student from Mohawk Valley Community College in the fall of 1995, to pursue a major in Art Studio. He found that EOP offered the resources to help him meet the academic challenges presented by doing college level work in a second language. "SUNY New Paltz provided me with the opportunity to achieve my goals," (continued on page 3)
Study Abroad in India

by Pavarthi Sankar

Greetings Friends,
The past weeks since my return have been quite difficult for me. My three-month stay in India went by so fast I cannot even believe it is over. I met many admirable people during this trip and I don’t think I would exchange anything for the time I spent in India. I have learned a lot about others and myself through this journey. I will always cherish these memories for the rest of my life.

I came to India with a different view on life than the one I have now. Even though I spent the first twelve years of my life in India, I did not experience anything on my own. The only India I knew about was through the eyes of my parents. Thus, it was very exciting for me to come back to my motherland and undergo it all by myself. But the excitement faded somewhat when I saw the power cuts, poverty, potholes, and pavement dwellers. I have learned to value my life more since this trip.

One of the other reasons I chose to go to India was because the International Partnership for Service-Learning Program offers a unique opportunity not only to study abroad, but also to do service at the same time. "Service is the rent you pay for the space you occupy" is a saying that I believe in very strongly. Service is not something we do just to feel good about ourselves. It is about how we choose to live, care about others, and face issues in the global community.

After reaching Calcutta, we went to Shishu Bhavan, Mother Teresa’s home for handicapped children. It broke my heart to see the children there. Some of them were just sitting on their beds watching the visitors come and go to make the time pass. A few were playing with a dirty piece of toy that they all shared. Seeing this brought memories from my own childhood to me and I realized I’ve had it so much better than millions of children around the world. I shouldn’t be upset that I didn’t get every dress or toy I wanted. I should cherish my childhood as a gift from God. The children at Shishu Bhavan didn’t have any love or any material belongings. I chose not to do my service there because I knew I was not strong enough to work with children in that condition.

I decided to do my service at (continued on page 4)
Everything at Kalighat was hand done which was something I had to get used too.

Most of the patients didn’t speak or understand a bit of English. One thing I learned was that even without speaking the same language, I was still helping them. They just wanted someone to sit with them and hold their hands or smile at them. They always had a beautiful smile when they saw me, even if they were feeling physically ill or having a very bad day.

"Service is not something we do just to feel good about ourselves. It is about how we choose to live, care about others, and face issues in the global community."

—Parvathy Sankar

I started to love service more and more and I’d go in to do service even in the afternoons and stay there until I had to get to classes. My jobs varied from laundry, washing dishes, cleaning patients with diarrhea, giving baths, handing out medicine, shaving heads, cutting nails, and washing the floor. All these jobs can be accomplished by an able-bodied person and I learned to humble myself through this experience.

One day when I was walking in central Calcutta, I was stopped by a ten-year-old boy and his little sister. “Sister you buy rice” the boy said as they looked up at me. I checked my pockets and realized that I only had enough money to buy myself a metro ticket home. I told the children that I could not help them today. They both grabbed hold of my legs and pleaded with me to help them. I smiled and told them that I would be able to help them tomorrow. As I walked away, the boy ran to catch up to me and threw his arms around my waist. He told me that if I would buy food for them, his little sister would have sex with me. I was shocked by what this boy said so I quickly pushed him away and glared at him. It was so sad just to look at his face again. Who knows how many times this boy has had to suffer such shame and humiliation in order to feed himself and his little sister? I emptied my pockets of everything I had and gave it to them and then I prayed to god to protect these two little children. My heart was broken to see so many children suffer in the streets of Calcutta this way. Since that day, I took those two children out to eat lunch with me for the rest of my time in Calcutta. I knew that feeding these children everyday would not put a hole in my budget but could fill two empty stomachs.

When I first applied for the International Partnership for Service-Learning Program, I was annoyed and worried about the fact that I would have to do half a day of services. I remember talking with my friends from home about how horrible it would be for me to do service for three months. It is very odd how doing service ended up being the thing I loved the best. Now that my three months are over, I wish I could have stayed longer. I would love to go back to Calcutta and do some more service in the future. I have learned to give to the poor during this excursion. Hopefully, now that I’m back home I will not close the heart that I have opened for the poor.

Love, Parvathy Sankar
EOP Sophomore
EOP Involvement in AMP/C-Step Research

Eight EOP students are involved in scientific research with the following faculty mentors through the Alliance for Minority Participation/Collegiate Science and Technology Program (AMP/C-Step) Summer Research Program 2002: Malik Hirani and Raymond Ransome with Dr. Yaser Khalifa, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering; Joel Diaz with Dr. Tom Nolen, Department of Biology; Sandy Perez with Dr. John Harrington, Dean, School of Physical Science and Engineering; Emmanuel Pena and Kimberly Smith with Dr. Denis Moran and Dr. Teresa Snyder-Leiby, Department of Biology; Ulysses Ayala with Dr. Preeti Dhar, Department of Chemistry and Dr. Teresa Snyder-Leiby, Department of Biology; Evelyn Paredes with Dr. Ghader Eftekhar, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

For more information on AMP/C-Step, please contact David Scott at x2721.

EOP Study Abroad

As liaison for EOP Study Abroad, Chris Whitaker coordinated the EOP Study Abroad Informational Meeting with Mario Varuzza. Mario Varuzza and Joan Feuer of the Center for International Programs hosted the event. Dean Bruce Sillner gave an introductory speech welcoming EOP students and encouraging them to study abroad. Joan Feuer followed with an overview of the Study Abroad process from application to arrival in the host country. Bernadette Morris of Academic Advising spoke on issues regarding academic planning. Nancy Mason and Gayle Grunwald of Financial Aid gave a presentation on financial aid issues and budgeting for study abroad.

Last year, EOP students studied abroad in the following places: Besançon, France: Codie Ransome Calcutta, India: Parvathy Sankar Middlesex, England: Michelle Derosier, Laura Figueroa, Renaud Jean-Gilles, Yesenia Soliman Valencia, Spain: Arlene Decastro

For more information on studying abroad, contact Chris Whitaker at x3226.

Model Senate 2002

As coordinator of the Model New York State Senate Session, EOP Advisor Arnaldo Mejias, Jr. accompanies a group of Latino students from SUNY New Paltz to Albany each year where they join peers from CUNY and SUNY campuses. This year included EOP students Acuati Abreu, Astrid Rodriguez, Rosanna Polanco, Johanna Soto, and Nathalie DeLaMota. Each year a mock legislative issue is chosen and the students—each acting as senators with an assigned district and party—present their positions on the topic. The topic this time was on the reinstatement of the New York City commuter tax. The participants are also eligible for the Orlando Cepeda Scholarship and one of this year’s recipients was Astrid Rodriguez.

The Model New York State Senate Session was developed at the request of the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force of the New York State Legislature.

For more information, contact Arnaldo Mejias, Jr. at x3226.

EOP Americorps Members 2001-02

The following thirteen EOP students participated in the Americorps Program:

Nina Acheampong, Placement TBA
Akua Awuah, Migrant Education (Received an $800 Education Award for completing a term of service.)
Fahima Begum, Placement TBA
Dania Castro, Youth Center
Rosanna Cruz, Youth Center
Indira Delgado, Children’s Center of New Paltz
Tamika Hardwick, Child Find of America
Omar Henry, Youth Center
Donna Miranda, Placement TBA
Elena Molina, New Paltz Middle School
Sakima Mullings, Youth Center and New Paltz Middle School
Jose Sanchez, Migrant Education (Received a pro-rated Education Award for completing 200 hours of service.)
Johanna Soto, Children’s Center of New Paltz (Fall) and Highland Residential Center (Spring).

For more information on Americorps, please contact Michelle Rosenbaum at x3265.
EOP Scholars’ and Dean’s Lists

The Educational Opportunity Program presents the Scholars’ and Dean’s Lists for 2001-2002. Students were selected for these honors based on Fall and Spring grades. The asterisk denotes Scholars’ honors for both Fall and Spring. The names in bold print indicate students on the Spring Dean’s List.

Abdal-Shakur, Siyada*
Abreu, Acaci*
Acheampong, Nina
Adderly, Crystal*
Adgebie, Sidikatu
Adely, Amy*
Alarcon, Patricia*
Allgood, Sharjah
Alston, Dariabiah*
Alvarez, Idris
Ane, Gabriela*
Aponte, Cynthia Ann*
Arango, Jorge
Archib, Zenobia*
Argumedo, Alan*
Arias, Gingher
Aristide, Barbara*
Assenzo, Jennifer*
Atilano, Jessenia*
Ayala, Ulysses*
Badalucco, Frank James
Balanta, Wanda*
Barnhart, Joshua*
Barreto, Joshua Elias
Bastien, Stacy*
Bautista, Alexandra*
Bell, Dorraine*
Berberena, Dabby*
Bermudez, Jessica Alana*
Berrios, Peter John
Boatemah, Yaa
Bonura, Paola
Boykin, Pauline
Brea, Richard*
Brown, Janet
Caba, Bryant
Cabrera, Ramon
Candelaria, Luisana*
Castillo, Glendaly*
Castro, Dania Amaparo
Chan, Man Men*
Chan, Yin Hung*
Charles, Shirlene Carolyn*
Chen, David*
Chen, Hai Ying*
Chen, Mei Jiao*
Chen, Rong Zong*
Chen, Yan Hong*
Cheung, Fa Hai*
Cheung, Gar Lok*
Chutino, Catrina M.*
Cipriano, Rosalinda*
Collazo, Aleida*
Cornielle, Geysa M.*
Cox, Susan
Cruz, Antonio*
Cruz, Francisco*
Cruz, Janette*
Cruz, Rossana*
Cruz, Sharrell*
Cruzeta, Pierina*
Dai, Yan*
Daly Odessa*
Davis, Greg
De La Cruz, Edwin
De Los Santos, Wilalberto*
DeJesus, Ricardo
DeLaCruz, Gonzalo
De LaMota, Nathalie*
DeLaRosa, Reina
DeLeon, Betty
Delgado, Indira*
Dent, Taisha*
Diaz, Joel A.*
Diaz, Julissa M.
Diaz, Maria D.*
Diaz, Sendy M.*
Diller, Amelia
Doldron, Kim Vanessa*
Doldron, Sharon
Donkor, Francis Odyro*
Donker, Ivy*
Dorleans, Phara*
Dorrough, Tracy*
Dowe, Lanae
Dragek, Danuta*
Dubois, Ira
Duporte, Tamarisk*
Dyer, Arlene*
Edmond, Anita
Elshorbagi, Aida*
Elvis, Michelle
Enders, Toni
Espada, Ramon*
Espinoza, Rafael
Evangelista, Ana M*
Evangelista, Nidia A.
Fairweather, Kelly-Ann*
Falk, Christina*
Farcient, Lisa*
Farrell, Lisa*
Fernandez, Delvyn*
Figueroa, Billy*
Figueroa, Laura*
Finch, Melissa
Franco, Milvio*
Francios, Erick*
Frohman, Terri*
Garrett, Ayana
Gautreaux, Liza*
Geno, Raphael
Gonzalez, Alex
Gonzalez, Auris*
Gonzalez, Christopher*
Gonzalez, Jaquelyn*
Gonzalez, Jose*
Gonzalez, Jose M.
Gonzalez, Massei
Gonzalez, Rosa F. *
Graham, Jeanna*
Grant, Roselle
Green, Phillip
Greenidge, Tawanna*
Greenleaf, Melita
Grodzki, Marnie*
Hernandez, Joelita*
Hernandez, Wilmy
Heyward, Tanya
Hirani, Malik
Hodges, Fannie*
Hsieh, Ping Yen*
Huang, Yong Hang*
Hu, Wenhu, Sam*
James, Marlyn*
Jiang, Li Yan*
Jimenez, Gregory*
Jimenez, Ramon*
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Educational Opportunity Program
HAB 401
SUNY New Paltz
75 S. Manheim Blvd.
New Paltz, NY 12561

(Scholars' List, from page 7)
Wong, Kim
Wu, Wan Fen*
Wunder, Lisa*
Xu, Zhi Ling*
Zaman, Mohammed
Zhang, Jun Mei*
Zhang, Ting Ting*
Zhao, Meixiao
Zheng, Hui
Zima, Danny*

Congratulations to these students!
The EOP Scholars' List is based on a 2.67 cumulative GPA or better and the Dean's List is based on a 3.00 semester GPA or better.

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www.newpaltz.edu/eop

Sandra Panman and
Chris Whitaker, Co-Editors

Layout by Chris Whitaker

Orientation Leadership
2002
Congratulations to the following EOP students for being selected as Orientation Leaders this summer:

Christopher Adames
Arlene Dyer
Erica Ubiera

The EOP Orientation Liaisons are:
Suleyni Monero
Wilalberto De Los Santos
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