



## IN THIS ISSUE

EOP Conference .....	2
Awards Nomination .....	3
XAE Student Induction .....	3
MVP Events.....	4
Study Abroad Experience .....	5
Friend of the Family .....	6
Commencement .....	7

## Hello EOP Family!

We hope your year has been as productive and filled with growth as ours has!

As we mentioned in the previous Newsletter, our student numbers are growing to meet the grant we were awarded from the Office of Opportunity Program. As part of the same grant, and to provide offices and meeting space for our students and staff, the campus also completed our new space this winter. We moved in to Haggerty19 in January and have settled into our new home this spring. The students have enjoyed the space for gatherings, tutoring, presentations and receptions for various events. If you haven't seen it yet, please stop in and see our new EOP Family home!

We also celebrated the 50th Bi-Annual EOP conference this spring, with a couple of very inspiring keynote speakers and some exciting workshop sessions. Check out the details in this newsletter, and remember that we now have Alumni Awards for you to nominate others (or yourself) for, and those forms are available in the year leading up to the next conference. We look forward to seeing you at the next one in 2020!

As you know, the climate in our country has made for uncertain times. Funding

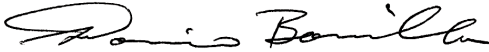


Antonio Bonilla

for programs like EOP are under even more scrutiny than usual, and the Perkins Loan, which helped so many of our students avoid bigger student loans, has been discontinued. This puts our students and their families on uncertain and troubling ground when considering higher education. If you'd like to help, we have lots of ways for you to support our students with your time, energy, and even financially. Please let me tell you how; just call or email me.

Until the reunion on October 12–14th, have a great summer creating memories with your families and the people you love! We'll be working for our new EOP Family here at Summer Orientation.

Tony Bonilla

  
EOP Director

# EOP Bi-Annual Conference



## Conference Award Recipients:



### EOP ALUMNU IMPACT:

TONY BONILLA

Awarded to an alumnus from the Educational Opportunity Program who has gone above and beyond to improve and support the student experience at SUNY New Paltz. This nominee should also be committed to the mission of access to Higher Education for underrepresented students and success of EOP at SUNY New Paltz.



### LEGACY LEGENDS:

DR. TOMÁS MORALES (pictured), EDDIE BELL, ARNOTT SEUNARINE, PH.D. and GLADYS PORTALATIN-SEUNARINE

In honor of your ground-breaking work and significant contributions. In gratitude for your legendary legacy building and dedication to the students and mission of the Educational Opportunity Program at SUNY New Paltz.



### ALUMNUS OF DISTINCTION:

CHEYENNE VANCOOTEN, MAWULEKUMI TOKPONWEY (pictured), JANET DAVIS, DESTINY SALDIVAR and RON LAW

With deepest appreciation for your service and commitment to the Educational Opportunity Program at SUNY New Paltz.



### CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION:

NICOLE PACHECO (pictured), CAROLINA E. GONZALEZ, CESAR DONE, JEFFERY OWASU, LUANA FERREIRA, PH.D and GEORGE J. RAMOS, JR., LMHC, NCC

With deepest appreciation for your Commitment and Service.

The Bi-Annual EOP Conference will be incorporating awards into each conference moving forward. We feel it is vital to our EOP Family to recognize the success and contributions of our Alumni.

Please read each category below and enter who you want to nominate for the 2020 conference.

1. **EOP ALUMNI IMPACT:** This goes to an alumnus from the Educational Opportunity Program who has gone above and beyond to improve and support the student experience at SUNY New Paltz. This nominee should also be committed to the mission of access to Higher Education for underrepresented students and success of EOP at SUNY New Paltz.

Nominee Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_ Years at New Paltz: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **LEGACY LEGEND:** This goes to an individual (does not have to be an alumni), who has contributed to the foundation and expansion of the EOP Program.

Nominee Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_ Years at New Paltz: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_ Years at New Paltz: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_ Years at New Paltz: \_\_\_\_\_

3. **ALUMNUS OF DISTINCTION:** This goes to an EOP Alumni who has taken the mission and aim of EOP to heart. Having achieved success in their field, this nominee has worked very hard to improve the experience of first generation college students and underrepresented students either on campus or in their wider community.

Nominee Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_ Years at New Paltz: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_ Years at New Paltz: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_ Years at New Paltz: \_\_\_\_\_

The award nominations can be sent to Jessica Purcell, Conference Committee Chair c/o Educational Opportunity Program, at Haggerty 19.



On May 4, 2018 the Beta Omicron chapter of Chi Alpha Epsilon inducted 59 new members, including honorary inductees Sharla Carey and Mawulekumi Tokponwey. Ms. Carey currently serves as the chief of staff for the Compliance, Conflicts Resolution Group, Legal, Audit, HCM, Services, and Compensation Accounting engineering groups at Goldman Sachs, and was the keynote

speaker. Sharla earned her BS in Finance from SUNY New Paltz.

In addition to the new inductees, thirty-five current XAE members were awarded upgraded status for demonstrating continued academic excellence. Among this group of honorees was the recipient of the Percy Sutton Award, Geliza Castro,

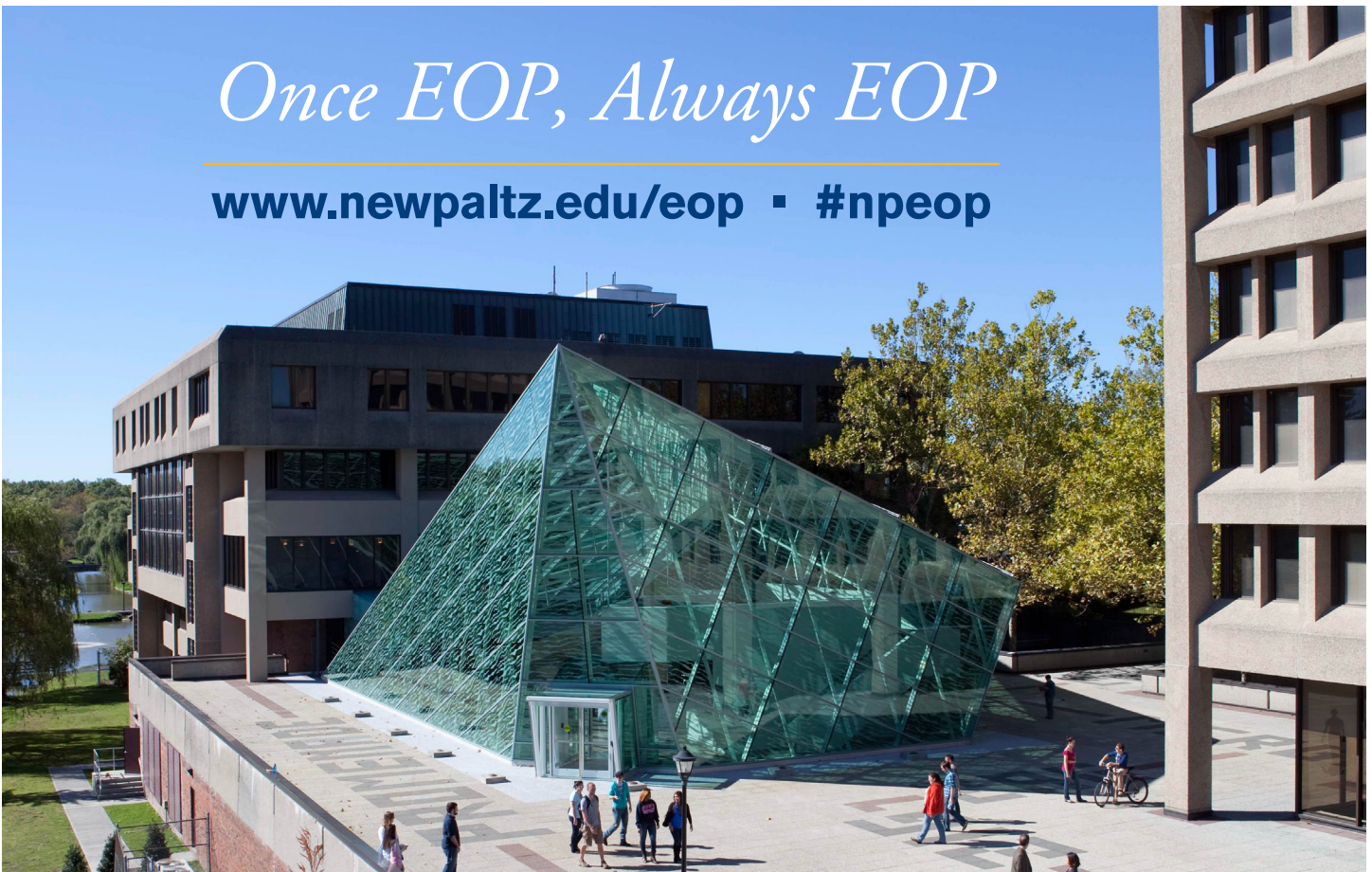


and the recipient of the Arthur O. Eve Award, Hydia Hunter. These distinguished students earned the highest cumulative grade point average among EOP graduating seniors.

A reception for inductees, honorable members, faculty, staff, and family and friends was held immediately following the ceremony.

# Once EOP, Always EOP

[www.newpaltz.edu/eop](http://www.newpaltz.edu/eop) ■ [#npeop](https://twitter.com/npeop)



## MVP Events



Clean Sweep



Coping Skills with George Ramos '06



Developing Confidence Workshop

# My Study Abroad Experience BY ROSA NOESI



Traveling and studying across the world will be a difficult climb, but the view from Prague would be a magnificent one. As someone that deals with low self-esteem and mental health obstacles I have always struggled to take grand opportunities. Studying abroad will push me to have an unforgettable experience.

I began my study abroad application with these words completely unaware of the unbelievable events that I would be apart of in the next few months. Being an Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) student in my second year, I had always been pushed to study abroad because the advisors really encouraged us to do it. As a Latina student from Washington Heights, New York, that did not have access to many opportunities because of race or economic status, I often thought that I could not have the same chances as many of my peers. However, with the right faculty and support on my side I pushed past my barriers and took many more chances that were presented in front of me. I definitely made the most out of my study abroad experience. I knew that while studying abroad in Europe my main priority was to travel.

My decision to study in Prague was decided upon the large expense difference between Prague to New Paltz which was a lot cheaper. However, when discussed with my peers whom had traveled to Prague they spoke very highly of it. I was eager to attend Charles

University and even enjoyed learning some Czech. I traveled to about twelve countries while studying abroad. I traveled to many of these locations with my roommate and now close friend, Raven Pitarra. While I enjoyed my time in every country there were a few that stood out to me more than others.

---

**“THE BEST VIEW  
COMES AFTER THE  
HARDEST CLIMB.”**

— UNKNOWN AUTHOR

---

Switzerland is a beautiful country filled with many mountain ranges that made me never want to leave. When traveling to Switzerland I signed up for a program called Bus2Alps that writes up itineraries, provides hostels and transportation for whichever location the program occupies. The town where I stayed, Interlaken is a small town surrounded by the Swiss Alps. The scenery was breathtaking and no amount of photos could capture those moments perfectly. I signed up for kayaking and I was able to see the mountains out in the water. I remember falling in the water and scraping my knees but it was all worth it because the water was the cleanest I have ever tasted. The people at Interlaken were selfless and extremely polite. The second day of my stay I went skiing which was not the best experience but not many people I know could ever say

“Yeah, I went skiing in the Swiss Alps.” The food was amazing, we had a wonderful mac and cheese dish filled with bake potatoes. Overall, Switzerland was expensive but a place I would return to in a heartbeat.

My visit to Barcelona, Spain was an emotional one. I was so excited about the trip I cried the night before because I realized how lucky I was. I did a numerous amount of things in Barcelona from seeing the Sagrada Familia to seeing street art along the beach. While in Spain I also traveled to Montserrat where I hiked Saint Jerome’s which was 1280 meters high. I enjoy hiking but it was a very hard hike to have accomplished. At some points the winds were so intense that I became very frightened and wanted to call it a day and turn back. When arriving at the top the views were pretty covered because we were surrounded by clouds as it was supposed to rain that day but we were extremely high up. I cried at the top because I realized how far I had come physically and metaphorically. I reflected on all of my hardships and realized that I was living my best life. I was thankful for everyone that supported me and pushed me to study abroad.

My last trip to the Amalfi coast in Italy as well as Rome were one of my favorites. I again signed up with Bus2Alps which made planning the trip much easier. We met at Ciampino airport and then had a four hour bus ride to the coast. We arrived at around 3 a.m.

and had to start our day at 8 a.m. We went to the beach at Positano where my roommate and I both fell asleep on the beach for two hours and got severely sunburned so remember to always wear sunscreen! Bus2Alps had made reservations at a restaurant with amazing seafood that same night. We were taken to the island Capri where we hiked up a quarter of a mountain and took a ride in some chairlifts up to the highest point. The next day we went to Pompeii and learned a lot about the history of the city that was destroyed by the volcano Mount Vesuvius. When in Rome we walked about the city and saw the Trevi fountain, Colosseum, Pantheon. All of Rome was filled with ruins pocketing the city but it quickly ended with my return flight to back to Prague hours later. Overall, my thoughts on studying abroad is to never think that you will never get the most out of your experience because of some setbacks that you have in your life. Studying abroad can seem like an alarming experience but the opportunities that it opens for you beats the anxiety that you may deal with for the moment. I would love to study abroad again because this loaded semester has only given me a taste of what pushing myself is really about. I am more comfortable with new environments and myself. I will incorporate everything that I have learned when I go back home and to New Paltz.

## Friend of the Family: NANCY MASON

### How long have you been working in Financial Aid and how long have you been at SUNY New Paltz?

I came to New Paltz as a freshman in 1972 for a good education at a reasonable cost. A college guidebook described New Paltz as "nestled in the foothills of the Catskills". The natural beauty of this area drew me. After graduation, I stayed here and was hired to work in Student Accounts in 1976. My assignment on my first day was to hand write the EOP exchange checks. In those days, we did everything with paper and pen. The first computer generated bills from Student Accounts were for the Spring 1982 semester. I worked in Student Accounts for 9 years.

I have been working in Financial Aid for 33 years. With the changes in regulations and technology, it hasn't been the same work. Banks used to process the federal student loans and there were no unsubsidized or parent loans. There was no e-mail. We have gone from one shared PC for the office to a PC with windows and two monitors for everyone. When windows was first installed, I dragged an icon around the desk top for twenty minutes without getting the program to come up. A colleague finally said "double click, Nancy". "What's double click?" The Aha moment and I was able to make use of windows. Eight of our staff are New Paltz alumnus. Our Financial Aid Director, Maureen Lohan-Bremer, was once our work study student.

### How did your working relationship with EOP develop over time?

My working relationship with EOP came from working together to help our students process their bills or their financial aid. Financial Aid determines EOP freshman applicant financial eligibility. We get to know our applicants well. EOP, Student Accounts, and Financial Aid share the goal of having our students succeed in college and graduate. I give Financial Aid presentations for Summer Orientation and Accepted Students' Day. I was invited to attend the EOP Summer Orientation lunches with our new freshmen, their parents, college and EOP staff. I attend the EOP Bi-Annual Conferences.

### What are some challenges EOP students face and how do you help them overcome those challenges?

Two of the challenges are understanding how financial aid works and covering the cost of college. Many times our student is the first in their family to go to college. We in Financial Aid give presentations and we have information both as hand-outs and on our website about how financial aid works. Our Checklist is an excellent resource for our financial process as it breaks down step by step each action that students need to take to receive their financial aid and process



their bills. Students can also ask us questions in person, by phone, and by e-mail. I prefer in person or by phone so that I can also ask questions to get to the real issue. Students sometimes ask what happened to my Pell when the issue is really TAP decertification. We prepare financial aid packages by projecting costs and packaging to cover the standard on campus bill. This coming 1819 year will be the most challenging to cover the cost of college because the Federal government ended the Perkins Loan program last year. All students who received the Perkins Loan in 1718 were sent an e-mail explaining that the Perkins Loan had ended and listing other options. In 1819, EOP students with maximum grant aid (Pell of \$6,095 and TAP of \$5,165) who accept both their Direct Subsidized and Direct Unsubsidized loans should have enough student aid to cover the standard on campus bill.

I often explain that these are your charges and this is your financial aid. If you have

more charges than financial aid then you owe. If you have more financial aid than charges then you will receive a refund.

### What are your favorite things about your job?

I enjoy the energy, determination, and confidence of our students.

I also enjoy the opportunity to be part of a vibrant intellectual community. I enjoy attending the guest lectures and presentations on diverse subjects here on campus.

Education is important and makes life better for the individual and for society.

Helping students receive their financial aid to help pay for college is a good thing.

Financial aid is always changing and always trying to improve. Federal financial aid law was first written in 1965. Every few years there is re-authorization to re-write some of the law. Re-authorization is currently overdue and we are expecting more changes than usual with the next laws set for the 1920 award year.

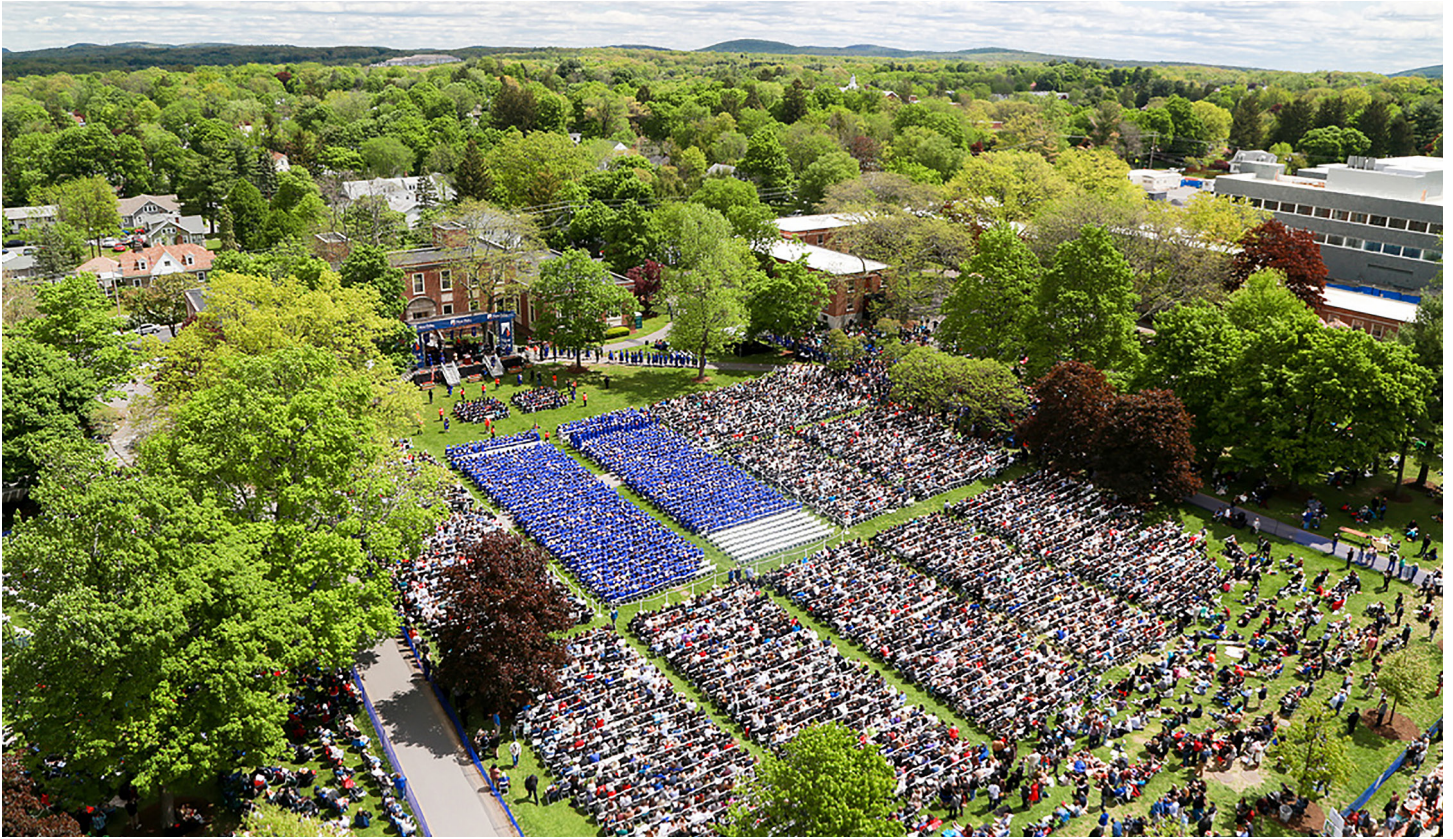
### What do you like to do outside of work?

I like spending time with family and friends, reading, cooking shows, photography and the natural beauty of this area. I have been watching the seasons change on the mountain for decades. I like to sing along to the country radio station when I'm alone in my car. Alone being the key word. My cousins use my singing voice as a measure of awful. I once had a cat who would cuff me should I dare to sing in her presence.

### Is there anything else you'd like to add?

We really are here to help students. We offer the most generous financial aid packages that our funding allows. The rules and regulations are because financial aid comes from tax payer dollars. We facilitate students receiving their financial aid. Academic decisions can have financial aid consequences. Students need to do their part. Timeliness matters.

# Commencement 2018 **Moving Forward**





**2016 EOP STAFF:** Robert Hancock, Clare Kelly-Barra, Christine N. Featherston, Jessica Purcell, Rita Celariste, Antonio Bonilla, Ivelisse Tuttle, Siuyim Auyeung, Courtney Edwards, Alicia Mejias and Erica Parker

*Once EOP, Always EOP*

**Educational Opportunity Program**  
 State University of New York  
 Haggerty 19  
 1 Hawk Drive  
 New Paltz, NY 12561-2433  
 Phone: 845-257-3226  
 Fax: 845-256-3273

For feedback, questions or content submissions for the EOP newsletter, please address:

Courtney Edwards, EOP Advisor  
 EOP Newsletter Editor  
 edwardsc@newpaltz.edu

[www.newpaltz.edu/eop](http://www.newpaltz.edu/eop)

