Welcome to the third edition of the AALANA Watch …

This issue of AALANA Watch presents the activities of AALANA mentors and mentees in spring 2010. The issue also highlights the opinions of AALANA mentors and mentees and their visions for the program in the years ahead.

Jennifer Nally and Rebecca Perez
(AALANA Watch Committee)

AALANA Welcome Reception

This activity was held on Tuesday, January 19, from 6-9 p.m. Mentors and mentees got together after the break to reflect on the activities of the past semester and consolidate the plan of action for spring 2010. Coming at the heels of the devastating earthquake in Haiti, the evening was also used to enact a plan to raise funds towards relief efforts in Haiti.

Jennifer Nally & Rebecca Perez, AALANA Mentors

Hope for Haiti Fundraiser

In the spirit of solidarity with the Haitian people, in the aftermath of the devastation caused by the earthquake in Haiti, members of the AALANA Mentor Program organized a fundraiser that included setting up donation tables at the Hunt Union, and the sales of baked goods. All the money raised was sent to the Red Cross Head Office in, Endicott, NY.

Midterm Madness

Academic excellence is one of the key goals pursued by the AALANA Mentor Program. Midterm Madness provides a distraction free and quiet environment for students to prepare for their exams. The spring 2010 session provided an opportunity for students to buckle down and mutually support each other. The session lasted for three hours at the CME. The AALANA Mentor Program’s study day is a valuable tool to help students excel in their college careers.
Collaborative Activities

AALANA Mentor/International Students Conversations Buddies
By Lauren Chao, AALANA Mentor

The AALANA Mentor/International Students Conversations Buddies is a new collaborative initiative between International Education and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs. AALANA mentors who are part of this initiative are: Christopher Bax, Liana Minaya, and Lauren Chao.

AALANA mentors meet, tutor, and assist visiting International students in a variety of ways. I am in the attached photo, at Mills, with the visiting Korean students. We were joined later by Jonathan Acevedo – an AALANA student, for a casual dinner.

Getting to know the Korean Exchange Students has been a positive and rewarding experience for me. I was able to learn about the experiences of the students as well as different aspects of their culture. I also have a better appreciation of the various obstacles faced by foreign students, especially those with English as a second language, when they enroll in universities and colleges in the United States. I was more than happy to exchange views with the students, on student life- and academic-related issues at SUNY Oneonta. I showed the students around campus and our local community, and was very impressed by their open-mindedness. I definitely look forward to future experiences and hope the AALANA Mentor/International Students Conversations Buddies is a lasting initiative.

Open House

The AALANA Mentor Program was represented at the spring Open House for incoming freshmen and interested students. AALANA mentors and mentees interacted and discussed with the incoming freshmen, several of whom were encouraged by what they learned from the mentors and mentees. Hopefully most of the students will join the growing AALANA community next fall.

AALANA Call Center

On March 30th and 31st, several students of the AALANA Mentor Program volunteered as callers at The AALANA Call Center. Under the guidance of the Multicultural Recruitment Coordinator at the Office of Admission, the students reached out to several prospective students after their visit to the college on March 27 (Academic Exploration Day).

Kente Graduation Recognition Ceremony

AALANA mentors and mentees served as volunteers at the Kente Graduation Recognition Ceremony – a joint initiative of the ALS, CME, OMSA, and the Office of the President

From left to right: Araya Henry, Caroline Taveras, Mary Anne Rojas, and Carol Medina
Socio-cultural Activities

**AALANA Olympics**

Basketball competition at the Alumni Field Arena

Many students came out to support AALANA students and had a great time doing it. Activities included: tug-of-war, jump rope, and basketball. Winners of the different competitive activities received awards. It was also an occasion for the Help for Haiti Fundraiser initiative.

**Luau Party**

The AALANA Mentor Program 2010 Big Spring Event was the “Luau Party” organized on April 17th at the CME. Music was provided by DJ TEN and students were treated to an assortment of delicious food provided by Sodexo. The party was an occasion for students to relax before finals.

**Spotlight on Graduating Mentors**

“*My time at Oneonta was a great experience for me. I came to the college as a sophomore and was welcomed by two great AALANA mentors Shavon Frazier and Guiermo Reyes. They were my guides during my first year in Oneonta.*

My mentor inspired me to also want to make other freshmen at Oneonta feel welcome. My other leadership roles at Oneonta were treasurer of both Sista2Sista and Students for Global Education. I have also participated in clubs such as HOLA and Students of Color Coalition which were presented to me through the AALANA Mentor Program.

Graduating from SUCO is a “dream come true”, yet I will miss the AALANA Mentor Program for all it has to offer. Being a mentor myself has helped me to make new friends, gain a lot of experience and knowledge.

My experience as a mentee and later a mentor is something I will always take with me. It was a great honor to take part in the Kente Graduation Recognition Ceremony* (Adriana Morales).

“*I am very excited to be graduating. Looking back at the last 4 years I realized how much I have changed. Being in groups such as the AALANA Mentor Program has opened me up to many different people. I was a mentee in the program and was very pleased to have mentors who helped me a lot.*

Later as a mentor I have been able to meet freshmen and also become their friend. I love helping others, talking with them. I also enjoyed helping set up events and getting everyone together. I have met some of the greatest people and I hope to stay in contact with them after graduation. I love being a mentor and I hope the new mentors will have the same experience.

Last year I did a study abroad program in Spain. The experience was amazing and I hope other mentors and students will continue to take this opportunity that the college offers.

As I graduate in May I look back to the wonderful things that have happened to me here at the college. I also took part in the Kente Graduation Recognition Ceremony which I think was a great event* (Courtney Cordero).”
“Mentoring gives me great pleasure. It’s always so nice to know I can reach out to someone and make a difference in their college experience.

I have had so much fun getting to know and spend time with Tanairy. This is my 4th semester as an AALANA mentor and I am already looking forward to meet the new mentees in the fall.” (Lauren Chao)

“Moving away from my twin sister was not an easy decision. Adapting to college life was not very difficult, however, since I had the opportunity to meet and socialize with other EOP and AALANA students, most of whom were either mentees or mentors in the AALANA Mentor Program. I am very happy with the numerous opportunities offered at SUNY Oneonta. In High School, I was actively involved in a lot of afterschool activities, including sports teams and choir. Moving on to college, I continued to do the same. I am currently involved in intramural softball, as well as various chorus/ vocal groups on campus such as the Voices of Serenity, the R&B Band, Concert Choir, and previously, the opera Street Scene. My experience in Street Scene was remarkable. I got the opportunity to work with people with different personalities. It made me excited to work with Colby Thomas, and other directors/musicians in the Music department. I am looking forward to serve as an AALANA mentor next year” (Araya Henry)

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead