This past fall, Cornell University held its annual First Year Parents' Weekend and the EOP/HEOP program opened its doors to families of first year and transfer students. There was a weekend of festivities planned, including not only the traditional educational events about Cornell, but a beautiful trip up to Taughannock Falls near Cayuga Lake and dinner at Kidders Landing in Interlaken, NY. Forty three family members and 17 of our EOP/HEOP students, coming from New York City and surrounding areas participated in the weekend's events. On Friday, October 28, a chartered bus picked up the families at the Cornell Club in New York City, arriving in Ithaca four hours later to begin their participation in the events planned. The Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives (OADI), which houses the EOP/HEOP programs, hosted registration and an Open House in its new facility on campus in the Communications and Computing Center.

There were many opportunities available to families and students during the First Year Parents Weekend that had been planned by the university. Families were encouraged to explore resources, services and available opportunities by participating in tours, open houses, and workshops. Due to the flexible nature of the itinerary, families had free time to take full advantage of events offered to them, travel around the campus and its neighboring surroundings. Hosted by EOP/HEOP, the highlight of the weekend’s festivities was a dinner at Kidders Landing that allowed everyone a relaxing opportunity to enjoy the company of family and friends. Following a Sunday morning speech by President David Skorton, the families boarded the bus to return to New York City, and the 2011 First Year Parents’ Weekend came to a successful conclusion, ripe with fond memories.
Dear Friends—

I hope you are all doing well, and am delighted to have this opportunity to share with you briefly my background and the purpose of our new office, both in our first six months at Cornell.

I came to Cornell at the beginning of July from the University of Michigan, where I was Faculty Director of the Center for Global and Intercultural Study, as well as having served as Coordinator of Multicultural Teaching and Learning. Before that, I was Director of Africana Studies at Union College here in New York, after receiving my Ph.D. in American Civilization at the University of Pennsylvania. Academic diversity initiatives have thus been a focus of my entire intellectual and administrative career over the past thirty years.

We see the Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives as a tremendous asset and resource in helping Cornell University achieve even higher levels of excellence through a broader exchange of knowledge and perspectives. OADI is here to ensure that the voices, experiences, and wisdom of those with backgrounds that were often marginalized or excluded in the past be fully supported and heard in our classrooms, labs, research, and co-curricular intellectual activities. OADI is a place of advocacy and support, providing both the resources and the nurturing environment that will encourage those who may have been unlikely to be at Cornell historically reach their highest potential here now.

Many of you are familiar with the significant accomplishments of past efforts in the entities known as COSEP and later OMEA. We are building on those foundations, and in tandem with the new Intercultural Center, continuing many of the same strong programs, such as the New York State Opportunity Programs, while aiming towards a broader range of services by doubling our capacity on both the student services side at the center, and the academic side here at OADI.

We pronounce OADI as “wadi,” which in Arabic or Swahili is a word that refers to a protected pathway or passage through a desert. Please stop by our new facility in Suite 200 of the CCC building in the Ag Quad and see for yourself all that we have to offer. I look forward to getting to know all of you better in the coming months.

Best wishes,

A.T. Miller (most folks call me “A.T.”)
Associate Vice Provost
(Academic Diversity Initiatives)
OADI LEADERSHIP

A.T. Miller came to Cornell as Associate Vice Provost for Academic Diversity Initiatives in July of 2011. He served as Faculty Director of the Center for Global and Intercultural Study and Coordinator of Multicultural Teaching and Learning at the University of Michigan from 2000-2011, and Director of Africana Studies at Union College from 1992-2000. He received his Ph.D. in American Civilization from the University of Pennsylvania, and his A.B. from Davidson College in North Carolina. In addition to his commitments to social justice, AT is also a musician and poet.

William “Woodg” Hornung has his BS in Music Education from Western University in Pennsylvania and his MPS in Community and Rural Development from Cornell University. Woodg came to Cornell in March 2001, and to OADI and the NYS Opportunity Programs in August 2007. He has a great passion for music and motorcycles.

In Risë’s work in Multicultural Affairs, she strives to motivate all members of the university community to work towards a genuine exploration of and commitment to social justice. Her personal experiences as an underrepresented high school student inspired her to pursue a career in Multicultural Affairs. Rise joined the Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives in 2012, and looks forward to connecting with folks across campus soon.
Staff Profiles

Nicolle Brazil, Counselor  
**EOP**  
Nicolle earned her BA in Psychology and her MA in Community Counseling. She enjoys working with students who experience academic and personal challenges.

Ricardo Gonzales, Programs Advisor  
**CSTEP/CPOP**  
Originally from Texas, Ricardo earned his BA in Politics and Sociology from Oberlin College. He has been at Cornell for over 3 years and enjoys the scenic beauty of the Finger Lakes Region.

Vanessa Lillard, Assistant Director  
**(NYSOP)**  
Vanessa has been in the Opportunity Program family for over 19 years. She believes that these programs are truly a gift— not only for students, but also for staff members.

Carol Raymond  
**Administrative Assistant**  
Carol provides administrative support for the HEOP and EOP programs at Cornell. She has been with the university for several years.

Maria Montesano, Counselor  
**HEOP**  
Maria has been serving students at Cornell for almost 12 years. She especially enjoys working with first-year and transfer students.

Cathi Sullivan  
**Administrative Assistant**  
Cathi began her career at Cornell in 2006, working in Human Resources, and joined the staff of OADI in July, 2011 as A.T. Miller’s assistant.

Anita Subrahmanyam, Administrative Assistant  
A California native, Anita arrived in Ithaca in the summer of 2011. She has a Masters in International Development and Arabic and a BA in Political Science and International Relations.

Shuo Zhu, Graduate Research Assistant  
Shuo has been Vice Provost Miller’s graduate research assistant since the fall of 2011. Originally from China, she is currently a second year PhD student in the sociology department.
In June 2011, the Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives (OADI) was formed as a unit that addresses diversity issues and support in the academic areas across the university. OADI is all about inclusion and achievement across the Cornell campus so that students of all backgrounds excel in reaching their academic goals. Our students, both those who come from backgrounds that have been historically under-represented and those who support them, add tremendously to the educational environment that brings excellence to all fields of study.

The Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives has as its primary constituencies students who come from racial or ethnic backgrounds that have been historically under-represented in higher education, those who are in the first generation of their families to receive bachelor degrees, and those who come from low-income families. In addition, we include the allies and advocates for these constituencies, and support the many other individuals whose diverse attributes and life experiences enhance the limited perspective of those who have mainly lived among the traditional college-bound population. In this way, we enrich the overall academic environment at Cornell.

OADI provides individual and group support for academic pursuits and organizations, a place of lively discussion and interchange, a family environment in which to feel at home and speak openly, and a strong voice of advocacy across the institution. We work to assist our students to get the most out of Cornell, and we work to assist Cornell to benefit more fully from inclusive excellence.

Our vision is based on Ezra Cornell's revolutionary commitment to "any person... in any study", which inspires us to cultivate the extraordinary presence of so many talented individuals in so many ground-breaking intellectual, artistic, and technical pursuits in order that every person in every study experiences the full diversity of dynamic and stimulating exchange with each other.

OADI's mission is:
• to ensure that the widest range of life experience, knowledge, creative expression and original thinking is shared across the breadth of Cornell's students, faculty, staff, and disciplines, particularly by those with backgrounds historically less likely to have been represented on campus; and
• to support the increased presence, academic success, intellectual achievement, and inclusion across all fields of study of those from these under-represented backgrounds at Cornell.

To that end, creating opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage and have intellectual discourse is part of OADI's mission, and several program series have been designed to exactly accomplish this goal.
Our Tuesday Lunch Engagement series is a weekly lunch conversation focused on current events, alumni successes, academic engagement, graduate school information, improving study skills, and many other topics focused on bolstering student success. The event occurs every Tuesday from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm in our space in 200 CCC.

OADI’s innovative series, Meeting of the Minds, is intended to provide students with an opportunity to attend a variety of events across campus, whether lecture, film series, colloquium, performance, or something else, each Meeting has been selected to inspire thought, conversation, and allow for an opportunity to expand the way in which to view the diverse and multi-cultural world in which we live. The OADI on-line calendar is regularly updated to provide information relative to both these programs.

In addition to students who are part of NYSOP and our pre-professional programs, CSTEP/CPOP, OADI provides a supportive environment for all students. The Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives extends a warm welcome to the Gates Millennium scholars, matriculated students from the Cornell Prison Education Program, non-traditional new students, and others.

Furthermore, we support a number of student organizations across the university that have an academic focus and sponsor students for conferences, internships, and research opportunities. We also seek to have our students represented among the highest honors, both at Cornell and nationally, in prestigious scholarships and fellowships, publications, honor societies, and admission to leading graduate and professional programs. Our purpose is to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students at Cornell.

OADI’s doors are open to all; please stop by, see our beautiful new office, join us for a Tuesday lunch. Our entire staff looks forward to greeting you.
Career goals: My goal is to finish here at Cornell. I will participate in Teach for America and work on my Masters Degree in Education. I then hope to go to Law School and study Juvenile Law to become a Juvenile Justice Defender. I would like to practice law and work on Juvenile Justice Reform.

Interests/Activities: I worked to plan the 2011 Women of Color Conference for students. I also work at the Women’s Resource Center. I am a member of Ordinary People. I have participated in and am active with the Dorothy Cotton Institute addressing issues of social justice. I will be working this semester with BSU in regards to mentoring.

What do you think about the new office and what is your current involvement with OADI?

I think is warm and welcoming. The staff is friendly and easy to talk with. A.T. is accessible for students and we see him in the office. The Tuesday Lunch Engagement is great! We get to see peers and it feels like home. The Computer lab is awesome! I also understand we can get counseling if we need it. I really think the office is coming together for students.

I have connected with some staff members and students in OADI. I worked with Mrs. Brazil on the pre-conference viewing of BLACK GIRLS ROCK! They have been helpful in supporting me in my leadership roles. OADI seems to be focusing on what we want as students; what we care about; our needs and desires to succeed. AT has been helpful in guiding me as a leader. I plan to become as involved as I can.

What are some things you expect OADI to provide/expectations?

I expect that OADI staff will continue to determine what students need. It would be helpful to provide more resources and support for students in regards to fellowships and internships. Something online that could give them a timeline as a guide to direct students in their endeavors. I also believe that providing support to mentorship programs and focusing on women students’ needs would be great.

What do believe may be some obstacles that students of color face that prevents them from getting the best benefits out of Cornell?

I believe that over programming in the community of color affects participation. Many students are stressed, overworked, and overwhelmed with the academic demands. In addition, they may have family issues back home or other worries. The programming needs to directly address their needs and be something that can produce results to keep the student interested and involved. There is also a need to be better/smarter at marketing programs, making them accessible for students, and spreading the word. We need to be more effective in how we offer the programs. OADI is supportive. We appreciate it and it is student centered. Staff are creating programs and helping students create programs. They are very positive. My hope is that OADI can really reach out to all diverse students on campus. There are other cultures and communities that should be included like international students and LGBT students. These students might usually go to other offices that they feel more comfortable in instead of using OADI which definitely can accommodate their needs.
The Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) is a New York State Opportunity Program geared towards under-represented and low-income undergraduate and graduate students interested in pursuing careers in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) or fields that require a professional license in NY state (Medicine, Law, Nursing, Accounting, and more). Through the Cornell Pre-professional Opportunity Program (CPOP), these programs are extended to students from all regions.

At Cornell, students are afforded opportunities to develop professionally and to prepare them to apply, learn and succeed in graduate school and their desired careers. Students are encouraged to attend conferences with other professionals, present research, and network. CSTEP/CPOP assists in the costs associated with taking these opportunities, so students can make more informed career decisions and to become a part of the professional community.

Cornell CSTEP students attend the annual conference to meet and network with other students from more than 40 CSTEP programs across the New York state. Students present research and attend professional development workshops focused on the application process for graduate school and further developing practical job skills.

OADI’s Pre-Professional Programs (CSTEP/CPOP) the Shadow Program, a collaboration with Mount Sinai Medical School and Weill Cornell Medical College. CSTEP/CPOP members shadow practicing physicians at either medical school for a week during their Winter Break in New York City. Students really enjoy spending the week in the shoes of a successful doctor, learning the rigorous demands of a schedule that extends beyond the traditional 9 to 5 workday. Participants also have the opportunity to accompany patient visits or approved surgeries.

CSTEP/CPOP students at Weill Cornell Medical School PreMed Conference, December 2011
Greetings from the New York State Opportunity Programs!! We are excited to have a newsletter being developed for the Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives and that we have the opportunity to share the wonderful things going on with EOP and HEOP here at Cornell.

My name is William “Woodg” Horning (I go by Woodg) and I have been the Director of EOP and HEOP and Associate Director of OADI (formerly OMEA) at Cornell since May 2010. Previously, I worked as the Assistant Director from August 2007. I am very proud of the great work our students accomplish on campus and continue to accomplish as alumni. Our programs have been at Cornell for more than 40 years! Although we have seen some challenging times, we are still moving forward working to help shape and develop our students into future leaders.

Since becoming the director, I have been working to increase our enrollment and bring our programs back to full strength by providing opportunities for students from across New York State. As you may have read in the Cornell Daily Sun, we have been under-enrolled and we have been working to meet our enrollment goals from New York State. As part of the process, we have been out visiting high schools and college fairs to talk about EOP/HEOP and Cornell with prospective students. This year, we visited more than 40 high schools across the state. We will continue to create relationships with high schools and work to meet our goals.

I have also taken on the task of re-connecting with our alumni. As I mentioned, we have been around for 40+ years, which means that there is a wealth of EOP/HEOP graduates out there doing amazing things and we want to know about them. I have been working through electronic media in an effort to reconnect. I have created a Facebook account, stateprograms@cornell.edu, for students and alumni to connect with me. On this page, I try to post stories as they pertain to EOP/HEOP and what we are doing in the office (some of you may have seen items about my recent recruiting trips to NYC). We also have a Facebook Group, Cornell HEOP/EOP Network, where I post information and where I hope alumni and students are connecting. Lastly, we have an alumni update form on our website at http://www.oadi.cornell.edu/heop/EOP-HEOP-Alumni.cfm. I am hopeful that through these efforts we can reconnect with many of our alumni and build a network to help support our current students where they can learn from the alumni and that our alumni can reconnect with one another as well.

Things have been going very well in the office. As you may have seen through the rest of the newsletter, we have acquired a new space that is beautiful. It has allowed us the ability to have more than two students in the office at the same for those of you who remember the Day Hall space. We are very fortunate to have a computer lab (20 machines), lounge, and study space for our students to use. Also, we have recently received the great news that the legislature has voted to return funding to Opportunity Programs that was previously cut due to budgets. Approximately $9 million has been signed back to the programs across the state! For all of you who have gone to advocacy and lobby days, written letters, and called your representatives, we are very thankful and we ask that you continue to be active in sustaining these programs for future generations.

We welcome phone calls and visits from our alumni and friends at any point if you are back on campus or in the area. I look forward to the continued success of these two great programs and having the opportunity to connect or reconnect with any alumni that are interested. Congratulations to our recent graduates, you make us proud, and we look forward to many more Cornell EOP/HEOP graduates to come!

Sincerely,

William “Woodg” Horning
Gong Joo Paik graduated from Cornell in the Spring of 2011 with a B.S. in Animal Science. She was a student in CALS and participated in EOP. She was active in many activities such as the Pre-Vet Society and the Measureless Christian A Cappella group. Gong Joo also received the 2011 NYSOP Director’s Award and Academic Achievement/Excellence Award. She decided to stay in Ithaca after graduating and is currently a part-time employee at the Oxley Equestrian Center as a Horse Stable Worker. Additionally, Gong Joo also volunteers at the Cayuga Nature Center where she proves care for exotic and wildlife animals. I was able to catch up with Gong Joo on one of her visits to our new office.

Counselor: So, you decided to stay in Ithaca?
Paik: Yes, I am glad I did.
Counselor: What are you doing now?
Paik: I am working at the John T. Oxley Equestrian Center.
Counselor: That is nice! What are you doing there?
Paik: I come in early and feed and water the horses. I do some dirty work like scraping stalls and rebedding them. I also handle horses, “turn them out” to exercise in the arena or out in the field.
Counselor: What kind of horses do you take care of and who uses this facility?
Paik: There is a border barn where the horses are housed. There is also a main barn. There are lesson horses for courses or private community lessons. There are also Equestrian horses for competitions.
Counselor: What skills are you developing?
Paik: I am building my strength for sure! (laughs). I also have had some close encounters with being injured by horses. But I am learning how to handle them and what it takes to keep them healthy. I have made some mistakes, but it is really good experience.
Counselor: What are your plans for the future?
Paik: I will apply for Vet School with Cornell for 2013. I am going to gain some more experience and work my way up. My goal is to become a vet.
Counselor: Well, sounds like you are well on your way! What advice would you like to share with other students?
Paik: DON’T GIVE UP! No matter what! If you fail or get a bad grade, keep going. I didn’t do the best in Bio or Chem, but I kept trying. Now I am working with horses and I love it!
Counselor: Thanks Gong Joo, and the best of luck to you!
I never knew the H/EOP existed until early in my senior year when college applications had to be done like any other senior student in high school. Until college, I considered the H/EOP program to be like any other financial aid program, but when I began college, my perception changed radically. For my education class, I had to write a paper on an education policy of my own interest. After pondering for about a week on what policy I should tackle, I soon became immensely interested in the impact the H/EOP programs had on students. After a wonderful interview with Woodg about the background of the H/EOP program, I decided that my paper would be focused on that very program that I’m part of at Cornell University. Writing this piece, I gained a new perspective of how the nation as a whole has taken steps to ensure aid for all individuals who wish to pursue higher education. Cornell is one of the few private colleges in New York State that offers the H/EOP programs. Being part of the H/EOP program, I have had the opportunity to meet wonderful remarkable staff who actually care for their students. I am truly grateful to be part of such a wonderful program because not only has it provided me with aid and support, but it also has given me a new place to call home. It didn’t take me too long to realize H/EOP is not just a program, it is a family.
The advocacy effort is very important. It is a chance to stand up and make sure that your voice is heard! The advocacy for opportunity programs and student aid is a continuous effort. Every year, students and staff travel to Albany, write letters, send emails and make phone calls to legislators to inform them EOP, HEOP, CSTEP and TAP are vital and must continue with adequate levels of funding. It is essential that these programs are available for current students and for those who will need these programs in the future.

At Cornell, with the help of our Government Relations office, students participate in advocacy visits to Albany in the fall and spring semesters. While in Albany, students have an opportunity to meet with representatives from New York State Division of Budget, Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC administers TAP), and various legislators and/or their representatives. Students comment that it is a worthwhile experience to share their stories and interact with legislators, while government officials receive an opportunity to put real student faces with the statistics they study to make policies. They hear the personal struggles followed by the triumphs of our students who always shine when they share their stories. Based on last year’s statewide participation, access/opportunity programs have received an additional nine million dollars in funding for the current academic year.

The advocacy effort continues in support of student aid for 2012-2013. On December 6, Patricia Gonzalez, Cindy Han, Ada Lau, Cindy Mei, and Peter Scelfo (Student Assembly, SUNY Representative) traveled to Albany to inform policy makers that opportunity programs and student aid are essential. Sly Mata, Assistant Director of Diversity and Inclusiveness in the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning also participated in the advocacy effort to support students and inform policy makers how important it is to invest in our future leaders! The students were great advocates who informed representatives that EOP, HEOP and TAP made all the difference in them being afforded the opportunity to attend Cornell University.

You too can make a difference. To find your elected officials, go to the following CICU New York Student Aid Alliance website: http://capwiz.com/cicu/home/

Communicate with your legislators via email, letters, phone calls, local office visits and Albany visits. Let them know you are a registered voter who cares how they vote on various issues—especially issues of importance like student aid! Education ranks right at the top of the things most important to you. Therefore, the advocacy for student aid must be in the forefront. Please pay attention to future emails that ask you to advocate and standup for student aid. Today, take the time to go to the advocacy website and let your voice be heard!
How did you come with the idea for SWAG?

SWAG, which stands for “Scholars Working Ambitiously to Graduate,” was created in response to an article that was published in the Cornell Daily Sun in March 2011. The article, titled "Report: Graduation Rate Low For Black Men at Cornell," described how African American men at Cornell had one of the lowest graduation rates among nearly every other racial demographic. The statistics were disturbing: although White males graduated at 91%; White females, 94%; Black females, 92%; Hispanic males, 87%; and Hispanic females, 88%, Black males graduated at a dismal 75%. In other words, one in four African American men failed to graduate from Cornell University. For me, this reality was unacceptable, and I wanted to do something about it. I knew in my heart that this low graduation rate was not due to a lack of innate intelligence, talent, skill, or ambition. Furthermore, I realized this problem transcended both race and economic circumstance – given that Black females at Cornell graduated at 92%. There seemed to be some peculiar factor within the Black male population at Cornell that was exacerbating the common predictors of low student achievement usually associated with low-income, minority students. I believed this factor was campus culture and climate, so I sought to improve it with a mentoring program that would appeal to Black males on campus.

In April 2011, I applied to be the Academic Development Chair for the on-campus organization Black Students United (BSU). Upon receiving that position in May 2011, I immediately began working with various members of the BSU e-board, particularly BSU’s co-chairs, Karim Abouelnaga, to create the framework and structure for SWAG. When creating SWAG we wanted to establish a few principles: 1) SWAG needed to have structure, 2) SWAG needed to emphasize individualized mentoring by major, and 3) SWAG needed to be large enough to impact the problem. With these three principles in mind, we aimed to create a program in which SWAG members would meet bi-weekly from 2:00pm - 4:00pm on Saturdays, there would be exactly one mentor assigned to each mentee, and we would attempt to recruit at least 50 mentors and 50 mentees over the summer. After we thoroughly planned out the program, the time came to prepare for the program that would be implemented only two and a half months later. Time was of the essence.

Do you have any advice for other students who may want to do similar things for underrepresented students?

The biggest piece of advice that I would give to any underrepresented student - by race, ethnicity, or economic background - strive for the highest GPA you can possibly get. Set high academic expectations for yourself and do whatever you have to do to achieve those goals. If you need to sacrifice sleep, parties, participation in clubs, Greek life, the right to be lazy, or mediocre mindsets, then make those sacrifices! For everyone the sacrifices will be different, but there is nothing more important that having the strong GPA and the right experiences necessary to propel you to where you want to be in life.
Graduates H/EOP
May 2011

Agyei, Joseph
Bhagwandas, Vishal
Chen, Qi Long
Cordova, Jaquelyn
Culpher, Reva
Dong, Lisha
Guadalupe, Cyre
Huot, Ordom
Jean, Rodney
Jones, Jayson
Latiz-Hackett, Roland
Lee, Jee
Lema, Lisa
Meadows, Ernest
Moses, Natasha
Paik, Gong Joo
Pang, Ngar Yin
Robinson, Astley
Sanabria, Alida
Singleton, Antonia
Velez, Eric
Veliz, Sergio
Daoud, Nina
Diamente, Luke
Edouard, Gardith
Gomez, Yuliana
Lau, Johnny
Lee, Nora
McFarlane, Chrissa
Munguia, Daniel
Nikulin, Pavel
Ovalles, Larisa
Pierre, Marvine
Qualls, Jessica
Rivera, Vanessa

Graduates H/EOP
December 2011

Keenan Borde
Rachel DeLeon
Eneida Mingla
Jeffrey Song
Kamar Williams
Arod Fields