

# EOP NEWSLETTER

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

SPRING 2013

### Contents

EOP Alumni Feature Tom Morales	2
Career and Student Development	4
Peer Mentoring	4
Joan Perisse Interview	5
Studying Abroad	6
Student Focus	8
Breakfast Recognition	10
Student Initiatives	12
XAE – Chi Alpha Epsilon	13
Alumni Connections	14



### Hello EOP Family,

At a recent student event I had the opportunity to speak with several of our alumni. I am always impressed and inspired by the achievements of our students. EOP graduates move forward to attend graduate school, become entrepreneurs, give back to the community through teaching, volunteer work, and programs like Teach for America and City Year. When we talk about what has contributed most to their successes, it comes down to the support of EOP and the mentoring of people who are further along the path to success. We all have the potential to achieve our dreams and the capacity to help those who are just starting their journeys. I have a challenge for all EOP current students,

alumni, and supporters: embrace how powerful a resource you are. Give back to your EOP family! The **EOP Support Fund** makes it simple to donate online in any amount with which you are comfortable. These contributions go directly to our program. We also have many opportunities for alums to serve besides via monetary giving. Anything you can do will help!

In addition to our regular programs, we are hoping to hold an alumni event in New York City soon. Watch for the announcement! This year we also founded the MVP (Men Valuing Professionalism) program to help develop the leadership skills and civic engagement potential in our male students. Another example of our students' hard work and

commitment to the community is Destiny Saldivar's receipt of the Chancellor's Award in Albany, NY. Our students continue to achieve and study abroad at higher rates than the general admission students. Due to the hard work of our students and staff, our pride for our program continues to grow. Make sure you get the latest news on our program through the **EOP webpage**, **LinkedIn** and **Facebook**.

Thank you!



Antonio Bonilla  
Director of EOP

# EOP Alumni Feature



## Dr. Tomas Morales, President of CSUSB

Born in Puerto Rico, Tomas Morales came to the United States as an infant. He grew up lower-middle class in the South Bronx. His father worked as a machinist for Faberware, and his mother dropped out of high school and worked for a while as a crossing guard. Entering first grade, Tomas spoke only Spanish.

By age 13, Tomas began a paper route delivering the New York Post. One of his stops was a pair of four-story tenements. Neither had elevators; stairs offered the lone passage from floor-to-floor. One day the buildings' superintendent, weakened with a serious back injury, asked Morales if he would sweep and mop floors for him every day after he finished his route.

"I'll give you a dollar a floor," he offered. "That was \$8," Morales reflects. "That was a lot of money back then. So I said, 'Sure.' So I finished my route, came back, and I did that for years. That's why I have a tremendous amount of respect for individuals who do that kind of work. It's hard work."

He came to SUNY New Paltz through the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). During his undergraduate career, Tomas managed work, coursework, and familial responsibilities. He met his significant other, Evy, at SUNY New Paltz. Tomas and Evy married, and began their family when he was just 19. It was common to see Tomas, accompanied by his first son, attending classes on campus.

After graduating with his bachelor's degree in history, he worked at SUNY New Paltz as an EOP Counselor, EOP Director, Assistant Dean of Education, and as the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs. Tomas shaped EOP at SUNY New Paltz. He set the example of how effective an EOP program can be. At SUNY Albany, he completed both his master's degree and Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Policy Analysis, while working full-time.

In May 2012, Dr. Morales was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters from SUNY New Paltz. He currently serves as President of California State University, San Bernadino (CSUSB).

## What was your undergraduate experience like?

My experience exemplified literature on student success and persistence. I was a history major. I had number of faculty mentors. Jerry Sullen was my advisor (professor emeritus now). Faculty in the History department, Black Studies, Latin American Studies, and Political Science professors were pivotal to my success. It's important to have faculty advising. Faculty and staff mentoring are mentioned in the persistence literature. Carlos Laquynya (Political Science, Latin American Studies).

People with whom I enjoyed strong mentoring and advising relationships include Lance Suneran, the second EOP director at SUNY New Paltz. Kirkland (founding director), the Education Association Dean and the Director of Admissions also mentored me when I first entered SUNY New Paltz in 1971. William Sample (then Director of Advisement) and Gail Gallerie (worked for the university President) were also instrumental. It's important for students to have similar relationships to have their experiences validated.

## Do EOP Alumni have a responsibility to give back?

I think it's very important for all alumni to give back. Specifically, individuals who benefited from EOP should give back to those programs. They can give financially, by mentoring, and by being involved with undergraduate student development. EOP has helped



level the playing field, by providing support, counseling, tutoring, and importantly access to institutions. All alumni have a responsibility to give back.

## You have moved to different states on both coasts in your career ascent. Was it difficult to make substantial career moves? Would you encourage students to consider such options?

I think sometimes you have to come out of your comfort zone to advance. I worked at SUNY New Paltz from 1975-1977, then came

# EOP Alumni Feature

back in 1981 as a director. I also undertook other responsibilities as Assistant Vice President and Assistant Dean of Education.

I would advise undergraduates, particularly freshmen, to begin preparing for life after their baccalaureate degree. Form relationships with the Career Resource Center, and identify faculty who are doing research in areas of your interest. It's not just about enrolling, completing courses, and graduating. There is learning that takes place all around you.

Expand your portfolio of experiences via internship opportunities, study abroad experiences, and on-campus employment. It's important to think of how you'll get the most from this university. Think strategically of how to develop this portfolio of experiences.

## Is there anything else you would like to convey?

I'd like to emphasize the importance of integrating students in a study abroad experience. When students enter the working world, if they can demonstrate that they have international experience, it is invaluable. I encourage students to study abroad. I know Bruce Sillner, he's doing an excellent job as Dean of International Programs at SUNY New Paltz. I didn't have this opportunity as an undergraduate.

I've gotten to know President Don Christian. I think SUNY New Paltz is fortunate to have such an outstanding individual as president. He's very student-centered. He speaks very highly of the EOP program and cares about it. My wife, two of my sons, my sister-in-law, and more people close to me graduated from SUNY New Paltz. I think it's an exemplary institution.



# Career & Student Development

For many students, spring is a season of interviewing. Graduating students may be applying for career positions, or graduate/professional study. Many students will be applying for internships, while others seek on-campus positions including EOP Peer Mentor, Resident Assistant, and Orientation Leader. Each of the aforementioned on-campus positions requires a recommendation letter. Do you need one?

Robert Hancock and Christine N. Featherston respectively conceptualized and developed a recommendation form for students to use. This will help you provide your advisor all the information necessary to compose a great recommendation on your behalf.

1. EOP Website link to form: [recommendation form](#)
2. Form has all information we need to provide a strong recommendation
3. Must request at least 3 weeks before deadline to give ample time to your letter writer

The SUNY New Paltz Foundation Scholarship Book will be released this Spring 2013 semester. Look for updates!

Best of luck on your applications and your EOP family is here to support you through any means we can!

## Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is an integral part of an EOP student's first-year experience. The [program](#) assists first-year and transfer students in their adjustment to the university experience at SUNY New Paltz. Each peer mentor is responsible for 5-6 freshmen and/or transfer student mentees.

As a first-year student, there are invaluable advantages to having a peer mentor. These include having someone knowledgeable to answer questions, from a peer perspective. Peer mentors help you navigate different offices on campus, while identifying and accessing resources. Peer mentors are there for you outside of traditional work hours.

Consider becoming a peer mentor! You will develop leadership skills in many ways. You will improve your communication skills with diverse students, form relationships with other peer mentors through staff development and training, gain friendships, learn about yourself, be challenged outside of your comfort zone, and build your professional credentials. The selection process begins this Spring semester. Visit [EOP Peer Mentoring](#) for application, interview process, and further information.



# Excellence in EOP

## Special Recognition | Joan Perisse

Joan Perisse - EOP Professional Tutor, English Instructor  
at SUNY New Paltz and Marist College



### Professor Joan E. Perisse

Professor Joan E. Perisse is a Lecturer Instructor of English Composition, Grammar, an FYI Program Instructor, and a Professional Tutor for the EOP Program at SUNY New Paltz. She consistently goes above and beyond for EOP students and the program. Joan is also a Lecturer Instructor of English Composition for Marist College.

Believers in the art of collaboration, she and her colleague Mary E. Fakler co-created THE COLLEGE INITIATIVE student publication; a joint collaboration with Marist College. It is a cross-college peer critiquing project where students review and give feedback on their peers' writing from other colleges. She has incorporated the use of multimedia and technology into the composition classroom, presented and participated in various conferences, and serves as a faculty mentor and faculty adviser for Relay for Life. Joan was also Part-time Teacher of the Year 2010.

### What inspires you to teach? Was there an event(s) that led you to the profession?

I have always liked helping people. I have a natural inclination to teach people easier and more effective ways to do things. One semester, I taught 7th and 8th grade students for a teaching segment of my undergraduate program. I became a teaching assistant during graduate study, where the college classroom emerged as a good fit for me.

### In the course of teaching and tutoring, what is a notable challenge a person might encounter, and how does one progress through it?

Resistance. The most difficult assignment is to help student who isn't willing to cooperate. People have to be willing and open to advice. If they perceive that you are trying to make them do what is against their benefit, they will resist. Students must have enough of a connection with you, to trust that your work and words are for their benefit.

### How did you begin working with EOP?

I have been with EOP for over ten years! Upon completing graduate work, I began my job search. Sarah Gardner, who then worked with EOP, mentioned that the program sought a tutor. I applied and earned the position. Upon starting, I modeled my approach from Sarah. She maintained effective rapport with students. Importantly, she had a vision and keen understanding of students' needs and ways to help.

### Why do you like working with our EOP students and staff?

The staff cares considerably for its students. The students' life experiences contribute to thoughtfulness and rich content in their writing. EOP students truly value their higher education opportunity. They express gratitude for our efforts, and it shows that they are learning and see the achievement. Students experience a discernible writing improvement in tutoring. It's rewarding to see the efficacy of our work, which is affirmed by students as beneficial and essential.

### For students who plan to teach as their profession, what advice would help them reach their goal?

Have patience. Be open to a person's foundation: their background, and how it influences their writing content. Be willing to work with students individually, because such an approach is the best service we can provide students for growth.

Some of my best teaching developments come from my students. Be open to learning from them. I encourage classroom discussions and deliberate what works well, and in what facets a novel approach would be best. I seek students' rationales for their perspectives. They note my openness to listening, and express themselves. I thereby identify what needs to meet, and collaboratively work towards them.

Once you become a teacher, make decisions, plan, and adapt to learning styles. I teach skills and show students how to apply them to different situations, even beyond the classroom. Learning is not kept solely for college, to be later discarded. My advice is to show students how their classroom learning is applied in various circumstances of adulthood.

### How do you like to spend your free time?

I worked in construction for many years! I love building things, such as houses, from the ground up. Construction and carpentry require critical thinking. They require you to think three or four steps ahead of your current position or task. I like to renovate aspects of my house, such as trim work, paint, and wood floors. I also love to try different cuisines, and traveling to immerse myself in diverse cultures and new traditions. I enjoy cooking and baking. I view it as a creative endeavor that expresses care in being shared with others.

# Studying Abroad

## My Study Abroad Experience

Youssef Kouyo | South Korea



### What is it like to live and study abroad?

Study abroad is one of the most amazing experiences a college student can have. It allows you to grow up in certain ways. You truly become independent, as you are by yourself in a foreign country. The fact that you make new friends and learn a new culture adds a plus to your life. I would suggest that every college student experience it, because it changes peoples' lives in a positive way.

### How did you choose your country?

I chose to study abroad in South Korea because I thought it would be interesting to go to a country where people do not typically go. Most people try to go to Europe, Australia, China, and Japan, but I never heard anyone say that they went to South Korea. Since I like to explore what others have not yet seen, I was excited to be one of the first students from SUNY New Paltz to attend a program in South Korea.

### What are the classes like?

I studied abroad during the summer, so classes were pretty intense. The professors taught at a fast pace.

### How is it meeting and making new friends in a different culture?

New people bring new joy to your life. You learn to enjoy what others do, and appreciate your own culture while embracing theirs. The people are always amazing. Most study abroad programs bring students from multiple countries. By the time you come back, you will be mentally rich with knowledge from interacting with them.

### What else was enjoyable about your experience?

I went on a trip to the southern part of Korea. It was great to visit the EXPO which happens every 4 years. I was lucky to have seen more of the Korean culture and how advanced their technology was.

### Was it difficult without family and friends from back home?

When you study abroad, you will miss your friends and family at the beginning; but after a while, your new friends will become your new family.



# Studying Abroad

## How hard was it to say “Goodbye” and return home?

After bonding with your new family, it is hard to say goodbye to them. Sometimes you may not feel like coming back again. Upon returning home, it will be good to see your family but you will miss your friends a lot.

## Is there any advice you would give to other students?

Financial aid was available for me, but I had to consult my advisor. If anyone is having doubts about studying abroad, they should talk to an advisor and anyone who studied abroad. I encourage everyone to experience it because it is “wonderful like that.”

## How to apply and prepare to study abroad:

Simply visit the [SUNY New Paltz study abroad website](#), meet with your EOP Advisor, and Study Abroad advisor. This site actually allows you to do an amazing search by looking at all the available programs.

## What top three things did you learn about the experience?

Top 3 things I learned:

- To love another culture
- Greater language proficiency (Korean)
- To live by myself, 5,000 miles away from everyone whom I know

Summer study abroad opportunities offer limited financial aid and scholarships. It's best to meet with your EOP Advisor and the EOP Study Abroad liaison, Clare Kelly-Barra, to forecast budget and expenditures.



# Student Focus



## What are some roles you have on-campus?

Presently I am captain of the womens' basketball team, an EOP Peer Mentor, Vice President of XAE, Resident Assistant (R.A.) at Lenape Hall, and I worked as an EOP Liasion last summer!

## What drew you to play basketball?

I started playing basketball in 5th grade. Ever since, it has carried me. It's an outlet for me to relieve stress and leave all of my personal concerns outside the court. Once I step on the court, I stay focused. During high school I played basketball in many AAU (summer league) tournaments.

## What was the process like of being recruited?

The SUNY New Paltz coach always came to our high school games. If he couldn't make it, an assistant coach or players from the New Paltz team would come and watch us. The New Paltz coach would call at least weekly to keep in contact with me, ask about my college application process, and generally express interest in me coming to New Paltz. I came on a recruiting trip here, where I met the team players and took a campus tour. I learned more about team dynamics, academic and sport-specific requirements, camaraderie, team chemistry, and what it's like to be a student-athlete.

## What's the student-athlete experience like?

As a freshman, it was hard. Managing my time with commitments including EOP study group, while the coach kept track of us with study hall every night was not easy. For two hours each weeknight, the team met for study hall to do our respective coursework. The coach presides over study hall, and upperclassmen are also present.

My academic transition would have been way harder without EOP study groups. My roommate was not an EOP student. She had to find her own time for studying, which is much harder than having a dedicated schedule to help a person be productive outside of class time. I appreciated and learned from the structure.

## How has EOP helped you?

If it was not for EOP, I would not be where I am today. I give all credit to my advisor. There were many times I wanted to give up, or times I thought I could not do it. She was there to encourage me. All advisors were there for me, when I needed them most.

As an incoming freshman, it's common to feel like no one's there for you, because you are starting to make friends in a new environment. I developed a rapport with my advisor early on, and it's been a major factor in my success. EOP also provided me a work-study opportunity in its office. This helped me earn some money to offset the cost of attending college.

## How do you manage your time?

I allocate certain time slots for each responsibility and activity. It's not just an hour here, or an hour there. You have to allot extra time in between responsibilities, because things will not always go as planned. When I first started college, I did not have time to eat. Now I set time to eat after practice, before practice, and in-between classes. I also make time for naps, because without that I would be journeyed. While I eat after practice, I contact my mentees and ask if they want to meet. This is an example of getting two jobs done at once, instead of separating everything.



## How do you deal with stress?

In order to deal with stress I set meetings with my advisor, and I talk to my mom. I also go to other advisors. It was hard for me to open up, but I see that every advisor is here for us. Last week I met with three, and they helped me so much. There are also times when I go to my secret spot on campus to look at the calming waters, the crystal clear skies, and mountains which I love seeing as a part of the New Paltz community.



# Student Focus

## How did you become a leader on campus?

I'm one of seven children. I always felt the responsibility of modeling good behavior and sound decision making in my household. When I came to college, I had a great Resident Assistant. Not only was she excellent at instilling respect for the rules, she was also our friend. My team captain, in addition, held us accountable for everything. She taught us to put forth our best at all times, because nothing is going to be handed to you. You have to make the best of each opportunity. My peer mentor really cared, and I could depend on her in any situation.

My advisor is amazing. She is my biggest supporter in everything I do. She is always at my games. She advises me on life, basketball, and relates to me because she played sports. She knows so much, and can sense when something is wrong with me. She finds ways to accomplish things when I think they are impossible. She relays my accomplishments to everyone. She believes her students are going to change the world for the better. We are change-makers out here.

All these individuals inspired me. I take on these roles because I also want to be a positive influence, and make an impact on people with whom I come in contact. The biggest reward is seeing people step up to the plate and become successful. I do this because not many people get to attend college. Being EOP is a privilege. There are only 125 spots for the thousands of people who apply. I am taking this opportunity and running with it. I am showing how much I appreciate it. I am really thankful.



# Breakfast Recognition

## Leading into the Future



2012 marks the 5th year in which first-year EOP students are recognized for meeting high benchmarks:

Exemplary coursework completion and attendance in BLK175 – Key Issues in the Education of Underrepresented Students.

Consummate attendance in EOP math and writing study groups.



# Breakfast Recognition

## Leading into the Future



Please congratulate these students for their hard work and commitment to the EOP first-year experience!



Roger Borger  
Nearlyse Dandas  
Graciela Del Carpio  
Licelotte Fernandez  
Yinan Hou  
Qiqi Huang  
Raquell Kissi  
Nadiatou Ouedraogo  
Akeem Samuels  
Tan Truong  
Betsy Wiener



# Student Initiatives

## Spring 2013 Initiatives

- Wed. 1/30 Spring Social!**  
*SUB 100 2:00pm - 5:00pm*  
Join us for food, games, and fun!
- Wed 2/13 FAFSA and Your Money**  
*SUB 418 11:30am - 12:30pm*  
**Guest Speaker:** Camille Suckie, Financial Aid Advisor  
**All you ever wanted to know about your Financial Aid application!** Camille will go over the basics of your financial aid application and make sure you know about the changes in the forms and filing requirements for FAFSA.
- Wed 2/20 Get ready to Interview! How to make the right impression and get the job/internship!**  
*SUB 418 3:00pm - 5:00pm*  
**Guest Speaker:** Christine N. Featherston, EOP Advisor  
**Do everything right in that next interview!** This workshop will give you the tools you need to make employers sure you are the best fit for them!
- Mon 2/25 Education Panel**  
*SUB 100 5:00pm - 7:00pm*  
**Guest Speakers:**  
Educators from New Paltz School District  
**Get your questions answered!** This panel discussion will help you gain a broad understanding of the education system and what place you might have in it.
- Sat. 2/27 Network to get where you need to be!**  
*LC 112 11:00am - 12:30pm*  
**Guest Speaker:** Robert Hancock, EOP Advisor  
**Get your name in the right places and get where you want to go!** There are jobs out there, but you need to know how to get in touch with the people who can help you. Learn what networking can do for you.
- Wed. 3/6 Study Abroad**  
*SUB 418 3:00pm - 5:00pm*  
**Guest Speaker:** Clare Kelly-Barra, EOP Advisor  
**See the world!** Adventure! Earn college credits while you travel! Clare and a representative from the study abroad program will discuss the “dos and don’ts” of choosing where to study and how to plan your trip.
- Wed. 3/13 Stress Relief!**  
*SUB 100 5:00pm - 8:00pm*  
**Take a break from midterms and relax!** Come take a break from midterms and lighten up!
- Wed. 4/10 Depression**  
*LC 109 7:00pm - 8:30pm*  
*Dr. Gwen Lloyd*  
*Director, Psychological Counseling Center*  
**Are you curious about the signs of depression? Wonder if you or a friend might be more than just “blue?”** Come learn how to recognize the signs and how to cope. Millions suffer from various forms of depression and there are ways to stay productive and get through it!



# XAE – Chi Alpha Epsilon

## Spirit of Giving

The Beta Omicron chapter of the Chi Alpha Epsilon (XAE) National Honor Society is committed to community engagement and giving back.

Last Fall, XAE held many events to raise awareness and donations for the community:

Thanksgiving – Canned food drive.

Food donation drive for the [Family of New Paltz](#).

Giving Tree is in its second year. Each ornament lists an item that is needed, ranging from school supplies to essential personal care items. All donations were given to [Agricultural Business Child Development \(ABCD\)](#).

Holiday Gift-wrapping Fundraiser – Since 2009, this program collects toy donations to brighten the holiday season for young children. Gift wrapping services are offered for a small donation, or a toy donation. The funds are raised for [Toys for Tots](#) to buy toys, books, and other gifts for less fortunate children.

Below is a partial list of Spring 2013 events:

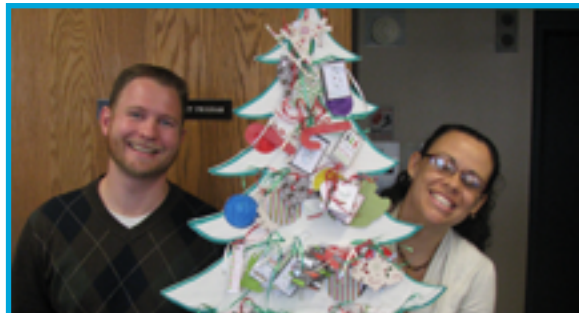
Annual Valentine's Day Candy Gram

Thurs. April 4 - Dinner Date with XAE

Sat. April 6 – Suicide Walk on campus

Fri. April 26 – XAE Induction for Spring 2013

**Criteria for XAE induction: 3.0+ cumulative GPA for 2+ consecutive semesters of full-time coursework**



# Alumni Connections

## Alumni Support and Pride in EOP

### Save the Date | Alumni Weekend 2013

EOP Alumni Social with DJ

Sat 9/21/13 3:00 - 6:00pm Location on [EOP events](#) page

Multicultural Networking Social

Sat 9/21/13 12:00 - 2:30pm College Terrace

Register at [www.newpaltz/eop/events.html](http://www.newpaltz/eop/events.html)

Prior to our EOP Social is the first ever Multicultural Networking Social! The Department of Black Studies, the Latin American & Caribbean Studies Program, along with the Scholar's Mentorship Program (SMP), the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), and the AMP and C-STEP Programs welcome all alumni, regardless of affiliation to either department or program, to attend!

EOP Alumni Weekend is a terrific opportunity to catch up with EOP friends, and to stay connected to your EOP family. In Fall 2012, Robert Hancock and Jessica Purcell worked assiduously with local business partners, who were generous for their donations towards the raffle. The proceeds directly benefit the [EOP Support Fund](#).



# Alumni Connections

## Alumni Support and Pride in EOP

On the Foundation Form where it states "please direct my gift to," if you designate "The EOP Support Fund" in the "Other" category, your contribution will be used to directly support EOP at SUNY New Paltz.

Please consider a monthly contribution or one-time gift.

It will benefit:

- Peer Mentoring Initiatives
- Alumni Reunions
- XAE Academic Honor Society
- EOP Student Socials
- Staff Development
- Alumni and Student Networking Events
- Developmental Workshops
- Student Initiatives
- Graduate School Application Fees
- Graduation Receptions and
- Induction Ceremonies

Add us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#)

for the latest updates.



**LinkedIn**





(Back: *Left to right*) Antonio Bonilla, Jessica Purcell, Clare Kelly-Barra, Ankur Kumar, Christine N. Featherston  
Robert Hancock III, Rita Celariste (Front: *Left to right*) Maritza Lewis, Amy O. Van Pelt, Ivelisse Tuttle



*Once EOP, Always EOP*

**Educational Opportunity Program  
State University of New York  
Haggerty Administration Building 401  
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:  
Ankur Kumar, EOP Advisor  
EOP Newsletter Editor  
kumara@newpaltz.edu

**More information about our program: [www.newpaltz.edu/eop](http://www.newpaltz.edu/eop)**