



The

Sojourner Truth

Newsletter

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Making Tangible Connections in Education:

The Value of Mentors and Mentoring Programs For Students of Color

One of the most profound ways to offer a consistent base of support for students of color in our results oriented society is through the relationships between mentors and protégés. The existence of these relationships and the programs that enhance learning for both mentor and protégé can be successful for all involved especially when viewed in the context of overcoming specific educational challenges facing people of color today. For instance, when one takes into consideration that there are over three thousands students who drop out of high school on a daily basis in this

country, the steady decline of minorities enrolled in graduate programs, the dearth of teachers of color in select fields of study such as science and English, and the alienation or displacement many students of color may experience within some educational systems, the act of mentoring can have a subtle yet defining role in helping to diminish these major challenges within various levels of education. It can be viewed also as a proactive tool for evoking change in many educational environments.

A first step that helps to assess fully the value of mentoring is clarifying perspectives about it that identifies the roles of mentors and mentees as well as some of the relevant functions of mentoring programs. Historically, initial use of the word stems from Homer's Odyssey. Odyssey, the King of Ithaca who went to fight in the Trojan War, chose a loyal and trustworthy counselor named Mentor to care for his son Telemachus. Telemachus was taught for several years by Mentor to

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

On behalf of all board members, we welcome you to the 2nd issue of the Sojourner Truth newsletter. This issue has as a dominant focus the theme of education, in part, because education encompasses nearly all aspects of our lives and because it is a true agent for empowerment, especially for people of color. At least three articles within this issue will highlight the need and value of education as it relates to social, health and personal concerns. By addressing the value of mentors, highlighting the need for more awareness about major diseases affecting our communities, and assessing the impact of archeology within our everyday lives, we hope we have developed an informative second issue that our readers find relevant and thought provoking. Furthermore, our aim with this issue continues to be in line with our mission statement of addressing critical issues and concerns that affect our lives while reminding us to maintain real connections of professional and communal support of one another. We thank you for your continued support.

Dr. Beverly A. Johnson

Mentoring Perspectives at Central Connecticut State University

Several staff, faculty and students have been or are currently engaged in mentoring on the CCSU campus. A select few decided to share their insights about the benefits of being a former mentor or being currently involved with mentoring programs at the university. Recent mentoring perspectives were given by Patricia Gardner, Associate Director of Recruitment and Admissions, Frank Donis, Professor of Psychology and President of the Latin American Association, and two CCSU students, Prince L. Prescott III and Melissa Yennie. These select quotes below reveal not only positive mentoring experiences, but they remind us of the necessity of mentors at CCSU. These quotes are shared with the intent of bringing more attention to the value of mentors and mentoring programs at all institutions of higher learning. More focus will be placed on this topic in future issues of the Sojourner Truth Newsletter.

***Ms. Patricia Gardner,
Former MEIP/CONNCAS Mentor, CCSU***

“When students participate in mentoring programs, most often the student will have a greater chance of being successful in their first year of college. They have a support system through the mentor while away from home, and they have someone on campus who they can talk to one-on-one about anything they need addressed. I believe it helps the student to know that they have someone they can go to who sincerely cares about their success and who is going to be candid with them. Mentoring was an opportunity [for me] to help students to understand the university environment, essential aspects of the university catalog on grading, academic good standing, probation, dismissal and withdrawal policies ... in addition to more personal related issues that can be addressed in order to keep students focused on learning in this academic environment.”

The Africana ConnCAS program is offered to students whose educational background has left them under-prepared for the challenges of college life. This Summer Transitional program is designed to help students who have developmental needs in the areas of

English Writing, Reading, Math, and Study Skills. Students will be given the opportunity to improve their skill level during the summer before enrolling in the University.

***Dr. Frank Donis,
President of the Latin American Association Program,
CCSU***

“Through our mentoring program, we try to instill in our students a sense of “family” which is very important for Latino/a students. By being in a supportive environment, students acquire the self-confidence they need to succeed. Students learn how to navigate the system effectively and use the resources that are available to them. These benefits of mentoring programs also improve retention. One of the most fulfilling aspects of mentoring is making a difference in people’s minds. Mentees are really appreciative of our efforts, and it is a real joy to see them grow in several important aspects.”

***Ms. Melissa Yennie,
CONNCAS Program Mentor, CCSU Student***

“As a high school student who joined the Upward Bound program, I know the benefits of being mentored. Mentors helped me with my transition from high school to college, and they influenced me to take advantage of the opportunities to help others as a mentor. The most fulfilling aspects of being a mentor at CCSU through the ConnCas program is receiving hugs from the young people I help.”

***Mr. Prince L. Prescott III,
Head Ambassador/Motivational Speaker,
ConnCAS Program, CCSU Student***

“I became a mentor to help guide kids on the right path to success. Mentoring kids and speaking to them at a young age will hopefully inspire them to be serious about their education. Mentors really make a difference in the lives of young people. We can confront the challenges of youth who feels academically lost. Thus, more university and community involvement would help to overcome these challenges and bring about positive results for all involved.”



OUR YOUTH, OUR FUTURE, OUR FOCUS

Over two hundred guests were in attendance for the New Britain Branch of the NAACP's Annual Freedom Fund Dinner, which was held on Saturday, September 17, 2005 in the Student Center Ballroom at Central Connecticut State University. The keynote speaker was New Jersey native Mr. Dan Smith, a former judge and Civil Rights Attorney. Smith's speech focused on the significance of maintaining family values with a special emphasis on the role of fathers in the lives of their children. He encouraged the audience to continually reinforce to children and young adults the values of maintaining good character and having a good education, particularly from historical perspectives. Thus, the work of the NAACP and the Urban League became central to his speech as he promoted the benefits of leaving a cultural legacy for our youth in light of current social and cultural conditions.



Children work out their bodies as well as their minds at the NAACP sponsored workshop in the Fall to Spring Semesters at Central Connecticut State University.

Attorney Smith's speech was clearly in line with the Annual Freedom Fund Dinner's theme "Our Youth, Our Future, Our Focus," and this theme resonated with the audience due to the recognition received by individuals who work on the behalf of children and young adults. For instance, Ms. Olga Callender, one of the first African American teachers in New Britain, received the NAACP Community Service Award along with the first African American Fire Chief in New Britain, Chief Mark Carr. Others recognized for their service and talents included Mr. Brian Riley, an entrepreneur whose work continues to be instrumental in helping young minority men become entrepreneurs and Ms. Loretta Eason, a graphic artist who has created cover designs for the local New Britain NAACP Branch Souvenir Booklets for several years. This year's recipient of the John P. Shaw Community Service Award, the highest awarded given by the New Britain Branch, was Mr. Ronald P. Davis, President of the New Britain Branch. The event's Co-Chair, Ms. Pauline Davis commented, "Although it is not easy to fight social injustice and racial discrimination, Ronnie has energized and rejuvenated us".

The Dinner also highlighted the talents of young people including an original "spoken word" piece delivered by ninth grader, Mary Wilson and a piano solo performed by seventh grader, Roger McIlwain, a graduate of the Once a Man, Twice a Child Saturday Academy sponsored by the New Britain Chapter of the NAACP. ■

Davis, Pauline
Co-Chair, Annual Freedom Fund Dinner
New Britain Branch, NAACP

ALAADS: Preserving the Past with Historical Tools of Knowledge

A necessary value that is a privilege to maintain in our society is the opportunity to prove or to challenge assessments and interpretations of historical information that has been characterized as factual or accurate. One major field of study that represents the importance of this value is Archaeology, and the Archeology Laboratory for African and African Diaspora Studies (ALAADS) is at the forefront of discovering more representative ways of understanding the past, especially as it relates to the history of African descendants in the United States. Under the direction of Dr. Warren Perry, Professor of Anthropology at Central Connecticut State University, the Archaeology laboratory thrives as a locale that is essential to several collaborative projects. Three specific ones are the New York African Burial Ground Project that is under Perry's leadership, the New Salem Plantation Project, headed by Gerald Sawyer, Adjunct Professor of Anthropology at Central, and the Connecticut Minkisi Project, supervised by Ms. Janet Woodruff, Administrative Trainee for ALAADS. Professor Perry points out that although they have responsibilities for leading different projects, they have discovered that their projects benefit most from their mutual participation.

ALAADS is also equally significant for Archaeology majors who play a major role in assisting with key projects and who have the opportunities to develop their own studies in association with the ALAADS staff. ALAADS caters to the needs of students by sponsoring special events such as the First Annual Robert N. Aebersold Student Conference held in April 2005. This conference gave at least eight CCSU students the opportunity to present original papers to an audience of over eighty students, faculty, and community members. Thus, ALAADS enhances further archaeology as a field of study for any student interested in developing observation and critical thinking skills as well as students who have legitimate concerns about accepting "facts" presented only from the perspective of those in power. Since several students majoring in archaeology are developing undergraduate thesis projects in African Diaspora Archaeology and others are working with faculty and community members on such projects as the African Burial Ground, ALAADS will continue to serve as a valuable resource center for their research interests.



Professor of Anthropology and Director of ALAADS, Warren Perry converses about artifacts in the Archeology Laboratory located in the Center for Africana Studies.

Located in the Center for Africana Studies at Central, ALAADS functions with a parallel agenda as the Center does because it works also at building partnerships throughout the campus, the community, and internationally. ALAADS is the only archaeology laboratory in the U.S. that is affiliated with a university African Studies Center. The Archeology Lab and Center are also linked as resource sites that encourage awareness and knowledge of the African Diaspora while making interdisciplinary connections. Although Perry emphasizes the unique perspective ALAADS brings to the university and larger community based on discoveries of hidden

patterns in the material record of the past, he is fully aware of the challenges ALAADS represents for established sources which become threatened by different historical perspectives, especially perspectives which can alter what people think about Connecticut, the country, and even the world. He asserts, "African Diaspora Archaeology, in particular, challenges the way that history books have portrayed the lives of African Americans. The material record, in many cases, directly refutes written accounts of the "gentle" character of African captive holdings in the northern United States and the presumed obliteration of African cultural practices. We have archaeological evidence that captive holding in the north was physically as well as emotionally brutal, and African cultural practices carried forth through generations."

Perry further comments on ALAADS's influence in dismantling stereotypes and misconceptions students, in particular, have about archaeology. Rather than comparing archaeology to treasure hunting or searches for valuable artifacts, he promotes archaeology as "a method of understanding people's lives based

on the objects they use". This is especially relevant for people of the African Diaspora whose marginal lives were not reflected nor represented accurately in the 18th and 19th centuries. The ALAADS staff promotes a premise of archaeology that is not only focused on the distant and recent past, but one that reveals and informs us also about the present, especially as it relates to our sense of locale. "The material record, unlike the written record, preserves without a social bias, and can be used to refute and/or confirm the accuracy of printed accounts," Perry stated. ALAADS's work, such as the N.Y. African Burial Ground, has influence on the direction of modern archeology and continues to make an impact on how history is taught. Attracting media attention, these projects have been featured in the March/April issue of Archaeology magazine.

ALAADS has a future vision of various collaborations with historically focused museums such as the Mattatuck Museum and Community for Change for the Arts (CFCFA). By working with CFCFA, the ALAADS's staff hopes to develop a museum of African
(Concluded on page 11)



Students and volunteers excavate a possible underground railroad site on Ladder Hill Road in Western, CT.

MAINTAINING A FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND HOPE:

Associate Dean Promotes Health Awareness About Sickle Cell Disease



Associate Dean of School of Technology Dr. Olusegun Odesina shares his insights about health issues affecting the Sickle Cell Community.

As founding member of Citizens for Quality Sickle Cell Care, Inc., (CQSCC), Dr. Olusegun Odesina, Associate Dean and Professor in the School of Technology, is making key strides in promoting public awareness about Sickle Cell anemia and other related illnesses. Odesina and his family have been advocates for people living with Sickle Cell through various

means of developing needed exposure and support services in Connecticut and other states. The idea for the foundation came into existence based on three families' belief that a clear need existed to advocate for people who live with the disease in order that they may have adequate and appropriate long term care.

With eleven board members, CQSCC is focused on making sure available and accessible medical care and support services exist for children and adults living with the disease and related disorders. According to Odesina, this must include medical care and support services that are comprehensive and culturally appropriate. Efforts to achieve these goals are made through education, advocacy, and counsel/support services. In the past four years, CQSCC has been active in the community by providing education about the misconceptions and lack of awareness from a national standpoint.

This chronic, debilitating genetic disease is an inherited

condition that affects the hemoglobin in the red blood cells. This condition that, ultimately, can lead to the damage of tissue and vital organs, decreases the body's ability to reproduce normal red cells and since people affected suffer from a short supply of red blood cells, they are clear candidates for developing anemia.

One of the biggest misconceptions, Odesina believes, is that many health care providers and policy makers are educated fully about Sickle Cell. In reference to their lack of understanding, Odesina comments, "On one hand because the disease is not like AIDS that manifests itself through different attributes, it is difficult for them to see it as a serious disease . . . Several people have died due to the lack of adequate care. The other side of this is the fact that even when adults patients, who are known to have the disease and have episodes of excruciating pain, the inexperienced care provider think they are faking it and thus have the tendency to deny them pain medications needed for relief. In some cases, they label them as drug addicts." Odesina acknowledges that a few states such as New York, California, Alabama and Georgia do focus on Sickle Cell disease in more proactive ways than others states; however, he believes there is gross marginalization overall nationally about it.

On a positive note, most states now have early diagnosis testing available for all newborns and parental education is increasing as well as entry into a Sickle Cell program for Prophylaxis penicillin. However, under funded programs that further extend appropriate medical care are still problematic within the society. For instance, Connecticut has two pediatric programs in Hartford and Yale, and both are under funded with limited staff to provide appropriate services. In addition, there is no adult comprehensive program to


provide quality medical care based on recent data and a lack of coordinated support systems for patients and family members. Odesina asserts, "I would like to see more support for intensive research to find a cure for this disease. There is more money spent on diseases that are not as debilitating as Sickle Cell disease. Also, there is appearance of racial classification of this disease which doesn't help matters on the national level. Meanwhile, funding that supports needed medical care and support services is always in high demand while the quest for a cure continues." Odesina further emphasizes the foundation's efforts to target (with education) health care providers in addition to those affected based on two key reasons: to expand their knowledge about the disease in order to promote early testing and to make sure that current or up to date treatment is available for patients in order to promote adequate long term care.

Even though the foundation is relatively new, the members are dedicated to educating the public and providing services to those in need. For instance, on September 27th 2004, the foundation, in collaboration with the Center for Africana Studies, sponsored a panel discussion titled, " Understanding Sickle Cell and Related Diseases". It was an informative session regarding Sickle Cell disease and the associated complications. The foundation has also made presentations to health care providers on current treatments of the disease so that they can be sensitive to what suffers of Sickle Cell are experiencing.

A dominant impact the foundation hopes to make in the future is the establishment of an Adult Sickle Cell Care Center through state funding. Although CQSCC has sponsored a bill three times for this purpose without prevailing, the members are not giving up on it, especially when progress has been made. Odesina affirms, " We have been able to assure the availability of a certified pediatric hematologist as the Pediatric Program Director in the

Hartford area. Also, in collaboration with the hospital for Special Care we will soon conduct a statewide needs assessment and provider education funded by DPH. This will be followed by an opportunity to attain trait counselors in the six regions and to provide educational services for primary care givers through a three year MCHB/HRSA grant, the first in the history of Connecticut."

As a founding member and former president of CQSCC who has two immediate family members living with Sickle Cell, Odesina has first hand knowledge about the issues people affected deal with. Thus, he is highly motivated to assist in efforts to find a cure.

He believes the foundation's work over the past four years has made a positive impact on several people. Dr. Odesina says, "Ultimately, the foundation is rewarded by the numerous testimonies and e-mails from parents who come in contact with the foundation's work and are helped through it." 

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The Center for Africana Studies 12th Annual Conference Aids in the African Diaspora

On November 4th 2005, the Twelfth Annual conference of the Center for Africana Studies was held in Thorpe Theatre, Davidson Hall at Central CT. State University. Informative and substantive speeches were delivered from speakers who represent numerous fields and institutions throughout the United States. The morning session began after the opening remarks by Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies, Paulette Lemma, Interim Provost and Acting Vice President of Academic Affairs, Ellen Whitford, and Interim Director of the Center for International Education, Lisa Bigelow. CCSU Faculty members, Dr. Peter LeMaire and Dr. Maxine Howell moderated the morning sessions.

Dr. Lula Beatty, from the Special Populations Office of the National Institute of Drug Abuse in Bethesda, Maryland, delivered the first lecture of the conference titled, "Drug Abuse, HIV, and Criminalization in African Americans: Using Research for Change". Dr. Beatty provided key parallels between drug use, crime, and HIV infections among select racial groups in this country. Although she focused on urban males of color throughout her lecture, her primary message centered upon the higher percentages of HIV/AIDS in African American communities when viewed in comparison to other racial groups in the United States. The conference continued with an insightful lecture by Dr. Faye Belgrave, Professor of Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Faye



Dr. Lula Beatty provides the first conference lecture titled, "Drug Abuse, HIV and Criminalization In African Americans: Using Research For Change".

stressed the importance for African American women (who are at risk from being infected with the HIV virus) to have culturally tailored interventions that can possibly decrease risk (of the disease) while increasing preventive measures. Dr. Belgrave's discussion was followed by acknowledgements from the President of Central Connecticut State University, Dr. Jack Miller. President Miller commended the Center's Director, Dr. Charles Mate-Kole for his role and efforts, applauded students in attendance, and encouraged students to participate in other conferences held at the university. The morning sessions concluded with two additional presentations that focused on HIV prevention for women in South Africa and HIV preventive approaches through "Rites of Passage" programs for the youth.

After a noon roundtable discussion session that collectively engaged presenters, faculty members, and student representatives of The Black Student Union, The Latin American Student Association, and the United Caribbean Club, the afternoon session of the conference convened with CCSU faculty moderators, Dr. Warren Perry and Dr. Olusegun Odesina. Keith Crawford, Clinical Director of Howard University's National Minority AIDS Education and Training, gave a poignant speech titled "HIV Diseases in Africa and the African Diaspora: Triumphs and Challenges." The success and failure rate with existing treatment for African people, the

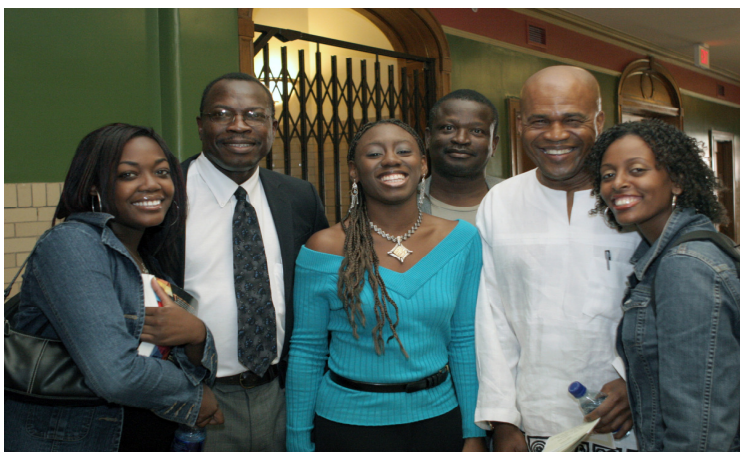


Senior Astou Seye and Ms. Grace Kennedy welcome and register students and community members to the 12th Annual Center for Africana Studies Conference.

difficulties of acquiring and administering anti-retroviral drugs, and treatment of diseases in addition to HIV/AIDs were major points of his speech. The afternoon sessions concluded with two key presenters, Dr. LaToya Conner, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Georgetown University, and Dr. Adrien N. Ngudiankama. Dr. Conner's speech highlighted the factors of low self-esteem and depression found in HIV women. She discussed the combination of individual and group intervention, including group therapy, for women suffering from the disease. Dr. Ngudiankama's speech, "Mechanistic/Reductionistic Approaches in HIV/AIDs Prevention: Rediscovering the African Therapeutic Philosophy

of Well Being," focused upon the importance of religion as it relates to health and healing, especially for HIV/AIDs victims in African societies. This final presentation was followed by a question and answer period, and the conference ended with closing remarks by the Center for Africana Studies Director, Dr. Charles Mate-Kole.

Rudi Somuah
Graduate Student, CCSU



Clockwise: Students and faculty take a moment to pose at the 12th Annual CAS Conference. Conference attendees listen intently to Dr. Lula Beatty's lecture concerning the impact of drug abuse throughout the country. Ellen Whitford, Interim Provost and Acting Vice President of Academic Affairs gives opening remarks to conference audience. Professors and students are attentive to the speaker's lecture.

MENTORING, *CONT'D*

become both a man and a ruler (Stone 11). In current times, this idea of mentoring relationships that encompasses the mentees or protégés's educational progress and, to some degree, their personal development can be found in numerous mentoring programs and may be expected in individual mentoring relationships. Since mentoring programs vary in type and scope of assistance, more programs that cater to the interests of select groups are surfacing today. These programs include but are not limited to faith-based mentoring, e-mentoring, peer mentoring and vocational mentor as well as the more traditional programs which focus on group mentoring such as the Boys and Girls Club of America, Big Brother Big Sister of America, and One Hundred Black Men, Inc., Generally, these organizations have a common aim of improving the quality of life for young individuals throughout the society. Yet this aim is twofold in that it provides opportunities for mentees to make clearer and better choices with their lives, and it enriches also the lives of the professionals and volunteers who understand that the learning process is interchangeable. Although existing research is relatively minimal about the impact of mentoring programs in our society, some limited studies show that students who participate in mentoring programs are receptive to further education beyond high school and are more than likely to enroll in college at higher levels than the students who did not participate in mentoring programs (Cave 17).

In a similar vein, effective mentors work diligently to implement the following four components to promote positive mentoring experiences: 1) assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the mentee 2) setting standards of excellence for the mentee 3) maintaining a respectful format of communication between mentor and mentee 4) opening oneself to self evaluation or self analysis. Each of these aspects of mentoring work effectively when the mentor has considered seriously the time, dedication, and



Dr. Olusegun Odesina provides valuable computer skills during a Saturday afternoon NAACP mentoring session held recently at Central CT. State University.

skills that are required to produce the desired results (Johnson 13-14). In addition, effective mentoring enables the mentor to make a fair analysis of the capabilities of the mentee and to determine whether the appropriate match of mentor and mentee has been made.

Each of these four components is especially relevant to mentors of color who may have to implement creative approaches to engage with select students of color who are exceptionally gifted yet highly unmotivated or in a category of students who may face a series of challenges that are academic, social, or personal in nature. Thus, many mentors of color share their past experiences, core values, and distinct language skills to promote the teaching and training of mentees that become parallel with improving the mentee's confidence and self esteem. Geneva Smitherman, a senior academic and mentor of color, understands clearly the value of mentors on these levels. In *Diving for Pearls: Mentoring as Cultural and Activist Practice among Academics of Color*, Smitherman explains:

... Since the mentor has been there before, she/he paves the way, points out the pitfalls, and hopefully can help the mentee avoid the mistakes and errors [that] the mentor

made in their development. The mentor sets standards of achievement and excellence for mentees as well as motivates them to stay on task so they can complete the journey. On occasion, this might mean nagging and butt kicking (especially when/if the mentee starts half steppin- which is normal, but it has to be overcome). Finally, mentoring is a kind of nurturing whereby the mentor helps/motivates the mentee to construct a vision of possibilities beyond the present moment.(512)

From middle school to graduate school levels, mentors of color can be viewed as activists who expose consistently the need for and benefit of better educational support systems and services for people of color, especially those who aspire to progress in the realms of higher education. As scholar Gail Okawa points out, mentoring is vital in the academic culture because it instills and reinforces the mentees’s self worth and assists in developing a sense of belonging and acceptance for students who may feel historically under-represented or marginal in number at predominately white universities (509). It is clear that the act of mentoring alone can not resolve any major educational or social crisis facing people of color today; however, the contributions of mentors who educate within and outside of ethnic communities should not be underestimated. Their presence, time and efforts may indeed help to reverse negative trends such as high school drop-out rates or the number of teen pregnancies, and may be vital to producing more people of color in

ALAADS, CONCLUDED

Diaspora art, history and culture. In addition, they will continue to promote a methods course and explore the possibility of creating courses abroad and on-line courses that may be taught cooperatively with universities in other countries. Clearly a valuable asset to the university and larger community, the ALAADS staff embraces its responsibility of preserving history while simultaneously reminding all of us

academe. Ultimately, mentors (and mentoring programs) who address the needs of students of color remind us beyond a surface level how we are all empowered by our willingness to be of service to others as others may have once been of service to us. ■

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EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

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(<http://www.ccsu.edu/cas/students.html>)

that the power of radical and unique archaeological perspectives of history can bring further clarity to our sense of time, place, and identity. ■

Johnson, Beverly.
Associate Prof. of English, CCSU, Editor-in-Chief

A Showcase of African Culture



Clockwise: Brother Abu delivers drum call and libation. Ebony Choral Ensemble performs various songs. CCSU students showcase African fashions, African Diamonds displays African Choreography.

On Friday April 28 2006, the Africana Students Organization organized the first of what is planned to be an annual major event - The Africana Students Organization "CULTURE SHOCK" - A Showcase of the African Culture. The guest speakers were Dr. Charles Mate-Kole, Director of the Center for Africana Studies, and Dr. Evelyn Phillips, Professor of Anthropology. The event featured "Drum Calls and Libation" by Brother Abu and African dancers; African Diamonds and African Pride. This event also highlighted singing by The Ebony Choral Ensemble of CCSU, performances by up and coming R&B singer; Ijeh, and the Hip-hop group, Black Antz. The Royal African fashion show dazzled the audience with casual everyday wear, formal wear, and wedding attire. The showcase concluded with a variety of African dishes. As the President of the Organization, I believe that all the hard work and effort put forth by the members of both the E-board and the club showed. This successful event exceeded my expectations.

Africana Students Organization (ASO) became a registered club at CCSU in the Fall Semester of 2005. The main focus of the organization is to bring about a sense of unity and belonging amongst students of African origin and other students interested in the African Diaspora and its culture at CCSU. Members of the ASO get together every Tuesday for meetings and discussions. The Organization held its initial Club-Introductory-Get-Together in the Spring of 2006, as a launch off for the organization. This club's "Introduction" provided a forum to welcome new members and for students to socialize freely. ■

Maryann Abogunde

(clubs.ccsu.edu/ASO)

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CONNCAS 2006

The Center for Africana Studies at CCSU will again host its annual five week summer transitional program for high school seniors, Connecticut College Access and Success Program, (CONNCAS). This successful program is in its fourth year and has helped many high school seniors make that leap to the next level.

This year's program will run from July 3, 2006 through August 4, 2006. Participants will live on campus and will participate in preparatory classes in Math, English, Information Technology, social studies and cultural activities. The program is **free** and includes residential accommodations, classes, transportation, meals and cultural activities. Africana Center students, including Nana Poku and Astou Seye will serve as peer mentors/counselors. Our thanks to the many faculty and staff who volunteer their time and expertise to help make this program a success.

For additional information you may contact the Center for Africana Studies: Ms. Grace Kennedy, (860)832-2816 (email:kennedyg@ccsu.edu or Nana Poku (email: poku_naa@ccsu.edu).