Once again, welcome back! You will find that this winter newsletter is unique in that it highlights a new intersession initiative at Potsdam called “Winter Academy”. In the pages which follow, EOP Freshman Jennifer Fernandez articulately describes the new program. Fellow first-year student Lawrence Daise provides you with a glimpse of the subject matter that students were working with in his description of “Grimms’ Fairy Tales.” Likewise, Sophomore Kyla Brooks shares her inspiration after viewing and writing about the film “Coach Carter” and interpreting a poem which was recited therein. Finally, Sophomore Lucellys Ortiz reminds us all why we need to keep working towards our collegiate degrees in her article about income differences based on education attainment levels in the United States. On behalf of our staff and our four Winter Academy participants, we hope you enjoy the newsletter.

~Shaili
Winter Academy 2013
~Jennifer Fernandez ‘16

During the 2009 fall semester, a grant was given to EOP, which helped begin the Recruitment and Retention Initiative. The initiative was meant to strengthen retention efforts. The grant has paid for various things such as: events for EOP students (day trips, workshops, game day/nights); the twenty dollars that help cover our Bear Bus fees; and admission travel for both the EOP director, Shaili Singh, and assistant, Raychon Gillis. Deidre Clark, Assistant Provost from the SUNY Office of Opportunity Program at Albany, was impressed with the success of the Recruitment and Retention Initiative and offered to give the SUNY Potsdam EOP a new grant. Ms. Clark pitched three ideas for the use of the grant: Winter Academy for at-risk students, intensive tutoring and support before exams, or an early summer program for “post freshmen” at risk for attrition following their first semester.

With the new grant, the Winter Academy for at-risk students was launched. The primary goal of the intersession program was to help further improve students’ skills in reading and writing, as well as, help build better discipline for the upcoming semester(s). The Winter Academy began on January 2nd, 2013. The two-and-a-half week program included activities such as: reading and writing seminars along with skill usage, physical activity to keep students active, dinner preparation, career planning, stress management, and tutoring from Sunday to Thursday night with the help of three College Writing Center tutors. Out of twenty EOP students offered the chance to participate, only four, myself included, accepted.

Although I worried about giving up the final few weeks of my winter break to come back to school, I came and participated in the Winter Academy. I did not know what to expect, but an opportunity for educational improvement was thrown at me and I gladly caught it. Throughout my time here, I have improved physically and mentally. I have explored and experienced the village of Potsdam, and participated in various kinds of physical activities that I would not usually do: yoga, working out at the fitness center and going for daily walks were a few of the many things that we were involved in for physical activity. Through rigorous reading, writing and the expansion of vocabulary, the group and I have mentally improved. I have learned several reading and writing techniques which I have struggled with in the past. For example, I have learned to better understand and analyze readings and how to develop a thesis statement and support my position throughout my paper. This experience is one I am glad I took on.

The grant for the Winter Intersession was put to good use. Discipline was put in place and new reading and writing habits were instilled upon us. The intersession has put me on the right path to begin the new spring semester. It has helped me improve and learn much more; I believe I can say the same for my peers. The program was very effective on me and if it were to be launched again, I am sure it would be beneficial for future students at risk.

Income Potential
~Lucellys Ortiz ‘15

High School graduates, or students who are contemplating going to university usually compare what benefits they will get from achieving a higher degree. Although there is a notion that college graduates tend to be better off economically than a high school graduate, few truly know the difference with regards to numbers. It is important for people to know the difference of these numbers because it can affect the quality of life they may be able to achieve. The American Dream of many parents is to have their children achieve success, and it is becoming more clear that a college education may grant not only the personal success of any student, but also the economic success of society as a whole.

According to a study done for The Business Journals Online by G. Scott Thomas, this century has shown about an 85% increase of income between people with their Bachelor’s degrees and high school graduates. A comparison, the 1970s, only showed a 30% drift of income between people with their Bachelor’s degrees and high school graduates. Thomas also indicates that there is a difference in income between people who have obtained Bachelor’s degrees and Master’s degrees. Between the two there was about a 35% difference during the 1970s, and currently there is a 45% difference between people with the two degrees. These disparities have raised many concerns for those who have yet to obtain any sort of college degree.

According to statistics there are variations of income between states. Thomas reported that in Tennessee, on average, a person with a Bachelor’s degree is making about $43,804 per year, compared to the $25,540 that an average high school graduate makes. In comparison, the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.) is said to have a larger difference, having an average college graduate make about $60,955 a year compared to $30,579 that a high school graduate might make. This gap is subject to growth on a yearly basis, and has a established a direct relationship between a person’s educational attainment and their earning power. There is a smaller difference between those with Master’s degrees and bachelor’s degrees, but of course this is subject to grow on a yearly basis.

Thomas’s study reinforced the importance of a college education in an American society, and without clearly stating it, you can infer that he wants American society to become conscious of the people and their surroundings. From these findings it may also be concluded that one must seek higher education to improve the quality of life they may have. Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees are stamps on a person that allow them to show their diligence, intelligence, and intellectual capabilities. There is very much an income gap between people of various educational attainment levels and it is up to every student to weigh his or her outcomes before downplaying a college education. In order to fulfill the American dream to its fullest potential, one must want, and seek a college education. Our parents have provided a platform, and it is up to our generation to continue on the path to personal and economic success.
"Our Deepest Fear"
~Kyla Brooks ‘15

-“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine as children do. It’s not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others.” -Timo Cruz

We all “fear” something, consciously and unconsciously, whether we want to believe so or not. It could be something physical, mental, or emotional. According to the poem, “Our Deepest Fear,” we all should not have anything to fear, if we attempt to face those “fears”. In the 2005 film, “Coach Carter,” Timo Cruz, recited the famous poem, “Our Deepest Fear,” which defines the entire movie. In interpreting the poem, I have been able to determine the actual origin of the poem, why he (Timo Cruz) is saying it, simplify what he is saying, and to define the difference between the recited poem from the movie and the original poem written by the poet. In addition, I was able to apply the poem greatly to my life, past and present.

I was intrigued with the message that the poem was giving, and decided to do some research about the poem. I discovered that a female, Marianne Williamson, originally wrote the poem. Cruz recited the poem almost towards the end of the movie. His reason for reciting the poem was because he was asked a question, which seemed difficult for him to answer throughout the movie “What is your deepest fear?” Cruz, being stubborn and rebellious, kept refusing to answer the question, until life gave him an ultimatum; to which he responded with the “Our Deepest Fear” poem.

In interpreting the poem, I was able to understand and simplify it. From my understanding of the poem, what we fear the most is realizing that we have an unlimited amount of power and control, and can accomplish way more in our life than what we were lead to believe. Many think that just because they had a difficult past, or an unappealing history about themselves, that they have no reason to set goals, make positive plans, or change their negative situations. The poem also states that as long as you keep pushing forward and never stop trying to accomplish things in life, you can never lose, especially when you are your biggest motivator and people around you are also there to help cheer you on.

In my opinion, I feel like this poem applies to my life a great deal, past and present. In the past, I always thought of myself as playing things kind of “safe” with my life. I grew up in a single parent home; I tried not to be active in anything social; and I felt like I was mentally, physically, and emotionally stifled from almost everything in life, all in the name of my mother. In the past, I thought I was doing my mom a favor with staying as close as I could and helping her out as much as I could by: always babysitting family members and friends; not participating in school events, especially sports because that involved money; and did my best to contain my sexual orientation, while attempting to do all of this with as little complaint as possible because I did not want to stress out my mother. But, what did I really accomplish other than growing up way too fast for my age? As a result, I almost did not make it out of my hometown and would have been a statistic like almost everyone else who did not make it, just to play it safe and to protect my mother and little brother. When Timo Cruz says, “Your playing small does not serve the world,” for me, this meant that by not taking chances, I did not take the chance to explore the opportunities around me.

Up until recently, I thought I was doing well with my fear of not leaving my hometown, and then I learned that I had a whole new fear that I never understood, until someone put it into a whole new perspective for me. My new fear was that I was going to end up like my mother, just settling for less than what I deserve. My mom spends her time working a full time job where she barely sees her own kids, and barely gets to “enjoy” the job itself, but it does not phase her because it’s money and it puts food on the table. I think this fear came about when I started to do poorly with my studies at SUNY Potsdam. I got too comfortable with dorm life and settled way too comfortably for “C” grades. As I was studying this poem, I learned that a “C” average is not acceptable on any level; especially since I have not put forth all the effort I know I could be shelling out; the effort everyone involved knows that I can achieve. With that in mind, Timo Cruz also said, “As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others,” which resonated within me with my situation in the Winter Academy. What Cruz is saying is that when we finally learn and understand our fears, from there we can let go and for those who spent so much time being concerned and putting effort to make sure we move along in life, they can finally relax and watch us succeed. I came to the Winter Academy to allow myself to have a new start, and to make sure that I understand that I would only get this one shot to start progressing for a turnaround in my academic grades.
“Our Deepest Fear” Cont’d
~Kyla Brooks ’15

For a long time I have known what I am capable of. I just became accustomed to making up excuses for many of my mistakes or failures. This poem helped me to see fear and my future in a whole new perspective. I hope I can follow through with the words I have related to in the poem. The poem “Our Deepest Fear,” recited by Timo Cruz and written by Marianne Williamson, has helped many set a new vision for their fears and future. Being able to determine and simplify the poem, and understand what Cruz is saying and why he is saying it, has put college into a new perspective and taught me not to treat the opportunities I receive lightly. It has created new standards to go by when heading into my spring semester of my second year of college at SUNY Potsdam. Between Williamson, Cruz and myself, the words are the same but what we take from the poem are completely different meanings; one thing that stays true though is that the poem encouraged positive changes in all of our lives. I hope to help pass these words along to someone who may be having a difficult time with things in life as the poem has helped me.

“Grimms’ Fairy Tales”
~Lawrence Daise ‘16

The fairy tales taken by Disney were not originally meant for children. Being filled with more graphic images, “Grimms’ Fairy Tales” targeted a more adult audience. Written in 1812, this book, which was written by the Grimm brothers, contains various stories such as Rumpelstilskin, Cinderella, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, and Little Red Riding Hood. Each story, along with being entertaining to read, teaches readers life lessons.

Most of the stories in “Grimms’ Fairy Tales” started out as oral myths at first. The Grimm Brothers spent several years collecting dozens of these stories for their famous book that they were told by their friends or German Pleasants”(Western Publishing Company). Therefore a couple of these stories were never really written until the Grimm brothers created this book. In 1937 Disney adapted Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, and Cinderella in 1950 (Molly Driscoll). Even though both of these tales have similar names the difference in level of gore is fairly high. For instance, in Cinderella the stepsisters cut off their heels and toes in order to fit into a glass slipper, while in the Disney version they just tried the slipper on in front of the prince. It is indeed ironic how gorish tales have changed into G rated movies. From two stepsisters cutting off parts of their feet to simply trying it on in front of the prince, the fairy tales from the Grimms defiantly illustrated more violent scenes. However, both The “Grimms’ Fairy Tales” and Disney’s adaptation had a common message that the good will succeed while evil will not go unpunished, just like in life how there are rewards for doing good and consequences for being bad. If you work hard and get good grades then you will find a prince and marry him, or graduate whichever one you prefer more, or doing well for ill intentions will come back to haunt you like in Rumpelstilskin, where he only helped out in order to get a baby to eat.

The “Grimms’ Fairy Tales” are entertaining, and fun to read for any college student who is looking to kill some time and see how their favorite childhood fairytales were originally told. It also can be related to your life and makes you ask, “Have I been a good person or not?” Next time you might think about how being determined can take you a long, long way.

Dorothy C. and John P. Flynn Scholarship

Would you like to pursue a transformational experience?
Apply for the Dorothy C. and John P. Flynn Scholarship.

An award of at least $1,000 will be provided to the student who best meets the application criteria below:

At the time of application, students must:

- Be actively enrolled in the Educational Opportunity Program at SUNY Potsdam;
- Have completed at least 36 credits of undergraduate study at SUNY Potsdam; and
- Have a minimum earned GPA of 2.5 at the end of the fall term.

**Please see Heidi if you would like to apply.**
Fall 2012 Honors Corner

President’s List
Christina Alubankudi
Stephanie Hall
Denisse Ochoa
Caitlin Scavone
Maggie Stasko

Dean’s List
Rosemary Alubankudi
Carolina Batista
Tanasia Betts
Dallas Emrich
Stephen Greenberg
Annie Jacobs
Samuel Lucas
Marissa Richardson
Rossanna Valdez

August 2012 Graduates
Whitney Hargett
Amanda Joles
Isaiah Steward
Christopher Torres

December 2012 Graduates
Robert Castro
Denisse Ochoa
Samantha Sharrow

Congratulations!

EOP Staff
Shaili Singh         Program Director
Nancy Brown         EOP Counselor
Alexis Nuffer       EOP Counselor
Raychon Gillis      Staff Assistant
Heidi Crump         Secretary
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