Ten years ago, Dr. Linda Williamson Nelson, professor of Anthropology and Africana Studies, took her class for the first time to South Africa with Dr. Melaku Lakew, professor of Economics, and his students, and the group visited the township of Soweto.

The bare shelves in the Soweto high school library struck a nerve with Jaylin Thomas, one of Dr. Williamson Nelson’s students.

“As we walked out, Jaylin said she knew she would be changed by this trip,” said Dr. Williamson Nelson.

Upon their return, Thomas and Dr. Lakew organized a new student club, Books Without Borders. The club was created to address the concern for the lack of educational materials in third world countries. The organization is composed of students, professors and concerned citizens who believe in the power of education and equal opportunity for all.

Dr. Lakew, the club’s advisor, headed donation efforts as part of his Service-Learning GSS course, Intro to International Studies. This past December, Books Without Borders shipped 525 boxes containing approximately 18,500 books to Kogi State Polytechnic in Kogi State, Nigeria.

“In less than two years, the club has shipped 40,000 books to needy countries all over the world,” said Dr. Lakew. “The club is founded on a belief that all children deserve books to read whether they are from Africa or America. It is one of the fundamental rights of children eager to learn and enlighten themselves.”

Daniel Tomé, assistant director of Service-Learning, aided the project by providing Student Engagement Activists (SEAs) to work in the role of project managers with Dr. Lakew’s class.

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Books Without Borders Sends 18,500 Books to Nigeria

“Service-Learning was the mechanism which helped Dr. Lakew’s classes address the greater need,” said Tomé. “If we weren’t looking at the larger problem, we were missing the boat.”

As a result, Dr. Lakew’s students focused their efforts on fundraising, approaching faculty members who received free editions of textbooks and asking them to return the books for their suggested retail price. The money was then donated to the Kogi Polytechnic Institute along with thousands of books.

“The Libraries at [our] institutions will enjoy new scholarly books and journals on the empty shelves for students’ use,” wrote Dr. Samuel A. Alfa, President of Kogi State Organization (USA), Inc., in a thank you letter. “Kogi State Polytechnic and other institutions of higher learning in the State are very young, and this generous donation will go a long way.”

Stockton Selected for AASCU-Macat Interactive Library Pilot

Stockton has been selected to participate in the pilot of the Macat Digital Interactive Library and Platform Evaluation, a partnership between the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and Macat, a digitally interactive library and learning platform.

The AASCU pilot is expected to last six to eight weeks and will consist of undirected and directed activities, conversations, and interviews through which pilot participants will engage with the Macat library and platform and provide feedback about their experience.

Selected Stockton faculty members will be asked to work with and review an early beta version of the Macat library and platform, and to assess it across a range of criteria related to content quality, intellectual structure, and accessibility for the target user. They will also review the platform’s functionality, features, and ease of use.

The pilot will explore questions related to how institutions might use the resource, potential licensing/sales models, and factors related to purchasing decisions at U.S. higher education institutions.

To learn more about Macat, click here.

Africana Studies Sponsors Two Events for Black History Month

Stockton’s Africana Studies program sponsored two events this week, celebrating Black History Month and the program’s 30th anniversary.


Dr. Patricia Reid-Merritt, Distinguished Professor of Social Work and Africana Studies, and Dr. Linda Williamson Nelson, professor of Anthropology and Africana Studies, organized and spoke at the conference, along with Dr. Donnetrice C. Allison, associate professor of Communications, Dr. Ellis Benjamin, assistant professor of Chemistry, Dr. Melaku Lakew, professor of Economics, Dr. Michelle Craig McDonald, associate professor of Atlantic History, and Dr. Beverly Vaughn, professor of Music.

During the panel discussion, Dr. Shawn Donaldson, associate professor of Sociology, moderated an exploration of cultural connectedness and distinctions on the complex movement of African identities across continents. Panelists included Dr. Lakew, Dr. Williamson Nelson, Dr. Sonia V. Gonsalves, professor of Psychology, and Dr. Janice Joseph, Distinguished Professor of Criminal Justice.
Dean Keenan Selected to NJDOE State Program Approval Council

Dean Claudine Keenan of the School of Education, has been selected to serve on the New Jersey Department of Education’s State Program Approval Council (SPAC), a panel that will advise the Commissioner on matters pertaining to educator preparation and program quality. Dean Keenan is one of only 11 members, six of them from higher education, five from K-12 schools, who have been asked to serve on the statewide council.

As a member of the inaugural SPAC, Dean Keenan will serve a vital role in establishing a rigorous, streamlined, and timely approval process for new and substantially revised programs in New Jersey.

Dean Keenan will assist in coordinating the bi-annual peer review program approval process, discuss matters of program approval and then generate recommendations to the department on policy changes and submitted program applications. The inaugural members will also help the Department of Education to further define council membership terms at their first meeting on Feb. 28.

Nancy Fiedler Retiring from Kramer Hall Position in March

Nancy Fiedler, administrative liaison at the Kramer Hall Instructional Site, is bringing her 14-year career at Stockton to an end on March 1, 2014.

Most of Fiedler’s career here was spent in the area of academic program support and advising.

Most recently, she joined the professional staff at Kramer Hall where she served as an administrative liaison. In this position, Fiedler cultivated several meaningful relationships including those with various high school administrators and students as well as a myriad of Hammonton merchants.

Fiedler’s creative side blossomed when she took over the planning of Kramer Hall’s Third Thursday events which routinely featured Stockton faculty or staff who shared their expertise with the Hammonton community.

“We will miss Nancy's smile and enthusiasm,” said Dr. Eileen Conran-Folks, manager of Instructional Sites. “We wish her the best as she begins a new chapter of her life.”

Three Stocktonians Aid in Habitat for Humanity Home Restoration

Three members of the Stockton community are aiding in the restoration of homes in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy as members of the Habitat for Humanity Atlantic County (HFHAC) Board of Directors.

HFHAC board member Rick Ricciardi is a 1976 Stockton alumnus. Ricciardi also serves on the college’s Foundation Board of Directors, and is the president of Habitat’s board.

Another Stockton graduate on the Habitat Board of Directors is Nick Sena, a 2008 alumnus. Sena, the leadership annual giving coordinator in the Office of Development in Alumni Affairs, currently serves as the Habitat Board Secretary. Sena became involved with the affiliate after interning in the office his senior year at Stockton.

Nikki Strothers, gift processor for the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs, sits on the Habitat Board as the chair of the Public Relations and Outreach Committee. Strothers was in the Habitat club at her alma mater, Ithaca College.

Throughout the years, many faculty and staff members, as well as alumni, have served on the board or volunteered with HFHAC.

“Ever since my first days on Stockton’s campus, I knew this college was committed to community engagement,” said Sena. “My involvement with Habitat, along with that of fellow colleagues and alumni, is reflective of that commitment. I take great pride in working here and knowing that Stockton continues to prepare students to positively contribute to organizations such as Habitat.”

Since Superstorm Sandy, the Atlantic County affiliate has restored close to 20 homes and has plans to complete an additional 15 more before the end of the year. The organization is in need of volunteers and donations in order to put families back in their homes. If you are interested in volunteering, or making a donation, contact Sena at Nicholas.sena@stockton.edu.
Career and Internship Fair Hosts 91 Employers, 400 Students

The Career Center’s Spring Career and Internship Fair, held on Feb. 6, hosted 91 employers and had over 400 students and alumni in attendance. Employers representing every industry attended, including health care, government, environmental science, banking and finance and hospitality.

In addition to employers, several of Stockton’s departments were present, including the Criminal Justice Department, The Washington Center Internship, The School of Graduate and Continuing Studies and The Retail, Hospitality & Tourism Talent Network of NJ.

“Stockton faculty members help promote the event by requiring students to attend,” said Dayna DeFiore, assistant director of the Career Center. “This ensures that employers meet a number of qualified candidates to fill their summer internships and full-time positions.”

“This was one of the best fairs we have hosted,” said Walter L. Tarver III, director of the Career Center. “Both employer and student participation increased, with many employers commenting on how well-dressed and prepared our students were.”

College Competing with U.S., Canadian Schools in RecycleMania

For the second year in a row, Stockton is competing in RecycleMania, a friendly competition and benchmarking tool for college and university recycling programs to promote waste reduction activities to their campus communities.

Over an eight-week period each spring, colleges across the United States and Canada report the amount of recycling and trash collected each week and are in turn ranked in various categories based on which institution recycles the most on a per capita basis. The schools are also ranked based upon which have the best recycling rate as a percentage of total waste and which schools generate the least amount of combined trash and recycling. With each week’s updated ranking, participating schools follow their performance against other colleges and use the results to rally their campus to reduce and recycle more.

Winning schools receive an award made out of recyclable materials, and win the right to host that category’s special traveling trophy for the coming year.

Do your part to help Stockton and the Earth by separating your trash and recycling!

To view weekly updates on Stockton’s recycling statistics in the RecycleMania competition, click here.

Send Us Your News!

We want to know about things going on in the Stockton community. Do you have an unusual hobby? Did one of your co-workers win an award or perform outstanding public service? Births, weddings, graduations and the like are all good things to submit to the Stockton Times. Contact the editor at (609) 652-4593 or e-mail Stockton-Times@stockton.edu

News about distinguished students can now be found at Distinctive Stockton Students. To contribute a news item for the blog, please contact the editor at distinctive@stockton.edu

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