



**Asian Pacific
American Heritage
celebrated through
Art Exhibition**

**Through June 30th,
OMSS Gallery, 2500
Student Union
M-F, 8:15am - 5pm**

Cultural Awareness: Come to OMSS to increase it!

Cultural Awareness is the foundation of communication and it involves the ability of standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs and perceptions. Why do we do things in that way? How do we see the world? Why do we react in that particular way? Cultural awareness becomes central when we have to interact with people from other cultures. People see, interpret and evaluate things in a different ways. What is considered an appropriate behavior in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another one. Misunderstandings arise when I use my meanings to make sense of your reality. Misinterpretations occur primarily when we lack awareness of our own behavioral rules and project them on others. In absence of better knowledge we tend to assume, instead of finding out what a behavior means to the person involved. Becoming aware of our cultural dynamics is a difficult task because culture is not conscious to us. Since we are born we have learned to see and do things at an unconscious level. Our experiences, our values and our cultural background lead us to see and do things in a certain way. Sometimes we have to step outside of our cultural boundaries in order to realize the impact that our culture has on our behavior.

Degrees of Cultural Awareness

There are several levels of cultural awareness that reflect how people grow to perceive cultural differences.

My way is the only way - At the first level, people are aware of their way of doing things, and their way is the only way. At this stage, they ignore the impact of cultural differences. (Parochial stage)

I know their way, but my way is better - At the second level, people are aware of other ways of doing things, but still consider their way as the best one. In this stage, cultural differences are perceived as source of problems and people tend to ignore them or reduce their significance. (Ethnocentric stage)

My Way and Their Way - At this level people are aware of their own way of doing things and others' ways of doing things, and they chose the best way according to the situation. At this stage people realize that cultural differences can lead both to problems and benefits and are willing to use cultural diversity to create new solutions and alternatives. (Synergistic stage)

Our Way - This fourth and final stage brings people from different cultural
(continued on pg. 2)

(Cultural Awareness, continued from pg. 1)

background together for the creation of a culture of shared meanings. People dialogue repeatedly with others, create new meanings, new rules to meet the needs of a particular situation. (Participatory Third culture stage)

Increasing cultural awareness means to see both the positive and negative aspects of cultural differences. Diversity creates valuable new skills and behaviors and in becoming culturally aware, people realize that:

- **We are not all the same**
- **Similarities and differences are both important**
- **There are multiple ways to reach the same goal and to live life**
- **Each situation is different and may require a different solution.**

How Do I Manage Cultural Diversity?

We are generally aware that the first step in managing diversity is recognize it and learning not to fear it.

Since everyone is the product of their own culture, we need to increase both self-awareness and cross-cultural awareness. There is no book of instructions to deal with cultural diversity, no recipe to follow. But certain attitudes help to bridge cultures.

Admit that you don't know. Knowing that we don't know everything, that a situation does not make sense, that our assumptions may be wrong is part of the process of becoming culturally aware. Assume differences, not similarities.

Suspend judgments. Collect as much information as possible so you can describe the situation accurately before evaluating it.

Empathy. In order to understand another person, we need to try standing in his/her shoes. Through empathy we learn of how other people would like to be treated by us.

Systematically check your assumptions. Ask your colleagues for feedback and constantly check your assumptions to make sure that you clearly understand the situation.

Become comfortable with ambiguity. The more complicated and uncertain life is, the more we tend to seek control. Assume that other people are as resourceful as we are and that their way will add to what we know. "If we always do, what we've always done, we will always get, what we always got."

Celebrate diversity. Participate in all the great OMSS events that can provide you with the opportunity to learn about other cultures and diversity.

Adapted from an article entitled "What is Cultural Awareness, anyway? How do I build it?" by Stephanie Quappe and Giovanna Cantatore <http://www.culturocity.com/articles/whatis-cultural-awareness.htm>



7th Annual Latino Youth Summit scheduled May 12, 2009



Keynote Speaker:

Juan R. Guardia, Ph.D.

Director, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Florida State University

According to the 2000 U.S. Census report, Latinos are the fastest growing population in the United States and now the largest ethnic group in the country. A more recent update states that one in every eight U.S. citizen is Latino. Sadly, the statistics also illustrate that Hispanic youth are less likely to complete their high school education, less likely to enter college and less likely to complete their degrees.

To address this issue on a community wide level, former University of Toledo president, Dan Johnson, directed the Latino Advisory Committee in 2003 to coordinate and implement a Latino Youth Summit (LYS). The purpose of the program is to help increase the Latino high school graduation rate and college attendance by engaging parents and students in early preparation activities and information sessions. Working with area schools, as well as social service agencies and Latino-based

organizations, The University of Toledo implemented the first Latino Youth Summit in April 2003. Now in its seventh year, the Latino Youth Summit is scheduled to take place May 12, 2009 at UT.

The following objectives of the Summit will help to achieve the goal of increasing the Latino high school graduation rate and college attendance.

- Engage 50% of northwest Ohio's Latino youth on the college prep track by 2010;
- Help parents become better informed about navigating through the educational systems for high school and higher education

(continued on pg. 4)

Celebrate the 3rd Annual Multicultural Student Leadership Awards 2009

OMSS invite you to join us in celebrating students who have exemplified excellent leadership in diversity awareness and appreciation of UT. Diversity, inclusiveness and individualism enrich our campus in many ways and it is time to recognize students for having the drive and commitment to make a difference in this area.

Please joins us on Friday, May 1, 2009 for the 3rd Annual Multicultural Student Leadership Awards!

Friday, May 1, 2009

2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Ingman Room, Student Union

Keynote Address: Dr. Susana Muñoz

Dr. Muñoz has a B.A. in Political Science and International Studies from Iowa State University and a M.S. in Student Affairs in Higher Education Administration from Colorado State University and a PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Study program from Iowa State University. Susana is originally from Merida, Yucatan, Mexico but grew up in Fairbanks, Alaska and in Sioux City, Iowa.

Awards to be presented Include:

The Emerging Leader Award

The Advocate Award

Community Spotlight Award

Defying the Odds Award

The Excel Award

Distinguished Multicultural Student Leader Award

AASEIO Commitment Award

OLI Commitment Award

LGBTI Commitment Award

Office of Accessibility Commitment Award

International Student of the Year



AASEIO Extends Congratulations to Grads

The spring term is quickly approaching, and for many students this is the close of their academic year. Let me say CONGRATULATIONS to all those students who will be departing the hallowed hallways of academia at the University of Toledo through the doorway of graduation. You have done well regardless of your major, grade point average or the number of years it has taken you to arrive at this point. Your diploma did not have an expiration date on it and you are right on time for your future.

This is the time of the semester when many students will find themselves stressed because of impending finals and the accumulation of reading, writing, projects, presentations and end of the year responsibilities. With the short amount of time left find time to enjoy each day you have on campus. The four, five (and for some students six) years you spend in college, however stressful, will become some of the most carefree, exploratory and self-proving you will have in your life. You just may need some time between this experience and your appreciation of this experience to realize it.

Congratulations to the graduates! Good luck to everyone taking finals and completing end of the semester assignments. For those who are eyeing the specter of FINAL EXAMS keep the Study Tips below in mind as you prepare.

www.AESEducationPlanner.org

STUDY SKILLS

1. Find your own quiet place at home to study where you can concentrate and do better on your homework.
2. When studying, sit in a comfortable chair but not one that is TOO comfortable.
3. Don't do homework in front of the TV – it is too distracting. While you're at it, try to ignore the telephone – your friends can leave a message!
4. Quiet background music might help you stay focused while you are studying.
5. Study with a friend or a group of friends. Compare notes and ask each other questions.
6. Know what your learning style is, and study in a way that best matches your own learning style.
7. Take short but frequent breaks, like a five minute break after twenty-five minutes of studying.
8. Try to relate what you are studying to things you already know to remember information more easily.
9. Start with the most difficult tasks or assignments, and then move on to the easier ones to focus maximum brain power on the hardest tasks.
10. The quality of your study time is much more important than the quantity of your study time.
11. Get into the habit of studying every day.
12. Try to determine your best study time and plan on studying at that time every day.
13. Think of homework as practice, not work. You know that you don't get better at things like sports or music or cheerleading unless you practice. School's the same.
14. Plan on a fun activity for yourself as a reward for when you are DONE with your studying.
15. After each study session, try to recall the main points and as many details as possible.
16. If you are not sure about something, ask a teacher, parent or friend for help. Asking questions is one of the most effective ways we learn!
17. Plan to spend MORE time (not less time) on the subjects that are harder for you.

(Latino Youth Summit, continued from pg. 3)

This continues to be one of the largest gatherings of Latino students in the region. Many of the students walk away with a feeling of pride in their heritage and with new ideas and information for a better future. LYS arms youth and families with college planning information. Included are information sessions about pre-high school and pre-college coursework and career related information about occupational fields requiring skills in science, math and technology with ways to pursue a career path. Interactive sessions immerse junior high participants in science and chemistry as they will make a fragrant body lotion they can take home. Information and discussion groups for tenth to twelfth grade students range from appropriate courses to take to financial assistance for college, as well as, alternate post-secondary options such as the military. Also, information about preparation for the building trades and required steps toward a chosen career path will be provided.

An important aspect of the Summit is the opportunity for Latino students to meet representatives from colleges that comprise the ECHHO association, Educators and Community Helping Hispanics Onward. This college fair allows students to obtain information pertaining to college admission and scholarship opportunities. The Summit provides ECHHO with an opportunity to interact with the largest gathering of Latino youth from northwest Ohio.

PARENT'S TRACK AND DINNER

On the eve of the Latino Youth Summit, parents will take part in a Parent Track. The Parent component provides opportunities for parents to be engaged in dialogue with professionals from areas such as the UT Office of Admissions, Adelante -The Latino Resource Center, and other community agencies. Parents seize this time to ask questions and collect business cards from other Latinos employed in schools and universities. Moreover, this is an opportunity to empower parents to help their children graduate from high school and encourage college attendance.

OVERNIGHT EXPERIENCE

As part of the Latino Youth Summit Experience, an overnight component has been established. Fifty to sixty Latino students from the 8th through 12th grade spend a day and night on The University of Toledo campus. They take part in a number of educational sessions, classes and fun activities with the purpose of preparing them for a university career. Students enjoy the overnight and look forward to this summer program component.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

As children register for the Summit, seniors are encouraged to apply for college scholarships at The University of Toledo. Scholarship information is included with the information packets and sent to all area schools. During the lunch portion of the event, we take the liberty to award the scholarships to those future Rockets!

If you are interested in serving as a volunteer for the Latino Youth Summit please call Sabina Elizondo-Serratos at x2992 or email sabina.serratos@utoledo.edu.

Diversity Tidbits

WORLDS GREATEST MINDS...

Albert Einstein, one of the greatest minds of the 20th century, is said to have had a learning disability.

U.S. LATINO POPULATION...

Latinos account for 15 percent of the U.S. population. Between 1990 and 2007, the Latino population increased 100 percent, compared with a 21 percent increase for the entire population. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

LIVING WITH A DISABILITY...

Approximately 10 percent of the world's population, 650 million people, live with a disability. People with disabilities are the world's largest traditionally underrepresented group. This figure is increasing through population growth, medical advances and the aging process. (Sources: United Nations, World Health Organization)

LARGEST MINORITIES IN U.S....

Blacks are the nation's second largest minority. Hispanics are the largest minority. They number 45,504,311, and are 15.1% of the US population.

Office of Multicultural Student Services: 419.530.2261, www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/omss

African American Student Enrichment Initiatives Office: 419.530.7264, www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/aseio

Office of Latino Initiatives: 419.530.2992, www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/latinos

Office of LGBTQ Initiatives: 419.530.5324, www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/lgbt

To submit topic suggestions for future issues of Orbit, please call 419.530.2261 or email anthony.kapp@utoledo.edu.