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- NYIT HEOP ALUMNI
  Connect with HEOP graduates on LinkedIn linkedin.com/groups/7073658

- EMAIL
  Contact the HEOP staff at heopma@nyit.edu

- CONTACT INFORMATION
  33 W. 60th St., 3rd Floor
  New York, NY 10023
  212.261.1545

- STAFF
  Phillip Menzies, Director
  Carla Freeman, Assistant Director/Counselor
  Rachel Morrison, Counselor
  Nadia Feracho, Administrative Assistant

From the Director’s Desk

Welcome back, everyone! As we embark upon the 2018-2019 school year, the fall issue of the Arthur O. Eve HEOP Happenings Newsletter will take a look back at the many examples of our students’ leadership, personal achievements, and involvement on and off campus from this past spring. This issue will feature stories such as Chi Alpha Epsilon (XAE) National Honor Society induction ceremony, graduate updates, HEOP Summer Program, and much more.

We encourage you to inform us of milestones achieved during your time here at NYIT so we can include them in HEOP Happenings. We believe that every student achievement deserves a moment in the spotlight.

I wish all of you a successful and productive semester.

Sincerely,

Phillip Menzies
Director, Arthur O. Eve HEOP

HEOP Graduate Luncheon
By Carla Freeman

It is a long-standing tradition that each year the NYIT Higher Education Opportunity Program honors its soon to be graduates and future alumni. This year’s graduate recognition ceremony was held on May 3rd, and highlighted the academic and personal accomplishments of the 17 students who earned their degrees in the fall or spring semesters of academic year 2017-2018.

After brief introductions and highlights of the each students’ accomplishments during their time at NYIT by their respective HEOP Counselors, the proud graduates were given the opportunity to share their stories with fellow graduates, faculty and staff, as well as acknowledge those who helped them get to this important stage in life.

Two graduates, Lismary Cabral (B.S. Electrical and Computer Engineering) and Salamatu Kenchi, (B.F.A., Communication Arts/TV Radio Program Production) served as student speakers for the event. Words of encouragement, and advice; as well as praise for a job well done, was offered by guest speaker and NYIT HEOP graduate Ting Ting Mei, Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions, who shared her experience as an HEOP student and now NYIT professional staff member.
HEOP Alumni Panel and Orientation  
By Nadia Feracho

Orientation can be an exciting, but also nerve-wracking day to many students; getting to know their peers, staff, and the culture of the school. For the HEOP orientation on July 2nd, we wanted to ensure that students broke out of their comfort zone and were motivated to be active in the NYIT community. We started them off with icebreakers that tested their memory skills. Although early in the morning, the icebreakers got them up and active! One student stated, “The icebreakers gave us a chance to interact with other students and exchange snapchats. It also gave us a chance to know each other better.” After, we moved on to the program overview. Our director Phillip Menzies shared his personal experiences being a HEOP student at his alma mater. The students’ faces lit up to know that he came from a similar background to them. Despite any hardship they may face, they too can defy the odds and statistics coming from a low income background.

If there is any advice you should take, it should be the advice of alumni. These are the people who have taken the classes that you will take, walked the halls that you will walk, and made the mistakes that hopefully you will learn from.

After wrapping up one-half of orientation, our 20 students listened to a panel of 6 alumni who came from a variety of majors and years. Being the most recent president of the SGA, Bryan Diaz (B.S. ‘18) explained to the freshmen the importance of being a student leader, getting involved in school activities, and taking advantage of the resources around them. Students like Martha Depumarejo (B.S. ‘16) learned that being an introvert has its pros and cons. She wished she would have been active sooner in her college career to make more connections. When asked for their reaction, one freshman said, “The panel answered a lot of questions that I had on my mind.” Each freshman felt more connected to the school by the end of orientation. They were able to understand the importance of HEOP and how privileged they are to be a part of a program that assists them so significantly.

Student Leadership and Service Awards Ceremony  
2018  
By Phillip Menzies

On May 3rd, 2018, the NYIT Student Affairs department hosted its annual student leadership and service awards ceremony to honor faculty and students for both their service and achievements within the NYIT community. This year’s recipient of the Higher Education Opportunity Award (NYIT HEOP’s highest honor) was graduating senior Bryan Diaz. Bryan also took home the Dean of Student Life Award that evening for his commitment of service as a student leader. It was a proud moment for both HEOP and the NYIT community as well. Senior Diana Lopez was recognized as well as for her participation in two groups that received awards. Sorority Alpha Sigma Tau (AST) was awarded Outstanding Chapter of the Year, and the Student Programming Association (SPA) received Program of the Year for their Haunted Floor event. As an active member of both organizations, Diana was present to receive the awards with her peers.

Since Bryan was unable to attend the ceremony, his mother and brother Justin Diaz (B.S. ’20) accepted his awards on his behalf. They are pictured here with Dean of Students Gabrielle St. Leger and NYIT President Hank Foley.

Arthur O. EVE HEOP NYC Regional Graduate Recognition Dinner 2018  
By Phillip Menzies

Last May, the HEOP Professional Organization (HEOPPO) hosted its annual HEOP NYC Region Graduate Recognition Dinner for its graduating seniors. Senior HEOP students from various colleges throughout the New York City region who exemplified academic excellence were honored by their respective institutions. Among the honorees of the evening were NYIT seniors Bryan Diaz and Lismary Cabral. Both students were selected based upon their academic achievements, on-campus involvement, and the perseverance and drive that they have shown through during their time at NYIT. Upon receiving their awards, both honorees gave acceptance speeches of how NYIT HEOP has influenced their lives and future prospects in positive ways. We are truly proud of both Bryan and Lismary’s accomplishments and wish them all the best moving forward.
Academic Excellence List: Overall GPA of 3.0 and Above

At the conclusion of the spring 2018 semester, 22 HEOP students maintained cumulative GPAs of 3.0 or higher. We applaud your hard work and effort. Keep up the good work!

Purni Adambarage
Bernice Almeida
Karibay Angeles
Malik Asad
Lismary Cabral
Justin Diaz
Yenifer Diaz
Julian Donado
Leslie Espinal
Rosangelica Gil
Priya Khurana
Diana Lopez
Laura Lopez-Toro
Mohamed Madboly
Aidan Mohammed
Imran Parjohn
Carolina Rodriguez
Klaudia Romaniuk
Monisha Roy
Aaron Soler
Mohammad Talha
Jonathan Torres

Summer Program Reflection
By Joseph Burkeen, Class of 2022

Summer 2018 was the most vivid experience I have ever been through. I often look back on it, and there were a plethora of moments that I and all the other HEOP freshmen shared that connect us altogether strongly. The program started off with the orientation day where we learned more about the HEOP program and what is expected of us. After that presentation, we progressed in to ice breakers to get to know each other better, however, the ice breakers didn't really get us acquainted better. The time spent in the classrooms during our free time is where our bonds grew stronger. Over the summer, all HEOP freshmen had to do two classes (in English and math) to ameliorate our skills academically. Within those times in class and our free time, we started to feel and act more like a family.

Aside from the classes and our free time, we would set aside our Fridays to dedicate our time to cultural trips and activities. One experience that stuck out to me most was the group exercises in Central Park. During the group bonding exercises, we learned how to work together as a group. These activities were a true test of patience and teamwork. We also had an impromptu game of hide and seek and were all in the moment, really enjoying our time together. Earlier in the program, there was another incident that stuck with me. Another HEOP student named Syniah experienced heat exhaustion during our orientation. HEOP counselor Rachel and I stayed with her to make sure she was fine. Syniah and I became so much closer because of that experience because I was there for her. This program has gifted me with so many lessons, tools, and friendships that I otherwise would may not have gotten if I were admitted as a general freshman, and I am forever grateful to HEOP and its staff.

NSBE Convention
By Malik Asad, Class of 2021

During March 27-31, 2018, I attended the 44th Annual National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) Convention in Pittsburgh, Penn. along with my fellow HEOP classmate Kevin Dominguez. During the conference, the biggest companies in the engineering field attended such as Google, Facebook, Snapchat, Tesla, and more. Each and every company had opportunities available for eligible college students. Kevin and I were still first-year students at NYIT, so we knew it was going to be challenging to land a job or an internship with the competitive companies in the world. However, we wanted to speak to representatives from each company and see what they are looking for so we can be prepared. Attending the NSBE convention was one of the most beneficial experiences I have ever had because I got to see how competitive it is to get a job or an internship. However, I learned how to prepare myself and what I need to do in order for me to have a successful career.
Spring Highlights from XAE
By Rachel Morrison

A semester in the HEOP office of NYIT is incomplete without the activities of Chi Alpha Epsilon (XAE) National Honor Society. The students of XAE aim to run fun and interesting events for their peers while adding value to their time at NYIT. This past spring, in addition to a large induction ceremony, the group hosted two events and a collection drive.

On April 29, a team of 11 took off walking from the Lincoln Center area to participate in the annual March of Dimes March for Babies. HEOP walkers were joined by the ladies of Alpha Sigma Tau (AST) sorority. When asked why they chose to walk, participants said they were there for their future babies. Nearly $350 was raised by our team on behalf of March of Dimes, which supports research and prevention of premature birth. The team successfully completed the 3-mile walk in one hour and 20 minutes, ending up downtown near Madison Square Park.

Deciding that their classmates were in need of an invitation to relax before finals, XAE planned a spring social picnic, held May 10 in Central Park. Though the weather threatened to turn on us at any moment, we set up a large beach blanket of snacks and proceeded to play some outdoor games like Frisbee, scoop ball, and ring toss. Attendees enjoyed an excuse to take a break and have fun, even if only for an hour. We hope to plan more social events like this in the future.

The spring semester was capped off by a school supply drive run during the month of May. Members voted this year to support Operation Backpack, a program that works to provide backpacks and age appropriate school supplies to homeless children throughout New York City. Thanks to generous donors, we collected over 50 items, including notebooks, crayons, markers, backpacks, pencils, drawing pads, watercolor paints, folders, and more. Our group ultimately donated two full backpack kits, one for a child in pre-k or kindergarten and one for a child in 1st through 4th grade.

There are several fall 2018 events currently being planned by XAE. Please be on the lookout for flyers, emails, and social media posts!

Eighth Annual XAE Induction
By Rachel Morrison

Chi Alpha Epsilon (XAE) National Honor Society was established to increase the recognition of successful students in academic support programs. It aims to promote continued high academic standards, to foster increased communication among its members, and to honor academic excellence achieved by those students. Chapters of XAE can be found nationwide. Since 2011, XAE has maintained an active presence on the New York City (Manhattan) campus.

On April 10, seven new members were inducted into the Zeta Lambda chapter of XAE at NYIT. Along with new member induction, eight current XAE members were presented with jewel upgrades in recognition of continued high academics. We congratulate the following honorees: Lismary Cabral, Michael Castillo, Salamatu Kenchi, Mohamed Madboly, Najnin Mimma, Lesley Panama, Carolina Rodriguez, Leanny Rodriguez, Klaudia Romaniuk, Monisha Roy, Mohammad Talha, Catherine Vivanco-Opazo, and Yordy Zapata.

Additionally, XAE has a tradition of recognizing individuals who contribute to the lives and successes of program students. This year, our chapter welcomed two more honorary members. Director of Financial Aid Margaret Dunbar was selected for the help she provides HEOP, packaging its students and assisting in the review of prospective students. Life Sciences Professor Dr. Richard Pizer was chosen for the impact he has made on HEOP students academically over the years in his courses.
Graduate Updates

See what members of the HEOP class of 2018 have been up to since earning their degrees!

Lismary Cabral, B.S., Electrical & Computer Engineering

I recently joined Leviton’s Engineering & Product Development Program (ePDP) as an Electrical Engineer. In this program, I get to rotate through three different business units: Commercial & Industrial, Residential, and Network Solutions. I am currently working in Commercial & Industrial where I am learning how engineers manufacture and test products that meet the customer needs. I am also learning how to design printed circuit boards, while utilizing space effectively and maintaining a low cost. I enjoy working at Leviton because I see engineers push themselves every day to create products that go beyond safety standards.

Priya Khurana, B.S., Computer Science

Shortly after my graduation, I started applying for jobs on Handshake, and I saw a job opening at Infosys Ltd, an IT and consulting firm mainly focusing on software services. Before interviewing with Infosys, I did not have any professional experience in my field except school projects. My interview was about 50 minutes, which was divided into two parts. The first part was technical questions, and in the second part they gave me a chance to talk more about myself and the projects I had previously worked on. My lack of experience was not an issue for this position because before being placed on a project there is a two-month training period in which they train you in a specific concentration. I am being trained for data warehouse testing. I have 29 coworkers with me that recently graduated from college, and everyone is being trained in different areas. During the training period, I have had an opportunity to learn new programming languages and connect with professionals from the industry. So far, my journey with Infosys has been great, and my accomplishments would not have been possible without the help of HEOP and NYIT.

Yordy Zapata, B.S., Architectural Technology with Construction Management

When I graduated in December 2017, I was hired as a Project Engineer by Walsh Construction to work with the team managing the construction of the new CTB at LaGuardia Airport. I had been with the company since August of 2016 working on the new Terminal B Parking Garage (part of the new LGA master plan) as a Project Engineer Intern. It was an interesting experience just applying for the job. Originally, I saw a posting on Indeed while looking for internships and decided to apply through their website. After emails, a phone interview, and a test on leadership skills, I finally was hired. As happy as I was working for them, I recently got an opportunity to work for the team managing the construction of DELTA’s new Terminal C at LaGuardia Airport with a firm called STV Inc. as a Project Officer. Overall, the most valuable thing I have learned is that you have to manage your career path like how you manage your job responsibilities. You do not want to go through 20 years of your career and realizing what you have done is not enough for what you truly want to accomplish.

Are you a graduate or current student interested in having your updates featured in the HEOP newsletter?

Contact us!

Newsletter submissions can be emailed to Nadia Feracho at nferacho@nyit.edu.
The primary objective of The Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) is to help provide a broad range of services to the student, who because of academic and economic circumstances would otherwise be unable to attend college, yet has the potential and desire to obtain a college degree.

HEOP is funded jointly by NYIT and the New York State Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program, and programming activities are supported, in part, by a grant from the New York State Education Department.

Crossing the Finish Line: 2018 Commencement

On May 22, 14 HEOP seniors were among the thousands that walked across the stage at Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum for NYIT’s 57th Commencement Ceremony. HEOP staff were on-site, eager to be the first to congratulate our graduates on a job well done. We wish them the best of luck with their degrees and hope they continue to maintain a strong relationship with NYIT and HEOP.