OUS Newsletter

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Cynthia Melendez '19, Chau Nguyen '19, Renée Roundy '19 in Philadelphia Study Group
Sitting here in the quiet of a Wednesday afternoon, I am thinking of you all—current students in OUS and First Gen, as well as those alums I know and those I haven't yet met, near here, abroad, spread in towns and cities across the US and the world. I can hear a few voices here in this quiet—Clinton's song-voice echoing from one of the study rooms. Muffled conversation and laughter drifting up the stairs from the living room (I imagine there must be someone curled up in a blanket sleeping on the couch, and others watching a show, and others with headphones on, notebooks open, half writing a paper due an hour ago). And then there's the sound of the freezer door snapping open and shut as someone searches for a spicy beef patty or a sweet toaster strudel to warm them on this cold November day.

Tonight at 5, we'll host a program for first years, sophomores, and juniors on how to get summer funding for internships and research, catered with crudités or crew-dights, depending on your pleasure. Tomorrow night, the sophomore class will gather for a chili dinner and a check-in—and knowing that particular class, there will be a whole lot of laughter and whole lot of throwing shade. And then by Friday evening, many of us will have scattered for the weeklong holiday and others will stay near, gathering for their own friends-giving meal next Thursday.

I think about how lucky I am to be here in this house and how often I hear OUS and First-Gen scholars say the same. And I think of alums who haven't been here recently enough to see their own La Casa Unidad move down the hill to another roomy red house on the corner of Broad and Kendrick—the 1934 House—and La Casa on the hill become our own OUS-First House, with its bright kitchen, large library, cozy living room, and several study rooms—and its set of offices tucked away upstairs.

I moved into the OUS-First house just a week or two before the Summer Institute began in late June, hauling the desk and furniture around, setting up for a window view, and digging deep into my inexperience as the new OUS Director. In July, Kris Rivera '96 and Shewanda Cole '00 stopped by the house, and as they came into my office and moved from room to room, I listened in to their laughter and their remembering of whose bedroom had been where and of the parties that had spilled throughout the downstairs. They were here only briefly before they had to return to teach in the S.T.E.M. and Shakespeare college-prep program for high schoolers, directed by OUS alum Denniston M. Reid, Jr '94. Their stories were new to me, but somehow also so vivid, and I glimpsed a bit more of the life and the history of this space. This place that has become home.

I am hoping that my letter to you here might make some glimpses possible for you all too, that these scenes might invite you all home too, especially as OUS celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year. No doubt the program has been very different at different moments of its history, coming into being through student activism as the University Scholars Program, later shifting into the Office of Undergraduate Studies and serving primarily as a Dean of the College division 2-course summer program. Over the past 8 years, though, it has shifted into the Dean of the Faculty division, breaking from its HEOP-funded origins into one of the three Admissions-determined four-year and highly-selective Scholars Programs on campus, and sistered over the past three years with the new First Generation Initiative program. And yet even in all of these changes, when I meet past OUS-ers and current OUS- and First Gen-ers, I see how the heart of this program—its students—are ever the same, ever brilliant, ever beautiful, ever changing what this campus can be.

Is it strange for me to want to look at the horizon with all of you? To imagine it and continue to move toward it? With all of the spirit and the collective wisdom of fifty years of OUS-ers who have walked these hills? Danced and cried and hollered and laughed in these rooms that surround me as I write? I don't think it strange. And so I invite you home, whenever you might come, to be briefly with us who are here right now, some for only a few more months and some for several more years. Come gather, all of us, spill throughout these rooms. Bring your tears, your laughter, and your song.

much love,
b
Manchester
- Nina Cook ‘18
- Jimmy Anim ‘19
- Ravendra Dhanraj ‘19
- Samira Gure ‘19
- Phuong Mac ‘19
- Emmanuel Poku ‘19

Philadelphia
- Imani Ballard ‘18
- Mary Bryce ‘19
- Regine Cooper ‘19
- Sara Daniel ‘19
- Chau Nguyen ‘19
- Renee Roundy ‘19

Madrid
- Vanessa Escobar ‘19
- Sheysel Jimenez ‘19
- Emmanuel Ramirez ‘19
- Karen Aguilar ‘20

Adventurous OUS Around
Curious About the World
Meet the

Nizhoni Saenz
Tempe, Arizona
“If you are not Native American, you’re an immigrant.”

Soren Schilhab
Houston, Texas
“Novels, poetry, comics, and animation are my obsessions, so if you ever want to talk about your fandoms come find me.”

Amber Grass
Harwich, Massachusetts
“I am the person that will drop everything they are doing just to pet a dog.”

Edward Chao
Oakland, California
“I don’t see the world through only my eyes, but through every lens I can think of.”

Jaritza Nunez
Lamont, California
“I came out of the womb fighting for social justice and eating Hot Cheetos.”

Eli Rudenko
Chicopee, Massachusetts
“I love the idea of spontaneity and independence, so much that I sometimes jeopardize my relationship with others.”

Rachell Maxwell
Locust Grove, Oklahoma
“Friends that nap together, stay together.”

Elsie Kindall
Dallas, Texas
<“Same.”

David White
Atlanta, Georgia
“انا اسمي داوود و انا الفشل في عربية”

Not entire OUS/ First class of 2021 shown
First-Years

Arturo Longoria
Houston, Texas
“Even if we don’t have the power to choose where we come from we can choose where we go.”

Tori Roy
Houston, Texas
“I’m always willing to have a polite conversation or get into a fight for social justice.”

Vanessa Fernandez
Orange, New Jersey
“I was not put on this Earth to fulfill your expectations, so I will never apologize for my existence.”

Gordon Kong
San Francisco, CA
“If you do not have time for something, it is just not a priority.”

Johanne Castro
Guam
“I always see the good in people.”

Muna Gure
NYC, New York
“I’m generally shy, but once you get to know me it’s a different story.”

Tenzing Dakpa
NYC, New York
“Nine weeks into college and found it to be a blessing in disguise.”

Silas Bond
Orange, New Jersey
“There isn’t enough time in a day to do everything I want to do.”

Amarachi Iheanyichukwu
NYC, New York
“I’m a life and art enthusiast whose life consists primarily of writing, intersectional activism, and listening to music too loud.”
OUS Spotlight featuring Jehdeiah Mixon ’18
OUS students are all over campus and are involved in so many organizations that the newsletter decided that the least we can do is showcase one student every month. This month the shout out goes to Jehdeiah Mixon '18.

Jehdeiah Mixon, a sociology major and philosophy minor, is a part of numerous organizations and mentioned that she has found a home within each organization.

“I remember being a first-year and being lost because Colgate is a very different place from what I was used to, but then I found a home in ALANA, I found a home in SORT, a lot of the people I looked up to were CL's, a lot of the people I looked up to were in Konosioni as well so I saw it as a chance to affect change on campus.”

Affecting change on Colgate is definitely something that OUS scholars do. Whatever work OUS students are doing now are already improving the experiences of future OUS classes. However it is hard to do so much within Colgate and still stay connected with OUS; luckily there are our OUS dinners. Mixon stated that the dinners are her favorite experiences on campus.

“My favorite OUS memories would definitely be our get-togethers like family dinners, we are all so busy, literally being a Colgate student is synonymous with being busy and sometimes you just lose touch, but everyone comes out to dinners when they can it is just good to see everybody in the same room, see familiar faces, some new, a lot old, just remember that whatever you may be going through you always have OUS to fall back on.”

Looking out for each other is another thing Jehdeiah cherishes and that goes for many OUS scholars. Mixon mentions that she would not be able to do everything she does if she did not have OUS to fall back on.

“It is hard to put into words how much OUS means to me. Without the resources here, and I am not just talking financial support for books, but also the community like Frank Frey, Suzanne Spring, Drea Finley, Dayna Campbell, Frank Kuan, you name it, I would not have made it here. Looking back to who helped me overcome my lowest moments, it was definitely my OUS family, and the OUS leadership, and the clubs I am involved in.”

Mixon is a clear example of how impressive the accomplishments of OUS students are and how she has made it clear that no matter how much she takes on OUS will always be there.
Tell us a little a bit about yourself:
A third of my life was spent in Hong Kong and I immigrated to the country when I was a teenager and spent the next third of my life in California and that’s where I went to school. Later, I came into the institution of higher education and never left it. I feel like I found a home working in university settings and working with students in particular. My very first job was working as a counselor for a minority engineering program. The opportunity to work here in OUS is like homecoming in so many ways because I’m using my skills in counseling and I get to work with students. It’s been tremendous.

What is the best part about being the Senior Associate Director of OUS?
The opportunity to connect and interact with students individually and collectively. To see how they blossom and do amazing work both inside the classroom and outside in the community and to see the amazing achievements the students accomplish. Just to know that we in OUS have a small hand in it is gratifying. The hard work is done by the student; we are here to champion and advocate and filter out whatever noises they have so they can focus on why they’re here.

What changes do you see in Colgate from when you first started to now?
The class of 2017 were able to live in the same residence hall so they can see each other and so that they don’t feel so isolated. This wasn’t always a thing. This idea is something that we want to be able to continue and advocate for because we believe that it’s good for them to be able to have shared experiences. The ability of the students to build on each other has truly been a strength from the program.

Do you have anything you would like to say to OUS family?
Take opportunities. Take advantage of what Colgate has to offer. This is also a two-way street if you will, that we want to work together, but we can’t do that when you’re not here so keep in contact with each other and keep in contact with your faculty members. Go to class. Participate. Take Advantage. Pay it Forward.
Tell us a little about yourself?
I’m not scary. A lot of people perceive me as having a resting bitch face and it can be intimidating for people who don’t know me. I may seem like I’m not enthusiastic and don’t care, but I do so come talk to me. Also, I love to read and eat.

Tell us about something memorable from your time at Colgate?
One of my best experiences as a student was probably the sit in. I got to do activism and that is something that matters to me and I got to do it with people that I was close with and people that I wasn’t. It was awesome and not awesome at the same time. I guess being at Colgate during breaks was fun also. It was great because we didn’t have much to do besides be with each other and have photoshoots. It was fun.

How is the transition between becoming a student to an alumni and then a staff member at Colgate?
It is sometimes hard. I was excited to become an alum and graduate and took this position when it was offered to me based off of my current circumstances and because I care so much about the OUS and FIRST mission. I was afraid that somebody who didn’t understand the mission of OUS and FIRST would take it. Also I couldn’t really go back home because didn’t have a space there like I do here. The reason it is hard is because I had so much support from friends when I was a student, but now they are all over the place and it can get pretty lonely on campus. However, there are others like me who also work on campus and together we have created our own space and support each other.

What advice do you have for current OUS and FIRST students?
Don’t stress. Things will get done in due time. For my seniors, you are graduating, accept it, enjoy it and try not to panic. To the Juniors and Seniors, you still have so much time. Have fun and try to scam Colgate as much as you can. Live your life the best way you can. Finally to the first-years, understand that grades are important, but do not let them define you and don’t stress about them so much. Your life outside your academics matters too.
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