

January
2019



affiliate
ə'filēət/
noun:
a person or organization
officially attached to a larger
body

The **AFFILIATE**

UBEOC Alumni Newsletter

UBEOC ALUMNI RECEIVE HONORS

The University at Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center (UBEOC) bestowed two of its prestigious awards to Alumni who represent the Center’s mission of lifelong learning and self empowerment , during its forty-fifth annual commencement ceremony at the University at Buffalo North Campus Slee Hall on May 23, 2018.



MR. HAMADI SHEBULE '17
2018 Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Award

Mr. Hamadi Shebule’s accomplishments overcoming incredible challenges as a refugee from Somalia , complement the legacy of Mr. Arthur O. Eve, former NYS Assembly Speaker and his mission promoting educational access , civic responsibility and community service.



MR. JAMES SIMMONS '82, '13
2018 UBEOC Distinguished Alumni Award

Mr. James Simmons’ struggle to overcome addiction and homelessness and his embrace of education at a later stage in his life, epitomize the personal strength, courage and commitment of UBEOC students and graduates .

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MR. HAMADI SHEBULE '17

Hamadi states his accomplishments make him think less about his past and more about his future. He recalls escaping war torn Somalia at age ten with his family but that his “new memories” foresee a brighter tomorrow.

Hamadi recollects clinging to his mother’s hand while fleeing to Kenya; living in a United Nations tent campground; watching his mother hand wash people’s clothes to subsidize their meager income; cutting down trees and building their house where he and his family lived for over a decade; enduring his family’s initial rejection of their immigration application to the United States and personally persisting towards this end. He also remembers rejoicing when his family was approved to move to Buffalo in 2004.

Since leaving Kenya, Hamadi has been committed to creating new memories. He takes pride in his first “new memory” when he secured a production job at Sweet-Works Inc. Another “new memory” was working at Culinary Arts Specialties for ten years performing assembly work and then advancing to Assistant Supervisor. And yet another memory was learning English and earning his High School Equivalency Diploma at UBEOC in 2017.

Mr. Shebule recalls his Math Instructor’s encouraging words to not dwell on any “one aspect” of a problem, but rather to put “two and two together” to see the big picture, an analogy which continues to inspire him. Visualizing his bigger picture, Hamadi sought out the services of the UBEOC College Connections Office and is now a full time student at Erie Community College. In 2017, Mr. Hamadi Shebule passed the United States of America citizenship exam and proudly took the *Oath of Allegiance*.

Mr. Hamadi Shebule currently works in the Buffalo Public Schools as a Teacher’s Aide where he assists and motivates students from around the world to see their own futures. He also serves our community as the Buffalo District Soccer League (BDSL) Coach for young adults.

MR. JAMES SIMMONS '82, '13

At five years old, living in segregated Alabama in the 1960’s, Mr. James Simmons witnessed the death of his father by the hand of a stranger. In 1971 he and his mother moved to Buffalo to be with family. At eight years of age, mental imprints of segregation and trauma made it very difficult for him to adjust; “I didn’t know how to talk with people of other races. I knew of cotton fields, not city streets. I was confused and scared.” According to James these emotions turned into stifled anger and led later to troubled years hanging around pool halls, shooting dice, stealing and not going to school.

As a teenager and adult, James lived ‘on the streets’ which he stated “...won out for over a decade.” At 17 he developed an entitlement attitude and didn’t trust anyone. His grandmother urged him to join the Army. Since he did not have a high school diploma, he enrolled at UBEOC and earned his equivalency diploma in 1982. He then joined the Army Reserve. Upon his grandmother’s passing, and his mother’s marriage and move to Kansas, he felt totally lost and resorted to drugs and alcohol to “bathe my life’s undealt-with pain away.” He found himself high, drunk and homeless and repeatedly serving 10-15 day jail sentences. Eventually, one judge told him to “Get help or serve one year.” James now admires and respects this judge who helped change his life. That ultimatum emboldened him to finally accept help from a variety of social service agencies (Sheehan Hospital Rehab, Genesee County Supportive Services, Salvation Army Rehab and Cazenovia Independent Living Rehab). In 2013 James returned to UBEOC, studied hard and graduated from the College Preparation program with academic honors and an Incentive Award.

Mr. James Simmons earned an Associates degree in Mental Health Assistant Substance Abuse Counseling from SUNY Erie College in 2015. He then earned a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology from Buffalo State College in May 2018 and is presently pursuing a Master’s degree in the same field.

Annual Alumni Awards and Recognition Reception

May 18, 2018

"Fostering Mission....Applauding Accomplishments" was the theme for the 3rd annual Alumni Awards and Recognition Reception held on May 18, 2018 at UBEOC.

The evening was spent socializing with fellow Alumni over hor d'oeuvres and live music from *Music by Marvin Rodolph*, and dinner catered by Chef's Restaurant.

Twelve Alumni were acknowledged for their volunteer service to UBEOC, supporting events including Juneteenth, Strengthening Families and Work Words. The honorees of the Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Award and Distinguished Alumni Award were also formally announced.

As you can see, everyone had a great time!

Save the date for the 4th Annual Alumni Awards and Recognition Reception, May 17, 2019!



ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

Brenda Brown '72

BS Liberal Studies Psychology Concentration, Retired Buffalo Public Schools Teacher Aide, Substitute Teacher. Current member of Buffalo Film Extras with movie credits in *The Best Man Holiday*, *Queen City* and *The Romans*. Earned TV Producer Certification from the Apollo Media Center. Singer in *The New Beginning Choral Ensemble*.

LaShawn Chinn '96

Promoted to NYS Department of State Community Services Program Analyst.

Patricia A. Elliott -Patton '05

Received the UMOJA 2018 Woman of the Year Award.

Debbie Felton '83, '84

Accepted position as Legal Assistant for Canadian Global Information Technology in New York City.

Rhonda Small '95

Is currently teaching science in the Durham Public School in Durham, NC.

YOU!

Update the Alumni Affairs Office regarding what you have been up to and YOU may be listed in the next issue of *The Affiliate!*

CONGRATULATIONS!

Alumni Volunteer at Juneteenth

Commemorating the abolition of slavery in the United States

June 16, 2018



CENTER ACTIVITIES

VITA Tax Preparation

February 4-April 15, 2019
M, T, TH 4:30pm-8:00pm
Some Saturdays 10am-1pm
Free and open to the public
Check website for details

Community Resource Fair

Tuesday, January 29, 2019
11:00am-1:00pm
Free and open to the public

Adult Learner College Fair

Saturday, February 23, 2019
11:00am-2:00pm
College representatives and
workshops for adults
contemplating college
Free and open to the public

Women's Conference

Saturday, March 23, 2019
9:00am-3:00pm
Free and open to the public

International Day

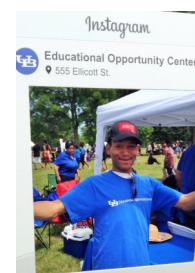
Thursday, March 28, 2019
11:30am-12:15pm
Free and open to the public

4th Annual UBEOC Alumni Awards and Recognition Reception

Friday, May 17, 2019
5:00pm -7:30pm
Save the Date!

Forty-Sixth Annual UBEOC Commencement

Wednesday, May 22, 2019
7:00pm
University at Buffalo Slee Hall



Pictured Center: Mayra Colon-Ruiz (UBEOC ATTAIN Lab Coordinator), Dr. Julius Gregg Adams (UBEOC Executive Director) and Anthony Miller (UBEOC Admissions Counselor/Recruiter) assist a prospective student at the UBEOC tent at Martin Luther King Jr. Park, Buffalo, NY

Pictured Left Column Top to Bottom: Tommie Babbs '77, Tonnalee Batchelor '70's, LaShawn Chinn '96, Patricia A. Elliott-Patton '05

Pictured Right Column Top to Bottom: Brenda Martin '09, Raphael Mitchell '15, Vilma Quinones '06, '94, LaVita Spentz '88

Dental Assistant Alumni “Mentor” Students

June 27, 2018

UBEOC Dental Assistant Alumni offered professional insight and excellent advice to the incoming Dental Assistant Class of 2019 during a *WORK WORDS* panel discussion. Dialogue centered around coursework demands, clinical internship expectations and real world work requirements.



Pictured First Row Left to Right: Tyesisha Patton'15, Katelyn Patterson'15, Gillian Guido'15, Priscilla Lamberty'15, Cherrelle Brown'15, Justin Becton'18

Pictured 2nd Row: Prospective Dental Assistant Class of 2019

Alumni Send Messages of Encouragement

August 27, 2018

Alumni having “walked the walk”, “talked the talk” to enrolled students. Students were welcomed to the 2018-2019 academic year with encouraging words from Alumni displayed on digital signage monitors throughout the Arthur O. Eve Buffalo EOC building.



“Be encouraged”: Charlene Ross '17

“Be encouraged by what you have done so far in your life”: Saba Rajput '17

“Determination is the key to success”: Carolyn Weidright '15

“Time waits for no one. Don't waste it. Invest in your education NOW”: Desirae Marion '11

“Stay determined”: Kathleen Reed '18

“Daily life is challenging. Stay focused on your goal”: Brenda Brown '72

“You can achieve if you trust and believe in yourself”: Patricia A. Elliot-Patton '05

“The struggle is part of the story— life, education, success”: Marcella Overton '94

“Think of the poem ‘Don't Quit’”: LaShawn Chinn '96

“The time you invest in today will give you great returns tomorrow”: Laythanette Shine '09

ALUMNI AFFAIRS

Alumni Professional Development Workshop

Thank you to all the Alumni who responded to the online *Alumni Professional Development Survey*. Alumni Affairs is presently in the planning stage to offer workshops to Alumni based on the indicated topics of interest. Those topic areas include: Financial Literacy, Career Development and Wellness. Stay tuned for more information.

Alumni List Serv

Do you know any Alumni who would like to receive community and UBEOC news and invitations to events? Please refer them to the Alumni Affairs Office. They will be signed up to receive information via the UBEOC Alumni List-Serv. Over 900 Alumni receive UBEOC news directly to their personal email.

Alumni Web Page

UBEOC highlights Alumni on its website. Click on the Alumni page listed on the top menu.

4th Annual Strengthening Families Celebration

October 20, 2018

300 plus family members celebrated at this year's free event open to the community, with the assistance of Alumni volunteers. The day was full of "funtastic" activities including: "Mr. Balloon Man", carnival games, story telling, science experiments, face painting, photo booth pictures, a bicycle raffle, Buffalo firefighters, the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Bookmobile, Explore and More Children's Museum, and more!



Pictured Left to Right: Marie Jocelyne Bonhometre, '16, Tamika Jones '18, Lalaysha Noble '87, Marcella Overton '94

1st Annual College Fair

November 10, 2018

EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLEGE

UBEOC Alumni volunteers helped make the 1st Annual College Fair a success. High School Juniors and Seniors and their families met with representatives from: Alfred State, Bryant & Stratton, Buffalo State, Canisius, D'Youville, Daemen, Fisk, Hilbert, Houghton, Medaille, Monroe CC, Niagara CCC, St. John Fisher, SUNY Empire, SUNY Erie, SUNY Genesee CC, Trocaire, and University at Buffalo. College workshops were also presented on financial aid, the college application process, critical thinking skills in the classroom and navigating college life.



Pictured Left to Right: LaShawn Chinn '96, LouElla Cole '94, Tamika Jones '18, Sonia Kisuka '15
Not Pictured: Hdar Basam '15

CENTER UPDATES

CONGRATULATIONS to the following in their new or transitioned positions at UBEOC!

Administrative Services

Ms. Mary Lou Conroy
Director Budget and
Administrative Services Unit

Admissions

Ms. Makeda Holley
Supervisor Enrollment
Management Unit

Ms. Keira Grant
Mr. Frank Panaro
Admissions Counselors/
Recruiters

Counseling

Mr. Anthony Funigiello
Supervisor Counseling and
Academic Advisement Unit

Marketing/Outreach

Ms. Latricia Davis
Marketing/Communications
Specialist

Mr. Joseph Muscarella
Continuing Education/
Outreach Specialist

Ms. Lynette Towns
Partnership Developer

Retention

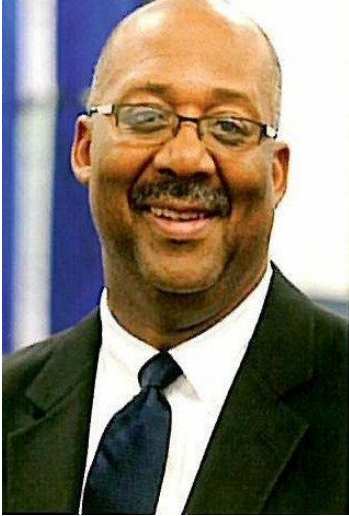
Ms. Michelle Riggio
Retention Specialist

Student Support Services

Mr. Frank Williams
Director Student Support
Services

Message from the Buffalo EOC Executive Director

"Any institution's alumni are key to its growth." Shiv Nadar



Julius Gregg Adams, Ph.D.
UBEOC Executive Director

Dear UBEOC Alumni,

The Buffalo EOC continues to grow as it provides services to its students, alumni and the community. Ms. Makeda Holley will be joining us in January 2019 as the new Supervisor of our Enrollment Management Unit and Mr. Frank Williams will join us as the new Director of Student Support Services. In addition, Ms. Keira Grant and Mr. Frank Panaro joined us in November as Admissions Counselors/Recruiters. If you are interested in returning to enroll in one of our vocational programs or our college prep program, please contact any one of them for assistance. They will gladly provide you with guidance and advice. You can also speak with Mr. Oliver Glover, Coordinator, Community College Connections to discuss attending college, completing financial aid applications and the reality of attending college as an adult.

Also, we will be hosting our first non-traditional/adult/returning student college fair on Saturday, February 23rd. The theme of the fair is "Expanding Opportunities for College." This event is an exciting opportunity to expand the access of adult learners to information about higher education, financial aid and FAFSA preparation. Representatives will be on hand from colleges and universities to highlight the uniqueness of their campuses and their array of programs and answer questions that prospective students may have. I hope to see you there!

As lifelong learners, I hope you embrace UBEOC's mission to provide individuals with tuition-free college preparation as well as the education and training they require to secure post-secondary credentials and/or enter employment.

I wish you and yours a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Mission of UBEOC

The University at Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center is committed to producing lifelong learners who are self-directed, empowered and committed to excellence.

Lifelong Services Available to Alumni

Career Services

Job search, resume writing, cover letter writing, interviewing skills, portfolio development, career exploration
716.645.1944

College Connections

College application and financial aid assistance
716.645.1910

Counseling Unit

Connections with community agencies and services
716.645.1939

University at Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center

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Buffalo, NY 14203

716.645.9555

<http://www.buffalo.edu/eoc.html>

www.facebook.com/buffaloeducational.opportunitycenter

Instagram @buffalo_eoc

Twitter@UBEOC

Margot Barrett Keysor

Administrator Alumni Affairs and Student Development Office

