



# EXPRESSIONS

## Multicultural Affairs and Community Outreach

St. Olaf College

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### A Word from the Director



#### Winter Greetings from 'the Hill' and Balmy Minnesota!

That's right, Minnesota is experiencing record breaking warmth with 40°-50° in January for the past two weeks – it is unreal. I am not complaining, because we are expecting average weather 15°-20° in the coming days.

Besides the weather, this edition captures the essence of diversity, opportunities, and events on 'the Hill' for closing months of first semester. In between are some biographies and updates of current students and alumni.

Finally, I wanted to reach out to fellow alumni of color. This year, like last year is a reunion year. I hope you join me (my 35th) and others to celebrate the special time (college) in our life, and the people (faculty, staff, students) who made it happen. Also, I would like to get an update on your family, and endeavors/recognitions.

Much love, peace and happiness (2012),

Bill Green '77

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### *Native American Weeks*

- Alisha Woodson '12

“Culture is Our Medicine,” was the theme for **Native Americans Weeks 2011** (Oct 23 – Nov 3) and provided ways to celebrate, bring awareness to, and promote open-discussion concerning Native American culture and current events to the St. Olaf campus community. From arts and crafts, to film screenings, guest speakers and events, Native American Weeks were not only fun and interesting, but also deep and thought-provoking.



On October 24<sup>th</sup>, the St. Olaf community was invited to the opening of Native American Weeks where one could make dream catchers and learn about contemporary influential Native Americans through poster presentations. The next day a *Service of Healing* was held in Boe Chapel featuring collaboration between the multicultural organization Talking Circle and the Norsemen Band.

A presentation and discussion with guest speaker Robert DesJarlait of *Protect Our Manoomin* was held in Holland Hall 501 on Wednesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. *Protect Our Manoomin* brings to light how sulfide mining and contamination destroys wild rice in northern Minnesota.

Talking Circle hosted a screening of the documentary, *Reel Injun* which explores the portrayal of Native Americans in film over the last 100 years.

Alexandra Busching '12 gave a presentation about her experiences working with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), a federal law that seeks to keep American Indian children with American Indian families.



Greenhouse manager Gloria Whitefeather-Spears came to campus and gave a presentation on the Red Lake Reforestation project where the Red Lake Band of Ojibwe is making headway in reforesting 50,000 acres of tribal land.

Native American Weeks concluded with a Closing Banquet on Sunday, November 6<sup>th</sup> featuring special guest speaker, alumna Anna Deschampe 04'.

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### Team Tibet Update

- Choendhen Waleag '12

As the news of the recent self-immolations by Tibetans surfaced throughout the world, Team Tibet and its member have been working constantly to educate the St. Olaf community on the issue of Tibet. With Tibetans and supporters all over the world rising up and taking action for Tibet, Team Tibet members thought it was only fitting that they also take part in this movement. Though the number of Tibetans on campus may not be large, it has certainly been able to keep the St. Olaf students and faculty fully aware of the situations in Tibet, due to the hard work of all the members in Team Tibet.



Fifteen of us were ready to embark on our journey to Madison, Wisconsin to attend the Midwest Regional Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) Conference. Each of us had different goals and expectations as we boarded the van. The journey was filled with sleeping, eating, and more sleeping; and luckily the weather was not the usual Minnesota winter so the trip was not hindered by snow! Once we arrived in Madison we checked into our hotel, and eager to attend the conference the next day, we rushed to our beds.

As we entered the conference room the next morning, it was filled college students who were also searching for information on Tibet. There were students from the University of Wisconsin, Lacrosse, the University of Wisconsin, Madison, various community colleges, the University of Minnesota, Hamline, and our neighbor, Carleton College. Approximately 70 students were in attendance, which was one of largest SFT conferences in United States.

After an icebreaker of “the human knot” the SFT leaders introduced themselves and shared the struggle of the Tibet and the responsibility that all humans, not just Tibetans, have in standing up against injustice. We participated in workshops that were very engaging, but more importantly made us more knowledgeable of the issues in Tibet and the also issues surrounding China and Tibet. Presenters gave us a better understanding of the Free Tibet movement and the Middle Way Approach, teaching us their differences and similarities. The smell of the food eventually called us to a lunch break and we stuffed ourselves with delicious Momos (Tibetan dumplings) made by volunteers.

In the afternoon, we resumed the workshops with various activities such as understanding the cost/benefit of China occupying Tibet and the importance of making the cost of occupying Tibet greater than the benefit. We were challenged to think about difficult questions that we could be asked by those who are unaware of Tibet’s cause, such as “Why Tibet?”

Later at night, as we were all exhausted from the conference, we fought the urge to sleep since there was a Tibetan concert with performances by local artists, artists from Minnesota, New York, and some from Europe. The concert was unlike anything as the music lyrics were mostly about Tibet’s movement.



The next morning we drove back to Olaf with the hope of enriching St. Olaf with the knowledge we gained at the conference. Team Tibet has been strong this year, due in large to the support of its members and the St. Olaf Community. We wish to thank everyone for their support that allowed members to attend this important conference.

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### *First Year Profile* *Lakresha Williams*

Lakresha Williams grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota with her mother and four siblings, one of whom was her twin sister, Tanesha. She attended Patrick Henry High School and even though her twin sister now goes to St. Thomas, she speaks with her every day. Two of her other siblings also attend college, one at Carleton and one at St. Thomas. Her oldest sibling is married with a baby, six-month old Emrie, whom Lakresha is looking forward to seeing over the Christmas break.

Lakresha chose St. Olaf after visiting several times because the campus is lovely and the people are generally warm. After one semester here, she found her Religion and the Bible class taught by Professor Hanson to be her favorite. She enjoyed breaking down and analyzing the Bible and the way Prof. Hanson showed the class that some films have a Biblical theme. Even though she has yet to declare a major, Lakresha is interested in four areas of concentration: nursing, education, social work, and economics.



Being a member of the St. Olaf Gospel Choir has been a very rewarding extracurricular experience for Lakresha. She is also a member of the student organization, Cultural Union for Black Expression (CUBE) and will serve as interim treasurer.

*Interesting Fact:*  
*Lakresha is double jointed!*

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### *Senior Profile Choendhen Waleag*

*- Laura Moya '12*

Tenzin Choendhen Waleag moved to Blaine, Minnesota at the age of eight as a Tibetan exile, from India where he was born. His father was born in Tibet and later fled to India; his mother was born in India. Choendhen attended Columbia Heights High School for a small amount of time prior to attending Minneapolis Edison High School. Now a senior at St. Olaf and an economics major with an Asian studies concentration, Choendhen hopes to “go into a field that deals with international relations and development in order to gain experience and knowledge of different cultures around the world.” Choendhen, the youngest of three, had his sister who attended St. Olaf College and his brother who attended the University of Minnesota as role models while growing up.

On campus he has been co-chair for Team Tibet for the last two years. In addition Choendhen has served as DCC treasurer, played Intermural sports, was media relations for Theoretical Thinkers, member of the SSS Board of Leaders, and treasurer and vice-president for Harambee. His experience at St. Olaf has been good. He states, “like any place in the world I have been to, it has its ups and downs. But, overall St. Olaf has been a positive experience in my life and had a huge impact on my growth. The academics at St. Olaf can be stressful and the amount of involvement on campus with the organizations can be overwhelming but at the end fruition of all the hard work can be rewarding”

In addition to cooking as a hobby, Choendhen speaks three languages fluently; English, Tibetan, Hindi. He is also learning Japanese. His plans after graduation include working for a few years prior to entering graduate school.

#### *Choendhen's Favorite Quote*

“To realize the value of one year, ask a student who failed his or her AP exams. To realize the value of one month, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby. To realize the value of one week, ask an editor of a weekly magazine. To realize the value of one day, ask a daily wage laborer who has six kids to feed. To realize the value of one minute, ask a person who missed their train. To realize the value of one second, ask the person who survived an accident. To realize the value of millisecond ask the person who won a silver medal in Olympics.”  
- unknown



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### *Alumna Profile* *Sindy Lopez Fleming '00*



Sindy (Lopez) Fleming was born in Guatemala and moved to California with her family when she was eight years old. She is the youngest of four children, and has two older brothers and an older sister. She attended Bell Gardens High School in Bell Gardens, California with another St. Olaf alumnus, Jonathan Aldana '01. Being adventurous, Sindy wanted to try something new after graduation and when an admissions officer from St. Olaf visited her school, her counselor suggested St. Olaf.

Once on “the Hill,” Sindy became involved in cross country, ran track for one year, and was active in several multicultural student organizations including Presente, CUBE, Harambee, and the Multicultural Executive Board. Participating in a wide variety of activities helped her become a better planner and organizer, skills she still uses. She learned, “to take leadership in whatever role I am placed.” Sindy graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor’s Degree in Spanish and Education K-12.

She met her husband, alumnus Justin Fleming '02 while attending St. Olaf. They were married in 2002 and have two daughters, Adriana – 7 and Isabel - 5. When her children were small, and while teaching K-12 off and on for five years, Sindy earned her Master’s degree in Teaching and Learning from St. Mary’s University. She states that she loves to learn and will be a lifelong learner.

Sindy’s career path brought her back to her alma mater last fall, where she works in the St. Olaf TRiO Student Support Services Office as an Academic Adviser and Supplemental Instruction Coordinator. One of the things she values about her job is getting to work with students one-on-one, preparing them for their careers and life after college. She enjoys making an impact on their lives.

In her spare time Sindy still manages to go for runs three times a week. One of her goals is to run in The Twin Cities Marathon. She is planning on running next October and will begin training in March 2012.

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### Minnesota Kente Summit Hamline University

Director of Multicultural Affairs, Bill Green and several students attended the Kente Summit at Hamline University on December 3, 2011. The objective of the summit was to bring together undergraduate male college students of African descent who attend Minnesota private colleges and universities in order to build community across campuses, identities, experiences, and commonly faced issues.

The goals of the conference were to:

- Create networking opportunities to expand peer and community support networks;
- Establish connections between Black male role models and participants to motivate and inspire success in and after college;
- Identify and address challenges and opportunities for participants related to engagement and retention at predominately White institutions.

Highlights include:

- Conference Keynote Speaker: Dr. Shaun R. Harper, Graduate School of Education, Africana Studies, and Gender Studies at University of Pennsylvania.
- Workshops and Presentations
- Each participant received a conference book and business cards

Special thanks to the Minnesota Private College Council, Hosts: Macalester College (Karla Benson Ruttan) and Hamline University (Carlos Sneed), and distinguished guests and the Black male participants from eight Minnesota private colleges and universities.



Attendees pictured above include (left to right): Bill Green '77, a student from Hamline University, Reggie Woods '13, Michael Hodges '13, Rashad Washington '14, Jakari Perry '13, Josh Titus '13, Patrick Tinsley '14, and Lordson Jonaissant '13.

### Collaborations

The Office of Multicultural Affairs has collaborated with others to bring **The World Film Series** and **The ARMS and AFA Speaker Series and Book Salon** to the St. Olaf Community.

Headed by Luying Chen, the World Film Series featured the films during first semester: *Faat Kiné* (Senegalese), *Sommersby*, *The Tempest*, *Winterland*, *Father* (Norwegian), *The Edge of Heaven* (German), and *Playing the Victim* (Russian).

The **ARMS and AFA Speaker Series and Book Salon** headed by Jennifer Kwon Dobbs and Joan Hepburn hosted two events during first semester. Authors Tim Hernandez and Dominic Taylor spoke during the first semester. On February 23rd Playwright and Poet, PJ Gibson will discuss *Destiny's Daughter* and on March 1 & 8 Shu-mei-Shih will discuss *Minor Tansnationalism*.

For more information contact the MACO Office at 507-786-3060 or email [multicultural@stolaf.edu](mailto:multicultural@stolaf.edu)



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### Africa Weeks

- Lalee Simeso '12

Karibu, the African student organization responsible for planning **Africa Weeks 2011** wanted to share the importance of unity between Africans and the Diaspora and so chose the theme **"Pan-Africanism: We are One."**



There were a variety of events exploring this theme including St. Olaf College and Carleton professors serving on a panel exploring the origins of Pan-Africanism. **Africa Night** was a success again this year with everyone enjoying a night of performances bringing talented dancers, poets, and musicians to St. Olaf. The showing of *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* with Nobel Peace Prize Winner Leymah Gbowee, a documentary discussing the role of Liberian women organizing to end the country's civil war under the rule of Charles Taylor was a success. Following the performance by David Schein, *MYethiOPIA*, Karibu members raise \$439 for a non-profit theatre group called OneLove Theater in Awassa, Ethiopia. Full of ambition and skill, this group tours rural Ethiopia to promote education about gender equality, HIV/AIDS prevention, and many other social issues.

The two week celebration ended on a high note with the **Africa Week Banquet**, where the community was invited to enjoy Nigerian and Ethiopian dishes, music, conversation, and words of wisdom from distinguished Professor Emeritus of history at Macalester College, Mahmoud El-Kati.

Africa Weeks is always a time of celebration, education and growth, and refreshing conversation among the St. Olaf community.



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### Study Abroad

This past summer and fall senior Morgan Dixon traveled to Oslo, Norway as part of both St. Olaf and HECUA programs. She participated in the St. Olaf Oslo International Summer School at the University of Oslo where she studied Norway, focusing on society, history, and arts. She remained at the University of Oslo during the fall as part of the HUCUA Scandinavian Urban Studies Program where the focus of study was on globalization and immigration within Scandinavia. Morgan states that all areas of the courses could be applied to any country and she would recommend them.

Seventy-eight multicultural students are currently on semester travel abroad or domestic J-term trips. These include:



Morgan Dixon '12 with classmates in Norway.

**Nasiha Ahmed** '13 – Sacred Place: Greece/Turk  
**Asia Black** '14 – Inter Span II-C Rica  
**Gabriela Bosmenier Cruz** '13 – Global Semester  
**Kelsey Brown** '13 – Japan: Nagasaki  
**Roland Brown** '13 – Term in China  
**Vinh Bui** '14 – AsianCon2:Meet Sojourners  
**Victoria Celano** '13 – Lit Eastern Caribbean  
**Gabriella Coll** '14 – Ital Art in Context  
**Tiffany Cunningham** '12 – Ital Art in Context  
**Dillon Davis** '14 – AsianCon2:Meet Sojourners  
**Kelly Davis** '13 – Fam Soc Srv Cntrl Mex  
**Garrett Dick** '12 – Econ Progress China  
**Morgan Dixon** '12 – HECUA: SUST  
**TaKeyah Dominique** '13 – ID French St--Paris  
**Anders Dzurak** '13 – Urban Sem & Practicum  
**Hana Ferronato** '14 – HECUA: Bangladesh  
**Domonick Fields** '13 – HECUA: Ecuador  
**Jennifer Franklin** '13 – Interim Exchange  
**Leslie Garza** '14 – Class Studies Greece  
**Jessica Guzman** '14 – Revolutionary Cuba  
**Michael Hodges** '13 – HECUA: Ecuador  
**Anna Hovland** '13 – Korea: Yonsei University  
**Jeffrey Hudson** '14 – Desert Biology  
**Lordson Jonassaint** '13 – HECUA: Ecuador  
**Novia Josiah** '12 – Fam Soc Srv Cntrl Mex  
**Grace Kasahara** '14 – AsianCon2:Meet Sojourners  
**Pakou Khang** '14 – AsianCon2:Meet Sojourners  
**Kevin Klynstra** '13 – Term in China  
**Sophia Kor** '14 – AsianCon2:Meet Sojourners  
**Moses Kulee** '14 – Sacred Place: Greece/Turk  
**Christina Lee** '13 – Class Studies Greece  
**Nicholas Lee** '14 – Number Theory - Budapest  
**Carla Leon** '13 – HECUA: Ecuador  
**Peter Lile** '12 – Class Studies Greece  
**Ken Lin** '12 – Polit Identity Cent Euro  
**Kia Lor** '12 – Hospital Health Care  
**Virginia Ma** '12 – Econ Progress China  
**Chloe Mais** '13 – ID French St--Paris  
**Taryn Manthey-Logan** '14 – Inter Span II-C Rica

**Erick Marigi** '14 – Number Theory - Budapest  
**Stephen May** '14 – Tropical Ecology  
**Ruth Medina** '12 – Revolutionary Cuba  
**Aakriti Mehra** '13 – Peruvian Medical Exp  
**William Molano** '12 – Desert Biology  
**Rorie Morrison** '13 – Human Development/India  
**Mary Murakami** '14 – Manhattan Art Interim  
**Najaha Musse** '12 – HECUA: Env Sustainability  
**Callyssa Ozzello** '14 – Inter Span II-C Rica  
**Apoorva Pasricha** '14 – Human Development/India  
**Jay Petersen** '13 – Rome and Wittenberg  
**Christophe Porot** '13 – Britain: Manchester  
**Akshar Rambachan** '12 – Human Development/India  
**Stephanie Robert** '13 – Global Semester  
**Allison Rodriguez** '13 – Revolutionary Cuba  
**Julieth Rojas** '14 – Health/Culture/Oceania  
**Daniel Sacerio** '13 – Egypt: American U Cairo  
**Hope Sexton** '14 – Inter Span II-Ecuador  
**Althea Speaks** '12 – IES: Buenos Aires  
**Carmen Stubblefield** '13 – ACM: Arts London/Florence  
**Henry Tarnue** '13 – Fr Lang/Moroccan Culture  
**Leyen Trang** '14 – AsianCon2:Meet Sojourners  
**Chong Vang** '13 – Term in China  
**Shoua Vang** '13 – Health/Culture/Oceania  
**Susan Vang** '14 – Number Theory - Budapest  
**Heather Walls** '12 – Turkey: Bogazici  
**Reginald Woods** '13 – Number Theory - Budapest  
**Alisha Woodson** '12 – Health/Culture/Oceania  
**Susie Wu** '14 – AsianCon2:Meet Sojourners  
**Erik Wyatt** '14 – AsianCon2:Meet Sojourners  
**Chaia Xiong** '14 – AsianCon2:Meet Sojourners  
**Ong Xiong** '12 – Fam Soc Srv Cntrl Mex  
**Serena Xiong** '13 – Health/Culture/Oceania  
**Trevor Yip** '14 – AsianCon2:Meet Sojourners  
**Carlos Rivera** '15 – Schools & Communities  
**Ida Sobotik** '15 – Schools & Communities  
**Gao Thao** '15 – Schools & Communities  
**Shenyang Vang** '15 – Schools & Communities  
**Ka Yang** '15 – Schools & Communities

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### Upcoming Events

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration** Monday, January 16th at 10:10am featuring *Dr. Anton Armstrong '78 as Chapel Speaker*

**Black History Month** February 6-29

**Pride Week** March 3-11

**Drag Ball** March 9

**International Night** March 10

**Harambee Conference** Saturday, March 31

**Asia Weeks** April 10-22

**Viva La Raza** April 23-May 6

**Senior Banquet** Sunday, May 6 at 5:00 pm in the Ballrooms

**Senior Reception** Sunday, May 27 at 11:30 am in the MACO Office (BC111)

**Alumni:** What is new and exciting in the new year?

Share it with us for upcoming editions of *Expressions!*

**St. Olaf College**  
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