



# Ethnic Diversity Newsletter

DEPARTMENT OF ETHNIC STUDIES

Congratulations to two of our students who won the commencement speaker competition:

**Mr. Mohamed Abdullahi Abdullahi**  
Major: Ethnic Studies & Political Science (Bresnan Arena, Taylor Center, Minnesota State University, Mankato)

**Ms. Lindsay Bolstad**  
Major: Ethnic Studies (Centennial Student Union Ballroom, College of Social Behavioral Sciences)



Good afternoon, President Richard Davenport, Faculty, Staff, and Fellow Graduates.

It's such a great honor to be speaking to you today. To begin, I would like to extend my congratulations to you all for finishing your degrees. It is an amazing achievement and one that

you and your families and friends should be very proud of.

Today marks another beautiful milestone in our lives, and we are ready to move forward. Four years have passed in the blink-of-an-eye.

Minnesota State University, Mankato is a place, "Where big ideas meet real-world thinking," And, we spent the last four years here developing our knowledge and making our dreams a reality.

Our dreams began when we opened our college acceptance letters four years ago. We imagined ourselves becoming politicians, lawyers, teachers, philosophers, Leaders, and much more.

As Harriet Tubman once said, "Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."

Looking back at my years here at Minnesota State Mankato, I can honestly say that there is no better school that is filled with so many wonderful staff and faculty members who dedicate their time to the satisfaction of every student's individual goals.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Minnesota State University, Mankato

Volume 14, Issue 1

Academic year 2013-14

Editors: Ethnic Studies Faculty

### Inside this issue:

- Commencement Speaker 2014 . . . 1
- Ethnic Studies Student Organization Event: Spring Fling . . . . . 2
- Student Friendly Senate Award to Mr. Xiong . . . . . 3
- 38th Dr. Michael T. Fagin Pan African Student Leadership Conference . . . . . 3
- Feeding the Mind by Paul Obeng-Amoako . . . . . 4-5
- Graduate Students . . . . . 6
- 4th Annual Midwest Ethnic Studies Conference . . . . . 7
- The Chair's Perspective on Graduation . . . . . 7
- Please Keep Us Posted . . . . . 8

### Mission Statement

"The Department of Ethnic Studies, an interdisciplinary program, is academically committed to promoting multicultural and ethnic knowledge, skills and values both within and outside the United States and to preparing our students for effective participation in the culturally diverse global community."

Continued from page 1

One such example would be, Professor Vieceli, Political Science and Professor Darboe, Ethnic studies took it a step further. They made it their mission to help me conduct original research, and travel to a conference in San Francisco, California to present my results. Because of so many wonderful and amazing faculty members like them, I am now graduating with honors, 2 degrees and will be attending a Georgetown University in Washington DC this upcoming fall, to further my education and become a lawyer.

Today, our hard work and long hours of studying, has finally paid off. It is time to take the knowledge we have gained to the next level, and apply what we have learned to the real world. For some, that may be to continue their education, some to explore the world, discover Big Ideas and to others that may be to start a family or their selected career. Whichever the case may be, I wish all my fellow students all the happiness.

As we move forward, as we face the task of building a reality out of our dreams, with this education as its foundation, we must always remember that following our heart, having compassion for others, and the direction in our lives will be the unquestionable path and power to change the world.

I challenge you to follow the example of this great University, to chase your dream, to follow your heart, to have compassion for others, to always strive for growth, and to always carry on the tradition of "big ideas and real-world thinking."

At this time, I would like to thank my mom who's in Kenya and my late dad who passed away my freshman year. It's so painful that they are both not present here today. They taught me the value of education and gave me the structure needed to become a successful person. But I know, wherever they are, they are very proud of me.

I would like to thank the College of Social and Behavior Sciences, Institutional Diversity, and a special thank you to the Department of Government for providing me with so many opportunities including the opportunity to gain hands-on experience by working a summer internship at the office of U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar.

I would like to thank Minnesota State University, Mankato, and all of the professors, and administration staff for their support and helping each one of us to develop our individual talents, to pursue our unique journey, to seize our destiny and to find our own voices.

Finally, I would like to leave you with one of my favorite quotes from John Lennon, "You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us. And the world will live as one."

Again, Congratulations to the class of 2014.

Ethnic Studies Student Organization

# Spring Fling

April 15 • 8:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

CSU Ballroom

\$3 in advance | \$5 at the door

**For more information, contact:**

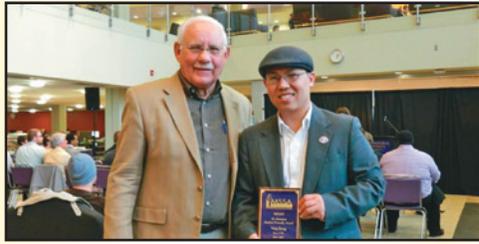
Faith Newmann, President: [faith.newmann@mnsu.edu](mailto:faith.newmann@mnsu.edu)

Keng Vue, Vice President: [keng.vue@mnsu.edu](mailto:keng.vue@mnsu.edu)

- *Limbo*
- *Cotton Candy*
- *Popcorn*
- *Cash Prizes*
- *Raffle*
- *Photo Booth*
- *Open Mic*
- *Water Coloring*

# Student Friendly Award

Warm congratulations to Mr. Vang Xiong, Pre-doctoral fellow, who received the student friendly award from the Minnesota State Student Association (MSSA).



Mr. Vic Swenson and Mr. Xiong



Members of the Ethnic Studies Student Organization



Mr. Xiong, Ms. Faith Neumann, President of Ethnic Studies Student Organization and Ms. Lindsay Bolstad, graduate student

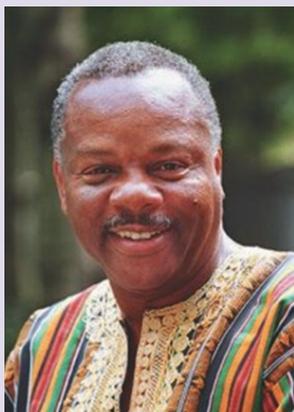
## The 38th Dr. Michael T. Fagin Pan African Student Leadership Conference



February 26 – March 1, 2014

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Molefi Kete Asante

Topic: The Power of Education in Advancing the Pan African Community



Dr. Molefi Kete Asante is Professor and Chair Department of African American Studies at Temple University. Considered by his peers to be one of the most distinguished contemporary scholars, Asante has published 74 books, among the most recent are *As I Run*

*Toward Africa*, *The African American People*, *Maulana Karenga: An Intellectual Portrait*, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, co-edited with Ama Mazama,

*The History of Africa: The Quest for Eternal Harmony*, *Cheikh Anta Diop: An Intellectual Portrait*, *Handbook of Black Studies*, co-edited with Maulana Karenga, *Encyclopedia of Black Studies*, co-edited with Ama Mazama, *Race, Rhetoric, and Identity: The Architecton of Soul*, *Erasing Racism: The Survival of the American Nation*, *Ancient Egyptian Philosophers*, *Scattered to the Wind*, *Custom and Culture of Egypt*, and *100 Greatest African Americans*. The second edition of his high school text, *African American History: Journey of Liberation*, 2nd Edition, is used in more than 400 schools throughout North America. In addition, Dr. Asante is featured in the new, landmark documentary, *The Black Candle*, narrated by Maya Angelou.

# Feeding the Mind; North Central Region

By Paul Obeng-Amoah

On November 9th, there was a gathering for a conference consisting of intellectuals, motivators, leaders and anyone seeking to be like the above. This gathering was the 2013 North Central Regional Black Graduate Student Conference held at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Attendees were able to sit for interesting panels. A common myth is African Americans



can't contribute to intelligent discussion, but the conference proved that to be what it is, a myth, as men and women of color seeking higher education and knowledge each had something to contribute.



Topics of discussion included issues impacting not just Black communities, but possibly multiple communities of different cultures. Although there are practices like affirmative action in place, there are still improvements to be made as addressed by Graduate Student in Education Leadership, Arnold James. "Most of these places act like when they've hired one Black employee, they've done their job," said James. James also has an extensive background in a variety of fields including restaurants, the military and ordained ministry.

With that, he's probably seen and been through a lot and is justified by his quote "The pigmentation of your skin gives a false impression on you that has a profound effect on who you think you are and who they think you are," James said.

That panel filled with words of wisdom was followed by another brilliant panel that was broken up into two parts so that people could enjoy the delicious food in between. Attendees were also greeted by the president of National Black Graduate Student Association, Anta Sane via Skype. This was followed by Dean of Institutional Diversity, Dr. Henry Morris speaking on the issue of modern segregation within and outside of people of color on factors like skin tone and geographical location as well as touching on what James said with regards to the next generation of African American Leaders, "You have to learn the language, you have to learn how to function in both their world and our world."

Next up was Minnesota State Mankato graduate school alumni, Dr. Donald "DJ" Mitchell Jr. DJ stressed on the numbers and percentages of Blacks getting undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees. With that, he went into how to apply for

# Annual Black Graduate Student Conference

Mankato – Mankato Times

graduate school, “Never self-select out.” This means if you get a low score on the GRE, still apply and use that score. For anyone in their final year or semester as an undergrad, DJ’s panel was full of valuable knowledge.

Dr. Mitchell Jr, Dr. Morris and special advisor to NBGSA-Mankato campus president, Dr. Michael T. Fagin Each received certificates of appreciation from the NBGSA

“One thing is you never stop learning,” said ‘Mama’ Maria Baxter-Nuamah. She is in the EdD candidate program. She told us a little bit about herself and her journey to getting a doctoral degree. It starts off with finding a topic of dissertation. Which then fast forwards to finding a committee which leads to actually doing the research, long hours of tedious research. “Women face numerous obstacles when attempting to obtain administrative positions in higher education.” Baxter-Nuamah spoke on her topic of study which was, African American women gaining spots in senior level administrative positions. Soon-to-be doctor, Baxter as always is a charming humorous lady who is as intellectual as she is comedic. She was also awarded a certificate of appreciation.

Dr. Johnson Afolayan gave a presentation on skills for an

interview. It starts off with finding the job followed by the interview and references. “You don’t just casually pick someone for a reference...Job interview is not like talking to your friend. You should be comfortable, prepared and practiced and be able to

Dr. Johnson Afolayan was awarded a certificate/award of appreciation.

The next panel was on career development by Matthew Carlson and Antonio W. Moore which started off with what



networking is and is not. We then got into why it’s important to meet and know certain people and how Girard’s law says you know 250 people and that those 250 people know 250 people. “Only 6% of jobs are found online” So you should probably only spend 6% of time job searching. This was followed by a practice of the elevator speech, a work party and what it entails.

“The sky’s the limit, it’s all up to you”, said Ethnic Studies professor, Dalton Crayton. With that, Crayton ended the conference.

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# Graduate students of 2014: Alternate Plan Paper & Thesis Titles

Minnesota State University-Mankato has a proud tradition of providing opportunity to all students who want to pursue and achieve their educational goals and objectives. Special thanks to parents, graduate faculty and friends who contributed to the achievement and success of students. Graduate faculty includes Professor Hanh-Huy Phan, Director of Ethnic Studies Graduate Program, Drs. M. T. Fagin, Wayne Allen and Kebba Darboe. An impressive number of students graduated in 2014. Below are their names and the titles of their research papers:

## **Lindsay J. Bolstad**

MS – Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies  
*The Impact of Race and Ethnicity on Sexual Violence: A case Study on Underserved Population in Minnesota*

## **La'Betra Chambers**

MS – Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies  
*The challenges of Immigrant Workers in Germany and the United States: A comparative View*

## **Marcella G. Dial**

MS – Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies  
*Social factors that affect African American decision-making process to choose Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska*

## **Fuquan Jackson**

MS – Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies  
*African American women in Higher Education: An examination on how gender, race and class affect their access to positions of power*

## **Joshua Maudrie**

MS – Cross-Disciplinary Master's Degree in Sociology and Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies  
*Defining Traditional American Indian Identity through Anishinaabe Cultural Perspective*

## **Glenn T. Johnson**

MS – Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies  
*Test of Labeling Theory on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism: A Comparative Analysis*

## **Barry A. Noble**

MS – Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies  
*A case study on racial/ethnic groups in the Minnesota Prisons*

## **Alisha I. Phandanouvong**

MS – Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies  
*Buddhism: Religion or Philosophy?*

## **Connie Johnson**

MS – Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies  
*Balana: An Analytical Framework*

## **Joel J. Vargas**

MS – Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies  
*Personal and Institutional Connections Influence on Latino Identity and Residential Plans in the Northern Great Plains*

# 4th Annual Midwest Ethnic Studies Conference

April 2, 2014 • Minnesota State University, Mankato

Keynote Speaker: Assistant Commissioner Elia Elia Dimayuga-Bruggeman

Topic: Achievement Gap between minority and majority students



Ms. Bruggeman is a professional educator and administrator with more than 25 years of experience in a variety of school settings, including notable work in rural Minnesota districts and the Northwest Suburban Integration District.

A teacher for 10 years in the St. James Public Schools, she has also been a professor at

Minnesota State University, Mankato. In 1996, she began her career in administration as the Dean of Students at Sleepy Eye Schools, and the following year became the Sleepy Eye High School Principal.

Dimayuga-Bruggeman has also served as the World Language Department Chair, and Academic Dean at Shattuck-St. Mary's Preparatory School in Faribault.

She is a Minnesota State Mankato fellowship award winner in the area of Educational Leadership working with Aspiring Principals and teaching classes in Curriculum Supervision.



## Chair's Perspective on Graduation from Minnesota State Mankato

The college/university graduation ceremony has its roots in the 12th century, and acts as a rite of passage for students entering the adult world. It marks the end of years of hard work for the student, and a move on to the next stage of their life's journey

with pride and enthusiasm. Faculty prepare, students hope and parents pray that the student will make the cut for graduation. Higher Education, today, regards graduation rates as accountability, that is, a measure of both student and institutional success. In this context, the faculty in the Department of Ethnic Studies congratulates with great pride the graduating class of 2014. My advice to the baccalaureate and graduate degree recipients,

you should always be proud of your achievements and become big dreamers. In addition, you should all be one of the "thousand points of light" a phrase popularized by U.S. President George H. W. Bush in 1988. That is giving back to your country through service—volunteerism. According to the Madiba (father) Nelson Mandela "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

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**PLEASE KEEP US POSTED.  
WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Name (Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr.): \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I AM:  Alumni— Year Graduated: \_\_\_\_\_, Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Friend of the Department of Ethnic Studies

Other

I WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION ON:

Serving as a Professional Mentor

Providing an internship

Contributing to the Ethnic Studies Development Fund at the Minnesota State Foundation (tax deductible)

THANK YOU!

Please tear off, fold, and place in an envelope addressed to:

Department of Ethnic Studies, Minnesota State University, Mankato,  
109 Morris Hall, Mankato, MN 56001

Or e-mail this information to [kebba.darboe@mnsu.edu](mailto:kebba.darboe@mnsu.edu)