



Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center Community Digest

Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center
A Diverse Community of Scholars Achieving Excellence

Spring Semester 2020
Volume 12, Issue 2

OHANA

Pictures from the 50th Anniversary Kick Off Celebration



**YEARS OF
VISION**

Multi-Ethnic Education
and Engagement Center

Formerly known as

Office of Multicultural Affairs • Office of Diverse Student Populations
Office of Minority Student Affairs • African and Afro-American Program
Center for Afro-American Affairs



Celebration of 50 years at the University of Dayton

In celebration of 50 years of supporting and advocating for multicultural students at the University of Dayton, the staff and students of MEC would like to share, “What MEC means to us”. This edition of the newsletter will also highlight our MECnificent events for the Spring Semester. Thank you for reading this edition of the OHANA!

Inside the Issue:

Letter from the Executive Director.....	2
Leading the Way.....	3
Student Engagement Assistants (SEAs).....	4
50th Anniversary Kickoff.....	6
Academic Success Corner.....	7
50th Anniversary Kickoff.....	7
Diversity Peer Educators (DPE).....	8
Graduate Assistant Corner.....	10
Student Organization Spotlight.....	11
MEC Student Reflection.....	12
Contact Us.....	14

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Letter from the Executive Director

Daria Graham, Ph.D.

Associate Dean of Students and Executive Director

When asked what MEC means to me, it is difficult to put the totality of my experience into words. This year marks my 30th year of being on campus. When I arrived on campus as a tentative first year student, this department was the first to greet me. I hadn't given much thought to applying to the University of Dayton, but after my visit I went home knowing that this is where I would be attending. Since then, the area has had several name changes and a variety of staff in leadership, but there are several things that have not changed. This department continues to be a resource, refuge, and home away from home. This is what MEC has always meant to me.

In 1970, the African and Afro-American Program was created to address the unrest and needs of a booming population of Black students at the University of Dayton. Since then the Center has undergone multiple name changes in response to changing student demographics and societal transformation. The office became the Center for Afro-American Affairs in 1971, the Office of Minority Student Affairs in the mid-1980s and the Office of Diverse Student Populations in 1995, reflecting growth in the University's Hispanic/Latinx student body. The Office of Multicultural Affairs title was adopted in 2008 to reflect a wider focus on African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian American, Native American and Pacific Islander students, and students with two or more identities. Effective July 1, 2019, our name was changed to the Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center to formally recognize our growing role in the social justice education of all students.

The MEC staff have worked tirelessly both inside and outside of the classroom to prepare students to live, work, learn, and serve in a global society. Through dialogue, academic support, leadership development, multi-ethnic/multicultural education, and programming with a cultural pedagogy, MEC has both supported and challenged students to create a more equitable and inclusive perspective and climate for all. Our partnerships with faculty, staff, and students have been integral as we not only create a safe space within the Center, but work to equip others to cultivate similar spaces in their daily lives. I believe this is why others who work outside of MEC describe the Center as their home away from home as well. It is our goal not only to educate others but to exemplify the tenets we espouse.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary during 2020, we have the opportunity to acknowledge significant milestones of our history and those whose work supported students from the time of their interest to their graduation. Many alumni credit past directors such as James Stock, Debra Moore, Kathleen Henderson, and Dr. Patty Alvarez as those whose assistance made their graduation possible. We celebrate the commitment and insurmountable love of former staff such as Tim Spraggins, John Ralph, Indra Leyva, Joel Buckner, Verda George, Victor Perez, Jessica Gonzales, Aaron Witherspoon, Carlos Stewart, and more as their dedication to the student experience was instrumental in removing internalized and external barriers to student success. Programs and initiatives such as the partnership with Campus Ministry and Ebony Heritage Singers, the Program to Engage and Exchange Resources for Students (PEERS) mentoring program, and Partners in the Classroom program were created by individuals who understood the challenges underrepresented, underserved students faced and knew the power of advocacy and resources. This year we celebrate a history rich filled with intentionality, marked by results, and the opportunity to benefit from such a powerful legacy.

As we prepare to celebrate and vision, I believe the name of the newsletter says it best. No matter the programs or people students encounter, our hope is that they believe we are the place where no one gets left behind.



Dr. Daria

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Leading the Way

Merida Allen, Director, Multicultural/Multi-Ethnic Education & Student Leadership



Spring semester is a great opportunity for students to begin to set goals for finishing the academic year. Achievement goals are rooted in the belief and confidence we have in our competence, motivation to proceed, and levels of organizational skills. Approach goal-setting with growth in mind. How well you perform in classes, at work, social and organizational settings, is directly linked to how open you are to accept and adapt to change. It is important to have a sense of your ability, and a desire to complete the steps necessary to achieve. One of the main goals of the University of Dayton, is to educate the whole person. Academic achievement is key but equally as important, is your individual development of awareness and skills to live and lead as valuable contributors to society.

Motivation. Think of what drives you to be your best, and achieve your goals.

Write down those goals and adopt a daily motivational routine. Sometimes motivation is intrinsic and emerges from within, but equally as effective are extrinsic motivational factors. Take the time to reflect on what or who motivates you. You and your goals are worth that investment.

Engagement. Surround yourself with a team of supporters who deposit positivity into your experience. There are great opportunities to connect with your college experience, by getting involved and striking a healthy balance between courses, homework, employment, service, and social networks. MEC provides opportunities for students in each of these areas.

Multi-ethnic education (**MEinMEC**) is the arm of the Center that provides educational experiences to all students. Currently, we have visited over 50 classrooms through our Partners in the Classroom, discussing topics related to intergroup communication, identity and living in community with others. We are also in the second semester of the pilot year of the UDiversity Community Education Module on Isidore, a PATH eligible experience for all students and requirement for all incoming students. We are also working closely with a group of MEC Communication Leaders who are serving campus as liaisons and active marketing and communication consultants for MEC and campus. Currently, the group is working on a few projects, including a video project that will be published this spring, to highlight the experiences of multi-ethnic students on UD's campus. Stop by my office or email Aaliyah Payne at paynea9@udayton.edu. Stay in touch and contact us for anything. You can also email meinmec@udayton to get involved.

Save the date for these other upcoming leadership and multi-ethnic education initiatives this spring semester:

- **MEC Teach-In**, Wednesday, April 14 from 9:00-7:00 pm, Kennedy Union Ballroom
- **Colors of Leadership Connections**, Saturday, April 18 from 10:00 am-2:00 pm, Adele Center. GET CONNECTED with **Colors of Leadership Connections** (COLC), a combination of collaborative and inclusive mini-workshops designed for students interested in advancing their leadership development. Particular focus is placed on how identity impacts experiences and identifying specific pathways to focus on leadership
- **Multicultural Overnight Program**, Saturday, April 18 to Sunday, April 19. Student leaders needed to engage with admitted high school seniors and families.

Take the initiative to impact change, even if you are the only one changed by your actions.

"A lot of leaders fail because they don't have the bravery to touch that nerve or strike that chord."

-Kobe Bryant

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Student Engagement Assistants

Lena Clerici, Junior, Chemical Engineering

For the past two and a half years, Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center has been my home. MEC has been a place where I am welcomed as I am, and am able to be my true authentic self. It's been a place for me to study and play. The community that MEC supports has challenged me to grow both as a student as well as an individual. MEC has provided a supportive community that has allowed me to become a leader here on campus. The role that I now fill allows me to give back to the community that gave me so much. Part of this is seen in my Sister 2 Sister programming which empowers the female students in the community.

Check the MEC calendar for upcoming Sister 2 Sister events and plan to join us!



December Lee, Senior, Pharmaceutical Chemistry

MEC has been a very positive place for me. It is one of the reasons that I came to UD. I am always welcomed with open arms and feel a sense of comfort in this space. It has been a great space to talk about my academic and social struggles. It has also been a great place to share my celebrations and academic successes.

MEC means a celebration of culture. I come to this space to celebrate my culture and learn about others. It is one of the spaces on campus where it is encouraging to openly talk about cultural differences and learn from others in return.

MEC means supportive. It has always been a place that I come to get support and advice for my academics, friendships, or life after graduation. MEC has a lot to me and has become my family away from home.

Stop by the Center to study, participate in a program, ask questions, or just eat your lunch!



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Student Engagement Assistants

Jordyn Mitchell, Senior, Sport Management

Hey family!

When I was a senior in high school, I attended First Flyers Day for admitted students, back when we went by the name OMA. I met Merida and the previous SEAs at the time and when I met her, she told me that herself and the entire office would do everything in their power to make sure my four years at Dayton ended in absolute success. To this day, MEC has yet to let me down. This place will always be in my heart and I wouldn't trade my experience here for the world because of MEC. As a graduating senior, I will truly miss the center and all of the beautiful faces of the staff and students I am blessed to see every single day. MEC is home.



Luis Rogel, Junior, Civil Engineering

Hello everyone!

Whenever I think about the Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center, I automatically think of five words. The words which come to mind are comfort, home, friends, resources, and support. Literally, the MEC lounge has couches that are broken in and fairly comfortable. MEC also brings comfort in a non-tangible way as well. Whenever I step into MEC, I feel as if I can be myself and not be judged. I feel that everyone accepts me for my whole self, and I don't need to change any qualities which I have. I describe a home as a safe place where I can go and unwind whenever I need to.

MEC serves that purpose for me, whether it be in the middle of the day between classes, or in the middle of the night when I am working on an assignment and need to print. No matter the time, I always feel welcomed into this space we all call MEC. I have built great relationships throughout my three years in MEC and I am very proud to say that I have built friendships that will last my entire life. Walking into the lounge is always very comforting because everyone always greets me and asks how I am doing or how my day is going.

MEC also offers so many resources, whether it be academic, social, mental and any other support. They offer so many opportunities for self-growth which is what my philosophy of life is based upon. Support is important to me. I love to feel that I constantly have people in my corner rooting for me that will drop what they are doing to help me out. When I entered college, MEC was called OMA, and even though the transition I still feel the same type of love.
#Newnamesamelove



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50th Anniversary Kickoff & Lunar New Year Celebration

Sam Ortiz, Associate Director of Campus & Community Engagement

Hola Familia!

Now that we're fully in 2020 it's a great opportunity to take a look at some of the great moments we've already had this year and look ahead to many more. In January we kicked off a year of celebrating MEC's 50th Anniversary with a MEC Day Lunch that included friends and colleagues from across campus and the community. We had wonderful food and fellowship and decorated our space with photos and artifacts showcasing the beautiful history and diversity of MEC and it's many previous iterations. It was an important reminder that the work we are engaged in at this moment was started and carried forward by those who came before and we are fortunate to get to build on their efforts. It is important to remember and honor their work as we continue that legacy.

In addition to the 50th Anniversary kick-off, the Asian American Association helped us usher in the new year with a wonderful Lunar New Year's Celebration. Those who attended were treated to a potluck lunch representing the many diverse cultures of



Asian American communities and got to participate in important and fun traditions like exchanging red envelopes that signify good luck in the coming year. The AAA students decorated our space to help elevate the family spirit that we consistently strive to cultivate. That event was a great taste of what we know will be a wonderful Asian and Pacific American Heritage Month later this semester in April.

Now in February, we turn our thoughts to the deep and rich heritage of Black History Month. We started off the month with a lunch representing various cultures of the African Diaspora provided by Rich Taste Catering. Rich Taste is a Black-owned business and it was important for us at MEC to not only support their business but ensure that the quality and authenticity of the food be centered and Rich Taste more than delivered that.

The rest of the month will include intentional discussions on what it means to be Black in professional spaces and still be your authentic self, the Black Excellence Ball, and our Maafa Commemoration series. For the second year at the University of Dayton in collaboration with Campus Ministry, we will be honoring the ancestors who passed away during the Middle Passage. For those of us of the African Diaspora, we know that their strength and resilience is our strength and resilience.

MEC continues to build a second home for many of our students who come from underrepresented communities. We grow every day. After 50 years I'm excited to see what the next 50 will bring all of us.

With love,
Sam



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Academic Success Corner

Cynthia Payne, Associate Director for Academic Success & Outreach

As you may have heard, my time in MEC is coming to a close! Therefore, it's so very timely for me that we are reflecting on what MEC means to us. Here are some words that capture what MEC has meant to me over the last three years and what I hope it can provide for you:



Time. Time to grow. Time to change. Literal hours and hours and hours of time spent in MEC and doing things connected to supporting the mission of MEC. I wouldn't trade my time in MEC and it has been the highlight of my professional career. I hope you invest hours of your time in moments, people, and opportunities that help you to change and grow.

Home. We hear it all the time. MEC is a home for so many of you all and it is a home for me too. We all have different associations with home. For me, home is a place of comfort, familiarity, and love. I have found that in MEC. Whether it is in MEC or somewhere else on campus, I hope you find a place and/or build connections with people that feel like home during your time at UD.

Authenticity. There may be some time in life where you feel like you can't display your whole, authentic self. I know I still experience those moments. My hope for you is that you always have places where you can be fully authentic. MEC is that place for me where I am accepted completely for who I am. We strive to create that environment for everyone in MEC.

New. When I came to MEC and Dayton, OH it was a completely new place for me. I didn't know too much about it and it felt like I was taking a risk. There will be times in life where you are presented with new situations and it will feel like a risk to take them. If you are anything like me: do your research, pray, trust your gut, and don't be afraid to take those risks. They can have some pretty fantastic payoffs.

Kindred Spirits. Some of the greatest blessings in my time at MEC have been the relationships created with so many people – both colleagues and students. I have truly gained a family that is made up of such beautiful spirits. Surround yourself with people who build you up, support you and respect you. Choose people who make you a better person. I am SO very grateful and fortunate to have gained this family.

Support. It is an incredible honor to be a witness to the greatness of students every day. I believe it is my job to provide the support that students need in order to succeed in their journeys. Even though I might not be sitting in MEC every day, nothing has changed about the fact that I am here to support you as you navigate these years. My heart and home will always be in MEC and I will continue to be there for you!

So, per usual, it's a bit cheesy 😊, but all of these words are pieces of what has made me so grateful to be a part of this **#OMazing** and **#MECnificent** family. **THANK YOU** for allowing me to be a part of your journey and this community! I look forward to remaining a member of this family – even in a new opportunity on campus. Regardless of where I sit, I will always carry MEC with me wherever I go!

YOURS, Truly.

~Cynthia

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Diversity Peer Educators

Megan Woolf, Assistant Director of Multicultural/Multi-Ethnic Education

Hi Everyone!

The Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center has been interwoven throughout my time as a Flyer, so it takes on much meaning in my life. As our new name reflects, the Center has been a major source of education and has led me to engage in learning, social justice and activism in my life, just as I hope it has for you!

Most importantly, MEC is home to authenticity - authentic people, engaging in true laughter and care for one another. We lift up one another on challenging days, listening to one another process calculations, theories, projects, or relationships. Here in MEC, we can ask one another hard question with the genuine hope of seeking truth together. The mission of MEC calls us to share in our journeys, being vulnerable and seeing the strength in vulnerability.

Spring semester is a time to explore that MEC embodied authenticity, and grow new relationships. Take time to go to a speaker, dialogue or program. Have a conversation with someone in class you've never chatted with before. Learn something new - about yourself and others!



Upcoming Dialogue Zone Events

Let's Talk about It: W. Kamau Bell,
"United Shades of Kamau"
Thursday, February 27
3:30-5:00 PM

How Inclusive Are We of the
Religious Views of Students and
Employees on Our Campus?
Wednesday, April 22 or
Thursday, April 23
3:15-4:30 PM



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MEC Diversity Peer Educators (DPE)



January Events

- DPE Information Sessions
- DPE Certified Peer Educator Training Weekend (Picture)
- DPE Presentation to Marycrest RA staff
- MLK Social Justice Plunge

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Instagram, Twitter & Snapchat!
@ud_dpe

February Events

- U Diversity Training for UDayton Global Students - February 17-21
- U Diversity Module Due for Incoming Students February 27th
- W. Kamau Bell Meet & Greet



**Keep an eye out for
DPE Events as we
pilot new programs in
March and April!**

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The Graduate Assistant Corner

Joia Mitchell-Hollman, '15, '21

MEC Graduate Assistant for Creating Inclusive Community

My admiration for MEC is undeniable. MEC is my home and safe space and most recently has been my place of solace. My experience in this place and with this team has shaped and molded me professionally and personally in ways that I would have not experienced elsewhere. I admire most the authentic and effortless connections with the students and the professional staff. Their support and encouragement are what drive me to show up and be present.

Thank you MEC!



Kirsten Simpson, '19 '21

MEC Graduate Assistant for Mentorship Initiatives & Student Engagement

When asked the question, "What does MEC mean to me?" It is honestly challenging to put feelings into words because this department means so much to me. My first connection to MEC began during the Spring of my senior year of high school. I attended the multicultural weekend in April of that year and that is when I knew that the University of Dayton was the school for me. Now, the MEC community has become my second family. I am so blessed to be a part of a staff that is dedicated to fostering that sense of family. Thank you MEC for always being there.

MEC is a MECinfiend and Excellent Community. It's my community. It's your community. It's OUR community.



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Student Organization Spotlight

Asian American Association



Hello! We are the Asian American Association, supporting Asian American students, including, but not limited to Eastern Asian American, Middle Eastern American, and Pacific Islander Americans, on all levels and promoting cohesiveness within the community. We provide students with the opportunity to interact with one another, learn from the experiences of others, and participate together in identity development opportunities and supporting Asian American students by promoting fellowship, enforcing on- and off-campus involvement and by being a liaison between students and administration.

THIS SEMESTER WE HAVE...



Celebrated Lunar New Year, a holiday widely celebrated in Southeast Asia, together with food and a red envelope exchange!



Attended OSU's AAA One Asian Nation event, where they recognized outstanding individuals within their community through a fashion show, talent show, and an inspiring Q&A segment to crown 2 winners!



Had brunch at President Spina's residence and listened to some thoughtful dialogue from the President himself!



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MEC Student Reflection

Sama Ahmed

Hey guys, My name is Sama Ahmed and I am a first year Mechanical Engineering student. I am from Miamisburg, Ohio.

My UD experience has been very positive. I have met lots of people and made great friends, gotten closer to staff members, and have become more involved. I am an active student in MEC and because of my love and involvement in MEC, I made an effort to be a part of the executive board for the Multicultural Programming Council and I am now the Middle Eastern Committee Chair for MPC.

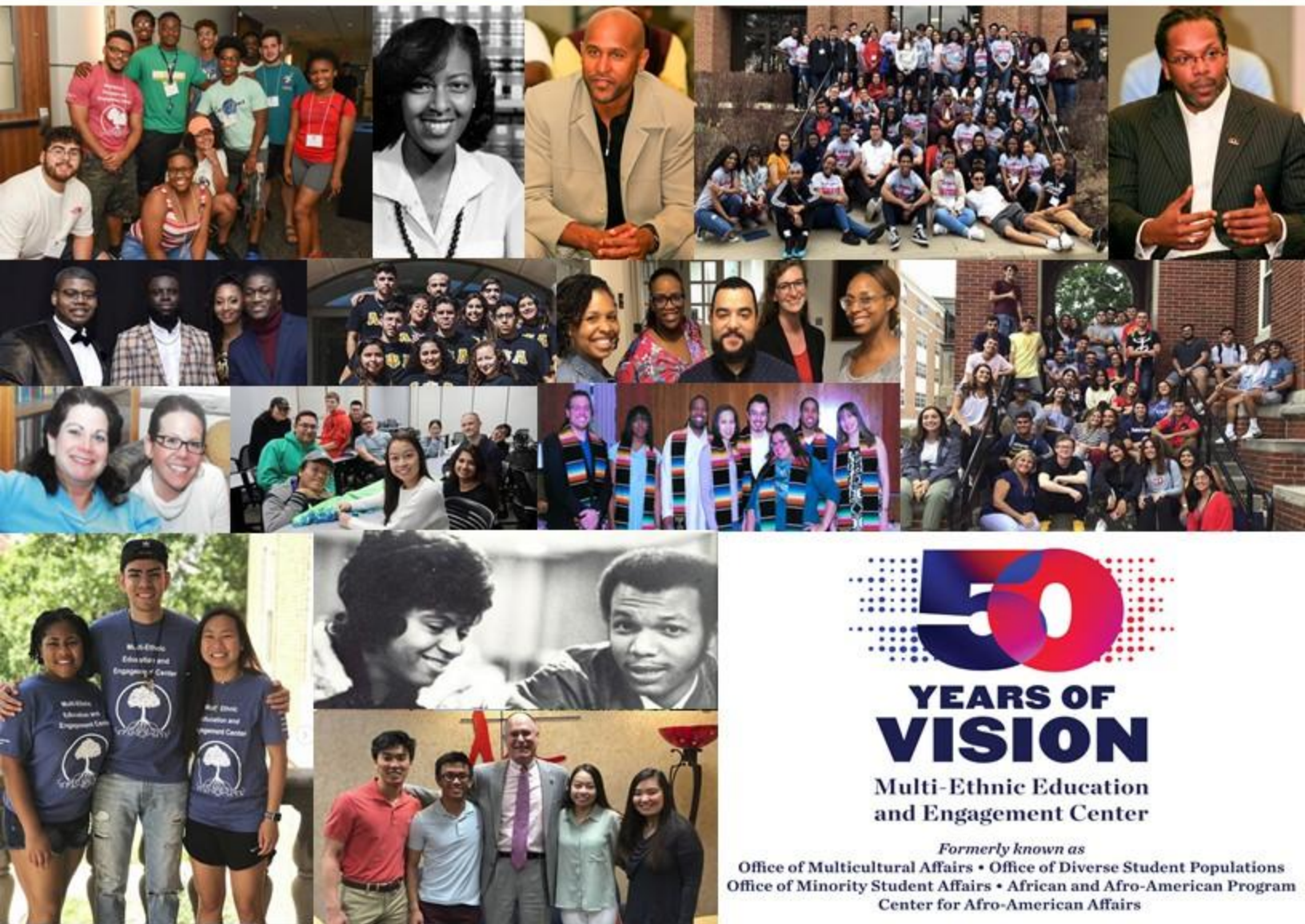
Recently, I joined Diversity Peer Educators as a member and am currently in the process of being a Certified Peer Educator. I am also involved in PEERS (the Program to Engage and Exchange Resources for Students) and have a wonderful mentor, Lena Clerici. She also leads Sister 2 Sister chats, which I participate in.

MEC has been like a second home to me. It makes me feel like I belong on campus and that I have a team that is on my side encouraging my academic success. With the 50th anniversary that was recently celebrated, I am so happy that MEC has been around this long and I hope that it continues its legacy in the future.



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 Center for Afro-American Affairs

*Celebrating a legacy of
 Vision
 Critical Evaluation,
 & Action*

SAVE THE DATES

JANUARY 17, 11:30am
 50th Anniversary Kickoff
 Alumni Hall, Room 101

MARCH 27, 11:30am
 50th Anniversary Celebratory Luncheon
 Torch Lounge

APRIL 14, 11am
 Campus Teach-In
 Collective Liberation:
 Vision, Critical Evaluation, & Action
 Kennedy Union Ballroom & Room 222

NOVEMBER 19, 5pm
 50th Anniversary Gala
 Dayton Art Institute

300 College Park
 Alumni Hall, First Floor South
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