December is here! A time to wrap-up the year, begin preparing for finals, holiday celebrations and getting ready for our winter break. As I complete my first full semester as EOF Director at CCM, I wanted to take this time and reflect on this amazing ongoing learning experience. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to get to know all of you - my students and for having the luck of working with such an amazing and professional staff. All of you have made this time of learning and transition very easy for me and I look forward to all the new things 2011 will have in store for us. To all our students, we wish you much luck and success during your final exams. Hang in there! You’re almost done!

Let’s take this time to look back on the 2010 year and reflect. Use your holiday break as an opportunity to rest, relax and enjoy time with friends and family. Come back refreshed and ready to take on new challenges as we get the Spring semester going.

The EOF Staff wishes all of you a happy and safe holiday and for a 2011 New Year full of health, prosperity and well being for you and your loved ones!

The Celebration of Kwanzaa

On Monday December 6th, the EOF office celebrated our annual Kwanzaa ceremony. This is an EOF long standing tradition and a great time to come together as a college community and celebrate the holiday season. It is also an opportunity to learn for those that might not know - What IS Kwanzaa?

Kwanzaa is a celebration of family, culture and community; it is a non-religious African American/Pan African holiday founded in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga - professor of African Studies at California State University, Long Beach. After the 1965 Watts Riots in Los Angeles and during a time of political and social turmoil, Dr. Karenga wanted to find ways to bring the community together. He founded “US” a cultural organization and began his research of African “first fruit” harvest celebrations. The name Kwanzaa is derived from the Swahili phrase "matunda ya kwanza" which means "first fruits". The celebration runs from December 26th – January 1st.

"Kwanzaa was created to introduce and reinforce seven basic values of African culture which contribute to building and reinforcing family, community and culture among African American people as well as Africans throughout the world African community. These values are called the Nguzo Saba which in Swahili means the Seven Principles. The Nguzo Saba stand at the heart of the origin and meaning of Kwanzaa, for it is these values which are not only the building blocks for community but also serve to reinforce and enhance them" (Karenga, 2008).

The celebration will vary from family to family, but it includes songs, dances, food and time to spend together. Each night a candle will be light and placed on the Kinara (candleholder), while discussing The Nguzo Saba, one of the seven principles.
What are your plans after graduation? My plans after graduation are to transfer to Montclair State University and dedicate myself to obtaining my Master’s degree.

How has County College of Morris and EOF prepared you for life after college? County College and EOF have been a learning experience for me. I came here as a high school student and now I’m leaving as a professional person preparing for what comes next.

What role has the EOF program played in your academic, personal, and professional development? EOF has been the extra push that I needed in my academics, a shoulder to cry on when I have problems in my personal life and the ears that listen when I need to let things out about classes, professors, etc.

What things have motivated you to continue striving for academic success and professional growth? What motivates me most is my family, where I come from, and what I dream of being one day in the future.

What advice or message would you like to leave to current and/or future EOF students? The message I’ll leave for the future EOF students are two quotes that are also part of my motivation. “Believe deep down in your heart that you’re destined to do great things!” and “When you feel like giving up, remember why you held on for so long in the first place.”

What personal experience, if any, has had a huge impact on your personal philosophies and/or plans in the future? Well I would be the first generation graduating from college in my family. That just gives me the strength to look toward a way that life is not easy, but nothing is impossible if you believe it deep down in your heart.

What are memorable moments you have had with EOF? The most memorable moment I’ve had with EOF was when I had problems with my dad’s status in the USA, and everyone just embraced me with their warm love and let me know you were there for me.

When you are not studying and engaging academic life, how do you spend your free time? I’m usually spending time with my family or singing at church which is what I love the most.

~ Stephany Cedano

AESNJ STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
Melanie R. Jimenez, VP of EOF Student Alliance

“Most EOF students that graduate from community colleges transfer to 4-year institutions or universities, because we know how hard it is to work for what we need”, said Dr. George Jenkins, one of the three authors of three New York Times bestselling books, and former Seton Hall University EOF alumnus at this year’s AESNJ Student Leadership Conference. On November 12, 2010, Director, Pam Marcenaro, EOF Counselors, Edith Nelson and Beth Pinajian accompanied me and four other EOF students including EOF Student Alliance President, Ayesha Aly Ahmed, to this wonderful and exciting event.

We started off with an amazing breakfast, and a welcoming speech from NJIT President, Maybelyn Rodriguez. We were gladly invited to spend the day learning about EOF, and life skills through a number of workshops that were extremely interesting. After
AESNJ CONFERENCE (CONTINUED)

experiencing a workshop on Public Speaking, I am sure to be prepared for my speech fundamental class in fall of 2011. I learned many facts about public speaking I did not know and met new people in the process. I also got to experience with my other EOF students from CCM, a Workshop on “Who Moved My Cheese”? This workshop relates to the book of the same name, and makes one think about how often we have to adapt to changes in our lives. I enjoyed it because now I eat more than just American cheese, I try to enjoy other cheeses because you never know when you’ll run out of American! (an example of being flexible)

We also enjoyed a luncheon with this special speaker, George Jenkins, one of the authors of the amazing book “The Pack”. After listening to a brilliant speech, we socialized with other EOF students from around the state playing in a game room with 6 pool tables, an indoor bowling alley, and a full arcade. We won gift certificates for TGIF. Our day went so quickly!! It was a once in a lifetime experience that anyone would love to experience again. So if you’re an EOF student, make sure you talk to your counselor and get registered for next year’s AESNJ Conference! I’m pretty sure it will be double the fun.

~ Melanie R. Jimenez
VP EOF Student Alliance

EXAM TIPS FROM STUDENTS & PROFESSORS

Exams value your memories and your skills and ability to understand what you are studying. They make you prepare beforehand and may cover topics you do not know. They also force you to be specific and focused, as time is limited in most exams.

Final exams are scheduled for the week of December 14th—20th. Please observe the following tips to get yourself ready:

- Start studying early and make sure you have covered all sections outlined on your syllabus.
- Attend academic review sessions scheduled by professors and or by Center for Assessment & Learning (CAL).
- Organize all your notes in an orderly fashion for fast referencing and utilize your textbook CD.
- Make a timetable for the period you are studying.
- Work together. For example, form a small study group.
- Review all the materials at least once after your main study session.
- Think up a few questions you might be asked on your exam, and try answering them.
- Have an efficient amount of sleep before the exam day.
- Allow yourself time for relaxation and thinking.
- Use strategies like deep breathing to overcome panic.
- Visualize yourself in positive and relaxing situations when starting your exam.
- Keep cool and calculated—don’t worry if you can’t answer the first question, calmly go onto the next. It will come to you later!
Everyone in EOF wishes you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a very happy and successful New Year!!