40th EOP Conference Thru Our Eyes...

The morning started off with several sessions in which we were able to choose an area of interest to learn more about in order to bring the information back to our SSU campus. All three of us, as student representatives, decided it would be most beneficial to attend separate sessions so that we could get the most out of the conference. After the small sessions, the remainder of the conference was spent in large student group sessions where we heard from several former EOP students who had reached success and wanted to share with us their struggles and achievements to show us that we weren't alone in our fight. The speakers ranged from faculty members, who despite their backgrounds went on to receive doctorates and now help CSU students reach their full potential, to State Senators who fight everyday in the California senate to ensure that education is a top priority.

The speakers at this conference played a large role in the motivation and empowerment of the students during their time in Sacramento. They stressed the importance of never giving up no matter what obstacles you face in life, and as one speaker said: "If it can be done, you can do it!" Every one of the speakers had hope that the (Continued from Page 4)

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EOP PEER Mentoring UNIV 199

By Katrina Grant

The idea behind this additional EOP Academy component is to continue having our EOP Students get acquainted with our campus and serve as a retention tool. The focus of one in particular, lead by Katrina Grant, a Senior Kinesiology major, has been on career mentoring and choosing a major.

It is estimated that about 20% to 30% of the students in her class are Undeclared majors and another 10-20% who are thinking of changing majors at any given time. Katrina’s approach to teaching the course was to administer interest assessments of possible topics to cover over the course of lectures and based on the interest of students, then formulate the course syllabus around the topics students wanted to discuss the most. The areas that seem more popular are issues of diversity on campus, career paths, choosing a major and campus involvement.

The EOP Peer Mentors meet weekly with their Manager to discuss issues that our EOP students are facing and to see how the course is coming along. Students have a chance to provide input as to the instruction and design of the course through a mid-term student evaluation. According to Katrina, students for the most part have provided positive comments about how the course has been helpful and are generally satisfied. A measure of success is determined in Katrina’s mind by being successful in the student’s other courses.

Students normally complain about having to take a required course in addition to the Fall Semester UNIV 102 as part of their EOP Academy but according to Katrina most students feel more confident after going through the course as a time to reflect and develop more social interaction amongst other EOP and non EOP students. One student commented to Katrina that the student ‘would not change a thing’ in the course. The UNIV 199 is a mandatory 1 unit CR/NC course that can be used as a free elective.
Hi everyone. For those of you who don’t know me yet, I’m the Associate Director of EOP. I’m responsible for EOP Admissions, coordinating Summer Bridge and the EOP Academy, developing our Leadership Program, and I am an advisor for both EOP and Undeclared students. I’m also the campus Testing Coordinator, so if you had to take the EPT or ELM at Sonoma, you probably ran into me.

So much for what I do. Here is a little about who I am. I grew up in Westchester, which is part of Los Angeles. I graduated from U.C.L.A. in 1971 (yes, that was a long time ago!), and got my M. S. in Clinical Psychology from San Diego State in 1982. I’m a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and used to have a private practice in Sonoma County. I’ve lived in Los Angeles, San Diego, Stockton, and Rohnert Park. I’ve been at Sonoma State for 22 years, and worked with EOP students for the past 12 years. I’m married, and have a 24 year old son, and 2 dogs – a Rotweiller mix, and a small pit bull. If I’m not at work, I’m probably walking the dogs! I like to hike and swim, read a lot, and love the TV show LOST.

I’ve been the Associate Director of EOP since December, and I think this is a very exciting time to move into this position. Diversity is the buzz word this year, at SSU and throughout the country. This seems to be a time of great opportunity to see some major and long lasting changes in our world, and I’m thrilled to be a part of it. You are truly the future leaders of our country, and it’s a privilege to be able to help you achieve your goals.

As I say at Summer Bridge, I would like to get to know all of you. I’m in the EOP Office, Salazar 1070. Come by and say “Hi” when you can.
The EOP Club is a student-run club whose purpose is to foster campus community for our EOP students and Friends of EOP at SSU. The club focuses on developing leadership skills by allowing students to govern, plan and make decisions regarding issues that are pressing to our EOP community on campus.

This year, the EOP Club has embarked on an ambitious plan to revitalize the membership by considering beach trips, camp-out days, study halls at the library and creating a book exchange program. According to Andre Bailey, Club Advisor, the Club is designed to empower the students to excel and promote a social and supportive environment amongst our EOP community at SSU.

The role of the club Advisor is to provide ideas, inspiration, mentorship and be a supportive agent of change. Who can join the EOP Club? It is specifically open to all our EOP students as well as Friends of EOP, meaning all those that support and aid the cause of the EOP program as well as anyone on campus that would like to contribute to its mission.

- Club meets once a week
- Mondays in the EOP / International lounge
- Salazar Hall 1070
- Meeting time is at 4pm

Membership is not limited to EOP students and all are welcome to contribute. The Club also has plans to be involved in the community by reaching out and is working toward fundraising to have a specific EOP Club Scholarship. If you are interested in learning more about the Club, please contact:

ANDRE BAILEY
Club Advisor
707.664.2196
andre.bailey@sonoma.edu

Hello all! My name is Laurel Lombardi and I’m a fourth year Kinesiology student here at Sonoma with a concentration in Lifetime Fitness. I started at SSU in the fall of 2005 straight out of high school after having attended the Summer Bridge Program. I came to Sonoma State from a small town on the North Coast as the first person of five kids to graduate from high school and the first to pursue higher education. I always knew I had what it took to get to college, but truly had no idea what to expect once I got there and didn’t have any experience to draw from.

The Educational Opportunity Program has been an instrumental part of my college experience from the first day that I stepped foot on this campus at Summer Bridge. There I met people who have become great friends and I became familiar with the campus and all the resources it offers. My EOP advisor helped me to understand the registration process and plan my academic future. Not only has the EOP staff advised me academically, financially and personally over the past four years, but they have welcomed me as a student staff member as well. As with many EOP students the EOP office has become a home away from home and likewise the staff has become my surrogate family. The opportunities I have gained through EOP have absolutely and without a doubt shaped my experience at SSU.

As I near the completion of my undergraduate degree I plan to continue my education in the health and fitness field by eventually attending graduate school to become a chiropractor or physician’s assistant. The advice I would give incoming students, or any student for that matter, would be to keep an open mind, keep a positive outlook, and to understand that there will be bumps along the way. Try to keep them in perspective and don’t let them deter you from what you are capable of achieving. Also, I would encourage people to go out of their comfort zone, take a risk and try something new. You might just learn something new about yourself!
EOP students sitting in that room would one day return and give back to the program that had helped and supported them in achieving their dreams. Another aspect of this conference that was truly inspiring was being able to meet the 250 EOP students who represented the 50,000 students who currently attend CSU’s across California. All of these students, including ourselves, were so open to sharing personal experiences and triumphs but also hearing and learning from what others had to say. Overall, we walked away from this Conference feeling part of a statewide EOP community.

The speakers showed us that when looking back on our journey to college, we need to remember that it’s not about how you compare to others, it’s about how far you’ve come. All of us walked away knowing that we have the power and motivation to achieve anything we set our minds to and no matter how hard our struggles may seem, the EOP program will support us in overcoming these challenges. What we learned from this conference could fill a book, but instead, we will share our experiences by listing a few quotes that had a lasting and personal impact on us.

“Excellence requires full-time focus and a desire to make it happen.”

“False negative: someone who is said to be doomed to fail yet makes it.”

“Excuses-You create your own reality. It’s easy to make excuses to justify why we didn’t meet a challenge. Excuses limit your mobility and put a hold on your future. Challenge your excuse. Excuses kill dreams.”

“If it was easy, everyone would have a college degree.”

“Bad attitude is the only disability in life. Eliminate and evaluate what attitudes and beliefs are holding you back and get ride of them.”

“Most people quit and make excuses. There’s no such thing as luck, you make the choices.”

“If you keep doing what you’re doing, you’re going to keep getting what you’ve always gotten.”

-Dr. Aldrich Patterson

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you might end up somewhere else”

“Failure is a part of learning. It’s not failing if you keep getting back up.”

“It’s easy to make a dollar, but it’s hard to make a difference.”

-Thomas Brown

“If you don’t take control of your mind, someone or something else will take control for you.”

-Simon Silva
(continued) What is Leadership? By Marvin Espinoza

When I first stepped onto college soil at Sonoma State, I was alone but was more ready than ever to face the challenges ahead. High school had left me with one important feature above all. I was hungry for knowledge and new experiences that would help me better understand myself and the world around me. My first semester met my expectations as my 3.8 GPA was honored by Sonoma State’s EOP program, which set up a dinner to congratulate students that had done well that semester. My second semester was both my worst semester and best. Although I had received the lowest GPA in my college career. I had also gained one of the highest achievements for my life and my mothers. That spring, we had become citizens of the United States. I traveled home a lot in order to help my mom with the citizenship process. From filling in complicated applications to studying hundreds of questions on US history, my mother looked at me when she couldn’t pronounce a world correctly in English or when she felt like giving up and putting the whole citizenship thing aside for another day. When it was over I was ready again to focus on school and to work hard to achieve my goals. My sophomore year was difficult as I balanced school with outside activities but never went below a 3.0 again. Some of my extra curricular activities include the campus’ hip hop club, Mu Omega chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and held a shift manager position in an off campus restaurant.

To continue my journey I believe that one of the most essential actions that I must take is to lead in my community by communication. The struggles in my life are only some of the struggles that exist for all people. I have the ability to relate and to learn. Because I am someone who overcomes the challenges that come, I hope to show others that they can overcome their struggles too. Summer Bridge will be a great opportunity to shine, to show the EOP students that a solution to many of the issues they face at home is to get a college education.
You're invited!

2009 is the 40th Anniversary of the Educational Opportunity Program in California. EOP at Sonoma is celebrating by inviting all current and former Sonoma EOP students and "friends of EOP" to join us on Sunday, May 3.

We are planning a full day of activities, including "pre-conference" activities starting at 10 am. Our formal opening session is @ 1 pm and you and your family are welcome to come for all or part of the day. It’s a great chance for you to have fun with your EOP community and to meet EOP alumni who have gone on to a wide variety of careers.

Please RSVP to sandra.shand@sonoma.edu within the next two weeks so we can make appropriate dinner arrangements. (The 4:30 dinner is NOT just for graduating seniors; it’s for all of us. Please RSVP if you are able to attend.)

SUNDAY, MAY 3rd:

10:00 am. Non-denominational service of remembrance for the treasured students, faculty and staff who have passed on. See sign at the Veteran’s Grove near the main entrance to campus.

11:00 am. Alumni & staff networking hosted by Andre Bailey, Sandra Shand and the EOP Club. SSU Commons. Look for signs.

12:00 pm. Break for lunch with old friends.

1:00 pm. Check in & Opening Ceremony at the Commons. Welcome and entertainment. Prize drawing.

1:30 pm. Plenary Panel of Alums on "Life after SSU. Thriving in difficult economic times; tips for success." Commons.

2:30 pm. Breakout groups joining alums and current students to discuss opportunities in career fields such as Education, Health & Medicine, Law & Criminology, Business, Social Service & Counseling, Math & Science, "Green" Careers. Commons & the Lakes.

3:30 pm. Concurrent games, activities & focus groups: Sports & games by the Lakes. Campus tours lead by current students. Topical discussion tables. Informal mentoring opportunities. Commons & the Lakes.


6:00 pm. Open Mic. Alums & current students sharing their experience of the SSU community. What role can we play in each others’ lives during the times to come?

7:00 pm. Talent Show, Video & Raffle. Alumni & current students are invited to share their talents. (If you are interested in performing, let Sandra know when you RSVP.) Commons.

9:00 pm - 1 am. EOP Club may sponsor a dance. More updates to follow on this.

What is EOP?

We provide a comprehensive array of services to support student success at Sonoma with graduation as a goal for all EOP students by:

Increasing retention for low-income and first generation students.

THE SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAM

is a one-week residential program that takes place the summer after high school graduation. Summer Bridge helps to smooth the transition from high school to college and students begin to form a learning community.

THE EOP ACADEMY

is designed to provide academic and social support for first year students. As part of the EOP learning community, Freshmen enroll in a block of classes.

THE EOP GRANT

Students who are admitted to EOP will be considered for EOP Grants (average Freshman grant: $1200) and a variety of other grants based on the results of their FAFSA.