

# OBERLIN

New Student Orientation 2008



## Many Voices/Building Communities Student Panel

### **MRC CONTACT INFO**

Wilder 208-105  
135 W. Lorain St.  
Oberlin, OH 44074  
Office Hours:  
Monday-Friday 9am-5pm  
Phone: 440-775-8802  
Fax: 440-775-6848  
Email: [mrc@oberlin.edu](mailto:mrc@oberlin.edu)

Wednesday, August 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.  
Thursday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.  
Warner Concert Hall

Coordinated by the Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) and co-sponsored by the Department of Residential Education, Many Voices/Building Communities is a panel discussion by current Oberlin students for all incoming first-year students during new student orientation each year. Panelists share their experiences and viewpoints around important, current issues of interest for first-years. Special attention is paid to the many opportunities and challenges that arise on such a diverse and dynamic campus. Students will have the opportunity to raise questions and socialize with the panelists and each other at a social reception that follows the panel.

Moderator:

Eric Estes, Associate Dean and Director of the MRC

Panelists:

Alex Birnie, Chloe Drummond, Julia Leeman, Elissa Nieves,  
Asishana Osho, Thomas Shannon, Daniel Tam-Claiborne,  
Amanda VanAllen

university of their choice. While I am passionate about all of the work that I do around campus I have to say that being a Bonner Scholar is my favorite. Another favorite of mine is working with Colors of Rhythm, a multicultural dance show put on each year by people of color on Oberlin's campus. This year I am proud to be the chairwomen of the committee and also prepared to pull all of my hair out a week or so before the show. I somehow also have enough time to also be a Peer Liaison working with first generation, lower income students, Mellon Mays Undergraduate Research scholar, and vice president of the senior class. After Oberlin College, I plan to go to graduate school to study media and journalism hopefully at Northwestern University, and eventually become a sports broadcaster or news anchor in order to be an inspiration for people of color everywhere. If you are interested in getting involved with any number of these things on campus do not hesitate to shout me a holla through email.

Email: [Amanda.VanAllen@oberlin.edu](mailto:Amanda.VanAllen@oberlin.edu).

We are grateful to the following people for making this year's program possible:

Multicultural Resource Center (MRC)  
Department of Residential Education  
Student Staff in Residential Education  
Oberlin College Dialogue Center (OCDC)  
Oberlin College Student Union  
Yeworkwha Belachew, Ombusperson and Director of OCDC  
Eric Estes, Associate Dean and Director of the MRC  
Brayton Fields, Assistant Director of Residential Education  
Linda Gates, Dean of Students  
Diego Luna, MRC Latina/o Community Coordinator  
Becky Mosley, Assistant Director of Residential Education  
Domenico Ruggerio, MRC Asian/Pacific American Community Coordinator  
Jack Skelton, MRC LGBTQ Community Coordinator  
Kantara Souffrant, MRC Africana Community Coordinator  
Tina Zwegat, Associate Director of the Student Union

\*We have included the panelists' emails. Their bios, pictures, and emails are also available on the MRC's website ([www.oberlin.edu/mrc/major\\_programs/Manyvoices.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/mrc/major_programs/Manyvoices.html)). Please feel free to follow up with them respectfully if you have questions after tonight.



### Daniel Tam-Claiborne, OC'09

Hello friends, I'm a senior Creative Writing and East Asian Studies double major from Brooklyn, NY. I am passionate about activism and social justice and am involved with a variety of organizations and offices on campus. I am the co-chair of the Asian American Alliance, which seeks to promote awareness of Asian American issues on campus through programming and dialogue. I am also a Bonner Scholar, and do most of my community service work with America Reads, which helps to support underserved children in the Oberlin public school system. Other affiliations include writing for student newspapers and magazines, helping to organize events and conferences, and co-hosting a jazz show on WOBC that I've been involved with since my first year. I have spent my winter terms in New York (interning with a museum), New Orleans (doing relief work after Hurricane Katrina), and Oberlin (as part of the inaugural group of Entrepreneurship Scholars). I also spent a semester abroad in Osaka, Japan studying language and living with a host family. I have been a Resident Assistant for two years, a student worker in the Multicultural Resource Center, and practically live in Mudd library. In my spare time, I love to play basketball and pontificate on my life (read: this bio). At the heart of things, though, is my sordid love affair with food, which brought me from my stint as a dishwasher in Stevenson to the delicious cookery of Third World Co-op, where I have eaten since my sophomore year. For those who would like to get a taste of co-op life, don't hesitate to ask, and while you're there, treat yourself to a bowl (or four) of white rice, of which I am inexplicably fond.

Email: Daniel.Tam-Claiborne@oberlin.edu.

### Amanda VanAllen, OC'09

My name is Amanda VanAllen, but my friends call me Mandi, and I am a fourth-year GRADUATING senior from Chicago, IL. I am a double major in English and African American Studies with a concentration in History. My life on campus, like many other Obies, is crazy busy. I am a two sport varsity athlete competing in basketball and volleyball, and I am also a Village Housing Assistant, that's an RA, but for houses instead of dorms. Like many of the other panelists today, I am also a Bonner Scholar in the Bonner Center for Service and Learning. For my service I have participated in a number of different services including the Boys and Girls Club of Lorain County and the OC Mentors Program, but have settled down for the last two years as a Ninde Scholar tutor which entails that I work with 3-4 students a year at Oberlin High and guide them through the process of enrollment in the college or

### Alex Birnie, OC'09

Hello Obie newbies! I'm a fourth year student from Calgary, Alberta, Canada (above Montana for those of you who don't know) double majoring in Economics and Theater. As a former double-degree student, previously studying Vocal Performance, my experiences have been very broad at Oberlin. I have been involved closely with programs and organizations such as the Ice Hockey Team, ArtsFest, Musical Theater (OMTA), German House and recently served as Co-Chair for the Student Finance Committee which allocates your student activity fee to all of the student organizations and clubs on-campus. I am a member of the student band 'The Sauce' and I work for the Publicity Office of the Theater & Dance Program. I am particularly passionate about the socially conscious and active students at Oberlin, and helping them achieve their goals and aspirations. I think that this school's greatest strength is the entrepreneurial and determined spirit of the student body. There are opportunities here to search out (and get roped into) an incredibly wide variety of activities that can ultimately be as much a part of your education as the classroom. Oberlin offers a phenomenal amount of resources (I'm still constantly discovering ones I never even knew existed) and if there is one piece of advice I could give, it would be to search them out and utilize them. They are here for you! Welcome to Oberlin.

Email: Alexander.Birnie@oberlin.edu.

### Chloe Drummond, OC'11

I am a second-year student from New York City. I'm beginning the double-degree program this year, majoring in Law and Society and Piano Performance. In my first year I was co-treasurer of the Asian American Alliance and now serve as the organization's student liaison. I also served as the treasurer for the 15<sup>th</sup> Biennial Midwest Asian American Student Conference, "Policy, Barriers and Justice." It's a mouthful, I know, but it was a great experience working with other students, staff and faculty, getting to know Oberlin's resources, and planning a weekend full of guest speakers and events. Feel free to ask me more about Asian American student activism on campus after the panel! As a Bonner Scholar, I have also been involved in the Bonner Center for Service and Learning (BCSL). Through the BCSL, I have been connected to the George Jones Farm where I thoroughly enjoy getting myself grubby! I also got involved with Prospect Elementary School in Oberlin as a reading and math tutor through the America Reads and America Counts programs. You should definitely stop by the BCSL and see what it has to offer. I live in Asia House and when I'm not out and about, I like to hang out in the library or Wilder bowl, swing dancing in the halls (I took the beginners Experimental College course or ExCo), and cooking in the kitchen with friends. Feel free to ask me questions after the panel or when you see me around campus, and welcome to Oberlin!

Email: Chloe.Drummond@oberlin.edu.

### Julia Leeman, OC'09

Hey! I'm originally from Silver Spring, Maryland and my high school was bigger than Oberlin. I'm a fourth-year Creative Writing, Comparative American Studies (CAS) and possibly Visual Art major. The CAS program has really shaped how I think about the world. I love (well, mostly) in-depth discussions of privilege and oppression and trying to see these discussions at work on campus. I "came out" my first week at Oberlin and I've been involved with queer activism and community on campus ever since. I have been a part of LambdaUnion, Queer Peers, Queers & Allies of Faith (QuAF), and Queer Jews & Allies. I am also interested in anti-racist organizing and fat activism, and I really want to learn more about prison abolition and environmental racism. I was a Resident Assistant for two years in Johnson or J-house, the "Hebrew Heritage House", and Baldwin Collective for women and trans/gender people. I enjoyed putting on programs and building a community where I lived. I have also been involved with the co-ops, and have eaten in a co-op since my first month at Oberlin. I've lived in Harkness the last two years and the community I've found in OSCA has been really important to me. Also, I love cooking vegan food! I've also worked at a co-op camp, lived at an artist collaborative for a summer and stayed at an eco-village for a month. Ask me, and I'll tell you plenty of stories. I love writing and making art, especially painting, and I'm interested in using art for social justice. I also just started to learn the banjo. Oh, and I love making friends, so please say hi when you see me around!

Email: Julia.Leeman@oberlin.edu.

### Elissa Nieves, OC'10

My first name may be Elissa, but please call me ChiChi, everyone does! I'm a third year Vocal Performance major in the Conservatory of Music from Lafayette, CA and I'm here to let you know that just because you're in the Conservatory does not mean you can't be involved with the College, and vice versa! I love singing opera and it's the passion that I've decided to pursue, but I've never felt that I should have to give up my other passions! Luckily for me (and you) Oberlin has been the perfect place to allow me to remain involved in life outside of the musical world. I am a Bonner Scholar, a member of Third World Co-op, a Latino/a Heritage Month Representative for La Alianza Latina (come check out our events this fall!), and I am involved in efforts on campus to establish an active Multi-Identities student group. I'm also trying to start conversations about what it means to be a low-income conservatory student. I try to find some time for fun with my friends and taking in some much needed sun in Wilder Bowl. I love to talk, so when you see me around campus feel free to come up to me and introduce yourself!

Email: Elissa.Nieves@oberlin.edu.

### Asishana Osho, OC'10

Hello. I'm from Lagos, Nigeria and I'm a third year student at the college. I'm on the pre-med track at Oberlin with majors in Biochemistry and French Literature. I'm involved in a few organizations on campus including the Oberlin College Dialogue Center, the African Students Association, the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students, the Student Finance Committee (You'll hear about this one early on if you intend to participate in any organizations - money talks!) and Consilience Undergraduate Research Education (A journal). In addition to these, I am a campus Resident Assistant, work at the Admissions Office, and am actively involved with intra-mural sports. Being involved on campus has helped me establish a network of friends who have contributed enormously to my development here in College. As an international student, adjusting to the Oberlin culture when I first got here was no easy task, but through these organizations I have found my comfort zones and have been enjoying myself since then. You'll definitely run into me somewhere on campus, so say hello when you do. Welcome to Oberlin!

Email: Asishana.Osho@oberlin.edu.

### Thomas Shannon, OC'09

Hi! I'm a senior (yikes!) double majoring in Chinese and Comparative American Studies. When people ask me where I'm from, I have to pause to think, because I'm really from a lot of different places. Being from an air force family, I've lived in Alabama, Virginia, Germany, and California, just to name a few. At Oberlin, I usually fill my plate working as a campus tour guide for Admissions, volunteering at Lorain Family Planning as a Bonner Scholar, and as a staffer at the on-campus Sexual Information Center (SIC). In addition, I've been able to host three shows at WOBC, the college and community radio station. I also love to hang out at the Multicultural Resource Center (MRC), which supports traditionally underrepresented communities: people of color; low-income; first generation; international; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) communities. The MRC also provides opportunities for everyone to get involved with social justice work on campus. I am also involved in ZAMI, a student group for Questioning and LGBTQI people of color.

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