

Diversit-



DIVERSITY TEAM NEWSLETTER

FALL 2018/SPRING 2019

Changing the world through interfaith

By Savannah
Martinez

I have always known that I wanted to change the world. It is an enormous challenge that I strive to make progress on every single day.

Three years ago, as a first-year with a Social Work major and Sociology minor, I somehow found myself involved with the Chaplain's Office on campus.

By the end of that year, I had attended a spring break trip focused on civil rights and interfaith and had declared my second minor in Interfaith Leadership Studies. This came as a shock to everyone who knew me because I identify as non-religious.

I got involved with the Chaplain's Office and Interfaith Leadership because they actively promoted the acceptance and inclusion of diverse faith-based and non-faith-based backgrounds.

Interfaith leadership is about recognizing and acknowledging both the similarities and differences

among persons and beliefs and working together to not only navigate the struggles of the world around us but to make it better for everyone.

I recognize that how I understand the world and my position in it is largely informed by my experiences and studies.

I love the work of interfaith leadership because it is something that is created by all for all.

It brings faiths, worldviews, diversity, inclusion, acceptance, social justice, and most importantly, people, together in a way that I have never seen before in my own communities.

Being an interfaith leader along with my social work background has provided me with the resources to identify the intersectionality of my identities such as being a cis-gendered, able-bodied, heterosexual, latinx, non-religious woman living in the United States of America. This has taught me how to use my identities to meaningfully connect with and understand others.

My collective experiences have shaped my vision of our world.

The future is filled with hope, community, and endless possibilities.



Etown welcomes Olympian

By Jamil Pines-Elliott

On Wednesday, November 7th, Elizabethtown College hosted Ibtiyah Muhammad for the annual Leffler Lecture. Muhammad is an American sabre fencer, five-time Senior World medalist and World Champion, and a 2016 Olympic medalist. In those Olympic games, she became the first American woman to compete in the Olympics in a hijab and the first Muslim woman to win an Olympic medal for the USA.

The conversation included Kurt DeGoede, professor of Engineering and Physics, and Kathy Staib, head softball coach, Assistant Director of Athletics, and Senior Woman Administrator. They asked many questions centered around her upbringing, religion and faith, fencing, mental health, and her Olympic experience. They also took questions from the audience and Twitter, with the hashtag #etownleffler.

One of her main points of emphasis was to always be yourself no matter what. She stated that we should all "break those barriers by being who you are" and that the "biggest act of resilience is to be yourself."

It was an honor to have such a humble, hardworking, passionate, and groundbreaking woman on our campus. She is influencing everyone around her with her words, vision, insight, and charity. She is a light who is just beginning to shine on everything she touches.

Student Spotlight

Name: Joseph “Joey” Sensenig

Major: Occupational Therapy

Graduation Date: May 2020

Hometown:
Leesport, Pennsylvania

Favorite Marketplace food:
Chicken Fried Chicken

Best Memory: Casino Nights

Reason for joining the Diversity Team:

I joined Diversity Team because I wanted to make an impact on campus and make a difference in the community



Hello, devoted Diversit-E Newsletter readers. My name is Joseph Sensenig and I'm a third year Occupational Therapy major here at Elizabethtown College. Currently, I am involved in multiple clubs on campus, including Diversity Team, SOTA, and National Society of Leadership and Success.

I am from a small town in Berks County called Leesport, which is about twenty minutes from Reading, PA. I'm an animal lover, an avid supporter of Philly sports teams, and (unfortunately) an excessively devoted student. Part of the reason I wanted to be part of Diversity Team is because of my unique background, with my father having a German background and my mother being born and raised in Colombia.

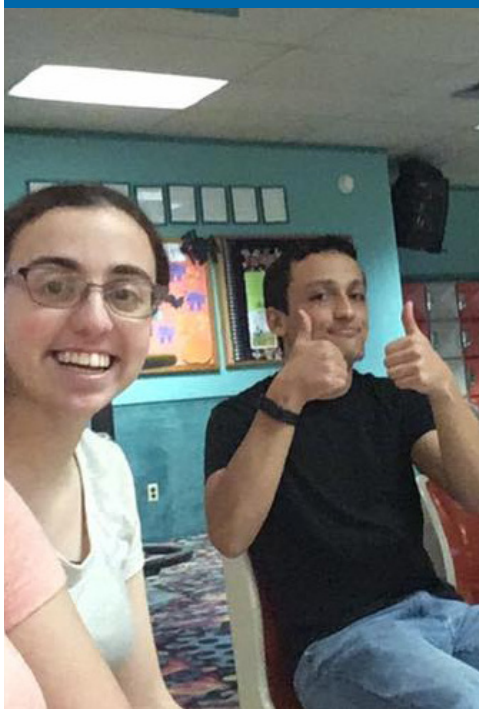
Due to this mixture of cultures throughout my childhood, I wanted to utilize my experiences to help Etown

become more inclusive and inviting for people of all backgrounds. Another reason I wanted to join Diversity Team is my belief that gaining input from multiple perspectives not only leads to improved communication and progress, but an improved community and society in general.

There's so much we can learn from one another, but to do so we must listen and discuss, which is quite difficult these days.

Along with other team members, we're hoping to provide more opportunities to explore the various cultural backgrounds that are present on Etown's campus. By exploring these backgrounds, hopefully we can be one of the few places where productive dialogue can take place.

We're very excited about next semester and have various events being planned, so we hope to see many of you around campus and at events in the coming months.

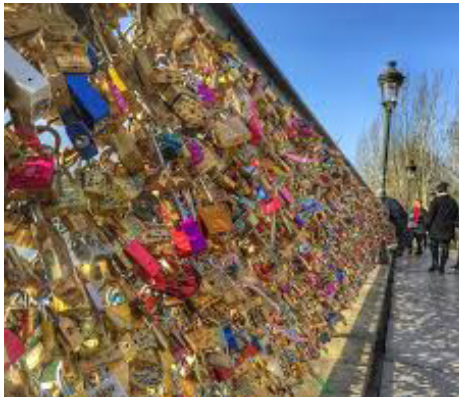


Holiday Traditions Across Cultures

By Jalil Pines-Elliot

Sometimes, we can be oblivious to how we celebrate the holidays, where the celebrations originated, and why we celebrate certain holidays in the first place.

The holidays can sometimes be described as the most wonderful time of the year, and they bring us together for remembrance, love, and peace. Not every holiday is the same, however, and it is important that we acknowledge the differences in celebrations as the holiday



season awaits.

Christians and many non-Christians all over the world celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas Day, December 25th.

In France, Christmas celebrations start with St. Nicholas day on December 6th, and on Christmas Eve, children put their polished shoes in front of the chimney hoping for them to be filled with candy.

Halloween, as we call it and know it in the United States, is a holiday celebrating the remembrance of the dead.

Most notably in Mexico, the multi-day holiday known as “Día de los Muertos” focuses on remembering family members and friends who have died.

New Year’s Eve, the celebration of the end of year, has many different traditions and roots around the world.

In Greece, an onion is traditionally hung on the front door of homes as a symbol of rebirth in the New Year. On New Year’s Day, parents wake their children by tapping them on the head with the onion!

Valentine’s Day is a day of love, and

every culture celebrates the holiday a little differently.

In Paris, couples used to attach a padlock on the Pont des Arts “love lock bridge” and throw the key in the River Seine!

As you can see, it is important to acknowledge the differences that we have in cultures and traditions and realizing that everyone has a different way of celebrating the holidays.

Differences are what make us, as individuals, unique and special, and through sharing these differences, we can appreciate and learn from them.



Please, Stop Asking “Where are you from?”

By Miguel DeCastro

Stop asking, “Where are you from?”

It may seem like a menial thing, but its impact can be insensitive, ignorant, and non-inclusive. This question is usually asked when someone looks different or speaks a different language than the majority in the community and so it is assumed that they must have come from somewhere else. That’s not always the case.

I’m Filipino, but I was born in Japan and raised in Maryland. Due to its complexity, growing up, it was difficult to explain to other people my ethnic background.

They asked, “Where are you

from?” and I would have difficulty answering because that question is vague, and I have lived in different places.

I usually told people that I was from Maryland and that usually brought up a follow up question of, “Okay, but where are you actually from?”

Pro tip: don’t ask this either. Their rejection of my truthful answer made me feel like I wasn’t accepted because it inferred I wasn’t able to fully assimilate and be part of a community where I live because I look different than most of my peers.

This question made me feel uncomfortable because I never could tell what they really wanted to know from me.

There are many different ways to learn about someone’s national origin or ethnicity without sounding insensitive.

I prefer, “What ethnicity are you?” or “What is your ethnic background?”

Others might prefer, “What is your family background?” or “What is your cultural background?”

I am proud of my ethnicity and I want to share my stories of with people.

If you want to know about anyone you meet, use validating, inclusive language and you will have a fruitful conversation.

We can all do better.

Think about your questions and please just stop asking, “Where are you from?”

Blue Jays. Always.

By Meghan Kenney

Originally published in The Etownian, edited for length

Nadia was an amazing person, to put it very simply. If you were in Nadia's presence, it was likely you were in a good mood," senior Jamil Pines-Elliott said.

On New Year's Eve, senior political science major Nadia Mourtaj, her sister Zeyneb Mourtaj and their cousin Meklit Techlehaimanot were involved in a car accident. Zeyneb passed away at the scene of the accident, and Nadia passed away Jan. 9, 2019.

The sisters had a joint funeral a couple of days after Nadia's passing near their home in Waldorf, Maryland. Vice President for Student Life Dr. Celestino Limas was in attendance and said that "[losing Nadia] was difficult for many reasons but in particular because it was her last semester."

Nadia's family asked Limas to speak at her funeral. He took this time to present Nadia's degree, for which she had completed all credit requirements before her passing.

Nadia was a Vera Hackman Apartments Community Fellow, a member of NOIR and a 2015 Mosaic Scholar. Nadia was the vice president and an award-winning member of Elizabethtown College's Mock Trial Team.

Nadia is remembered by Associate Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Planning Dr. Kyle Kopko in an email as "an outstanding student [who] was passionate about civil and human rights, working to advance these causes in her studies and co-curricular activities."

As a first-year, Nadia participated in the Civil Rights and Interfaith Service Trip to Atlanta, Ga. and Selma and Montgomery, Ala. During her sophomore year, Nadia studied at American University in Washington D.C. She also went to South Africa in May 2018. These experiences allowed her to explore her commitment to community service.

She made an impact on campus as well as in the lives of those she knew.

Senior Anthony Carter remembered Nadia as "more than a best friend to me. She was like a sister. She was always there for me and others when times got difficult and I'll miss all of the laughs that we shared."

Area Coordinator Dominick DiLoreto, who worked with Nadia when she was a Community Fellow, remembered Nadia as "top of the line... She was very inspirational in her activism and her love for everyone."

"While we mourn Nadia's passing, we take comfort in the fact that her light continues to burn through her legacy of service," Chair of the Political Science Department Dr. April Kelly-Woessner said.

"I think we all feel a responsibility to pick up the torch and carry on Nadia's work in her memory."

Nadia—you are so loved and so missed by all of us who were lucky enough to know you.

By Elizabeth Gipe

Originally published in The Etownian, edited for length

Former student Joey Kobus passed away Tuesday, Aug. 14. While Kobus withdrew from the College, he will be given the same dedications at Baccalaureate and Commencement in his honor as a current student.

During his time at Etown, Kobus was a double major in political science and Japanese, and he was a part of Momentum. He was also a member of the Jay's Nest staff.

Adjunct Faculty in Latin Jennifer Besse remembers meeting Kobus in Momentum, where he stood out to her among the other students.

"I immediately noticed him, even among all the other students in Momentum, because he was so engaged in conversation," Besse said.

In Momentum, Besse runs the socratic seminar sessions, and she recalled asking a question about what students think of when thinking of a hero. Besse was surprised by the thoughtfulness of his answers and his kindness during their sessions.

"He was comfortable creating space for other people," Besse said.

Director of Student Transition Programs Jean-Paul Benowitz also remembered Kobus's time in Momentum in a statement he released around the time he learned of Kobus's passing.

"We are grateful for the time we were able to know him and for his contributions to the College, particularly in the Momentum program," Benowitz said in his statement.

The students at the College who knew Kobus remembered him for his kindness. Senior Brooke Mazzone knew Kobus about a year before his passing.

"In the time that I got to know him, he made such an impact on my life, and that says a lot about a person," Mazzone said. She also remembered him as a fun-loving, genuine person.

"I just want him to be remembered for who he was," Mazzone said. "You won't meet anyone more genuine than what he was."

While talking of Kobus, Besse referenced a quote she translated from Cicero, De Senectute 19:17 that expressed sadness whenever someone young passes away.

"All things that happen naturally should be thought of as good. And what is more natural than for the old to die? But if the same thing happens to the young, it violates and baffles nature. Therefore, it seems to me that when the young die, it's like a vibrant flame being crushed by a flood of water, but when the old die, it's like a fire burns out on its own without being put out by anything," Besse translated.

The Diversity Team



Guadalupe Carnero
Diversity Team Coordinator

Contact Us

Email(s):

David Stewart,
Associate Director
& Coordinator
of Multicultural
Recruitment,
stewartd@etown.edu

Aileen Ida, Diversity
Team Coordinator,
idaaileen@etown.edu

Guadalupe Carnero,
Diversity Team
Coordinator,
carnerog@etown.edu

Follow [Elizabethtown
College Diversity Team](#)
on Facebook to learn
more!



Aileen Ida
Diversity Team Coordinator
Class of 2019



Jalil Pines-Elliot
Diversity Team Member
Class of 2019



Jamil Pines-Elliot
Diversity Team Member
Class of 2019



Austin Hall-Bumbray
Diversity Team Member
Class of 2021



Miguel DeCastro
Diversity Team Member
Class of 2020



Joseph Sensenig
Diversity Team Member
Class of 2020