

# Ethnic Diversity Newsletter



*Department of Ethnic Studies*



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**Editors: Miho Chisaki & Vang Xiong**

**Minnesota State University, Mankato**

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# Department of Ethnic Studies



## Beauty of Cultures

Wednesday, March 14



Mulan Dancers

This year's "Beauty of Cultures" event was held on Wednesday, March 14th in the Centennial Student Union's Hearth Lounge from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The purpose of the "Beauty of Cultures" is to promote and celebrate multiculturalism on campus and to encourage students, faculty, administrators, staff, and Mankato community members to meet the diverse and talented MSU, Mankato's "family."

More than 30 performers showcased their talents in the program:

- Mulan Dancers
- Biofreak Crews
- Butterfly Dancers
- Lero Odola
- Kaying Lao
- Maichei Lor
- Shristi Rajkarnikar
- Asheesh Manandhar
- Sashindra Shrestha
- GaoShoua Vang
- Kaying Lao
- Nancy Lao
- Mai Moua Vang
- Brady Allen
- Sapana Ghimire
- ESSO's Dancer
- CIASA's Dancer



Lero Odola



Sapana Ghimire



Bao Xiong



NetCom Singer



Biofreak Crews



ESSO Dancers



Vang Xiong, founder of the Beauty of Cultures, did an excellent job putting this event together for the University's community to expose to ethnic cultural dances and songs.

The event was sponsored by the Department of Ethnic Studies and Institutional Diversity and co-sponsored by the Ethnic Studies Student Organization, International Student Association, Elizabeth & Wynn Kearny International Association, Chicano Latin American Student Association, NetsCom, Bangladesh Student Organization, Opportunity Access Success Intercultural Services, Mulan Dancers, Butterfly Dance Group, and BioFreak Crew.

BIG THANKS to Mr. Xiong for promoting diversity on campus





# 4th International Conference & MSU Diversity Dinner & Reception



Marshall & Pauline



Cindy, Jaffy, Sura, Sang, Va, Pathy & Nikhom



Va & Mr. Xiong



Jaffy, Mr. Xiong, Va, Marshall, Mr. Sang & Sura



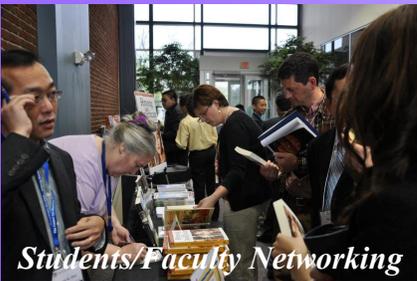
Bunsavira & Alisha



4th International Conference



Diversity's Reception for SBS



Students/Faculty Networking



Cindy, Nikhom, Pathy, Linda



Diversity's Reception



Lero & DeWayne





## Ethnic Studies Conference

Thursday, April 5

**Celebrating the Rich Racial/Ethnic Diversity of America's 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Midwest Ethnic Studies Conference

Thursday, 4/5/2012  
 CSU Ostrander Auditorium  
 Minnesota State University, Mankato

*Open to the general public*

<b>Conference Schedule:</b>	
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	<i>Conference Registration</i> CSU 150 / Ostrander Auditorium
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	<i>Welcome, General Assembly &amp; Smudging Ceremony</i> Dr. Michael T. Fagin, Professor & Special Advisor to the President
9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	<i>Somali Settlement in the U.S.</i> Dr. Cavo Abdi, Professor at the University of Minnesota
11:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.	<i>Panel Discussion</i> Mr. Carlos Gallego, Community Outreach Manager of Think Small Mr. Bukata Hays, Executive Director of Mankato Diversity Council
12:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.	<i>Lunch &amp; Keynote Speakers / Lutheran Campus Chapel</i> Dr. Sally Baas & Ms. Nao Thao Hmong Culture & Language Program
2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	<i>Panel Discussion</i> Mr. Abdi Sabrie, African Family & Education Center Mr. Ethan Bates, Southwest MN Housing Partnership Mr. Ernesto Velez Bustos, Centro Campesino Ms. Lois Schmitt, Bremer Bank & Nonprofit Resources
3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.	<i>Panel Discussion</i> Mr. Fuyuan Jackson, Graduate Student, Ethnic Studies Department Dr. Shannon Miller, Assistant Professor, Gender & women's Studies Dept

For more information, please contact the Department of Ethnic Studies:  
 Morris Hall 109 / (507) 389-2798

The Second Annual Midwest Ethnic Studies Conference, “Celebrating the Rich Racial and Ethnic Diversity of America’s 21st Century,” was held on Thursday, April 5th in the Centennial Student Union’s Ostrander Auditorium and a follow-up lunch session in the Lutheran Campus Chapel.

The conference was designed to meet the professional interest of those careers found in the College of Education, Arts and Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences and other areas working with diverse populations. Its primary goal is to provide an interdisciplinary platform for students, faculty and others in human service career paths to present research and discuss issues related to ethnic studies from a national and global perspective.

Five different ethnic/multicultural workshops and panel discussions were presented throughout the program’s schedule. Its very first program started off with a smudging ceremony, then a presentation on Somali settlement in the U.S., a follow-up workshop on community outreach programs and Hmong American refugee experience, a lunch session with two keynote speakers on Hmong culture and language program, and a panel discussion on diversity and community resources/services.

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Midwest Ethnic Studies Conference



Keynote speakers: Dr. Sally Baas & Ms. Nao Thao



Lunch Session

**Dr. Sally Baas & Ms. Nao Thao**  
 Hmong Culture & Language Program





## Exploring America's Diversity

By: Lois Schmidt

*Ethnic Studies Conference's Panelist*



*Ethnic Studies Conference*

I was honored earlier this month to be among panelists at Minnesota State University, Mankato's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Midwest Ethnic Studies Conference. Bremer Bank has been open less than a year in Mankato and the community has welcomed us with warmth and healthy curiosity. In this event, the curiosity was about Bremer's attention to educating employees on the rich, varied stories and traditions of new immigrants and Native Americans in our communities. "This conference includes lots of the types of stories and experiences we try to offer to our bankers," I said. "But since they need to be in the bank and available to customers, we do what we can to organize training and cultural experiences right in our bank buildings."



*Eggrolls prepared by ESSO*

In our Marshall, Willmar and Redwood Falls banks, for example, we'll be honoring Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month with Bremer/Hmong Days in late May. Of course, ethnic food is always a part of the experience. I snapped a photo of the eggrolls that were part of our conference lunch. See below – hot, fresh and delicious right from the kitchen!

Pictured with me below are co-panelists who I have been privileged to meet in my work in our Bremer communities, including Mankato, Owatonna and Marshall. L-R Abdi Sabrie, Executive Director, African Family and Education Center, Ethan Bates, Community Coordinator, Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership and Ernesto Velez Bustos, Executive Director, Centro Campesino.



*Abdi, Ethan, Ernesto & Lois*

For more information about Bremer Bank's Nonprofit Resource Center, please visit us at:  
<http://nonprofitresource.blogspot.com/>

*"We are a unique team of Nonprofit Resource Specialists working with nonprofit communities in Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin, helping organizations and coalitions develop their capacity to serve clients and communities. Our unique position is just as unique as our employer - Bremer Bank."*

## Community Outreach





ESSO Good News & Fundraisers



# Fundraiser!

ESSO successfully conducted two Lucky Bamboo Plant fundraisers in the Centennial Student Union. The first fundraiser was held on November 9th in Fall 2011 while the second fundraiser was held on the 8th of February in Spring 2012. The purpose of these fundraisers was to raise money for the students to attend conferences and create social events for Ethnic Studies Department's family to meet and network with each other, or simply take a break from studying and working. Such events as "End of the Year" picnic, Thanksgiving potluck, Bowling Night, field trips, and etc.

ESSO sold out of all their lucky bamboo plants in their first fundraiser in Fall 2011 and sold out again after tripling their product for the Spring 2012's sale. The group raised over \$500 from these two fundraisers. With the generous contribution from Dean Greer of the \$1,000 and along with the fundraisers' budget, ESSO members were able to attend for the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Hmong Studies in St. Paul on March 30th.

ESSO will be conducting another Lucky Bamboo Plant fundraiser at the Mankato Area International Festival on Sunday, April 22nd (CSU Ballroom) to raise money for next year's officers/members. Come out to support ESSO!





ESSO Events



ESSO's Flower Sale



Bowling Night



Faculty & Families



Ethnic Studies Student Organization



We Love ESSO



ESSO's Thanksgiving Potluck



Executive Officers





## Ethnic Studies Student Organization

Meet the Officers

In Fall 2011, the Ethnic Studies Student Organization's members elected their executive officers for the academic year of 2011-2012. With brief details about the election process from their advisor, Vang Xiong, along with interested candidates' speeches. The members nominated the following students to serve in the executive boards.

- President:** Linda Yang
- Vice-President:** Carole Vang (*served in fall term 2011*)
- Vice-President:** GaoShoua Vang (*served in spring term 2012*)
- Secretary:** Lindsay Bolstad
- Treasurer:** Va Yang

## MEET YOUR OFFICERS



Hello, my name is Linda Yang and I am a 4<sup>th</sup> year Hmong American student at MSU. As of Fall 2011, I was elected to be the President of the Ethnic Studies Student Organization. My role in this academic based organization is like most organizations around the campus, getting to know those who attend our weekly meetings, help with getting the Ethnic Studies Student Organization's name out on campus, and finding ways to help fundraise for the members & officers to attend ethnic conferences in and out of Minnesota. This year, we were fortunate to receive a \$1,000 grant from Dean Greer to attend the 4th International Conference on Hmong Studies at Concordia University in Saint Paul. It was a great conference for us (students) to network and share our college life experience. Big THANKS Dean Kimberly Greer!



Hi, my name is GaoShoua Vang and this is my second semester at MSU. As a PSEO student, it was hard for me to associate with others and make friends, but later I was introduced to a few members of the Ethnic Studies Student Organization and invited to their meetings. I finally found a small group of people here on campus that I could befriend with. As the second semester approached, I was given the generous and splendid opportunity to be the Ethnic Studies Student Organization's Vice- President, of which I am still grateful for. Being Vice-President was a great experience for me that allowed me to develop a strong understanding of what it takes to be a leader and how to work with others. I also had tons of fun participating in the "Beauty of Cultures" and several fundraisers that ESSO held on campus. Overall, I really enjoyed learning about the opportunities that are here on campus and the great friends I made throughout the school year.





I proudly serve as the Secretary for Minnesota State University, Mankato's Ethnic Studies Student Organization. My responsibilities as a Secretary include: recording meeting minutes, organizing and storing records, creating meeting agendas and fliers, scheduling and participating in events and meetings, and maintaining communication with ESSO members via e-mail, text, and social media. ESSO has participated in many exciting activities during the 2011-12 academic year, including: potlucks, resource fairs, ethnic studies conferences, diversity dinners, highway cleanup, Beauty of Cultures, Bowling Night, Lucky Bamboo Plant fundraisers, and graduation commencement flower sales. I am grateful to serve with such passionate and dedicated ESSO members. The wonderful people of ESSO make our small but committed organization so successful. As we continue to embrace diversity and discuss the issues surrounding subordinate groups, the future of ESSO is bright.



*Nyob Zoo*, my name is Va Yang and I am the Treasurer in the Ethnic Studies Student Organization. Ever since I was elected to this position, I've been working very hard to improve the organization to a new chapter, and at the same time, I've learned so much from my peers. As the Treasurer to ESSO, my responsibilities are to handle the money that ESSO has fundraised and keep track of all expenses that officers, members, and advisor used in the organization. Throughout the school year in ESSO, I've come to learn that in order to be a successful club it must involve with teamwork. I'm glad we have great team players this year. I'm very enjoyed all of the things that we've done in the club, as well as very appreciate our advisor, Mr. Xiong, who always there for us. Mr. Xiong, "thank you" for training me how to use Microsoft program to create ESSO's fliers. It has been a great year for me.



*Ethnic Studies Student Organization*





## Awards & Scholarships



This year's "Recycling Award" goes to Va Yang, who has contributed the most in ESSO's recycling fundraiser. Va has collected more 300 cans to help fundraise for the organization. In order to keep the community healthy, Va believes that it is everyone's responsibility to recycle unwanted products — whether just a pop can or a small piece of paper — recycle is the key to keep Mother Earth clean!

# Recognition Award

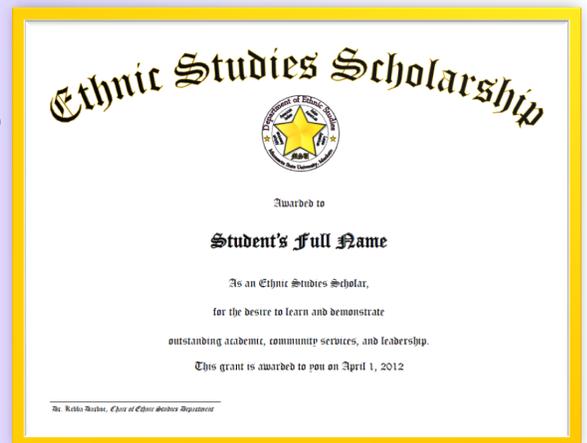
Each year, the Department of Ethnic Studies gives out three scholarships to support four students who are either majored or minored in the ethnic studies curriculum. In order to be eligible, applicant must have taken the following Ethnic Studies course: American Racial Minorities or Introduction to Ethnic Studies. Applicant will agree to have completed an additional six Ethnic Studies credits at the completion of the award year. Available funds will be distributed in two equal installments at the beginning of each semester through financial-aid and will show up as a credit on student's fee statement. Application forms are available in the Ethnic Studies office, 109 Morris Hall.

### Type of Scholarships:

The **Academic Excellence Scholarship** will go to a student with the highest GPA. The **Achievement Scholarship** will go to a student who has overcome great difficulties or challenges in maintaining a high GPA. Last but not least, the **Timothy Price Scholarship** will go to two students who have demonstrated outstanding academic, community services and leadership.

### This year's recipients are:

- **Josie C. Alleva** for the Achievement Scholarship
- **Timothy P Custalow** for the Academic Excellence Scholarship
- **Irma T. De La Guardia** for the Timothy Price Scholarship
- **Va Yang** for the Timothy Price Scholarship



## Ethnic Studies Department SCHOLARSHIPS

# Congratulations!





## Faculty & Community Outreach



Mr. Vang Xiong & Senator John Harrington

On Saturday, February 18th, the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans and Hmong American Partnership hosted their very first “**2012 Asian Pacific Town Hall Meeting**” at the Hmong American Partnership building in Saint Paul. The day’s event included a presentation on initial data from the 2010 Census data and the significance and implications for the Asian Pacific community, as well as a short panel discussion opened to the general public for any concerns in their local community.

### Event Agenda:

- Registration and networking (9:30-10:00 am)
- Welcome and Introductions
- 2010 Census Presentation
- Panel discussion on the significance and implications of the Census data and recommendations for leaders and meeting with MN State Legislators

### Purpose of this meeting were to:

- 1). Get updated on the latest US Census figures on Asian Pacific populations in Minnesota, including education, economic, and other demographic data.
- 2). Network with community leaders from the Asian Pacific community and with leaders that work with the Asian Pacific community.
- 3). Participate in a community-wide discussion on addressing a range of issues, such as jobs, education, housing, health, civil rights, and pending state legislation.
- 4). Speak to legislators from both Republican and Democratic parties. Advocate on issues you care about!



# CAPM

COUNCIL ON  
ASIAN PACIFIC  
MINNESOTANS

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (CAPM) is a state agency created by the MN State Legislature to fulfill three primary objectives:

- to advise the governor and members of the legislature on issues pertaining to Asian Pacific Minnesotans;
- to advocate on issues of importance to the Asian Pacific community; and
- to act as a broker between the Asian Pacific community and mainstream society.

For more information about CAPM, please visit them at:  
<http://www.capm.state.mn.us/>





## Faculty & Community Leaders



*Dr. Michael Eric Dyson & Dr. Michael Fagin*

During the academic 2011-2012, Dr. Fagin organized many conferences, for example, Native American, Latino, Asian, the 36<sup>th</sup> Dr. Michael T. Fagin Pan African Student Leadership Conference, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Midwest Ethnic Studies Conference.

The highlights of the Pan African conference included the luminary keynote speakers, for example, Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, Kimmie Weeks, etc.

Dr. Michael Eric Dyson is an American academic, author, and radio host. He is a professor of sociology at Georgetown University. He is a two-time NAACP image award winner and one of America's most influential and renowned intellectuals. He was named by *ebony* as one of

the hundred most influential black Americans and is the author of sixteen books.

Topic: "Dr. Dyson keynote address at the 36<sup>th</sup> Dr. Michael T. Fagin Student Leadership Conference stressed the need for all people living in a multicultural society to understand the impact that racism has had on shaping the attitudes and behaviors that affect us in today's society. His examples of white racism and sexism sent a strong message to all that were in attendance and increased the understanding of their negative impact on America's integrated society."

Mr. Kimmie Weeks was born in Monrovia, Liberia. He is an internationally acclaimed human rights activist. Mr. Weeks currently serves as the organization's Executive Director while also working on his Masters the University of Pennsylvania. He remains a vocal advocate for children's rights around the world.

Topic: "Kimmie Weeks's presentation covered contemporary education and economic needs in several developing African nations. His keynote address at the Pan African Student leadership conference demonstrated how many developing African nations are improving their health and educational standards. Mr. Kimmie Week also stressed the needs for economic development and teaching youth personal health care, basic educational skills and vocational training."



*Mr. Kimmie Weeks*

# Building a Better Community





## The 24th Annual Black Graduate Student Association Conference



The National Black Graduate Student Association (NBGSA) was ecstatic to announce Philadelphia/Valley Forge, Pennsylvania as the host site for its 2012 national conference. The 24th Annual National Black Graduate Student Conference (NBGSC) was held on March 14-17, 2012 under the theme "Claiming Your Place in Uncommon Spaces." The conference drew many graduate and undergraduate students from around the country.

The NBGSA was founded in 1989 at the University of Michigan. Its inception of the NBGSA has provided graduate students with critical resources to enrich their academic and social experiences. NBGSA is the nation's largest interdisciplinary Black graduate student

organization and is dedicated to addressing the needs of Black graduate students. Our members continue to use their scholarship and service to enhance our campuses, communities, and the world.

The annual conference and meeting of this organization provides a platform for scholarly research to be presented, networking, and social opportunities. Delegates from universities around the nation present their work in roundtable discussions and poster sessions. Many delegates also enjoyed interacting in general sessions, seminars, and workshops facilitated by nationally recognized scholars.

The key note speakers for the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference included:

- \* Honourable Congressman Chaka Fattah (D-Pa.)
- \* Dr. James Braxton, Lehigh University
- \* Dr. Gregg Carr, Howard University
- \* Dr. Zoe Spencer, Virginia State University

On November 9-10, 2012 Minnesota State University, Mankato will host the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual National Black Graduate Student Association North Central Regional Conference. For more information, please contact Dalton Crayton (North Central Regional Representative) by email: [dalton.crayton@mnsu.edu](mailto:dalton.crayton@mnsu.edu) or Dr. Michael T. Fagin (Executive Board Advisor) by email: [michael.fagin@mnsu.edu](mailto:michael.fagin@mnsu.edu).

A major highlight of this annual event is its College Career Fair in which national and international universities are represented. The College Career Fair continues to be an excellent event to expose undergraduate students to graduate school opportunities and to assist Master and Doctoral students in their search for employment.

# Educational Networking





## Graduate Assistants

*Higher Education Experience in Ethnic Studies Program*



My name is Miho Chisaki and I am from Tokyo, Japan. I am a 2<sup>nd</sup> year graduate assistant in the Ethnic Studies Department. I came to this country after I graduated from high school in Tokyo, and I am going to graduate with a master's degree in July. Moving to Mankato is a big change in my life, and I am still experiencing something new every day here. I have had many precious experiences as a college graduate student and graduate assistant in the Ethnic Studies Department. I look forward to contributing to our society by bringing knowledge and experiences that I obtained through the years I spent here at MSU.



Hola! My name is Irma T. De La Guardia and I am a graduate assistant in the Ethnic Studies Department. As a Latina from Panama City, Panama I grew up surrounded by a culturally diverse environment. Having received a bilingual education, I am fluent in both Spanish and English. In May 2011, I graduated with a B.S. in Business Management and minoring in Organizational Communication from the University of Minnesota, Crookston. My experience in the Ethnic Studies Department has been educationally rewarding and I look forward to the rest of my collegiate career at MSU. Nos vemos!



Deri-Jot! My name is Lero Odola and I'm a non-traditional student at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I'm a refugee from war torn South Sudan. I escaped the Sudan's regime brutality about twenty years ago. My dream is to earn the highest college degree that I can — so I could give back to my community and share the college life experience that I've had to other non-traditional students to pursue their dreams. My experience with Minnesota States University, Mankato has been remarkable. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Ethnic Studies and Law Enforcement from the College of Social and Behavioral Science in 2011. Currently I'm pursuing a master's degree in the Ethnic Studies Department's graduate program.



My name is Nayoung Heo and I'm from South Korea. I speak both Korean and English. I finished my undergraduate study here at MSU, and I'm currently enrolled as a graduate student in the Ethnic Studies' graduate program. Majoring in Ethnic Studies has been a big change in my life, especial for someone like me who came from a country where ethnic diversity was almost like an unimaginable story from a different part of the world. Now looking back what I have gone through, the Department of Ethnic Studies not only has given me opportunities to challenge myself constantly but also to work as a graduate assistant with great professors and colleagues, as well as get involved in various events and academic conferences. Anyone can knock on our door and feel/experience what I have felt in our department!





## **Good News from Dr. Kebba Darboe**

*Chair of Ethnic Studies Department*



I wish to thank my esteemed colleagues for their support and hard work on all the accomplishments especially the program review. In addition, ethnic studies faculty wants to thank for their support on the program review process: Ms. Cindy Veldhuisen, Office Supervisor, program faculty, and graduate students, Dr. Kimberly Greer, Dean of College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Dr. Barry Ries, Interim Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, and Dr. Scott Olson, Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs.

During the academic year 2011-2012, the ethnic studies faculty has accomplished the following:

- 1). Prepared the self-study for program review.
- 2). A bundle of thanks to Dr. Carmen Lugo-Lugo, external reviewer, who submitted her completed program review report on November 7, 2011.
- 3). Ethnic Studies faculty responded to the nine recommendations.

Another significant accomplishment is in the curriculum area, for example,

- 1). As required by the Minnesota state law, the requirement for baccalaureate degree should change from 128 to 120 credits—conversion or curriculum redesign:
  - This process is completed and approved
  - No minor is required
  - Recommended minors include American Indian Studies and applied programs, for example, Social Work
- 2). Diverse cultures requirement labeled as “gold or purple” for only lower and upper division undergraduate courses. Some courses have been approved as gold and purple.
  - Purple course meets Goal 1: To prepare students with course content and the analytical and reflective skills to better understand diversity in the United States and in other societies across the world.
  - Gold course meets Goal 2: To give students learning opportunities to experience diversity with supervised reflection; to assist them in recognizing and responding to conditions of marginalized populations.
  - However, some students have raised concerns and pointed out that by design ethnic studies courses already meet the diverse cultures requirements—gold and purple
- 3). The Online Graduate Diversity Certificate Program is approved and requires 18 credits.

However, threats to the department still remain, for example, faculty mobbing characterized by spreading vicious rumors, bullying and stereotyping, and meddling by other faculty and staff in the internal affairs—all these behaviors are manifestations of institutional discrimination. In this context, the ethnic studies faculty will continue the struggle, as eloquently stated by Frederick Douglas’ (1857) in his timeless chant: “If there is no struggle there is no progress....”



**DEPARTMENT OF ETHNIC STUDIES**  
**109 Morris Hall**  
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**Mankato, MN 56001**  
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**Visit us at: [www.mnsu.edu/ethnic](http://www.mnsu.edu/ethnic)**

***PLEASE KEEP US POSTED.***  
***WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU***

**Name:**  
**Title:**  
**Company Name:**  
**Home Address:**  
**E-mail:**

**I AM:**         **Alumni / Year of Graduate:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Degree:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 **Friend of the Ethnic Studies Department**  
 **Other**

**I WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION ON:**

- Serving as a professional mentor**
- Providing an internship**
- Contributing to the Ethnic Studies Development Fund at the Minnesota State Foundation (tax deductible)**

**THANK YOU!**

*Please tear off, fold, and place in an envelope addressed to:*

**Department of Ethnic Studies**  
**109 Morris Hall**  
**Minnesota State University, Mankato**  
**Mankato, MN 56001**

**Or email this information to [kebba.darboe@mnsu.edu](mailto:kebba.darboe@mnsu.edu)**

