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ROBERT & PATRICIA GUSSIN SPIRITAN DIVISION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

NEWSLETTER

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Pasquale Merante 2009 - 2010 Gussin Spiritan Division Student of the Year



PASQUALE MERANTE,
 ATHLETIC TRAINING

Pasquale Merante 2009-2010 Gussin Spiritan Division Student of the Year Sophomore physical therapy major Pasquale Merante was selected by the staff of the Gussin Spiritan Division as the 2009-2010 Student of the Year. Merante grew up in Mount Lebanon, a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and he graduated from Central Catholic High School. After one visit to Duquesne

University's campus, he was convinced that Duquesne was the right school for him. "Just one look at the campus was all that it took. I could immediately tell that this was a University that could help me find my place." Merante claims it was the unique atmosphere, the campus layout, and the positive energy he felt on the bluff that set Duquesne apart from the other Pittsburgh area universities he visited.

"JUST ONE LOOK AT THE CAMPUS WAS ALL THAT IT TOOK. I COULD IMMEDIATELY TELL THAT THIS WAS A UNIVERSITY THAT COULD HELP ME FIND MY PLACE."

When informed of his acceptance to Duquesne and his selection for the Gussin Spiritan Division, he experienced mixed emotions. At first, he was cold to the idea of attending a summer semester. However, after meeting the staff and his summer classmates, he warmed up to the prospect of beginning his freshman year early. "I wish that every Duquesne freshman could experience the summer semester" Merante explained, "It gave me a jump start on making friends, adjusting to the college atmosphere, and developing good study habits."

Merante shared that the application and interview process leading up to his selection as the 2009-2010 Gussin Spiritan Division Student of the Year was intense. Eligible Gussin students were sent an email requesting that they submit an application, answer seven questions in detail, provide references, and sit for an interview. When asked what emotions accompanied the honor of being selected for this honor, Merante smiled and humbly said that it was "one of the best moments of my life." ■

Charnee Slaughter Awarded 2009-2010 Weber Scholarship

By: Brianna Damich and Uhuru Hotep



CHARNEE SLAUGHTER,
 PSYCHOLOGY

Charnee Slaughter is the recipient of the 2009-2010 Michael P. Weber Memorial Scholarship. Slaughter attended three different east coast high schools. She started her journey at the Phillip O' Berry Academy of Technology in Charlotte, North Carolina

where she was a dedicated member of the Sorority of Friendship, Sisterhood, and Opportunity. Slaughter's next move sent her north to Newark, Delaware where she settled into Christiana High School, finding much of her interest outside of school in softball. Her final high school, Penwood, is located outside of Philadelphia. Here she completed her senior year.

"I AM BLESSED."

Slaughter kept her options open, visiting several college campuses before settling upon Duquesne. It was Duquesne's Biology/Pre-Med program that sealed the deal. Slaughter spoke of her drive to become a pediatrician which would secure her position as the first in her family to practice medicine.

When asked about her perception of Duquesne University, Slaughter explained that she loved the fact that Duquesne is an urban campus, but maintains a sense of serenity and tranquility. Her receiving the Michael P. Weber Memorial Scholarship came as a complete surprise and she humbly declared:

"I am blessed."

Slaughter's experiences with Pennsylvania Acts led her to admit that "it was the best experience ever because it gave me a sense of independence."

The Weber Scholarship was established in 2003 by the family of the late Michael P. Weber. Dr. Weber served as the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Duquesne University from 1987 to 2001. He was a staunch supporter of the Learning Skills Center which now bears his name. ■

2009 - 2010 SPIRITAN DIVISION STUDENTS



Allison Abraham Zaina Boulos Emily Chandler Gabriella Ciocca-Blank Courtney Creps Michael Diaz John DiCarlo Eric Duale Jennifer Dugan



Gary Earland Ryan Essel Jocelyn Floyd Taylor Glenn James Goodman Sarah Gratten Sean Johnson Serge Kona Horvin Latimer Jr.



Ethan Leatherbarrow Steven Maltez William Manfredo Andre Marhold Nolan Maurizi Nicholas McGowan Brittaney Morocco Boom Nuanual Annelise Pompa



Kaitlyn Reiser Arthur Rooney IV Kathryn Sabolcik Justin Seybert Brendan Sikora Charnee Slaughter Kristine Stewart Erica Stogden Carly Vendemia Jonathan Walters

Introduction to the Spiritan Division of Academic Programs

Standing as a hallmark of Duquesne's dedication to education for the mind, the heart, and the spirit, named for the Spiritan congregation, and endowed by alumnus, Dr. Robert Gussin and his wife, Dr. Patricia Gussin, the Spiritan Division of Academic Programs specializes in helping students of varying backgrounds develop their full potential as students and citizens of the world. The Division's performance-tested system of personal guidance and learning assistance supports the student's transition from high school diploma to college degree.

The Spiritan Division helps freshmen and other students new to Duquesne maximize their chances of college success. While there are many factors that will impact that success, chief among them is a solid transition to college life. Successful college transitions are made when the student:

- Adapts to new learning environments and new learning situations.
- Understands the role of personal responsibility in college, career, and life success.
- Refines the academic skills necessary for college success--reading, writing, editing and critical thinking.
- Relies on high-quality academic support such as tutoring, counseling and other interventions should problems arise.

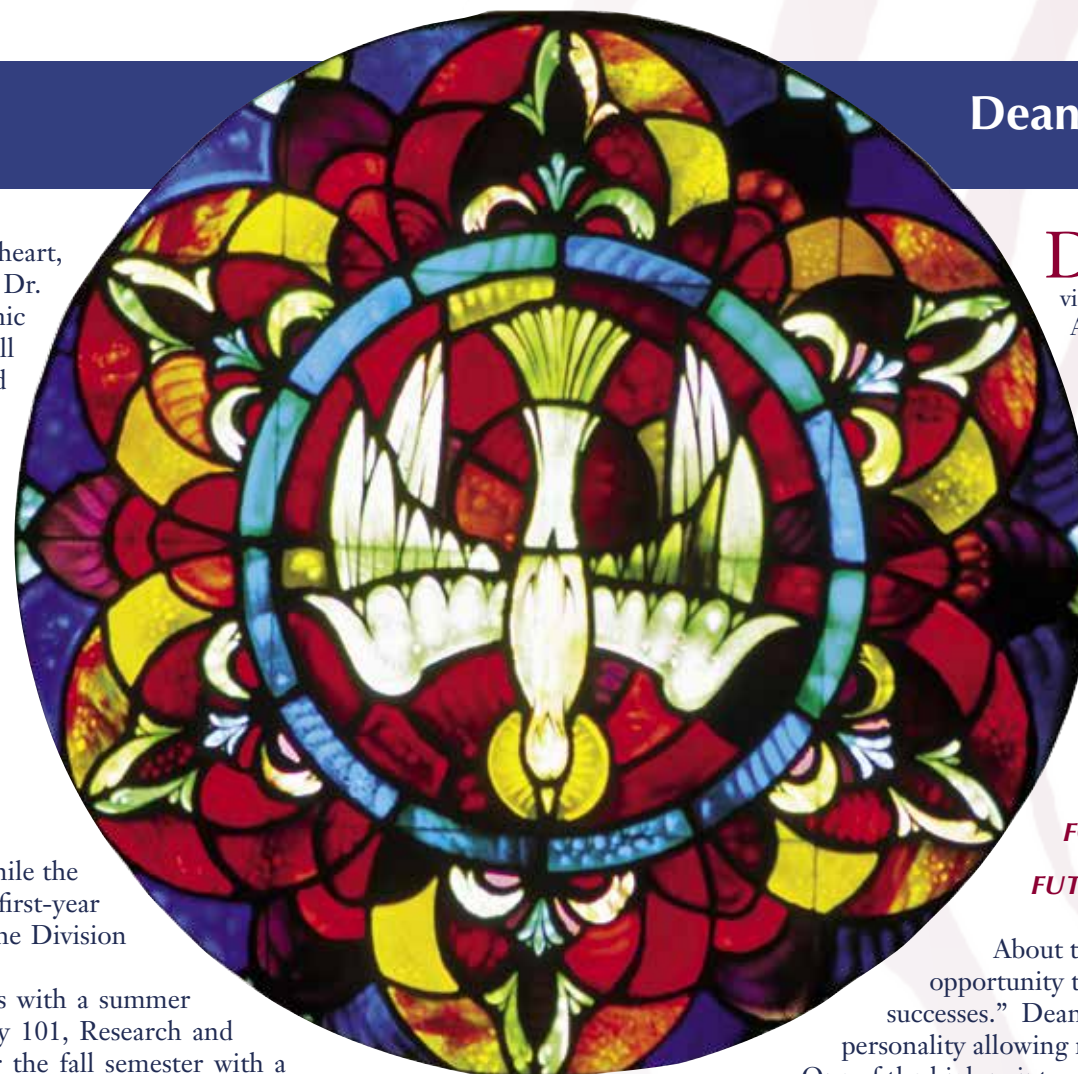
The Spiritan Division of Academic Programs operates on a cohort model. While the Division freshman is immersed in the same Core curriculum as other Duquesne first-year students, Spiritan Core courses are taught by University faculty hand picked by the Division because of their commitment to the Division's approach to student development.

The Spiritan Division student's transition from high school to college begins with a summer semester during which the student is registered for Core English 101, University 101, Research and Information Skills, and Academic Strategies. The student returns to campus for the fall semester with a University transcript showing six earned credits and with an armful of friendships developed during the summer semester.

The academic year continues this development through coursework, academic advisement, tutoring when needed, and counseling. It culminates with an end-of-year review during which assessment of academic and affective growth is discussed with the student. Assuming all Division requirements are completed and all prerequisites for the intended major are satisfied, the student transfers to the college or one of the schools to pursue that major. Otherwise, the student is retained in the Division until all requirements and/or prerequisites are met.

That many Division students have gone on to complete their degrees at Duquesne or elsewhere--and some have pursued or are pursuing graduate degrees--attests to the soundness of our approach to academic and affective development. Obviously, the transitions Spiritan Division students make during this first-year lays the foundation for their progress toward their degree.

Our work is intended to help the student selected for admission to the Division accept personal responsibility for academic success or failure. Their success is our success. ■



Dean Rotondo: A Gussin Spiritan Student Achiever

by Uhuru Hotep

Dean Rotondo is a young man who respects family tradition. This third year psychology major from Boca Raton, FL, has been visiting the Duquesne campus since he was 14. His older brother Antonio is a GSD alumnus and a Duquesne graduate. And his sister Angelica graduated from Duquesne with a degree in education. Both are in graduate school and Dean intends to follow in their footsteps.

At the age of 16, during one of his campus visits, Dean met Reggie Bridges, a GSD advisor, who encouraged him to raise his grades so he could follow his brother and sister to Duquesne where they were successful students. After graduating from Highland Christian Academy in Pompano Beach, FL, Dean applied to Duquesne, enrolled in the GSD and attended our 2007 summer semester.



DEAN ROTONDO,
PSYCHOLOGY

"BEING A GUSSIN SPIRITAN DIVISION STUDENT WAS AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY THAT PAVED THE WAY FOR MY PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR MY FUTURE SUCCESSES."

About that experience, Dean states: "Being a Gussin Spiritan Division student was an incredible opportunity that paved the way for my professional growth and laid the foundation for my future successes." Dean further stated that "Interacting with Spiritan Division faculty and staff has shaped my personality allowing me to mature and grow as a student and as a person."

One of the high points of Dean's undergraduate education to date was his 2009 fall semester at Duquesne's Italian campus outside Rome. Here he established his first 4.00 semester GPA. He describes his experience in Italy as, "The most powerful learning experience of my life. It allowed me to further mature, discover my individuality while learning from my peers."

As vice president of the campus chapter of Alpha Tau Omega, Dean creates opportunities for his fraternity brothers to serve the community by serving the poor. When asked for advice for new GSD students, Dean shared, "Never lose faith in yourself and get comfortable with change. Participate and take advantage of every opportunity Duquesne provides and you'll be successful."

Regarding his future plans, Dean intends to attend graduate school to earn his master's degree, work in a psychological counseling position perhaps at a hospital and eventually open his own private practice. ■

Friends of the Center

- Office of Admissions
- Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Center for Accelerated Learning

The Newsletter Staff

Founder and Publisher
Judith R. Griggs, Ph.D.

Managing Editor
Uhuru Hotep, Ed.D.

Guest Editor
Michael Dern, B.A.

Contributors
Alaina Webber

SPIRITAN DIVISION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

VOICE (412) 396-6661
FAX (412) 396-5466

WEB SITE

WWW.DUQ.EDU/SPIRITAN-DIVISION



The mission of the Spiritan Division is teaching, caring and building futures through a community of excellence.