

Mu Kappa 2019/20 Annual Report

Submitted by Mu Kappa Faculty Sponsor Dr. Kari Jensen, June 7, 2020

Mu Kappa Executive Committee:

Fall 2019: Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Kari Jensen
President: Ligia Clara
Vice President: Adriana Galarza
Secretary: Sophia Hadeed
Treasurer: Emma Rossetti
Historian: Margaret Engel
Director of Events: Dr. Craig Dalton
Media Chair: Alishbah Saddiqui

Spring 2020: Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Kari Jensen
President: Sophia Hadeed
Vice President: Adriana Galarza
Secretary: Ligia Clara
Treasurer: Dr. Kari Jensen
Historian: Margaret Engel
Director of Events: Dr. Craig Dalton

Chapter website:

https://www.hofstra.edu/academics/colleges/hclas/geog/geog_mukappa_goals.html

Highlights of Activities of 2018-2019 Academic Year (200-800 words):

Mu Kappa and the Department of Global studies and Geography celebrated Geography Awareness Week by organizing two guest talks on Wednesday, November 13, 2019. Mu Kappa's Director of Events, Dr. Craig Dalton had invited three of his research colleagues from other universities to enlighten us on different Geographical topics: In the first talk, Dr. Emma Fraser (Lancaster University) and Dr. Clancy Wilmott (UC Berkeley) presented on "Digital Games, Digital Geographies, Urban Play in Video Games," discussing the relationship between video games, digital urban environments, urban play, and lived experience. In the second talk, Dr. Jim Thatcher (University of Washington, Tacoma) presented on "Electoral Districting in More Than Euclidean Spaces," which explored how we can use maps to re-imagine how we draw electoral districts and how travel-time can be used as a means to measure equity, access, and representation in voting and representational districts. The lectures were very well attended, with many students asking questions during the Q&A sessions. We organized a luncheon in between the talks where students and faculty could talk with the speakers.

On Tuesday, December 3, 2019, Mu Kappa, the Global Studies and Geography department, and the Caribbean Student Association (CSA) hosted a Trinidadian Diversity Dinner. The event had ample support from the Hofstra Community: The Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dean's Office provided funding for the event as did the Office of Intercultural Engagement and Inclusion. By 8:30pm, the Hofstra University Greenhouse was packed with more than 80 guests including students, faculty, staff, and friends and family of main host Sophia Hadeed. As food is central to Trini culture, the restaurant chosen had to be a true representation of the tastes of the islands. Trinciti Roti, a restaurant located in South Ozone Park, Queens, delivered exactly that. The food reflected the blended cultural influences of African, Indian, European, Chinese, and Arab communities, all of which are present in Trinidad. Dinner included an array of authentic and traditional Trinidadian cuisine such as doubles (curried chickpeas and fried dough (barra) with sweet tamarind sauce, pepper sauce, and sliced cucumbers), stewed chicken, pelau, and more. Sophia Hadeed '20, board member of both Mu Kappa and CSA, was the main speaker at the event. Two of Hofstra's international students, Daena Laplacieliere '23 (Global Studies) and Vivek Omar '23 (Biochemistry), also shared their experiences growing up in Trinidad, moving to New York for Hofstra University, and explained what it means to them to be Trinidadians. In true Trini fashion, music is a must. The island rhythm was maintained by Hofstra alumni, Brandon Fonville '19, also known as DJ Liv, who has a way with projecting the vibrations you feel back home in Trinidad. Hofstra alumni Virginia Donalds '19 facilitated an open dialogue alongside Sophia, adding Caribbean flair and charisma to each question. Several students shared stories about not only Trinidad, but their homes in other countries in the Caribbean as well. (Thanks to Sophia Hadeed for providing this dinner report.)

On Tuesday, April 28, 2020, Mu Kappa organized a virtual induction ceremony held over Zoom, in which the number of Mu Kappa members was increased by 20, to a total of 158. Keynote speaker, Dr. Burrell Montz, Professor of Environmental Geography and Planning at East Carolina University, Executive Secretary and past President of Gamma Theta Upsilon, offered a lively recount of her journey to the world of geography. Because of her passion for studying the intricate connections between humans and their physical surroundings she left high paying jobs as an environmental consultant and environmental planner, and embarked on her doctoral studies in Geography at the University of Colorado, Boulder. She decided to study the flood that had occurred in her home town three years prior, and this became the beginning of a long career dedicated to the study of natural hazards, water resources management and environmental impact analysis. Dr. Montz has advised many graduate students on these topics and she mentioned that she has enjoyed the opportunity to travel to many countries and all over the U.S. for research, conferences and talks. She has also been involved in several climate change related projects in North and South Carolina. She spoke passionately about the unique characteristics of the academic discipline of Geography, which entail such a diverse skill set that it can be successfully applied to a huge range of topics, such as the current COVID19 situation. She congratulated our initiates on their accomplishments and ensured them that they are entering an organization with very strong networking opportunities. Sophia Hadeed '20 (Mu Kappa President), Adriana Galarza '20 (Vice President), Margaret Engel '21 (Historian), and Ligia Clara-Arenivar '19 (Secretary) led the ceremony to welcome the new inductees.

Additional Information to be Considered for Chapter Awards

Members inducted this year: 20

Members inducted last year: 18

We provided leadership for two events designed to promote geography during the last academic year.

Please list the events and provide a brief description of how they promoted geography:

1. The above-mentioned guest talks on Wednesday, November 13, 2019 were part of Mu Kappa and the Department of Global studies and Geography's celebration of Geography Awareness Week: In the first talk, Dr. Emma Fraser (Lancaster University) and Dr. Clancy Wilmott (UC Berkeley) presented on "Digital Games, Digital Geographies, Urban Play in Video Games," discussing the relationship between geography, video games, digital urban environments, urban play, and lived experience. In the second talk, Dr. Jim Thatcher (University of Washington, Tacoma) presented on "Electoral Districting in More Than Euclidean Spaces," which explored how we can use maps to re-imagine how we draw electoral districts and how travel-time can be used as a means to measure equity, access, and representation in voting and representational districts.
2. On Tuesday, December 3, 2019, Mu Kappa, the Global Studies and Geography department, and the Caribbean Students' Association hosted a Trinidadian Diversity Dinner. Sophia Hadeed '20, current President of Mu Kappa was the main speaker at the event. Sophia is a dual major of Global Studies and Geography with a concentration in Geographic Information Systems. Sophia gave an impactful presentation as she educated guests on the past and present of the country by using maps, text, and photos. She told us stories of her childhood spending time in both the United States and Trinidad & Tobago while sharing beautiful photos of the country's nature and culture. She explained social and cultural norms, traditions, and even taught us some Trinidadian Patois! Two of Hofstra's international students, Daena Laplaceliere '23 (Global Studies) and Vivek Omar '23 (Biochemistry), also shared their experiences growing up in Trinidad, moving to New York for Hofstra University, and explained what it means to them to be Trinidadians. After their presentation, an open dialogue engulfed the room for over an hour wherein students, staff, and faculty were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments regarding life not only in Trinidad & Tobago, but in the Caribbean as a whole.

Facebook posts on GTU's page, 2019/20:

Sept. 6, 2019: Mu Kappa's honors chapter award announcement.

May 3, 2020: Mu Kappa's induction ceremony of 20 new members, organized on zoom, with guest speaker Dr. Burrell Montz.

June 3, 2020: Trinidadian Diversity Dinner, organized Dec. 3, 2019, by Mu Kappa, the Caribbean Student Association at Hofstra University, and the Department of Global Studies and Geography.

Respectfully submitted, June 7, 2020.

Kari B. Jensen