

MU Seniors Display Artwork in Link Gallery

Kaleigh Gabriel
Staff Writer

Professor Ejenobo “Jena” Oke, an associate professor of art at Manchester University, recently opened an exhibit entitled “(Still) Playing with Dolls,” which showcases her artistic love for fibers and ceramics along with her fondness of dolls from her childhood.

As director of Galleries, Oke has dedicated Gallery G, located on the second floor of the Jo Young Switzer Center, to works of her fellow artists in the past. However, she decided now was the time to exhibit her own art, a collection of works that has her taken years to create.

Upon entering Gallery G, viewers are greeted by stark white podiums jutting toward the high ceiling. Atop the podiums sit pieces of work, some ceramic and some paper. Along the white walls of the gallery hang beautifully woven quilts and blankets, varying wildly in color.

For two years Oke has worked on pieces inspired by her childhood love for dolls. “I grew up in Nigeria,” Oke said. “I remember the dolls of childhood that I would play with until they fell apart. And when they fell apart, I would then play with the pieces.”

Oke says that while the world may see dolls as props to



Professor Ejenobo Oke contemplates the head of a doll, the subject of her art show “(Still) Playing with Dolls.” As a child, Oke played with her dolls till they fell apart, and explores that theme through ceramics, paper, and fiber.

modern-day horror films, she sees them as a connection to her past. “As

a child I learned to love and care for my dolls as my own mother cared

for me,” she said. “I was captivated by books, such as those by Enid

Blyton, an author who spun tales of toys that came alive when the human children left the room, toys that clearly felt the physical imprint of their contact with children.”

Each piece of art displayed is a representation of a doll or moment that held meaning in her life.

For example, “Maggie’s Tower,” a tall ceramic sculpture centered in the room, features the repeated face of a doll Oke received from her mother and cherished in her childhood. With its rusty brown color and the ascending pattern of doll faces, the tower resembles that of perhaps a child’s imagination and love for a special toy.

Many other attention-drawing pieces are contained within the walls of Gallery G. Along the left wall sits a doll portrayed as a swaddled baby, sitting atop an intricately detailed quilt littered with cracked ceramic masks of a doll, suggesting a sense of rebirth.

“It’s about second chances,” Oke said. “It’s a theme I’ve been dealing with for a while now. What happens when you have gotten older and fulfilled your purpose? What do you do with yourself? Do you find a new purpose?”

Oke’s art not only displays this theme with the occurrence of ‘used’ parts, but also through her

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Dr. Lea Johnson, new vice president for health science initiatives, will oversee the development of the nursing program.



North Manchester’s campus will house the nursing skills lab, while lectures and clinicals will take place on the Fort Wayne campus.

New Nursing Program Coming to Manchester

Tiffany Williams
Staff Writer

President David McFadden announced in Feb 2019 that Manchester University is developing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program with the help of Lea Johnson, the new vice president for health science initiatives.

Johnson joined Manchester University in fall 2018 and brings over 20 years of higher education experience. She is known for her transformative leadership within academic healthcare: she worked for a decade in academic nursing and healthcare administration at a major university that had close to 800 students, and later served as the president of two healthcare colleges where the largest programs were nursing.

Johnson was hired to plan, develop and launch MU’s nursing program, as well as other healthcare-related programs, to meet market needs and help Manchester advance its mission. “I feel I understand the nursing educational process, the stressors students face when preparing for

direct patient care and importance of having a supportive and nurturing educational environment,” Johnson said. “With our institutional values and focus on respect and holistic education, I believe we can have a wonderful nursing program at Manchester.”

Manchester University’s Board of Trustees gave unanimous approval to developing the program during their January meeting.

There is no definite time when the program will be ready, but Johnson says it could take until 2022 depending on various factors. “Our start date depends on the length of time it takes to hire a nursing director, and on the two accrediting groups--the Indiana State Board of Nursing and the Higher Learning Commission,” Johnson said through email. “We are not allowed to recruit or admit students to the program until approvals from both groups have been received.”

The nursing director position was posted nationally last week and, according to Johnson, it may take 5–7 months to find a strong leader for that position.

The split campus program between North Manchester and Fort Wayne features two distinct clinical environments, urban and rural, which requires a director who is student-centered, highly creative and entrepreneurial. “I believe the right person is out there,” Johnson said. “They simply need to see our ad.”

Once Manchester finds a suitable nursing director, they must pursue accreditation from the Indiana State Board of Nursing and the Higher Learning Commission. To do this, the nursing director must develop a curriculum and then apply for review by the Indiana State Board of Nursing. The Board will vote to approve the director after he or she reviews the teaching facility, curriculum and the library. Additionally, the director will have to meet the faculty as well as staff from financial aid, admissions, and the business office before the Board will vote.

Only after being approved can Manchester present their application to the Higher Learning Commission. If approved, the program can be posted on Manchester’s website and

admissions can begin to admit prospective students.

Nursing is frequently mentioned as an area of interest by prospective students and interest in nursing majors is strong throughout the country and continues to grow. This is one of the reasons Manchester University decided to pursue a nursing program. The second reason is that there are more than 700 nursing jobs that go unfilled in Indiana each year. The nursing program would offer excellent preparation for career opportunities since nursing jobs are predicted to grow.

Manchester expects its nursing program to be distinctive in several ways as it will focus on both rural and urban health, incorporate a strong interdisciplinary learning model and will be infused with liberal arts competencies. Such competencies include: communication, conflict, resolution, critical thinking, cultural sensitivity, service, collaboration and leadership.

Once the nursing program is underway, it will have a home in both locations. Students will spend their first two years on

campus in North Manchester taking liberal arts courses as well as fulfill their science requirements. The last two years will be spent in Fort Wayne since over fifty percent of that time will be devoted to clinical experiences that are hospital-based.

The divide also caters to the three distinct ways the curriculum will be delivered: lectures, nursing skills lab, and clinicals. Nursing skills lab will be in North Manchester while clinicals will be in Fort Wayne where students have access to SIM labs, which have the most advanced technology, including manikins that can be programmed to mimic serious medical emergencies and conditions.

The program will probably start too late for Manchester’s current students. However, once it begins, the program will provide Manchester University students with additional high-demand career opportunities. “A nursing degree provides a great career path and it can also serve as a springboard to other health-related career opportunities,” Johnson said.

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methods of creating the pieces themselves. “It wasn’t until quite recently that my love for ceramics really began,” Oke said. “I am a fiber artist by nature. But I found that just like in fiber art, in ceramics I am able to use my hands to guide me in my craft. I am very hands-on in my

work as well as guided by the notion that everything has a place and a reason.”

Oke’s work in fibers is displayed in full elegance in Gallery G. Along the wall directly across from the door hangs a substantial quilt depicting vibrant white orchids with intricate pink details among a background of mixing reds. The green

stem of the flower attached to the delicate petals as it begins to droop and one lonely petal breaks free.

“The Orchid Quilt,” the largest of all Oke’s pieces, is a hand-stitched quilt, which required two years to be completed. Oke says that given the extensive time she spent crafting this piece, she feels drawn to it because it contains “memories and

moments of [her] life.”

“I like to slow down and look at the details in art, in things, and in people,” Oke said. “I am enamored by the thought that by touching the fibers or broken pieces, they touch me. Most often, my works reflect a subtle awareness of what our actions do—on a small scale, to the intimate objects around

us and on a larger scale, to each other.”

Oke’s exhibit “(Still) Playing with Dolls” will be open for viewing until April 1.



A ceramic collage of doll faces.

Photo by Chloe Arndt.



Oke’s miniature ceramic houses, from which hands reach out, or faces peer through doors and windows.

Photo by Chloe Arndt.



Swaddled dolls lie in a “bed.”

Photo by Chloe Arndt.



Head, house and bottles take shape in this paper art piece.

Photo provided by MU Marketing Department.

Career, Internship, Grad Fair Held in Upper JYSC on March 6



Photo by MU Marketing Department.

Each year, there are over 50 employers seeking students for internships, part and full-time work. Senior Jamie Soposky spoke with employers at the Career and Internship Fair last spring.

Carly Kwiecien Co-Editor-in-Chief

Each year, Manchester University puts on a Career and Internship Fair and invites several businesses from all around the state to visit and speak with Spartans from first years through seniors about the possibility of gaining employment with them. The Career and Internship Fair is a way for students who are looking for full-time and part-time employment, as well as internships, to gain experience and comfort speaking with potential employers.

Senior Abby McVay, an assistant for Career and Professional Development, is excited for the Career Fair to take place once again in the Upper Jo Young Switzer Center.

“The importance for the Career Fair is to have students connect with a variety of employers and to ultimately find an internship or a full-time/part-time job,” McVay said.

McVay also emphasized that the Career and Internship Fair is for all majors from all colleges

throughout Manchester University.

“Many employers, like Brightpoint or Lifeline Youth & Family Services, are looking for health communication, psychology, social work and education majors,” she said. “But every major is represented at the Career and Internship Fair. We have Arts United from Fort Wayne attending, which is really awesome.”

The Career and Professional Development Marketing Intern, senior Kira Hall, will also be helping with the Career and Internship Fair.

“I have been assisting in creating promotional material and I will also be running the Our View of MU Instagram account to promote the Career Fair,” she said.

The fair also appeals to students who are seeking more information about graduate schools.

Universities like Anderson University and the University of Indianapolis will be looking for prospective students for their various Masters programs.

Hall has some words of wisdom to give to students who are

considering attending the Career and Internship Fair. “All of these events are there to benefit you and help you in your time at Manchester and after Manchester,” she said. “I highly encourage everyone to come to these events and build yourself professionally.”

McVay adds to this by saying that students interested in the Career and Internship Fair should practice their introductions to speak with potential hiring managers. “That is the most important part when meeting with employers,” she said.

If looking for a professional headshot to use on a resume or LinkedIn profile, the Office of Marketing will be setting up a marketing photo studio on the second floor of the Administration Building from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Mar. 6. Faculty and staff are also invited to have their photo taken if they do not currently have a portrait or need to update an older image.

The Career and Internship Fair will take place on Mar. 6 from 1-3:30 p.m. in the Upper Jo Young Switzer Center.

MU Discusses the ‘Unfinished Project of Race in America’

Marcus Zwiebel
Staff Writer

Manchester University hosted an enlightening Discussion Day which centered on what was characterized as the “unfinished project of race in America.” The day-long event was held Wednesday, Feb. 20, at a variety of locations across campus, featuring a diverse group of presenters.

Registration for Discussion Day workshops began at 9 a.m. and preceded the keynote address in Cordier Auditorium. Students were invited to select the workshop of their choice which they could attend following the primary address.

The keynote speaker was introduced by Uma Ganesan, assistant professor of history, and the chair of the Discussion Day committee for 2019. This year’s keynote speaker was Lisa Givan, Indiana Tech’s vice president of Diversity and Inclusion and chief diversity officer. She gave, in comparison to other VIAs, a shorter, but still engaging, address on race relations which she titled “Ahas and Amens.”

Givan told the audience

that she is the daughter and fourth child of a Baptist man from Alabama and a biracial Pentecostal woman. She attended private school in Akron, Ohio, throughout her youth and explained that despite her racial difference and the presence of few individuals of color, she was not inherently aware of these differences until elementary school. It was there a group of students began a chant that included troubling remarks about skin color.

Givan used this anecdote to inform the audience about what she termed the “them” conflict, by which individuals identify others unlike them as something entirely removed from themselves. She became aware of the unintentional, although sometimes intentional, “them” conflict through her education and professional career in Ohio, as well as through the schoolyard incident. “Because of that ‘them’ conflict, I had to learn to cultivate relationships, I had to grow comfortable in my own space and in my own skin,” Givan said. “And I’m very thankful for that.”

Givan also posed the idea that people are often “stuck on mute.” She further explained that individuals tend to ignore much of the experi-

ences around them. When they suddenly “go off mute and tune back in,” the world is much louder and much more abrasive, simply because they had been absent from it directly and are jumping back into an experience with the world rapidly.

Givan’s advice for individuals who believe they are growing increasingly mute, or are already mute, includes taking a step back and understanding that you are an individual that must have relationships with others—there is simply no option but to interact (and interact appropriately) with others daily.

In her keynote she also considered the names of others and how that simple knowledge fosters and promotes relationships with others. “Get a life, learn how to develop relationships and learn each other’s name,” said Givan, before receiving some applause from the packed Cordier audience. “And hopefully this is one of those ‘aha’ moments that you’ll recall weeks or even years from now and go ‘now I know what she meant’ I can only hope it will be lifechanging for all, or at least one of you out there.”

The keynote address was followed by a variety of workshops

in the academic center which students had the option to register in advance for prior to the address. The workshops engaged students, staff, and faculty, and covered a variety of topics including race, police, the relationship between and efficacy of nonviolence and violence, race and environment, as well as the mindset around and involving race.

The Discussion Day workshops were followed by a series of 21 caucuses categorized by race which were moderated by faculty, staff and

friends of the Manchester community. Manchester University’s 2019 Discussion Day events provided students an opportunity to complete two VIA requirements: one for attending Givan’s keynote address and one for attending both a workshop and a caucus.

The Discussion Day events, free and open to the public, were concluded by closing statements by Raylene Rospond, vice president for Academic Affairs.



Photo by David Alvarez.
David Alvarez teaches kids leadership and communication skills at Unity Performing Arts Foundation.

Senior Teaches Leadership in Local Community

Noah Tong
Staff Writer

For David Alvarez, a senior communication studies major at Manchester University, Unity Performing Arts Foundation was central to his childhood development. Now he hopes to instill the same skills and values he learned from a young age as Student Development Coordinator for Unity. “I am responsible for teaching leadership and communications skills as well as preparing students for on and off stage,” Alvarez said. “I also work on the relationships internally and externally in the organization, and work on the overall growth of the organization.”

Unity Performing Arts, located in Fort Wayne, Ind., describe themselves as an “innovative, after-school concept” that looks to develop and empower young people from the ages of seven to 19. They boast specialized programming for students in education, choral music, dance, drama and creative writing.

Alvarez credits Unity for the life-changing preparation and relevant experience it provided him. “Starting at the age of 12, I led the choir in little things such as songs, setup, assisting, all the way to running events and rehearsals on my own,” Alvarez said. “I have also been exposed to national and international travels, and even performed with artists such as Roberta Flack, Keisha Cole and Kirk Franklin.

“I actually joined at the age of seven, and I attended Unity events consistently past graduation,” Alvarez continued. “Being an alum, in 2016, I presented Marshall White [Founder & CEO] with a job I’d like, and he gave me the title.”

Currently enrolled with Unity are 61 students representing over 17 zip codes. There is a \$60 annual fee, although Alvarez contends: “That is nothing when you take in the fundraising for travels, and account for the cost of our performances being around \$43,000.”

As his commute is about 50 minutes from campus, Alvarez admits the schedule can be “hectic” at times.

“I am a board member of two clubs on campus, and I’m president of one of them,” he said. “On top of that, I work anywhere from 20 to 30 hours a week for Unity. During the week it is anywhere from one to three hours, but on weekends I commit from the beginning to the end of the day. That is roughly around 15

hours.”

With over 11 events in March alone, the hours Alvarez gives are a significant contribution to the success of Unity programs and performances. He is quick to note, however, that more help is always appreciated. “We could always use volunteers!” Alvarez said. “We have weekend rehearsals where we could have help with setup, supervising students, or other fun activities we have for the students.”

Alvarez still has much he wants to accomplish. “Once I graduate, I will be taking a higher position at Unity, working with youth to develop them into leaders and professionals,” he said. “I will also be working on the growth of Unity Performing Arts Foundation.”

After being a student who takes part in Unity events, Alvarez is now able to experience the benefits of being an educator. His passion of improving the lives of young people rewards him above all else.

“Almost daily I get texts or calls from my students sharing accomplishments, sharing wisdom, or even just seeking help on becoming people,” Alvarez said. “I have seen little things where students improved vocally, or gained confidence, all the way to students’ lives completely changing. “Not everyone comes from a great home, and Unity gives them a family to fall back on,” he continued. “Today’s society pressures kids to sex, alcohol, drugs, and even just bad behavior. Unity is a positive environment that allows for the opposite to be encouraged.”

Alvarez’s time at Unity has even taken him around the world to places such as Riga, Latvia, where the Foundation competed at the World Choir Olympics. An incredible opportunity to compete overseas, Alvarez was also aware of the impact he could have on an international stage.

“We were eating in a cafeteria and a giant table with thousands of trays fell over,” Alvarez said. “Over 80 choirs were in that room and no one went to help. I quickly grabbed several students and ran to go help. Slowly, one by one, other choirs joined in cleaning until they were all stacked nicely.

“I felt a tug on my shirt and an elderly lady from Riga was crying,” Alvarez continued. “She thanked me and said she was sorry. I asked why she was sorry, and she said she assumed Americans were, as she put it, [expletive]. Although it doesn’t seem like much, anyone can stand up, lead and make a difference.”



Photo by David Alvarez.
David Alvarez pictured with students he works with on a daily basis at Unity Performing Arts Foundation.



Photo by David Alvarez.
David Alvarez participating in an on-stage performance. Unity Performing Arts Foundation strives to empower kids through programs in education, choral music, dance, drama and creative writing.



Photo by David Alvarez.
David Alvarez pictured with a child involved in programs at Unity Performing Arts Foundation.



Ruuska to Participate in Pan American Games this Summer

Zoe Vorndran
Staff Writer

The cold water washes over his skin as he plunges into the water; the stress rolls off his back as he performs laps in the swimming pool.

For Guerby Ruuska, a senior English major and a journalism minor, swimming has been a lifelong passion. Much to Ruuska's relief and delight, he will compete with the Haitian National Swim Team after graduating in May.

Ruuska was inspired by Naomi Grand'Pierre's performance as the first Haitian Olympic swimmer during the 2016 Rio Olympics and he became interested in competing for his native country. Ruuska was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and adopted by Eric and Elizabeth Ruuska when he was a baby.

After consulting with Grand'Pierre about the process of joining the Haitian National Swim Team, Ruuska began the arduous task of obtaining a Haitian passport, gathering documents and filling out paperwork. When he received the news of his acceptance, Ruuska was relieved. "It was such a long, annoying process, but I was thrilled to finally be signed up," he said. "My family may be more happy and excited about it than I am to be honest," he continued, laughing.

Ruuska's family, along with head coach of Manchester University's swim team, Michael Kocsis, are definitely excited. "This is an amazing opportunity to continue competing," Kocsis said.

Ruuska's passion for swimming began when his parents enrolled him and his other siblings in a summer swimming



Photo provided by Guerby Ruuska.

Ruuska prays before swimming, which is part of his ritual before each race. This season he set two school records in the pool.

league. Even though his siblings quit, Ruuska continued to swim.

Everything from the effortless, fish-underwater feel to the sore muscles after a hard workout motivates Ruuska. "Nothing feels better than the feeling of satisfaction after a hard workout, going through the rest of the week tired and still pushing through physically," he said.

Despite his original plans to hang up his cap and goggles, Ruuska sprang at the opportunity to compete on the Haitian National Swim Team. "I wasn't really planning on swimming post-college, but this all happened and Tokyo 2020 Olympics is coming up," he said. "Why not shoot for the stars?"

The first step to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics is competing in the Pan American Games, a competition featuring summer athletes in the Americas every four years in the year preceding the Summer Olympic Games. The next Pan American Games will occur July 26-Aug. 11, 2019, in Lima, Peru. Set up by the International Olympic Committee, the Pan American Games were created to help American countries be more competitive. Despite its efforts, the International Olympic Committee was unsuccessful in creating a Pan American Games for winter sports.

Ruuska plans to participate for the Haitian National Swim Team and he is looking forward to competing against swimmers from

the United States as well as other nations. "I hear it's a really neat meet just because of all the culture and the mixture of the small island nations competing," Ruuska said.

For Ruuska, competing and racing motivates him to continue swimming. He loves the way the water tugs him along and all that rushes through his mind as he competes are the words, "fast, fast, fast."

While on the team, he is also excited about traveling, meeting new people and experiencing different cultures. As an Indiana resident, he stated: "It's time to get out there and soak in the rest of the world." He also cannot wait to make more connections within the swimming community.



Photo provided by Guerby Ruuska.

Ruuska presents the Haitian flag at Manchester University's home swim meet.



Photo provided by Guerby Ruuska.

Ruuska mentally prepares for his race.



Photo provided by Guerby Ruuska.

Ruuska begins the 100 backstroke race.



Photo provided by Spartan Athletics.

Back row: Guerby Ruuska, Jamie McBride, Mikki Goetz, Coach Mike Kocsis. Front row: Nathan Koch and Anjel Clemente.