

*Who will speak at the Ajani Celebration?*

Every year an alumna offers the Ajani Challenge. A senior will also be selected to give the Ajani response. Anecdotal comments will be offered for each participant during the kente stole presentation. Bring your hankies.

*Is there a fee for participating in the Ajani Celebration?*

Students who accept their invitation to participate must return the Ajani Information Form to Rev. Cornett-Scott via email. Students must also adhere to the participation fees.

**If you have further questions, please contact:  
Rev. Andrea Cornett-Scott, Associate Provost  
for Inclusive Excellence**



*Not to know is bad but not to wish to know  
is worse. ~ African Proverb*

**Ajani Celebration: A Rites of Passage Ceremony.** This ceremony celebrates the accomplishments of our seniors who have made a consistent contribution to inclusive community during their tenure at Mary Baldwin University.

**Ajani** is a Swahili word meaning: *She who wins all struggles.* Through the Ajani Ceremony, you will have the opportunity to celebrate the people who have helped you become successful on your educational journey. During the past twenty three years, the Ajani Celebration has become an honored Mary Baldwin tradition that punctuates the end of the academic journey of culturally engaged students through the sharing of a challenge, personal testimonies, presentation of awards, and the donning of the Ajani stoles by our University President.

Each year participants chose to wear traditional dresses for the ceremony that reflect their class colors. Ajani graduates are approved to wear their kente stoles during the Commencement Exercises on Sunday. Wearing the Ajani stole during commencement symbolizes the hard work and dedication that students have shared in providing diversity programming to our city and University community.

*A celebratory reception will follow the festivities.*



# AJANI

## CELEBRATION



Rose Terrance Lawn  
Rain location- Student Activities Center

## *What is the Ajani Celebration?*

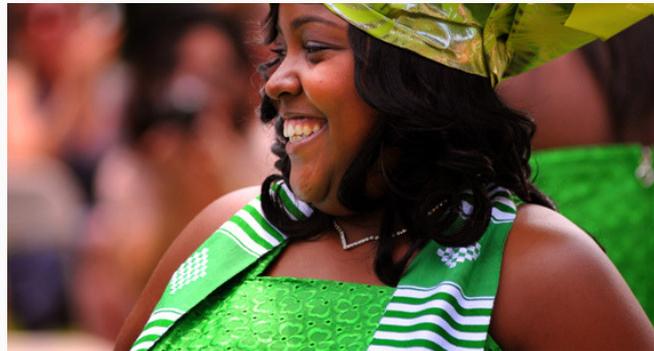
The Ajani Celebration is a ceremony that celebrates our students who have been engaged in diversity programming and who have supported the goal of building inclusive excellence continuously throughout their educational tenure. Through the Ajani Celebration, these special students are given the opportunity, within a small, intimate setting, to recognize and acknowledge the people who have supported them during their academic journey. Although many other colleges and universities across the country hold similar ceremonies, our Ajani Ceremony was especially designed for Mary Baldwin seniors by Rev. Andrea Cornett-Scott in 1998.

Within the Ajani Celebration lies the Rafiki Ceremony where a special award is given to a person who has made significant contributions to the university and the community of color. The Rafiki circle is also formed placing the first year students on the inside and the seniors, alumni, faculty and staff on the outside symbolizing the inextricable bond that is held between Mary Baldwin, alumnae, current students and graduating seniors. The Ajani Ceremony celebrates the various ways that Mary Baldwin University values our inclusive community.



## *What is the significance of the Donning of the Kente Stole?*

Kente is an Asante ceremonial hand-woven cloth that is worn during important occasions. It is a visual representation of history, ethics, and aesthetic principles. The green and white Ajani stoles that will be worn by our seniors were designed for them in Ghana and reflect their class colors and symbolizes the value they placed in inclusive excellence. Ajani graduates are the only graduates sanctioned to wear the kente stole for commencement. While all Ajani graduates are not of African descent the kente stole has been retained to respect the origins of the celebration at MBU.



## *Is Ajani another graduation ceremony?*

The Ajani Celebration is in no way a replacement for the Commencement Exercises. It is a rite of passage ceremony designed to celebrate the engagement of student who have committed their MBU journey to inclusive excellence and it charges it 's special honorees to continue their service well after graduation.

## *Who will participate in Ajani?*

The Ajani selection process is administered by the Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence (OIE). All students are encouraged to consult with the AVP early in their MBU career to learn about the path to Ajani. Ajani honorees have demonstrated record of respect for the Office of Inclusive Excellence. Invitations are extended to students who have engaged in diversity programming, through the OIE, throughout their entire university journey, demonstrated a record of respect, or have completed a minor in African American studies. Honorees should have assisted with the ceremony at some point during their matriculation process.

## *Who will attend the Ajani Event?*

Like all commencement events, Ajani is open to the entire MBU community. Seniors have an opportunity to send special invitations to family, friends, alumnae, faculty, and staff for reserved seating. Participants are asked to indicate the number of special guests on their Ajani Participation form.

## *How should I select my person of honor?*

Each graduate should select a faculty or staff person who has played a significant role in the graduate's development at Mary Baldwin University. This person receives special seating and acknowledgement.



## *What is the suggested attire for the event?*

Honoree's will wear formal african attire reflecting their cultural background. The cloth is chosen by the Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence in the respective class color. In the past some honorees have chosen to wear African, Latin and Asian traditional dress. Guests are asked to wear similar corresponding cultural dress to make the occasion more festive. All graduates place a gele or an appropriate headpiece on their head following the receipt of their stole. This is not a shorts and t-shirt affair.

