

## **Haitian earthquake affects AU's downstate students**

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There are no undergraduate students from Haiti enrolled on Alfred University's main campus, but the devastation caused by Tuesday's earthquake directly affects some students and alumni in Alfred University's downstate programs. The University offers master's degrees in counseling and literacy at two locations in the metropolitan New York area. Dr. Jay Cerio, director of the downstate programs in counseling, said that among the four groups of students enrolled in the Master's in Counseling, approximately 50 of them are originally from Haiti or still have family in Haiti. Among the students and alumni, he has learned one lost her mother and her aunt; another is still trying to locate 15 family members; and two others have not been able to reach anyone in their families for news. The students, alumni and faculty of the downstate program are particularly close, said Cerio. "Our thoughts and prayers are with all those whose families, friends, and hometowns have been affected by the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti. They have all been on our minds since hearing about the quake." President Charles M. Edmondson, in a statement to campus this afternoon, also said the thoughts and prayers of everyone at the University are with those affected by the tragedy. "For some students in our downstate programs, this is a very personal tragedy; they have lost family and friends as a result of the earthquake. Everyone at Alfred is aware of their anguish and receives every news update from Haiti with them in mind." As students return to campus this weekend for the start of classes on Tuesday, efforts to assist those organizations providing direct relief in Haiti will intensify. Dan Napolitano, director of the Center for Student Involvement, will coordinate those efforts. Napolitano is also organizing a special edition of the Bergren Forum for noon Thursday (Jan. 21) in Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center. He's recruiting speakers who can address the Haitian crisis from a cultural, political or personal perspective. The Bergren Forums are open to the public free of charge. Coffee and tea are provided, and attendees may bring their own lunches.