

One of our main goals at the Center for International Programs is to keep open communication with our alumni across the world. We need recent contact information from past alumni students. If you have any contact information on the students listed below, please include their information in the International Alumni Feedback Form. You can also email the contact information to Helen Viitti, the new graduate assistant, at hcvlitti@valdosta.edu.

Last Name	First Name	Graduation Date
Alimeti	Afrim	Spring 96
Aneste	Elena	Fall 97
Bache	Laila	
Baez	Carlos A.	
Berger	Carston	Fall 97
Besley	Paul	Fall 92
Bjoerklund	Ola	Fall 96
Blomqvist	Anders	Fall 94
Bojovic	Gregor	Fall 95
Bonnici	Sharon	Fall 94
Borchert	Miriam	Fall 93
Bosompen	Kwabena	Fall 97
Boulais	Romain	Fall 96
Brughn	Jamilla	Fall 97
Busawule	Annabella	Fall 95
Carriere	Veronica	Fall 93
Chalk	Shannon	Fall 93
Chang	Tse-yan	Fall 96
Chusandra		Fall 93
Coibion	Helen	Fall 92
Conrad	Christian	Fall 89
Cormier	Joel	Fall 95
Crossman	Bradley	Fall 91
Cuko	Matilda	Fall 97
Darling	Julie	Fall 93
Davis	Mary Marquet	Fall 92
Denham	Yonghui	Fall 92
Diakoniuk	Julia	Fall 94
Ednani	Diviya (Didi)	Fall 98
Eko Ude		
Eldnani	Diviya	Fall 98
Erskine	Barry	Fall 93
Erskine	Catherine	Fall 92
Eyitayo	Femi	Fall 98
Eyitayo	Wale	
Flowers	John	Fall 92
Fortune	Duncan	Fall 92
Frietas	Luiz	Fall 94
Gandica	Luisiana	Fall 94
Garcia	Alberto	
Gavala	Antonio	Fall 92
Godfrey	Shana	Fall 93
Gullvert	Suzanne	Fall 94
Hamann	Frank	Fall 93
Hettuaratchi	Bandu	Fall 92
Hislaire	Philippe	Spring 96
Iskakova	Aigul (Aika)	Fall 98
Iturralde	Maria Isabel	Fall 92
Johnson	Ricardo	Fall 92
Johnson	Andrew	
Koivuniemi	Minna	Fall 93
Laverde	Carlos	
Makvandi	Nejad	Fall 97
Menacho	Tania	Spring 94
Montano	Pablo & Aneta	Spring 93
Mueller	Susan	Fall 96
Nygaard	Katri	Fall 98
Tarnowski	Thomas	Fall 95
Thompson	Shekeatha	Fall 95
Xue	Ning	Fall 91



cosmicos

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Welcome To Cosmicos!

Greetings from Valdosta! Welcome to the latest edition of *Cosmicos*! This newsletter is a way for us to keep you updated and informed about Valdosta State University events and about how your fellow alumni are prospering. In order for us to continue to successfully publish this newsletter, we need your assistance. Please send us pictures, letters or anything else you feel is newsworthy about yourself. If you have changed careers, gotten married, or have an addition to your family please let us know. It is especially important that you keep us informed of your current address so that we can ensure that future mailings of *Cosmicos* are appropriately addressed to you.

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INTERNATIONAL VSU COMMUNITY



The international student community in Valdosta has been expanding over the last few years, despite a trend toward decreased international enrollment nationwide. Fall semester 2003, forty-one new students from twenty-six different countries enrolled at VSU. There has been an increase in the number of students coming from Belize, Colombia, Turkmenistan, Germany, Kenya, and Russia. Students from previously unrepresented countries have also joined our community, especially from Lithuania, Senegal, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, and Bangladesh.

After a five-day orientation period, the new international students enjoyed a welcome party at the Center for International Programs, hosted by Vice President Louis Levy, where they met VSU faculty and other international students. Some of the faculty who participated in the event included Dr. John Barbas (Chemistry Department) and Mrs. Barbas, Dr. Louis Levy (Vice President for Academic Affairs), Dr. Kurt Keppler (Vice President for Student Affairs), Dr. Michael Noll (Geography Department), and Mr. Israel Cano (Spanish Professor from Belize). The highlight of the evening was a martial arts demonstration by Dr. Tian Jin-Long from China. Dr. Tian Jin-Long joined the physical education department at VSU for the 2003 fall semester to teach Tai Chi Chuan, a type of martial arts.

International Students in Curriculum and Instructional Technology Ph.D. Program

Florita Smith and Lydia McCoy, from Belize, are the first international students in the College of Education's Curriculum and Instructional Technology Ph.D. program. As part of the program, Florita and Lydia tutor in the Education learning lab, supervise preservice teachers, and provide multicultural instruction in classes. According to Dr. Catherine Price, Department Head, bringing faculty from Belize for the doctoral program is a long-term goal finally realized.

International Students Receive Awards

At the annual Honors Day ceremony on April 9th, 2003, Valdosta State University recognized and rewarded three international students for distinguished achievement. The program included University-wide awards and one award from each department and program. The awards were made to students who were recognized for having made major contributions to the community and achieved outstanding academic accomplishments. Kim Becker, graduate student from Germany, received a certificate of Excellence for Outstanding Contributions in the Field of International Understanding from International Programs. Marcos Rabello, from Brazil, was honored with the Wall Street Journal Outstanding Senior Award, and Helen Viitti, from Cyprus, was recognized as the Outstanding Student in Secondary Education and Middle Grades.

On April 26, a fourth international student was recognized by his instructors and peers in a special ceremony. Jahmor Lopez, from Belize, was recognized as Valdosta State University Curriculum and Instructional Technology Department's annual Outstanding Student in the M. Ed. Program.

English Language Institute

The English Language Institute (ELI), now beginning its third year at VSU, continues to provide English instruction intended to prepare students to enter VSU full-time. ELI students study intensive English grammar, listening, conversation, pronunciation, reading and writing designed to help them achieve the necessary

193 TOEFL score as well as to succeed in university-level classes. Since its beginning, 6 graduates of the ELI have been accepted into VSU. The program also serves as supplemental instruction for full-time VSU students who may be having difficulty with their classes because of their English proficiency. Five proficiency levels are offered in each session of 4 months. For more information on the program, contact Charlotte Davis, ELI Coordinator, chdavis@valdosta.edu.

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

In January, 2003, the newly-created U.S. Department of Homeland Security mandated that all U.S. institutions accepting F-1 and J-1 students and exchange visitors register those individuals with Immigration via the tracking system known as SEVIS. An estimated 500,000 current international students in the U.S. had to be registered in SEVIS by August 1, 2003. Registration information included current U.S. address, home country address, date studies began, date studies are to be completed, any off-campus work, and any drop below full-time study. The Center for International Programs met the August 1 deadline, assuring that all current F-1 and J-1 visa students will be able to continue studies at VSU and that VSU will be able to continue accepting international students and exchange visitors. The registration must be done each semester a student is enrolled, within 30 days of the start of classes.

In addition, the Department of Homeland Security now requires that all visa applicants go to a U.S. embassy or consular office in person. Despite fears that this practice would cause delays and prevent some students from getting their visas in time to begin fall semester, this did not prove to be the case. All VSU applicants were able to get visas in time to start fall semester as scheduled.

Delays were expected in airports when students first arrived in the U.S. due to the SEVIS data entry required of Immigration officials before allowing the student to enter the U.S. VSU students were advised in advance to make plans for connecting flights with the expected delays in mind, which eliminated serious problems for the majority of students.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Currently at VSU there are 231 international students actively enrolled representing 69 countries. The top five countries represented among current students are Germany (20), Belize (19), Japan (15), Canada (13), and Russia (11). The number of students and their respective countries are listed below:

Albania	1
Australia	3
Azerbaijan	1
Bahamas	7
Bangladesh	1
Barbados	1
Belize	19
Brazil	2
Bulgaria	7
British Virgin Islands	4
Cameroon	1
Canada	13
China	4
Chile	1
Colombia	8
Croatia	1
Cyprus	2
Czech Republic	1
Denmark	1
Ecuador	1
El Salvador	2
Fiji	1
Finland	1
France	2
Gambia	1
Germany	20
Ghana	4
Greece	1
Honduras	3
Iceland	1
India	5
Japan	15
Jamaica	3
Kenya	7
Kiribati	1
Korea	5
Kyrgyzstan	1
Laos	1
Lebanon	1
Liberia	2
Lithuania	1
Mexico	4
Netherlands	3
Nicaragua	1
Nigeria	6
Norway	1
Pakistan	2
Panama	2
Philippines	2
Russia	11
Saudi Arabia	1
Senegal	1
Slovakia	1
Spain	1
Suriname	1
Sweden	1
Thailand	2
Trinidad	1
Turkey	1
Turkmenistan	9
Uganda	2
Ukraine	3
United Kingdom	10
United Arab Emirates	1
Uruguay	2
Uzbekistan	1
Venezuela	1
Zambia	2
Zimbabwe	1

Total 231

“Stay In Touch With Us”

International Alumni Feedback Form

Please send us the latest news and information about yourself. We would love to hear from you so please don't forget to send us your response!

Please fill out this form and return it to:

**Center for International Programs
1500 North Patterson Street
Valdosta, Georgia 31698
Fax: 229-245-3849**

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

TEL _____ FAX _____

Email _____

Major at VSU _____ Graduation Date _____

Current Employer _____ Current Position _____

Honors, Awards, etc. since graduation _____

You may give my name to prospective students in the area so they can contact me with questions.

Other information we can publish about you:

Comments about the Cosmicos publication:

Information received will be included in the next edition of Cosmicos, scheduled for publication in February 2004.



▲ Sheldon Servio & Sarah Ashworth



▲ Shawn & Harikleia Georgiou Sirmans



▲ Govind Saraff



▲ Nici, Miki & son Kai Luca Suzuki

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Diversity Luncheon

On April 7, 2003, the VSU Office of Equal Opportunity Programs and Multicultural Affairs, with the help of the Center for International Programs, sponsored the first Diversity Luncheon in the University Center Magnolia Room. International students provided recipes for the food, which was prepared by VSU Food Services. International students also spoke to the large group about their countries and their experiences at VSU. In addition, they provided entertainment for the event, including traditional dances from Turkmenistan and music by the Edgar Dorantes Latin Jazz Band.



International Awareness Experience

The International Awareness Experience is a six-week program sponsored by the VSU Center for International Programs. The program is designed to place international students from VSU in local elementary schools for one visit to a class each week to serve as a resource for teachers and students during a social studies lesson about the international student's country. The international students gain exposure to the U.S. educational system and the local students gain an invaluable exposure to places they may never have an opportunity to visit. In January and February, 2003, nineteen VSU international students participated in the Experience in four Valdosta schools.

Community Friends

Eight new international students this fall have taken advantage of the opportunity to have a "Community Friend". A Community Friend is someone at VSU or in Valdosta who serves as a liaison for the student in adapting to life in a new culture. A Community Friend may invite the student to his home during holidays or just invite him to dinner once in a while, or the friend may take the student shopping or to a sports event, or call regularly to see how the student is doing. The VSU and Valdosta communities have been generous in their response to the Community Friends program.

Society of International Students

At the first meeting of the Society of International Students (SIS), the following officers were elected: Levy Odera, President; Mwita Chacha, Vice President; Chinyelu Onyeka, Treasurer; Stephanie Dawson, Secretary; and Claudette Dakers, Assistant Secretary. The group's first activity was a cookout at the new Recreation Center swimming pool. The officers of the club are off to a great start and have set up committees to plan trips and activities for the year. Advisor to the club, Charlotte Davis, has had to step down from that position due to increased demands for reporting of student information to the newly formed U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Irina McClellan, VSU professor of Russian, has agreed to serve as new advisor to SIS.

ALUMNI NOTES

Sheldon Servio, (2003) from Belize and **Sarah Ashworth**, (2001) from the UK, were married in Valdosta on July 27, 2003, at Christ's Fellowship Church. Their daughter, Maya Grace, was christened following the wedding ceremony. Sarah's mother was able to fly in from the UK for the occasion. Sheldon is presently working in Tallahassee, Florida, as part of his year of optional practical training following graduation.

Ardell Sabido, (2002) from Belize, is the First Secretary of the Embassy of Belize in Havana, Cuba. She also serves as the Charge' de Affaires when the Ambassador is out of the country. In Ardell's words, "I am the Head of Mission when the Ambassador is absent and basically overall I am second in command at all times at the Embassy." Congratulations Ardell!

Dilip Vara (2002) from the UK, is Executive Assistant of the Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum in Chicago, working as part of his optional practical training. He aids in the reporting to the Board of Trustees and the Chicago Park District. Dilip started out as weekend manager of the gift shop of the Museum, and after one month was promoted to his present position. Way to go Dilip!

Barry Leahey (1994) returned to England in the summer of 1995 after spending a fantastic year in Valdosta, where he predominantly studied Sports Medicine. He finished his degree in the summer of

1996 and then did a Masters in Sport and Exercise Science. He has since managed several large health and fitness clubs. In 1998, he started work with Technogym. He has helped to design and build some of the largest gyms in the world. He lives in Cheshire, just around the corner from the Beckhams. He still keeps contact with Chris Hatcher, VSU football coach, who was a friend from Sports Medicine.

Harikleia Georgiou Sirmans, from Greece, (1995) and her husband, **Shawn Sirmans**, bought a new house in Valdosta. In a couple of months the Sirmans will celebrate their first wedding anniversary. Harikleia has accepted a job at her local library processing books and other library materials. They own two pets: Budgie, a parakeet and Xanthe, a kitten.

Govind Saraff (1997) lives in Kathmandu, Nepal and was blessed with a baby girl on December 10, 2002. The baby's name is Sanskriti Saraff or Gungun. Govind is a CEO proprietor and his company's name is Everest Group.

Leithia Economides (Lei), from Greece, graduated from VSU in 1999 with a degree in teacher education and is seeking friends from the period of 1998-1999. You can contact Lei at leithia@yahoo.gr .

Leo Exter (1994) was the first Russian student to complete studies at VSU. He got married on December 30, 2002, and he now lives in Brussels. Leo has just

graduated with an MBA in General Management from Vlerick Management School in Ghent, Belgium's premier business school. As far as jobs go, he worked for the Coca-Cola Company for a few years, then for a small Belgian computer company where he specialized in strategic marketing for small companies. He is currently looking for new opportunities. You can contact Leo at leo.exter@coditel.net .

Martin Osler (1996) got married in October, 2002, and honeymooned in Brazil, where he enjoyed visiting Rio, Salvador, Iquassu, and Sao Paulo. Martin is a member of the Haddington Pipe Band, and he has started his own media relations company called Osler Media. He keeps in touch with Dino Sehovic, who is in New York. Martin lives in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Naoko Ikeda (1997) lives in Williamsville, New York. He just graduated from medical school this May, and he is starting his internship at SUNY Buffalo.

Nici, Miki, and their son **Kai Luca Suzuki** live in Tokyo, Japan. Kai Luca Suzuki was born on April 16, 2002. (See Below) Nici and Miki had a reunion with Asa and Jesper Hedblom, Duncan Fortune, and his fiancée Irene Taylor in Tokyo. Jesper and Duncan were Rotary students in Valdosta during the year 1992-1993. Jesper was on a business trip to Japan, while Duncan and Irene stopped by during their world trip.

Annual Valdosta International Fair

The International Awareness Experience culminates in the Annual Valdosta International Fair, which took place this year at the Valdosta Colonial Mall on Saturday, March 2. The fair featured displays and performances by the international students as well as dance and martial arts demonstrations by elementary school children, sponsored by the Valdosta Asian Cultural Association. Plans are underway for an extended fair in the spring of 2004.

27th International Dinner

The International Dinner is the main event for the Society of International Students (SIS) each spring. The 27th Annual International Dinner took place this year on Saturday, April 26, at Park Avenue Methodist Church. The theme this year was "A Taste of the World." The main goal of the event is to celebrate international understanding and appreciation for the rich cultural resources that international students bring to Valdosta. The buffet featured forty-three dishes from around the

world, prepared by VSU international students. Recipe books for the dishes are available in the CIP office. After dinner, students entertained the guests with traditional dances, songs, and skits. The Garifuna Association from Belize, with its fabulous musical extravaganza, contributed to the evening's success, as did dances and songs by Levy Odera of Kenya and Sarah Tshila of Uganda. Both performed in full traditional dress to the delight of the audience. Davina Loskot, of Belize, performed a violin solo. Maral Meredova from Turkmenistan served as Mistress of Ceremonies for the third and final year and as always did an outstanding job. Maral graduated in May, 2003, and is now working in Valdosta as part of her year of optional practical training. Kenechekwu Osonwa of Kenya served as Master of Ceremonies. Close to 300 guests attended the dinner and all were impressed by the dinner, the entertainment, and by the willingness of the students to share a little of their cultures.

CIP STAFF

A few changes have taken place on our team:

Kim Becker, former graduate assistant in the CIP, graduated in May and is now doing her year of optional practical training.

Our new graduate assistant and *Cosmos* editor is **Helen Viitti**, from Cyprus. Helen received a Bachelor of Science in Education degree in English in May, 2003, and is now pursuing a graduate degree at VSU in Instructional Technology.

Dr. Michael G. Noll, from Germany, has joined the CIP team as a Faculty Associate.

Dr. Noll is an Assistant Professor of Geography at Valdosta State University. Since he first came to VSU, he has helped

with the organization and implementation of the yearly Spring Focus Series by offering Special Topics courses. He is currently working with the European Council and VSU on the design and implementation of a new study abroad program in Germany, which is scheduled to start in 2004. His job as a Faculty Associate or "administrative intern" at CIP is to: a) become better acquainted with all aspects of international program development and management; b) help nurture the interest in study abroad programs of our students; and c) serve as a liaison between the CIP and the general faculty at large. His educational background lies in the geosciences, especially Cultural Geography, and he is in a tenure track position in the Department of Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences.

Elizabeth Chewing, PR/Communications major from southern Atlanta, is interning in the office, working with Jill Clemmons in the European Council of the University System of Georgia. **Marie Tolle**, recent VSU graduate, joined the CIP staff in September as administrative secretary. Marie is engaged to be married and enjoys music and sports. She is a native of Homerville, Georgia, near Valdosta. Student workers are **Kai Tillman** from Moultrie, Georgia, **Peggy Wohlgemuth** from Germany, and **Mwita Chacha**, from Kenya.

You can access our website at www.valdosta.edu/cip to see pictures of all the new faces.

Thank you all for your generous responses! As you can see we have a lot of new information:



▲ Annie Pagniez-Lambrix and her family



▲ Ank van der Biezen Cleven and her husband Leo

ALUMNI NEWS

VSU international student alumni have proved very helpful to American VSU students studying abroad in Europe. Dr. Fred Ware, Professor of Management, has been leading student groups from VSU in the University System of Georgia's European Council study abroad programs since 1997, and former VSU international students have provided Dr. Ware's students with rich experiences in their studies of European business. Dr. Ware said, "VSU alumni contacts are crucial to the students' experiences, gaining access to major factories, stores, and banks for the classes' weekly field trips." Dr. Ware taught in France in 1997, 1999, and 2002 and in England during 2000 and 2003. The European Council Programs include field trips as an integral part of the five-week curriculum. Former VSU international students have been assisting Dr. Ware in arranging field trips from the beginning. Strong alumni connections created a community of friendship and respect. Alumni students who have helped make Dr. Ware's classes a success include:

Sabine Garde (1978), who resides in Paris with her daughter Marie, assisted Dr. Fred Ware's study abroad students in a tour of the Louvre in 2002. She then traveled to London in 2003 to guide Dr. Ware's students through the British Museum. Sabine, a former Georgia Rotary Student Program (GRSP) student, has become an amateur but accomplished Egyptologist!

Emmanuelle Suzanne Guezennec (1987) lives near Paris with her husband Yann and children Paul Andre, Marthe, and Louis. Emmanuelle, also a former GRSP participant, recently passed a national teacher certification test that qualifies her to teach English. Her husband, Yann, is an executive with Venice-Simplon Orient Express and has arranged field trips for Dr. Ware's management students a number of times in Paris and London.

Annie Pagniez-Lambrix (1981) and her husband Patrick reside in Paris where she is employed by Caisse Nationale de Credit Agricole. Annie is a former Rotary International Scholarship student at VSU and is a member of the La Defense Grand Arche Rotary Club in Paris. Dr. Ware's students benefited a number of times by briefings at the Credit Agricole bank as well as business trips arranged by Annie and her Rotary Club. Her children are Helene and Pierre-Clement.

Wilhelmine Bidet (1994) and **Jon Good** (1994) Wilhelmine has moved from France to London and is employed there near Victoria Station. Jon, a former VSU golf team standout from the U.K., continues his golf career as a club professional near London. Wilhelmine and Jon helped Dr. Ware plan several museum tours for his students in London last summer.

Ank van der Biezen Cleven (1988) and her husband Leo are from The Netherlands but now reside in Luxembourg. Their children are Laura, Alexander, and Mathieu. Ank was a GRSP student at VSU and worked for the Dutch embassy in Washington, DC, before returning to Europe. Dr. Ware's study abroad students were able to visit the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg with the help of Ank's husband, who is a financial manager at Dupont. (Pictured above are David Starling with Dr. Ware, Ank and her husband)

Martin Erharter (1988) helped lead a factory tour in Germany for business students. The tour was orchestrated by a recent VSU graduate, Klaus Aker.

staff email

Listed below are the email addresses for several of our staff members. We hope to hear back from you soon!

Tracy Harrington	Director	tharring@valdosta.edu
David Starling	Assistant Director	dstarlin@valdosta.edu
Charlotte Davis	International Student Advisor	chdavis@valdosta.edu
Jill Clemmons	European Council Administrative Coordinator	jmclmmo@valdosta.edu
Marie Tolle	Administrative Secretary	nmtolle@valdosta.edu
Helen Viitti	Graduate Assistant	hcvlitti@hotmail.com
Elizabeth Chewing	Intern	eachewni@valdosta.edu
Michael Noll	Faculty Associate	mgnoll@valdosta.edu

If you know students who are interested in applying to VSU, please have them direct their inquiries to: chdavis@valdosta.edu.