



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.

International Educational Week Celebrations at VSU



▲The Steel Drum Band

As part of its growing involvement in outreach on global education, the Center for International Programs sponsored a number of activities to celebrate International Education Week in November 2003. International Education Week is celebrated throughout the United States in response to an April 2000 directive from President Bill Clinton, aimed at increasing support for international education. Dances, Steel Drum Band performances, lectures, movie presentations, costume displays, and Tai-Chi martial arts exhibition were the highlights of the International Education Week at VSU last November. International Education Week is a time to celebrate the diversity of America and the many different cultures, languages, and traditions that make up our global community. These cultural events helped VSU students gain a deeper understanding about world issues and diversity.

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Currently at VSU there are 236 international students representing 68 countries. The number of students and their respective countries are listed below:

Albania	1
Australia.....	3
Azerbaijan	1
Bahamas	8
Bangladesh.....	1
Belize.....	16
Brazil.....	2
Bulgaria	6
British Virgin Islands.....	2
Cameroon	2
Canada.....	16
Czech Republic.....	4
China	3
Colombia.....	7
Croatia.....	1
Cyprus.....	3
Denmark.....	2
Ecuador.....	1
El Salvador	2
Fiji.....	1
France	3
Gambia.....	1
Germany, Federal Rep. of.....	1
Germany.....	16
Ghana.....	3
Greece.....	1
Haiti	1
Honduras.....	2
Hungary.....	2
Iceland.....	1
India.....	4
Japan	13
Jamaica.....	3
Kenya	8
Kiribati	1
Korea, Republic of South.....	8
Kyrgyztan	1
Lebanon	1
Liberia.....	2
Lithuania.....	2
Mexico	5
Netherlands.....	5
Nicaragua.....	1
Nigeria.....	9
Norway	1
Pakistan.....	3
Panama.....	3
Philippines.....	1
Russia.....	13
Saudi Arabia.....	1
Senegal	1
Slovakia.....	1
Spain	1
Suriname	1
Sweden	2
Thailand.....	2
Trinidad	1
Turkey.....	1
Turkmenistan.....	10
Uganda	3
Ukraine	1
United Kingdom.....	9
Uruguay.....	1
Uzbekistan	1
Zambia.....	2
Zimbabwe.....	1
Total	236



Tai-Chi Martial Arts Exhibition

VSU Exchange Professor, Dr. Jin-Long Tian added a special touch to International Education Week celebrations with his Tai-Chi Martial Arts Exhibition. Jin-Long Tian was an exchange professor from Yangzhou University. Dr. Tian is from a family in China that is legendary for its martial arts expertise. As a young man, he won more than ten top prizes in provincial and national competitions. In 1991 and again in 1992, he placed second in “push hands” sparring in China’s National Championship. His martial arts experiences have spanned from being a sportsman, a teacher, and a coach, to a researcher in Martial Arts. He trained seven national champions and three international champions in the push-hands technique during his four years at Yangzhou University. Dr. Jin-Long Tian is the head coach of Jiang-Su province free-sparring training base, which is the equivalent to an Olympic Training Center. He is also a national martial arts referee and top graduate student advisor in martial arts at Yangzhou University.

During his semester at VSU, Dr. Jin-Long Tian taught two classes in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education as well as a class in the Lifelong Learning program for retirees through the Department of Continuing Education. In addition, Dr. Tian has worked closely with the Valdosta Asian Cultural Association (VACA) in training the group’s youth martial arts troupe of 12-14 year-old boys and girls. Tian also demonstrated Tai Chi styles at public schools, sporting events, VSU campus celebrations, and at the annual VACA international banquet in October. He marked the conclusion of a semester’s residence at Valdosta State University with the “Tai-Chi Martial Arts Exhibition” on December 10, at VSU’s Whitehead Auditorium in the Fine Arts Building.

Library Expansion Completed

The Odum Library extension opened this semester. According to Dr. George Gaumond, University Librarian, the \$14.2 million project now includes a 95,000 square-foot addition, 216 new computers distributed between the Internet café, computer lab and electronic classrooms as well as an additional 1,078 seating units. A 100-seat auditorium, distance learning classrooms, climate-controlled archives, reading rooms, and an uplink studio will also benefit students. Gaumond also said that the library houses nearly half a million books, and that the new space is going to allow the university to increase its collection. The library extension is still a work in progress, but most of the developments are mainly behind the scenes and will not



Student Enrollment Increase at VSU

In the Fall of 2003, Valdosta State University had an 8 to 9 percent enrollment increase over last year. In Spring 2004, VSU student enrollment was 9,928. The VSU president, Dr. Zaccari, commented that over 50 percent of incoming freshmen come from the metro-Atlanta area. A recent survey shows that only 12 percent come from within 125 miles from VSU. The beautiful campus, the excellent instructional learning facilities, and the challenging educational programs attract new students. Since 1999, VSU has seen a 20 percent increase in students. In an attempt to balance the student/teacher ratio, 18 new professors have been hired in the past two years. Other changes have also taken place to satisfy students' needs including a housing project, the library expansion project, and new parking spaces.

Sociology Program Advancements

The Valdosta State University sociology program became one of only three undergraduate programs in the nation accredited by the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology. Accredited programs offer skills-based education rather than giving students a liberal arts-based education. The sociology program has met national standards and included a new internship in the program. Students graduating from an accredited program may even have advantages over other students in the field. Traditionally, sociology graduates have worked for social

services, mental health programs, and substance abuse programs. Students who graduate from the new accredited sociology program will also be prepared to work in private industry.

Blazer Football News

The Blazers lost a heartbreaker at Bazemore-Hyder Stadium in Valdosta to Carson Newman 35-29 on November 22, 2003 in the first round of the Division II playoffs. The loss ended Valdosta State's season at 10-2, the first two-loss season for the Blazers since the 2000 campaign. Despite the defeat, nine Blazers were named to the 2003 Gulf South Conference team.

VSU Basketball Aims at the Top

The VSU Blazers are on a roll, with a Gulf South Conference tournament invite already sealed and twenty wins so far this year. However, head basketball coach Jim Yarbrough is hardly content to rest on his laurels. He is striving for another ambitious goal: leading his team to a #1 ranking in the South Region for the first time. To do this the Blazers had to beat the North Alabama Lions on February 16th. North Alabama lost the game by 13 points. Right now the Blazers are leading the East ahead of Montevallo and West Georgia. Yarbrough concedes that the Lions were tough to beat, but the loss of Lions' leading scorer Chad Jones, who was under one-game suspension for fighting, made the game a little easier on the Blazers.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY



▲Back Row/left to right: Karen Payne (UK), Nicolene DeGraaf (Netherlands), Pamela Nwillene (Nigeria), Trayan Kushen (Bulgaria), Michael Tang (Britain), Maskat Aliyeu (Turk-

New Foreign Students Arrive

About 30 new foreign students joined the VSU international community for the spring semester 2004, bringing the total foreign student enrollment to 236 students. In addition to degree-seeking students, this group includes students who study at the English Language Institute and exchange students from Sweden, Scotland, the Netherlands, France and the Czech Republic. There has been an increase in the number of students coming from Bahamas, Canada, Cyprus, France, Kenya, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Sweden, and Turkmenistan

English Language Institute

The English Language Institute (ELI) continues to provide support to VSU by improving the English proficiency of international applicants. The ELI offers English instruction that prepares students for using English in an academic or professional context. Students are placed into levels for each skill at the beginning of each term according to their proficiency in each skill. Classes at the ELI are small, averaging less than ten students, allowing very individualized instruction.

At least eight graduates of the ELI have become full-time VSU students since its beginning in August 2001. Many other full-time VSU international students have benefited from ELI classes by improving their English proficiency. The Institute enrolled a total of 11 students during the spring of 2004 and

continues to be self-sustaining.

Instructors at the ELI employ innovative teaching techniques when teaching grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Acting is a new technique that Maral Meredova, an ELI instructor, adapted for her advanced-level conversation class. On Friday 13, 2004 the ELI students entertained an audience of twenty-five with a performance of "Truth Revealed." The skit portrayed a court scene and the sentencing of a man who murdered his wife. The performers delivered their lines with accents hailing from Russia, Mexico, Panama, Japan, Cyprus, and Korea. "By acting, students learn to become more comfortable with communicating and interacting with people," Ms Meredova said.

International Educational Week Celebration Photos



1. L to R: Julia Bibangamba (Uganda), Carol Atono (Uganda), Sarah Tshila (Uganda), Isatou Cohateh (Gambia), Mami Mboup (Senegal), and their American friend.

2. L to R: Tatyana Privalova (Ukraine), Claudette Dakers (Belize), Giso Abadi (Belize), Professor, Dr. Ellen L. Friedrich.

US-Visit Information Available on Department of Homeland Security Website

On January 5, 2004, the Department of Homeland Security began implementation of the new United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) program at 115 airports and 14 seaports. US-VISIT is a new biometric system for processing visitors upon entry to the U.S. The new program will verify the visitor's identity and compliance with visa and immigration policies by scanning equipment to collect biometric identifiers, such as fingerprints, in an inkless process, along with a digital photograph. The foreign visitor's biometric and other information will be checked against law enforcement and intelligence data to determine whether the visitor is a threat to national security and public safety. The Department will apply this rule's requirements only to foreign applicants seeking to be admitted pursuant to a nonimmigrant visa who travel through

designated air and seaports. The new procedures are expected to add just seconds to the entry and exit process.

Valdosta Celebrates Chinese New Year

On Friday, January 30, the Valdosta Asian Cultural Association (VACA) celebrated the start of the Year of the Monkey. In Chinese culture, the New Year's celebration is the most important holiday of the year, and for the past five years the VACA has organized a celebration in its honor. This year's celebration took place at Mathis Auditorium. The first part of the day was reserved for students from Lowndes County and Valdosta City schools, and at 4 pm the public part of the program started. The program's highlights included exhibitions, food samplings, and children's games, as well as martial arts and music demos. Through these programs, the VACA hopes to improve cultural awareness and appreciation throughout the South Georgia community.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES



International Awareness Experience 2004

Nineteen students representing thirteen different countries and fourteen teachers from five elementary and middle schools in Valdosta are a part of the tenth Annual International Awareness Experience 2004. International Awareness Experience (IAE) is a six-week program, which is designed to place international students from VSU in local classrooms for six weeks. International students serve as a resource for teachers and students during social studies lessons. They conduct presentations about their countries, and they plan meaningful activities for the class. The primary goal of the International Awareness Experience is to increase the cultural awareness of both international and U.S. students. We are pleased that Valwood School has resumed its participation in the International Awareness Experience after a two year-break. Other schools, which participate in this project, include Genesis Christian School, Southeast Elementary School, J.L. Newbern Middle School, and Valdosta Middle School.

The grand finale of the International Awareness Experience will be the Eleventh Annual City of Valdosta International Fair, which will take place on Saturday, March 6, at the Valdosta Colonial Mall. The fair features displays and performances by international students and children from the classes they have visited.

In addition to the International Awareness Experience, annual participation in the Lowndes after school program, our students are involved in a number of other Community Outreach Programs. In Pine Groove Elementary School, students from Turkmenistan, Russia, and Africa, participated in the night of "Culture and Art" on February 19, 2004. International students from VSU also took part in the "Multi-Cultural Week" held during February 23-27, 2004 at a middle school in Moultrie, GA.

International Student From Belize Presents at Conference

Louis Underwood, an international student from Belize, delivered a presentation at the Southeast Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society. Underwood gave a presentation on a project outlining how a Single Molecule Magnet can be used as a Quantum Computer. Louis recently graduated with a Computer Information Science degree. The meeting was held in Atlanta at the Renaissance Hotel and Convention Center. The four-day meeting attracted over 2,500 chemists and students. The Valdosta State University delegation was the largest undergraduate group present at the meeting. Valdosta State University chemistry students made eleven presentations related to original research.



Society for International Students

The Society for International Students (SIS) was involved in a number of activities in the fall semester and is planning several projects this spring. The group participated in Homecoming by building and displaying a float for the annual parade down Patterson Street. SIS also participated in International Education Week, and visited St. Augustine, Florida. Some of the students joined the American Association of University Women Meeting on December 6, where they shared holiday celebrations and customs from their countries with the AAUW members. For

spring semester, SIS is planning several trips to historical Georgia sites, and will organize the annual International Dinner.

The 28th Annual International Dinner will take place on Saturday, April 17, at 7:00 p.m. at Park Avenue Methodist Church. The International Dinner is the capstone event each year for foreign students at VSU. Every year since 1976, the students have organized an international buffet and variety show for the community. Tickets will be available from the CIP in March and are limited due to the popularity of the event.

STAFF UPDATE

Charlotte Davis, the International Student Advisor since 2001, retired on December 19 2003. She will be moving with her husband to South Carolina where her family lives. Charlotte has been an inspiring mentor for many international students, and she will be greatly missed. The Center of International Programs hosted a farewell party to honor Charlotte. Irina McClellan will be the new International Student Advisor.

Irina McClellan has agreed to serve as the new International Student Advisor. Irina is not a new face at Valdosta State University. She has been a part of VSU for almost four years. Ms. McClellan was born in St. Petersburg, Russia where she graduated from St. Petersburg State University with a degree in Asian Studies. She came to Valdosta, Georgia in 1999. In 2001 she received her MPA from Valdosta State University and for the past three years she has been teaching Russian language in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages.

Ms. McClellan is not new to the Center of International Programs and International Education, either. During

the summer of 2002 and 2003 Ms. McClellan served as the Assistant Director of the European Council's summer study abroad program to her native city of St. Petersburg, Russia, where she also taught a Survival Russian Language and Culture Class to the study abroad participants. As a high school student in Russia, Irina McClellan participated in study abroad and cultural exchanges, learning the benefits of international education firsthand. It was at that time that she realized how important international education was and what a life-changing and inspiring experience her own visits to the United States had been. Irina comments: "Now it is my turn to help the international students at VSU make the most out of their study in the United States. It is my turn to help somebody else learn and discover a different culture." Ms. McClellan believes that her experience of coming from a different culture and being an international student herself allows her to better understand and help the international students. She came to Valdosta over four years ago and it has become her second home. "I will do my best to make our international students

feel at home here at VSU," Ms. McClellan says.

Elma Kronemeijer (2002) has joined our team at the Center for International Programs as a new graduate assistant. Elma, who was born in The Netherlands, came to VSU five years ago to study English. She graduated in 2002 and is currently pursuing a Master's degree.

Elizabeth Chewing, from southern Atlanta, is still interning in the office, assisting Jill Clemmons who is the Coordinator of the European Council of the University System of Georgia. Elizabeth has participated in study abroad programs in London, Paris, Italy, and Switzerland. She graduates this spring semester.

Marie Tolle is the new administrative secretary. She is a graduate of VSU, and she plans to get married in March. Student workers are **Peggy Wohlge-muth** from Germany, **Mwita Chacha**, from Kenya, and **Travis Simmons** from Pavo, Georgia.

staff e-mail

Listed below are the email addresses for several of our staff members as well as our mailing address, phone, and fax numbers. We hope to hear back from you soon!

E-mail Addresses @valdosta.edu

Tracy Harrington	Director	tharring
Irina McClellan	Student Advisor	ibmcclel
Marie Tolle	Secretary	nmtolle
Elizabeth Chewing	Intern	eachewni

David Starling	Assistant Director	dstarlin
Jill Clemmons	Administrative Coordinator	jmclmmo
Helen Vlitti	Graduate Assistant	hcvlitti
Michael Noll	Faculty Associate	mgnoll

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

ALUMNI NOTES



▲Dorian Mathias at 4 days old

Magali Renault Monin (1993) and her husband are happy to announce the birth of their second child, Dorian Mathias. He was born on August 30th. Congratulations!! Magali lives in France and was a Rotary student in Valdosta during the year 1992-1993. She is currently employed at Laboratories Fournier as a translator. You can contact Magali at magali.Renault-monin@wanadoo.fr.

Fiona Rankin (2000) lives in Darlington, UK. She graduated from VSU with a degree in Sports and Exercise Development. After graduating, she decided to pursue acting and she took an easy Vocational A'Level course in performing arts. She appeared on her local arts centre stage with a few roles in the play "The Relapse." Fiona was honored in Vocational A'Level Performing Arts. She is currently employed by Holmes Place Health Clubs as a Fitness Consultant, and she teaches swimming classes. You can contact Fiona at kortney@myself.com.

Nona Rogava (2000) from The Republic of Georgia was studying at Valdosta State University as an exchange student for the academic year of 1999-2000. After an unforgettable year in the United States, she continued her studies in her home country at Sokhumi Branch of Tbilisi State University where she graduated with an Honors Diploma in 2001. Currently she is working on her PhD degree at the State University of Language and Culture in the Republic of Georgia. For the last three years and a half she



▲Nina and parents "Carrolls"

has been working at the United States Agency for International Development, Caucasus mission in Tbilisi. Nona serves as a president of a new non-government organization called the Georgian-American Youth Association. She last traveled to the U.S. in March 2002. She visited her brother who was studying in the United States as an Exchange Student at the time. She took advantage of being in the US and visited her host families - Hanna and Nick Carroll in Valdosta, Georgia and Janet and Steve Andersen in Estes Park, Colorado. She still keeps contact with her host families, her first international advisor Dawn Williams, professors, her best friends: Melissa Uecker and Elizabeth Norton, and many more. As Nona commented, "There is a Georgian saying: Don't have 100 dollars but have 100 friends." She is very excited to have so many friends from all over the world.

Veronica Lemos (1996) from Ecuador graduated from VSU with a degree in Business and is now residing in Miami, Florida. She is currently teaching at Miami Dade College. Her husband is serving in the Air Force and is stationed in the UK for another year. Veronica is a good friend of Wilhelmine Bidet and Jon Good, and she is going to preside over a wedding ceremony for them in May. She has legal credentials which allow her to perform civil marriages in Florida. Veronica is friends with a number of high-ranking governmental officials in her home country of Ecuador. Upon returning from living in the UK, as part of her volunteering activities, she became



▲Veronica and President of Ecuador

closely involved with the American-Ecuadorian Chamber of Commerce, of which her father, Mr. Gustavo A Lemos, has been the president for the past two years. Veronica shares a picture of the Chamber's events which involved the current President of the Republic of Ecuador, Colonel Lucio Gutierrez, the First Lady Ximena Bohorquez, and Veronica Lemos Carriere.

Kosta Gavrilov (2002) enjoys working in New York. He plans to pursue a graduate degree in New York, Boston, or Europe. He will visit friends in Valdosta sometime in February or March 2004.

Wale Eytayo (1998) from Nigeria transferred from VSU to Georgia State University where he graduated with a degree in Computer Information Systems. He currently lives in Atlanta and works with a web-hosting firm. You can contact Wale at: Eytayo@hotmail.com