

Cosmos Fall 2006

Greetings from Valdosta! Welcome to the sixteenth edition of our Valdosta State University International Alumni newsletter. Keeping you in tune and in step with the latest news and updates about Valdosta State University events and informed 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.

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Country	Total
Albania	2
Australia	3
Bahamas	9
Bangladesh	1
Belarus	4
Belize	17
Bosnia	1
Brazil	5
British Virgin Islands	1
Bulgaria	6
Cameroon	4
Canada	18
Chile	1
China	3
Colombia	6
Costa Rica	1
Croatia	1
Cuba	4
Czech Republic	5

Ecuador	3
Egypt	1
Estonia	
Fiji	
Finland	
France	6
Gambia	1
Germany	17
Ghana	1
Greece	1
Guatemala	
Honduras	2
Hong Kong	
Hungary	3
Iceland	1
India	14
Israel	2
Italy	
Jamaica	3
Japan	17
Kenya	10
Korea	9
Kyrgyzstan	1
Liberia	1
Lithuania	1
Malaysia	1
Mexico	18
Netherlands	4
Nigeria	7
North Korea	
Norway	
Pakistan	4
Panama	3
Peru	3
Philippines	1
Poland	1
Romania	3
Russia	17
Saint Vincent	
Saudi Arabia	12
Senegal	1

South Africa	1
Spain	
Suriname	1
Sweden	7
Tajikistan	
Tanzania	
Thailand	
Trinidad	1
Turkmenistan	15
Turkey	2
Uganda	3
Ukraine	1
United Arab Emirates	2
United Kingdom	4
Uruguay	
Uzbekistan	6
Venezuela	
Zambia	1
	Total Students
A total of 63 countries represented here at VSU.	299

Oldest City in America

On August 29, 2006, 23 international students loaded into VSU's vans for a day trip to America's oldest city: St. Augustine, Florida. This was the first trip for the international students as it was the start of the semester and a great chance for most people to build friendships. Students were able to visit the Lighthouse, view feedings at the Alligator Farm, spent several hours touring the city and end the night with a Haunted Ghost tour. A variety of countries were represented on the trip including Germany, Uzbekistan, France, Russia, Japan, Sweden, England, Holland, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Belize, and USA.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS EXPLORE PLACE WHERE DREAMS COME TRUE

On October 1, 2006 a group of 25 of Valdosta State University's (VSU) international students experienced the wonderful world of magic during a trip to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. The students traveled via VSU's vans. Former Society of International Students PR/Event Coordinator, Katie Steffen, organized the trip. Accommodations were at the Best Western Hotel on Hotel Plaza Blvd. in beautiful Orlando, Florida. The students spent two memorable days visiting the four Disney theme parks, Epcot, Animal Kingdom, MGM Studios, and the Magic Kingdom and 2 fun filled nights taking advantage of Orlando's fun nightlife at Downtown Disney and Pleasure Island.

VSU Centennial Celebrations

Valdosta State University marked its one-hundred year existence this October with celebrations throughout the month. Students, faculty, and staff campus-wide joined in the festivities in order to bring in the University's "birthday" in grand style. The community welcomed the milestone and joined in many of the events. Activities for the month included, but were not limited to: 5K Fun Run/Walk, Poster Contest, Essay Contest, and a Flyover sponsored by Moody Air Force Base to commemorate the celebration. Dr. Ronald M. Zaccari announced VSU's honorary chairs on January 5, 2006. The chairs are: Alfred W. (Bill) Jones, III, David M. Ratcliffe, and Martha Barrs (Jones) Robertson. Each of the noted chairs are VSU Alumni and agreed to serve as chairs for the term of 2006-2013. Centennial celebrations extended well through the Fall 2006 semester, concluding with the Centennial Homecoming Football game on October 7, 2006. The game included a half-time show, which commemorated the 25th year of football at VSU.

Odum Library Opens New 4th Floor Exhibit



On August 17, 2006, VSU's own Odum Library opened a museum of panels and display cases, which unfolds the history of Valdosta State University, formerly known as Valdosta State College. The opening of the exhibit marked the beginning of the fall semester's centennial celebrations. There was a ceremony held on the front lawn of the University in honor of the exhibit. There was food, speeches, and a tour of the exhibit. Hundreds of people attended the event to

help celebrate one of the year's most outstanding accomplishments. The entire 4th floor atrium and a part of the archives were dedicated to the unveiling of this information. The exhibit is currently open to students, faculty, staff, and the community.



International Education Week 2006

November 13-17, 2006, marked the annual celebration of International Education Week (IEW). International Education Week is a time for international students, faculty, staff, and advocates for international education to enlighten individuals nationally about different cultures and perspectives. IEW also allows people to explore different cultures. The week's festivities were divided amongst three days and involved a lot of planning and participation on behalf of many students, faculty, staff, and the community.

On Monday night, the international students held a sushi cooking class, which was a huge success. With the help of international students and Centennial Hall's Complex Director, Erin Sandonato. The participants were able to learn how to make sushi and Korean kimbob. There were approximately 30 participants, and several students collaborated to make the event successful. Aya Inukai, from Japan, headed the event.

The annual International Fair and bake sale took place on Tuesday afternoon on Palms Quad, located outside of Palms Dining Center. This year's event included a language booth session, country displays, and music. Preparation for the event took a lot of time and effort on behalf of the coordinator Cielo Mosquera, President of Society of International Students (SIS), and Pavel Arsenov, Vice-President of SIS. Students, faculty, staff, and the community helped make the event a success and students from various countries were able to represent their nations and cultures with a lot of enthusiasm and excitement.

Later that evening, there was an International Quiz Bowl. This was the second annual event and it allowed participants to demonstrate their knowledge about various countries.

Marcela Paredes, SIS PR/Event coordinator, organized the event.

Thursday night the week's festivities ended with an International Talent Show and Mini-International Dinner held at the Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM). The talent portion of the evening was conducted by Minerva Blancaneaux from Belize (Assistant PR/Event Coordinator) and the dinner portion of the evening by Ernesto Prencke from Colombia (Treasurer). The event was a first for the SIS and proved to be a huge success with over 100 attendees at the evening's event and over 50 student participants who helped to make the night a success.



English Language Institute (ELI) Expansion at VSU

In 2002, the English Language Institute started with about six to eight students and two different levels. Today, the ELI has four levels and 28 students representing approximately 13% of the international student population here at VSU, bringing thousands of dollars into the university and local economy.

ELI offers rigorous intensive English preparation, which prepares students for academic success as they begin to pursue their undergraduate and graduate degrees. The ELI also offers access to all University facilities such as the library, dining room, health center, computer lab, The Learning Center, athletic complex, and dormitories, Internet and e-mail access, plus advising on immigration, academics, and student life. While at the ELI, the students have the opportunity to speak English and make friends by taking intensive English, participating in student activities, and joining campus clubs.

Currently, there are seven experienced instructors teaching at the Institute. They are eager to teach students in and out of class through fun activities such as game night, cultural trips to different cities throughout the south, and a celebration of various US holidays.

Some of the holidays celebrated including Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Valentine's Day.

This year for Halloween, the students participated in pumpkin carving. Some

of the students came in costumes; some got their faces painted, while others were busy trying to carve the best pumpkin. Maral M. Viveros, Director of ELI, organized the event. Kimberly Tanner, acting Director of VSU's access office, also played a major role in this event. First, she educated the students on the tradition of Halloween and pumpkin carving, and then she demonstrated the technique of pumpkin carving. Members of the Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) also helped a great deal in making this event a success. They kindly donated ten pumpkins, helped set up, and assisted with the pumpkin carving. There were about 35 people at the event including ELI students, exchange students, other international students, ELI teachers, some VSU faculty and staff, and VSU students. I believe it is safe to conclude that the event was a blast!

November was also a great month for many activities, which ELI students participate. First, the students participated in the International Education Week. The ELI students prepared special traditional meals, a display board about their life at VSU and ELI, and some students belly danced. In addition, the ELI staff prepared a big traditional Thanksgiving feast on November 20, 2006 at the Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM), formerly known as the Baptist Student Union. Students once again gathered around a long table just as American families do at this time of the year. Teachers prepared several traditional dishes such as sweet potato soufflé, pecan and pumpkin pies, mashed potatoes and gravy, green bean casserole, rolls, macaroni and cheese, and of course a big 12 pound turkey. After the meal,

everyone played various board games, cards, pool, and much more. Both the ELI and BCM will cooked delicious dishes and shared with the students about the tradition of one America's most celebrated holidays: Thanksgiving!

For the end of the semester, the ELI has organized a Christmas/New Year's Eve dance party. The food for this event will be done in more of a potluck style. The students and the teachers are invited to bring their own traditional or favorite Christmas/New Year's Eve meals. As everyone enjoys their meal, different stories and the tradition of this holiday will be shared around the room. This type of event is perfect for a fun way to rap up the end of the semester.

International Student Picnic 2006



The Georgia Baptist Convention's (GBC) annual International Student Picnic was held on October 21-22, 2006, at Stone Mountain Park in Atlanta, Georgia. International students from all over the state of Georgia attended this event and represented their countries through song. Both international and American students were invited to attend the event. Valdosta State University's Collegiate Baptist Ministry accommodated a total of fifteen international students and five American students. After eating a great meal and listening to a speaker, everyone gathered on the lawn in front of the mountain and experienced the renowned Stone Mountain Laser Light show. While in Atlanta, the students were able to tour the city, making stops at Underground Atlanta, IKEA, Atlantic Station, Olympic Park, and the Capitol building. It was an excellent trip and many friendships were formed because of it.

New Staff at the Center for International Programs Office (CIP)



Administrative Assistant

Lee Yarbrough was born in Gulfport, MS and raised in Valdosta, GA. She attended Agnes Scott College for a B.A. in English and Classics and holds a Certificate in Publishing from the University of Denver. Lee also studied abroad at the University of Essex in Colchester, England. She is currently working on her M.A. in English at VSU and serves as the administrative assistant for the Center for International Programs. She also has a kitten named Leonidas and is the self-proclaimed Master of the Known Universe and Supreme Maven of the Crossword Puzzle.



Graduate Assistant

Sonya Dodson is the second child born to Andrew and Thelma Dodson. Sonya Dodson was born at Wynn Army Hospital in Fort Stewart, GA on October 31, 1983. Being born into a military family Sonya was exposed to many different cultures and was able to travel some before her father's military tenure came to an end. Sonya has lived in Aschaffenburg, West Germany, Babenhasaun, West Germany and Herzogenaugh, West Germany. She has traveled to Switzerland, Scotland, and Ireland, to name a few of her international travels. Sonya graduated from Armstrong Atlantic State University in May of 2006 with a B.S. in Communication Disorders and is currently pursuing a M.A. in

Communication Disorders at VSU. Sonya enjoys cooking, singing, and spending time with family and friends.

Center for International Programs (CIP) Office Staff Contact Information

Name and Title	Email address @ valdosta.edu
Dr. Ivan Nikolov, Director of International Programs	inikolov
David Starling, Assistant Director and Study Abroad Coordinator; Director of the ELI	dstarlin
Irina McClellan, International Student Advisor	ibmcclel
Lee Yarbrough, Administrative Assistant	layarbrough
Megan Powell, Coordinator of the European Council, ISEP Coordinator	mapowell
Sonya Dodson, Graduate Assistant	stdodson
Maral Viveros, Assistant Director of the ELI	mmeredov
Susan Starling, Graduate Assistant	smstarli

You can also contact the Center for International Programs at (229) 333-7410 and the English Language Institute at (229) 219-1246.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

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. Also, if you have information about any other alumni you can also inform us and encourage them to contact us as well.