



cosmicos

A Publication of the Valdosta State University Center for International Programs | Fall 2025

Welcome To Cosmicos!

Greetings from Valdosta! Welcome to the revival issue 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.

contents

International VSU Community.....	1
Student Activities.....	2
ELI Staff.....	2
New Program News.....	3
Faculty Highlight.....	4
Alumni Testimonial.....	4
Faculty Emails.....	5
Info & How to Apply.....	5

Written By: Takeshi Horiguchi

Welcome to Cosmicos!



Irina McClellan, assistant director of CIP, Study Abroad and Exchanges and David Starling, Director of Global Initiatives, ELI

International VSU Community

Due to the efforts of the international programs from the ELI and CIP, Valdosta State University's campus is mixed with culture and new beginnings. Last semester we had more than 50 students from around the world join the ELI program, including Japan, Korea, Czech, China, Mexico, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, and Ecuador. Two universities from Japan: Oberlin University and Otomon Gakuin sent students for a study abroad program where their students took two semesters of English classes.

continued on page 2

International Students

Currently at VSU there are 178 international students actively enrolled. 48 countries are represented at the University. The number of students and their respective countries are listed below.

Anguilla.....	1
Argentina.....	2
Australia.....	4
Bahamas.....	1
Belgium.....	1
Belize.....	8
Brazil.....	3
Cameroon.....	2
Canada.....	1
China.....	10
Colombia.....	26
Czech Republic.....	11
Denmark.....	1
Dominican Republic.....	1
Ecuador.....	1
France.....	6
Georgia.....	1
Germany.....	3
Ghana.....	9
Honduras.....	4
Iceland.....	1
India.....	7
Italy.....	1
Japan.....	16
Jordan.....	2
Mexico.....	3
Nepal.....	1
Netherlands.....	1
New Zealand.....	1
Nigeria.....	3
Norway.....	1
Pakistan.....	2
Peru.....	2
Poland.....	3
Russia.....	1
Saudi Arabia.....	6
Singapore.....	1
South Korea.....	8
South Africa.....	1
Spain.....	1
Sweden.....	3
Switzerland.....	1
Trinidad & Tobago.....	1
Uganda.....	1
United Kingdom.....	2
Venezuela.....	5
Vietnam.....	7

Each semester, our international and exchange students have the opportunity to explore the region through a variety of trips and activities organized by the ELI.

Last semester, students spent weekends in Orlando, visiting world-famous theme parks like Disney and Universal Studios, and in Atlanta, where they explored the Georgia Aquarium and the World of Coca-Cola. We also took a day trip to St. Augustine, the oldest city in the U.S., known for its historic architecture, interesting shops, and scenic coastline. We also made a camping trip at Providence Canyon where we made smores and hotdogs and played various games.

Closer to campus, students visited Burton Brooks Peach Orchard during the summer harvest and took time to explore Valdosta's historic downtown, with its local shops, restaurants, and cultural landmarks.

These trips offer students a chance to experience Southern culture, connect with classmates, and make lasting memories during their time at VSU.



David Starling



Takeshi Horiguchi



Sarah Horiguchi



Stephanie Treminio



Diana Iaromich



Autumn Wibright

Meet the ELI Staff

The English Language Institute at Valdosta State is supported by a dedicated team of six faculty and staff members who bring a wide range of cultural and professional experience to the classroom. Many have taught English both in the U.S. and abroad, including in Japan, where three of our instructors previously taught English, and all speak at least one additional language, such as Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, or German. One staff member is even a former ELI student, offering a unique perspective on the learning experience.

Our team comes from diverse backgrounds, including military linguistics, international education, and multicultural communities, which helps us connect with students from all over the world. Classes follow a structured intensive program focused on reading, writing, grammar, and conversation, but are also tailored to meet the needs of each group. Outside the classroom, staff often join in on trips and activities, making it easy for students to build strong, supportive relationships during their time here.



Beatriz Potter

Written By: Sarah Horiguchi

The ELI: A Cultural Hub at the Heart of VSU

Every year, the English Language Institute at Valdosta State University looks forward to welcoming new students from around the world. Each group brings with it a unique blend of cultures, languages, and perspectives, making the ELI a vibrant hub of global exchange on campus. We never know exactly who will walk through our doors, what countries they'll come from, what stories they'll share, or what dreams they'll bring, but that's part of what makes the ELI such a special place to teach and learn.

Beyond language instruction, the ELI fosters lasting relationships and cross-cultural understanding between students, staff, and the wider VSU community. Many of our alumni go on to achieve remarkable things—whether it's launching international careers, continuing their education, or fulfilling lifelong dreams. Hearing from former students and seeing where life has taken them is one of the most rewarding parts of what we do. Their success stories are a constant reminder of the impact of language learning and the global connections formed here at VSU.



Czech Students Exchange

Palacký University Olomouc students came to visit Valdosta State University in the Spring for one month. Every year we have Czech students from various fields, mainly Education majors, audit regular classes on campus. VSU also sends a group of students, mainly Politics and Psychology majors, in the summer to Palacký University Olomouc. They were a lovely group that got to experience Orlando Studios, Atlanta, St. Augustine, Jacksonville, and explore around our peaceful town as azalea flowers were in full bloom.

Summer 2025: Strengthening Ties with Universidad Militar Nueva Granada



This summer, Valdosta State University hosted a group of 20 professors from Universidad Militar Nueva Granada (UMNG) in Bogotá, Colombia, for a one-month intensive English program. The visiting faculty members, representing various academic disciplines, came to improve their English skills in preparation for teaching parts of their coursework in English back home in Colombia.

The initiative supports UMNG's broader goal of helping students reach a B1 level of English proficiency (CEFR) and increasing the use of English in higher education. Both VSU and UMNG are hopeful this program will continue as an annual summer exchange, deepening academic collaboration and fostering long-term international partnership.

Faculty Highlight: David Starling

Dr. David Starling is the director and founder of the English Language Institute. He teaches Public Administration, Political Science, and German classes at Valdosta State University on top of ELI classes. He is skillful at golf and car mechanics and plays mandolin when he has free time.



Dr. Starling enjoying Providence Canyon aka The Mini Grand Canyon in Georgia during our recent camping trip.

Blast from the Past!

This is the first issue of Cosmicos from September 2002! Dr. Starling tried his best to recreate the photo in this revival issue by wearing the same tie!



ELI Alumni Testimonial:

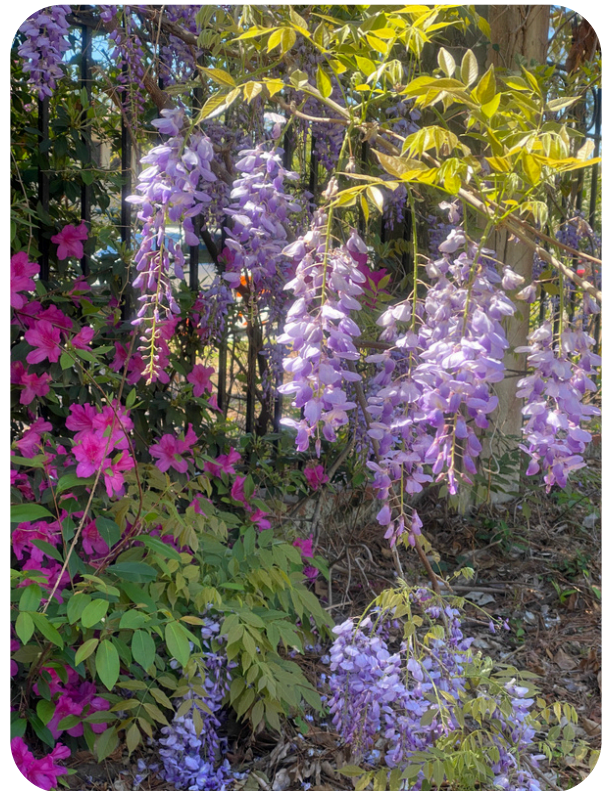


Hinaki Enomoto

Hinaki always dreamed of working at Universal Studios Japan. As a university student in Tokyo, she visited the park once a month with her annual pass, traveling all the way from Tokyo to Osaka by Shinkansen just to be there. While studying at VSU's English Language Institute, she often wrote about her dream in class and focused on building her English skills. After graduating from J.F. Oberlin University, Hinaki made that dream a reality and now works at USJ. She believes her English ability played a role in helping her stand out during the hiring process.

(Pictured: Hinaki as a child and now living her dream at USJ.)

Curated Campus Photo: Spring



Takeshi tries to take photos of the surrounding area to help his students from abroad acclimate to their new environment. He tries to be as funny and informative as he can. You can find his posts on our Instagram page.

How to Apply

The program is designed for international students who are not proficient enough in English for university studies or adult learners. Prospective students must be 18 years old or if under 18, have parents or a guardian in the area to participate.

Application Procedures:

- Apply and pay the non-refundable \$100 application fee online: [Apply and Pay Online](#).
- Print and fill out the [Financial Statement](#), scan a copy of your passport, and email it to us at vsueli@valdosta.edu.
- If you are transferring, please print off the following form and take it to your current school for approval - [Transfer Eligibility Form](#)
- You should have your [Medical History Form](#) completed before you arrive in the United States. We strongly recommend applicants do this in their home country with their own doctor because this can be expensive to do in the United States.

Get more info from our ELI website



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We want to hear back from you!

If you are an alumni and want to update us with your life, please send us a message!

If you have tips for new students that you'd like to share, please also send us a message.

If you enjoyed one of our trips, please let us know. Each semester we try to change things up and go to different locations around our area.

If you're a new student, let us know if there's a place you'd like to go to!