

# Le Journal

West Virginia State University Office of International Affairs Newsletter

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## WV Higher Education Policy Commission Sponsors Freshman Excursion to Quebec City, Canada

Students wanting an international experience and the opportunity to hone their French language skills were given an opportunity this past May by enrolling in “An Introduction to the Political and Cultural Identity of Canada and Quebec.” Students were able to earn one course credit through West Virginia State University, Marshall University, or West Virginia University which was transferrable to their home institution. The study-abroad opportunity was sponsored by the WV Higher Education Policy Commission’s international initiative in collaboration with the three WV universities and the Université Laval in Quebec City.

The group of 29 students from eight different public universities in West Virginia (including five WVSU students) participated in a one-week travel/

study course to Quebec, Canada during the month of May. The academic program was comprised of morning lectures by Laval faculty followed by site visits corresponding to the lecture topics.

Students also had ample time to explore the old world charms of Quebec City that included seemingly endless restaurants, cafes, and shopping boutiques. The group stayed on the Laval campus where they received a complimentary breakfast, were within walking distance to the mall complex, and had easy bus access to the center of Quebec City. The group also spent the first and last nights in Niagara Falls on the way to and from Canada.

Quebec City is one of the oldest cities in North America. The ramparts surrounding Old Quebec (Vieux-Québec) are the only remaining fortified city walls in the Americas north of Mexico, and were declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1985 as the ‘Historic District of Old Québec’. Université Laval is the oldest centre of education in Canada and was the first institution in North America to offer higher education in French.

Students interested in participating in the summer 2010 trip to Quebec City must be in good academic and financial standing. Priority will be given to first year students who are either finishing their first year or first semester, and classified as in-state West Virginia residents for tuition-purposes.

For more information contact:  
James Natsis, (304) 766-4249;  
natsisja@wvstateu.edu



Students in Quebec City, Canada

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# Rotary Foundation Offers a French Experience

by Todd Beane

The experience of living in another culture and gaining knowledge of their views and way of life is priceless. One becomes a more sensitive person and more understanding and appreciative of other lifestyles.

The Rotary Foundation's Group Study Exchange (GSE) Program is a unique cultural and vocational exchange opportunity for professionals between the ages of 25 and 40 who have been in their career for at least two years. The GSE program is a longstanding program of Rotary International. It allows young professionals to experience other cultures, foreign professions, and build international relationships.

I recently spent 30 days overseas in the Massif Central region of France. For four weeks, team members are steeped in the host country's culture and institutions. They have the opportunity to observe how their vocations are practiced, develop personal and professional relationships, and exchange ideas. In a typical tour, applicants participate in five full days of vocational visits, 15 to 20 club presentations, 10 to 15 formal visits and social events, and spend two to three days at the district conference.

I spent the month of June travelling around the central part of France, visiting many cities, staying in host French Rotary members' homes, and experiencing the France culture. In addition to offering the finest of food, wine, art, and architecture, France is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. Our West Virginia Rotary GSE Team was taken on VIP tours of historical landmarks, cathedrals, ancient castles, pristine gardens,

and a 12<sup>th</sup> century village that was still in partial use by community members. The GSE Team visited seven different cities in 30 days. Every four days we would repack our luggage and move to a new city, with a new Rotary Club, and a new host family for each member of our team.

Few language barriers existed since most of our French Rotary host families spoke some English. Another American in our group and I both spoke a little French and one of our team members spoke fluent Spanish. All of these factors facilitated easier communication. While we didn't carry on long conversations, everything was understood. The Rotarians we came in contact with were either retired business men and women or current employees of companies.

I found the stereotypical French

man or woman to be very proud, most kind, generous, and polite. With "s'il vous plait" this, "merci" that, and "pardon moi" heard regularly. Americans can learn from French manners. For example, the French are friendly and will take time to stop and talk about anything with passersby on the street. They appear to really enjoy life. Working for a living is not their main goal in life. Enjoying camaraderie with family and friends is a main focus. Each day of our journey was filled with two hour lunches and later three hour dinners where we would enjoy the best cheeses and wines of the local region.

Travel guides that I read prior to taking the trip cautioned not to discuss religion or politics during a meal. It was considered rude. To my surprise almost every meal conversation dealt with the Obama

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**WV Rotary Team from District 7550. L - R: The mayor of Le Puy en Velay, France, Oliver Irons of Lewisburg, Jennifer Gruenke of Bluefield, Todd Beane of Charleston, Elaina Smith of Fayetteville, and Rotary Team Leader Sally Pennington from Fayetteville**

White House and what our thoughts were on the “new” administration. The French are huge Obama fans and the outlook for America in their minds is good!

One of our earlier stops on the tour was historic Perigueux, an ancient town in the central part of France. My host lived in an 18<sup>th</sup> century castle. The “suite” I stayed in consisted of a dressing room, a sitting room, bathroom, a shower room, and bedroom. During this stay in Perigueux our WV Rotary GSE Team dined with the Perigueux Rotary Club in a 17<sup>th</sup> century barn that had been converted into a dining hall.

Two of the towns in the Massif Central region, Rodez and Aurillac, provided me with a feeling of home. These cities were a little smaller in population than Charleston, West Virginia

(about 30,000 - 35,000 people), but seemed much larger in size because of the side shops and historic medieval buildings around every corner. Another striking similarity was the surrounding mountains. These particular French mountains were actually dormant volcanoes thousands of years old lined with trees and vegetation making them green and beautiful. I felt completely at home and at ease.

The most incredible thing I discovered on my travels is that the French Rotary members were willing to take each of us into their homes and families with total trust. To allow a foreign stranger complete access to your home is amazing. I envy their trust and kindness.

Through my travels abroad in France and other parts of Europe, one thing is certain - people are the

same everywhere in the world. We are all human and are all kind at heart with a genuine willingness to help each other. Even in a country where you may not speak the language fluently, people are willing to reach out and help. World travel has opened my eyes to new experiences and a greater understanding of the world, but people from other countries have taught me so much more.

The Rotary Foundation gave me a once in a lifetime opportunity. I experienced a culture that has changed me professionally and personally. I have established life-long friendships with people whom I would have never had the opportunity to meet. I now have wonderful friends and a network of people in France. Listed below are some travel tips. I hope they will prove useful to anyone planning a journey abroad.

## **Todd’s helpful travel tips before international journeys to a new place**

- Read up on the city where you plan to stay. Weeks before leaving, research online the weather there. This will help you plan what clothes to pack.
- Don’t pack too much. If anything, under pack. Travel is much more enjoyable when you are not lugging around two or three suitcases at each stop.
- Keep an open mind. Eat what your hosts eat. It’s part of the experience. Falafel in Israel. Pizza in Italia. Cheese in France.
- Be open to the universe. No judgment. People are what they are, based on their environment. You as a visitor should adapt.
- In most countries it is considered rude to talk about politics or religion during meals.
- DO NOT go with strangers who approach you (They already have you identified and ‘pegged’).
- Smile. Be nice. Whether you like it or not, fair or unfair, you are your country’s representative wherever you go.
- Once you are back here at home, be kind to foreigners who look lost. You will never know what help you can give them now, and what they might offer you in the future.

*Todd Beane is a Communication Marketing Specialist with the WVSU Gus R. Douglass Institute*

# Visiting Scholar from Mexico Gains From His West Virginia Visit

Samuel Sanchez Dominquez spent three weeks in Institute during the months of May-June to better understand the biodigestive and compost activities and research taking place at WVSU. Professor Sanchez Dominquez is a faculty member of the Plant Science department at the Universidad Autonoma Chapingo, Mexico. During his Winter/Spring sabbatical, he traveled to Argentina to observe the large-scale agricultural operations at the Universidad Rio Cuarto. He was later contemplating traveling to either Cuba or Spain, when a colleague suggested he travel to Institute to observe the research operations at WVSU.

Sanchez Dominquez was not aware of the on-going partnership agreement between WVSU and Chapingo and later learned that a colleague, Teodoro Espinosa, was

currently doing research there, and a former student, Ulises Toledo, was the Associate Dean of the Gus R. Douglass Land-Grant Programs at WVSU.

Sanchez Dominquez explained during his interview with *Le Journal* that Chapingo started an Agro-ecology department about 15-18 years ago, and the university was turning more and more towards “green” sustainable, organic methods of agriculture. His visit to West Virginia enabled him to observe research facilities on campus, as well as sites elsewhere in the state via the WVSU Extension Programs in Rural Development and Agriculture. “I learned that the money invested in the biodigester and related projects surpass the total budget Chapingo spends on research over a total area of about 240 hectares. I’ve also had the

opportunity to travel within the state of West Virginia and in the region and have found it to be a very beautiful part of the country,” Dominquez stated.



**Professor of Plant Science at the Universidad Autonoma Chapingo, Mexico, Samuel Sanchez Dominquez**

## Title VI 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference

The Department of Education celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Title VI with a Conference featuring a Keynote address by the Honorable Madeleine K. Albright, the 64<sup>th</sup> Secretary of State of the U.S. Secretary Albright was the first woman so named and in 1997 was the highest ranking woman in the history of the U.S. government. In addition to the Keynote, invited guest recipients of Title VI funding were offered thematic tracks to follow including an attempt to address the question: How will Title VI programs evolve over the next 50 years as national and global security are more inextricably intertwined?

Other themes focused on the critical importance and value of second language competence to our national interests and internationalizing higher

education to include a significant increase in the numbers of students engaged in international learning, study abroad, increased off-shore campuses, and development of technology-based international collaborations in research and teaching.

The former Secretary of State offered a thoughtful, compelling address sprinkled with anecdotal humor from her term in office. She advocated for talking to other nations without preconditions, citing the importance to remember that there exists a common humanity that binds us all. She also stated that when she gifted President Obama with a copy of her latest book, *Memo to the President: How We Can Restore America's Reputation and Leadership*, that her inscription stated, “I have

the audacity to hope that this book will be useful.” Other comments focused on study abroad as an integral component to education and her urging the President to include money for internationalizing Community Colleges.

In 1997-98 WVSU received \$125,000 from Title VI to open the Office of International Affairs which issues this newsletter, and to hire a Director to oversee the office. It also supported faculty development abroad to the Francophone country of the Republic of Benin in order to develop international courses and to begin to fuse international content into the curriculum. The core course GED 211, Introduction to International Studies, was one of the courses developed as a result of Title VI funding.

# Taste of Ethiopia

by Edna Frimpong

For those lucky enough to attend The Taste of Ethiopia's Third Annual Celebration, it was a memory to be cherished. The night was filled with music, education, culture, custom, and all around fun. According to the students of the Ethiopian Students Association (ESA), there are about 80 ethnic groups in Ethiopia, and each of these has its own music, dance, language, food, and fashion. The Amharic Dance was a highlight of the evening. It involved a heavy concentration of rhythm, rapid foot movement and elegant costumes. By the end of the music/dance half, the audience was tapping their feet.

Much like the Amharic dance, the Guargena Dance was steeped in rhythm. The pulsating beat was an invitation to the audience to join the dancers on stage. At one point, Jack Magan, a WVSU physics professor, was taken onstage by one of the performers. He commented about

the experience, stating that "It was great! I knew a lot about the food because my family and I have been attending this event since it started a few years ago. But I learned a lot about the traditions and the dances, as well as the culture of the people that brought us this incredible food."

Throughout the evening, there were drawings for door prizes. One of the winners received a luxurious Blackwood candle-stand. Another audience member won a beautiful wooden drinking cup, which is traditional tableware in almost every home in Ethiopia. The third prize was a multicolored silk scarf which could be worn with just about any outfit.

The students presented a fashion show following the drawing, where they explained the origin and ethnic group which wore the clothing. They explained that women of certain groups could be identified by the length of their skirt and the accessories that accompanied it.

During the last song, students and other faculty members were invited onstage to participate in a dance of the audience's choosing. Mrs. Ann Johnson, a recent resident to the area, and her Ethiopian daughter, Azalech, stated, "We are very excited to be here. My daughter was born in Ethiopia, and we just moved to West Virginia, so I was very happy to participate in this to show my daughter our appreciation for her culture."

"Incredible! This was one of the most energy filled events that I have ever attended. It was exciting, fun, and all around enjoyable. I recommend that everyone come next year," stated one student. Enda Smith, another student, said that the event helped her learn more about Ethiopia and to appreciate the diversity here on campus, as well as understand her Ethiopian classmates better.

*Edna Frimpong is an OIA Intern.*



Guests are seated before buffet service of Ethiopian dishes.



# Great Start for Colombian Summer Study Abroad Program

Spanish language student Suzanne Jenkins and political science major Don McClain were pleased and surprised to be met at the Colombian airport by a chauffeur driven Universidad Autonoma del Caribe (UAC) vehicle. Welcoming them to their four-week study abroad experience was Yeison Corredor, the Director of International Affairs. Senor Corredor explained that the university would not spare any effort in making the students stay a great experience. "I want them to be our ambassadors at WVSU, so we have selected our best teachers, our best classrooms with the newest air conditioners and have advised the Office of Technology to have the equipment ready with internet and projectors. We have also carefully selected the host families," he explained, "and I am sure they will have no complaints about our program."

Thus, began the bilateral agreement signed between WVSU and the Universidad Autonoma. Other aspects of the cooperative arrangement will include exchange of faculty, research projects, training workshops, video conferencing, and an exchange of articles to be published in the UAC's *Encuentros* and WVSU's *Le Journal*.

In addition to the month-long intensive language training at UAC, Suzanne and Don were immersed in conversation with their host families. They also visited museums, churches, banks, commercial centers, historical areas, and other tourist sites. Suzanne, who is a Spanish-Education major, explained that the overall experience had a positive impact on her language ability, her understanding of cultures, and even her health. "Now I am at a level where I don't need to translate all of my sentences in my head from English to Spanish to communicate interpersonally; my vocabulary flows spontaneously in Spanish," she confided.

She also recounted that her readings in Spanish Culture classes were more meaningful after visiting such places as the Palace of the Inquisition, the San Felipe de Barajas Fort, known as the jewel of colonial military engineering, and baroque churches. "It is one thing to read about religious medieval sculptures' focus on suffering, and yet another to actually touch a wood carving of Jesus Christ depicting the blood and tears of his suffering." She also recounted that the close family ties and bonds of affection experienced by Spanish Americans included her, for she now had an adoptive Colombian family that treated her as a daughter, a sister, and even engaged in a fair amount of spoiling her at needed times. From the health point of view, Suzanne also confided that she lost twenty pounds during her stay while enjoying all of the delicious, fresh foods. "I am better fit, and can easily climb stairs," she concluded.

Don also enjoyed the fine food, especially the fresh fruit, but he admitted to his penchant for shopping. He constantly perused the handcrafts and high couture and arose early to seek his purchases. He adopted the friendly sense of humor of barranquilleros stating, "I didn't need an alarm

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**Spanish Education major, Suzanne Jenkins and International Liaison at UA Yeison Corredor**

clock any longer, I had one on the street that shouted at exactly 6:00AM: AGUACATEEEEEESSS! (AVOCADOES).” During his shopping spree, Don also realized that his language ability was improving immensely. “I can understand most of the Spanish that is spoken around me now. I cannot always reply in Spanish, but I know that understanding is the first phase in the process,” he said.

The two professors in charge of teaching the Spanish language courses to the students were Alejandro Espinosa and Rocio Niebles. They were both pleased with the student’s progression. “It’s rewarding to hear them use the language taught in the classroom in conversations outside of the class,” stated Espinosa. He reported that on the first day of Suzanne and Don’s arrival that he and professor Niebles had to accompany them

to an ATM machine to withdraw money, but that after several weeks into the course, they were able to explain what they wanted and buy what they needed at the cafeteria without staring at the bank notes for a lengthy amount of time.

Espinosa further summarized the bilateral agreement and the overall summer experience by stating that, “We have learned a lot, too, in this process. Our training as teachers of English as a foreign language and as teachers of Spanish as a mother tongue needed some adaptation to fit the needs of students of Spanish as a foreign language. The electronic books and ancillaries, the dependence of the textbook on technology clearly show that a formidable team has been formed to produce it, and we are happy to reorient our methodological efforts in this direction.”

# Colombia 2010



West Virginia State University will sponsor a 4-week Spanish immersion program beginning in late June 2010 in Barranquilla, Colombia. The host institution will be the Universidad Autónoma del Caribe. The program will include an Advising OPI Interview, which will be of particular interest to K-12 teachers of Spanish who are interested in demonstrating proficiency at the required national level.

The program package will include airfare, family home stay (lodging and half pension), course instruction, extra-curricular excursions, and airport transfer in Barranquilla. **The total cost will be approximately \$2,000.**

More information will be available in the next few months. Please contact Miguel Zapata [mzapata@wvstateu.edu](mailto:mzapata@wvstateu.edu) or (304) 766-3068.

# Bridging the Communication-Cultural Gap

By Sean Meade

We shouldn't take for granted our ability to communicate with one another. Cadet Michael Miller and I (Cadet Sean Meade) learned this the hard way on April 14, 2009 as we were introduced to Cadets Luis Minin and Gino Paz of the Peru Escuela Militar De Chorrillos (EMCH). EMCH is Peru's equivalent to the United States Army West Point Military Academy. Every year, the West Virginia National Guard (WV ARNG) hosts an exchange between cadets of the Peruvian military academy EMCH and one of the three Army ROTC programs in West Virginia. West Virginia State University was honored to be the 2008 and 2009 hosts of the Peruvian Cadets. The exchange is designed to build a lasting relationship between the future military leaders of both countries so that if need be, the two countries can come together to fight a common enemy.

Cadet Miller and I were selected as chaperones of Cadet Minin and Cadet Paz for the week-long 2009 exchange. There was one major problem: neither Cadet Miller nor I spoke Spanish; however, we felt that our "can do" attitude and military bearing, mixed with a little arrogance, would help us accomplish our newly assigned mission. When we were first told of our assignment, Cadet Miller and I were ecstatic to be given the opportunity to interact with those from another country and culture. Both Miller and I are native West Virginians and have had little experience with cultures outside of the United States. However, neither of us could have imagined how difficult it would be to cement the friendship that would eventually be formed between the four of us.

Before the arrival of Cadet Minin and Cadet Paz, Cadet Miller and I studied key Spanish language phrases so that we could properly greet our guests. On the day that the Peruvians arrived, we felt confident that we would exceed the expectations that we were hoping to meet. Unfortunately, we were not as squared away as we thought. Even with a translator present for the initial greeting, we found it very difficult to effectively communicate with the Peruvian cadets. Things really turned sour when our translator departed. The four of us were

standing there with blank faces trying to figure out how we were going to complete the simple task of getting their luggage to my vehicle. Things really got interesting in the ride back to campus when we were trying to ask them if they had girlfriends and explain that Cadet Miller and I did not have girlfriends. Forgotten from our studies was the fact that the nonverbal "OK" sign in the United States translates to "homosexual" in the Peruvian culture. So I am sitting there pointing at the two of them saying "chica amigo" (girl friend) and giving them a hand gesture that was clearly misleading. With a look of shock on their faces, they start pointing at me and Cadet Miller and talking to each other as if they were sharing a secret. Simultaneously, Cadet Miller and I remembered the Peruvian meaning. It took us nearly an hour to explain that Cadet Miller and I were not making a pass at them.

As the week went on, Cadet Miller and I ran into several other language and culture barriers where we had to use "Google translate" to clear up our intended meaning. By the second day though, the four of us had created our own unique way of communicating. Cadet Miller seemed to be learning Spanish at a faster rate than me, but I was good at communicating through non-verbal expression. Miller and I found that working together as a team seemed to be the best way for the four of us to communicate. There were several times when friends who thought they knew Spanish would see us having trouble conveying a message and would try to intervene; however, we had grown so accustomed to how the four of us worked as a team that our supposed Spanish speaking friends only hindered our interaction. When we would go out with our friends, no one but the four of us could understand what we were talking about.

Before our interactions with the Peruvian cadets, Cadet Miller and I had a completely different outlook on how people in the rest of the world lived. I had always imagined Peru as an indigenous place that was overrun by jungles and poverty. This is because that is what the media portray here in the United States.

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However, Cadet Miller and I learned that the people of Peru are not that different. We discovered that most of the people of Peru lived the same lifestyle as the citizens of the United States.

As time went on, we found that communicating with one another was not a problem anymore. We were still forced to resort back to “Google translate” from time to time, but for the most part, we were working with one another very effectively. Cadet Miller and I wanted to ensure that the Peruvian visitors had the best time that they could possibly have while they were visiting West Virginia. So we introduced them to activities such as paintballing, go cart riding, and golfing. We were also honored to meet with Major General Tackett (Adjutant General for the West Virginia National Guard), attend a West Virginia Power baseball game, and take a trip to Gettysburg to share some United States history.

One of the most notable differences between the Peruvian and United States cultures was the difference in the way that they carried themselves. Cadet Minin and Cadet Paz took great pride in their manner and their views of how a man should act. I don’t know if it was their military background or if it was cultural, but they were always extremely courteous. Every night that we returned to my apartment, Cadet Minin would give me a gift. I

eventually grew accustomed to the two of them holding the door every time that we entered or exited a building, also. This was frustrating to me because I would try and be courteous to them; however, they continually acted as if we were *their* guests. The only time that I saw either of them frustrated was if I did not let a female enter a room first or when I would not open the car door for a female. This tradition has died in the corner of the world that I inhabit, but through my interactions with the Peruvian cadets, I regained a new respect for old US customs and courtesies.

This experience has stimulated my interest in foreign culture and languages. Up until this point in my life, I have never fully appreciated the need to be bilingual in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Growing up in West Virginia has acted as a barrier to the outside world. West Virginia is ranked 50<sup>th</sup> in the United States in people who are bilingual. As a result, Cadet Miller and I have had little contact with the outside world. I am grateful that I was honored with this experience. It opened my eyes to the opportunities that I have missed.

Not only have my eyes been opened, but I have gained two new friends in the process. Cadet Miller and I built a lasting relationship with the Peruvian cadets that will last for years to come. Even though we don’t speak the same language,

we stay in contact through e-mail by using “Google translate.” Although the WV ARNG did not have the funds to complete the exchange by sending United States Cadets to Peru this year, my hopes are high that I will have the privilege to travel to Peru next year to see my friends again.

*Sean Meade is a student in the ROTC Program.*



**L - R: Sean Meade, Peruvian cadets, Luis Minin and Gino Paz, and Michael Miller**

# Students, Faculty, and Guests



**Professor of Sociology/Philosophy, Paul Mocombe (1st generation Haitian)**



**Elementary Japanese language class**



**Suzanne Jenkins and Don McClain in Barranquilla, Colombia**



**Ethiopian Student Association officers discuss their 2009-2010 strategies. L -R: Tigist Geberhwot, Mulukan (Luke) Aseffa, and Enkenyelesh Metaferia**

# Students, Faculty, and Guests



**Shilpa Ramesh (Kuchupudi Dancer) & Media Studies student Christine Agbanzo at the India Center's Heritage Fair**



**Students explore Quebec City's old town splendors**



**Dr. Sonya Armstrong, Math (2nd left) with Banská Bystrica's Julia Raticova (International Relations), Stefan Sevcik (Businessman), & Miriama Sevcik (Matej Bel University Student)**



**Dana Lorenz (second from left), practicing physician, and representative of Charles University, Prague, meets with WVSU faculty and support staff to discuss plans for the 2010 International Geriolympics to be held in Prague**

# Charleston and Banská Bystrica Sister City Relationship

Banská Bystrica means “mining mountain stream” in Slovakian. It is a fitting title for a sister city relationship in West Virginia where mining and mountain streams join hands with the local culture. The former Executive Director of the West Virginia Humanities Council, Chuck Daugherty, and former educator, Linda Elliot, have been working with citizens on both sides of the Atlantic in an effort to make the sister cities partnership a reality.

The Sister City Relationship took an important step in October 2009 when a delegation from Banská Bystrica traveled to Charleston to officially consummate the partnership. Delegation members included Jaroslav Sihelsky, City Manager, Julia Raticova, Director of the city’s International Relations Office, Jan Chorvat, Vice Chancellor for International Cooperation at Matej Bel University, Stefan Sevcik, a Banská business leader, and Miriama Sevcik, a student at Matej Bel University.

The delegation was treated to the best the region has to offer including attending the Charleston Symphony, Mountain Stage radio taping, the Rotary Club, campus visits to University of Charleston and WV State University, a photo opportunity with Governor Manchin, and a meeting with Mayor Danny Jones to unveil the Sister City Plaque. “Our visit to Charleston

is the easy part. Now it is up to the people to make this a fruitful partnership,” stated Jaroslav Sihelsky during his address to the Charleston Rotary Club.

The weeklong visit by the Slovak delegation was both an enjoyable, yet an exhausting experience for Linda Elliot who had been anticipating this moment for over 2 years. “I have been so busy preparing for their arrival that I haven’t seen my grandchildren for two weeks,” stated Linda during an evening reception hosted by Mayor Jones at the University of Charleston Rotunda Gallery. A delegation of about twenty city officials and community members from Charleston will reciprocate the visit to Banská Bystrica next May.

Banská Bystrica is a city of around 100,000 people in the middle of Slovakia, a country in Central Europe. Slovakia’s

mountainous terrain and its predominately rural nature make it similar in many ways to West Virginia. Banská Bystrica is a commercial and cultural center in central Slovakia. Nestled in the foothills of the Tatra Mountains, Banská Bystrica has long been known as an especially pleasant place to live. The town square with its buildings dating back many centuries is the focus of community life and is a thriving business center. For more information visit the Banská Bystrica website at [www.bbb.sk/en/](http://www.bbb.sk/en/).

For more background on the sister city relationship, see the article in the Fall 2008 edition of LeJournal, “Charleston Exploring Sister City Relationship with Banská Bystrica.”

[http://www.wvstateu.edu/shared/content/international\\_studies/Le\\_Journal\\_Fall\\_2008.pdf](http://www.wvstateu.edu/shared/content/international_studies/Le_Journal_Fall_2008.pdf)



**WVSU President H. Carter, Jr. (Center) with Business leader Stefan Sevcik & Dr. Jan Chorvat, Vice Rector of International Cooperation & Public Relations - Matej Bel University**

# Universidad Chapingo Researcher Spends Sabbatical in College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics

by Edna Frimpong

“I thought they were pulling my leg.” This was Teodoro Espinosa’s reaction to his job offer here at WVSU. Born and raised in Xochimilco, Mexico, Dr. Espinosa always had a curiosity for working overseas. At Chapingo University, near Mexico City, Dr. Espinosa earned his bachelor’s degree in Agro-Industry Engineering. From there, he earned his Ph.D. at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and later conducted his field study mixing complex fluids at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal.

His hard work and curiosity in working overseas prompted a colleague who was, at the moment, visiting WVSU and Chapingo alum, Ulises Toledo, to recommend him for a job at WVSU. At the time, WVSU was having problems with the mixing of complex fluids. Espinosa couldn’t believe it; he thought they were playing a practical joke on him.

In April of 2004, he realized it wasn’t a joke when he was invited to attend a seminar with WVSU Biology Professor, Mark Chatfield, who was interested in his field of study. In order for him to be able to come to the US and work successfully, the two institutions created a collaborative agreement that enabled him and two students to come to WVSU to conduct research.

After this experience, he went back to Mexico, but his American experience was yet to be over.

Drs. Chatfield and David Stafford attended the National Agro-Industrial Congress conference in Mexico and presented a report on some of the work WVSU was doing. Dr. Espinosa was also invited to present some of the work he was doing. The WVSU professors were very interested in his presentation.

At that conference, he talked to his WVSU counterparts about a possible sabbatical for the 2005-06 school year. This came to fruition in the summer of 2005 when he came to “State,” along with four graduate students, to work in the Bioplex at the Institute campus. “It was a unique experience,” he commented.

Two years ago, he requested another sabbatical for the 2008-09 academic year. He arrived in October 2008 and began assisting Dr. Toledo in setting up collaboration between Chapingo and WVSU to improve scientific studies on both sides of the border. He also informed *Le Journal* that they are hoping to extend the collaboration to other universities including the Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo, Instituto Politécnico Nacional, and the University of Georgia. The idea of this collaboration is to offer different countries an alternative to waste management. Through this program, they hope to create more and better connections with universities all over the world.

After his sabbatical ends in late 2009, Dr. Espinosa plans to go back home to Mexico. However, he wishes to maintain the strong connection he has made at WVSU. When asked what his future hopes are for the collaborations, he answered, “I would like to see a



Teodoro Espinosa

shared Ph.D program between schools so that students can choose to do their research in either of the schools and thus benefit from shared resources.”

I asked Dr. Espinosa why he felt this collaboration between schools was a good idea. He mentioned that they are contribute to the development of human resources and to him, that is the most important. He added that they are not only changing the world’s waste management, but rather are providing students with a solid background that can be applied throughout their careers.

*Edna Frimpong is OIA Intern*

# Porque No Mas Japones?

by Edna Frimpong

I had taken Spanish for three years in high school and realized I could have an easier time in the class should I decide to take it again in college. But my passion was pulling me somewhere else. My love for the Japanese culture and art motivated me to take the Japanese class offered here at "State." After my second semester of Japanese, I was ecstatic to take the next level only to realize that the upper level of Japanese was not offered here. Like most of the students in my class at the time, I was very disappointed to say the least.

In preparation for this article, I decided to revisit Professor Yumiko Imori's Japanese 102 class. After class, I had the chance to interview students to monitor their attitudes towards the class.

Lisa Crawford, had this to say: "As a business major, I have noticed that the Japanese are very successful in business, and by learning the culture, I am hoping to gain some insight on how to maintain a business successfully and further my business career."

Wendy Shamblin, James Taylor, and Abby Spedman are all English majors who decided to take Japanese because of their love for the language. According to them, the language is challenging, and it takes an extreme level of passion to want to take it.

Danielle Moore, Josh Given, and Grace Alsop are Art and Communication majors whose passion for art has taken them on a unique journey. They mentioned during the interview that Japanese artistic style is so unique and

intriguing that it is recognized everywhere in the world. Josh commented, "It is a family tradition for me; my sister went to Japan to further her international studies, and sometimes my whole family sits and watches anime together. To me, Japanese culture and language has been part of my life, and I'm hoping to keep that tradition alive."

Robert Walsh, a History major, was stationed in Japan but did not learn the language. After he got to WVSU, he decided to take the class so he would be able to communicate with his Japanese friends. Finally, Dorlissa Eason, an Administrative Management major, is an avid traveler who has hopes of visiting Japan someday soon. To her, that is enough motivation to want to take several years of Japanese language.

As anime (Japanese animation) becomes more popular by the minute, so does Japanese culture and language. By talking to others over the course of time here on campus, I came to the understanding that most students take the Japanese language and culture course so they can better understand the films they watch. The general consensus was that watching anime in their original Japanese is preferred to the English dubs. Since most students take the class for this purpose, they tend to pay closer attention than they would for a required foreign language class.

According to an article published in *Le Journal* Vol.4 Num.1, Japanese 399 used to be offered here at "State". Instead of language, it focused mostly

on the cultural aspects of Japan. According to Department chair of Modern Foreign Languages, Mary Frye, there was a budget cut in the department at the time, and the Japanese course offerings suffered a loss. She indicated that there weren't enough students signing up for the course which resulted in it being cut. I asked Madam Frye if I could get enough students to sign a petition to commit to taking the class, would the department consider re-instating the class. She mentioned that if I were to do this, she would present the petition to the current college dean. I also asked Professor Imori whether she would be willing to teach an upper level class. She replied that she would more than love to.

Currently, Japanese 101 and 102 are offered alternately per semester. It is my wish that Japanese 201 and 202 would be provided so that students with the passion for Japanese language could have the opportunity to advance their skills. This article is a report as well as a preliminary petition. My goal is that this article will persuade more students to want to register for the class. Japanese language is not required for graduation. It is challenging and might not be for everyone. But for those students who enjoy the sense of accomplishing something important in their lives, it is definitely a great choice. Give it a chance, and I promise you will find it hard to regret the decision. I can be reached at [efrimpon@wvstateu.edu](mailto:efrimpon@wvstateu.edu). Dommo Aregato!

*Edna Frimpong is an OIA Intern.*

# The Voice of the Students

## Have the war efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq succeeded in fulfilling their missions?

Absolutely not. All we have succeeded in doing is creating more violence and turmoil in a land that will not accept peace on the terms of a Western Christian power.

**Jeffrie Carroll, History**

Nope.

**James Recknagel, Communication**

What was the mission again? My opinion is that we will be known as the real problem for many years to come.

**Demetri Paparoupas, Regents**

Formerly, we were tolerating opium growth and production in Afghanistan, and now we are not. So we may yet succeed in renewing al Qaeda funding--a big improvement.

**Jane Scheider, Education, Social Studies**

For me to say whether the war has succeeded, I would have to have a clear idea as to what we have been trying to accomplish in the Middle East other than control the oil. What I can say is that both operations: Iraqi freedom and the occupation of Afghanistan, show a massive failure in American foreign policy in general, and both "wars" have only led to a more global distrust of the U.S.

**Steven Wandling, History**

No, the war efforts have not completely fulfilled its intended mission. Though they have come a long way, there are some loose ends that need to be tied.

**Jeanie Wilkenson, Adult Education**

To be completely honest, I for one do not know the mission of the war efforts in either Afghanistan or the Middle East, and therefore I can't really tell if the mission is being accomplished or not. There are rumors and theories about what the mission was supposed to be, but I think the American public are still unsure of what exactly we are fighting for.

**Edna Frimpong, English Literature**

To be honest, I am not sure what the intended mission was. I was under the impression that we were fighting back against Osama Bin Laden, but here we are eight years later and still justice has not been served for September 11, 2001. I believe that we have helped Iraq in a lot of ways, but what was our purpose in invading Iraq to begin with?

**Nicole Casto, Adult Education**

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## International Potpourri

### College of Professional Studies Welcomes New Professor

The Criminal Justice Department welcomed Dr. Shih-ya (Connie) Kuo, a native of Taiwan, during the fall semester. Dr. Kuo earned her Ph.D. from Sam Houston State University located in Huntsville, Texas. She is married with two children. Her husband currently teaches at the Central Police University in Taiwan.

### Masters in Media Studies Program

In Fall 2009, Mexico native Miriam Kajomovitz joined other international students from Africa, the Czech Republic, and Monte Negro in the Masters Program in Media Studies. Kajomovitz is a recent graduate of Endicott College located in Beverly, MA.

(continued on page 17)

## Department of Modern Foreign Languages Helps to Promote Defense of Human Rights in the State through Translation

“The job of a Professor clearly supposes more than teaching. Another expectation is community work,” says Dr. Miguel Zapata behind his huge cup of hot, sugar-free coffee. The West Virginia Human Rights Commission needed several packages of documents to be translated from English to Spanish. “We have received requests from Spanish speakers in the area to provide them with translations of those documents,” said Ms. Tausha Rucker, an Investigator for the Human Right Commission in Charleston. Ms. Rucker contacted Professor Mary Frye, Department Chair, to seek voluntary translation of the documents, which included a notice listing several types of discrimination, Employment Background Forms, Housing

Complaint Information Forms, Public Accommodation Complaint Forms, general information about procedures to defend rights, and other documents. “The Spanish-speaking population is slowly growing, but at the Commission, right now, we do not have the resources to pay for the professional translations of such serious documents,” continued Ms. Rucker, “so, I thought of the University as the natural resource to ask for help.” And she was not disappointed.

Dr. Zapata jumped to action. Knowing that the amount and accuracy of the translations would add more work to his heavy load, he requested help from his students and made provisions for the educational experience. Ms. Elisabet Mayora, a senior student

in the Spanish-Education BS program, accepted the challenge, and completed the translation of some of the documents and a draft of others. The materials were then carefully edited and proofread by Dr. Zapata. “But Elisabet has since graduated, has a full-time teaching position, and is ready to pursue studies leading to an MA, besides being a full-time mother,” added Dr. Zapata, “and the work is unfinished.” So he continued the work alone.

“I did it with pleasure” he adds, “because I feel the job of the Human Rights Commission is essential to the community, and especially since the translation may have an impact on real people’s lives: those people in need could be my ‘compadres.’”



## *Study Abroad in Canada*

An Introduction to the Political and Cultural Identity of Canada and Quebec:

A One-Week Freshman International Experience  
 Summer 2010  
 May 15 – 23

**Costs: \$700 per student.** This will include registration fees for one-credit hour, transportation by bus to and from Canada (via Niagara Falls), accommodations, lectures, site visits, and some meals.

Sponsored by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
 In collaboration with:

West Virginia State University, Marshall University, and West Virginia University

Contact: James Natsis, Director, Office of International Affairs, 302 Hill Hall; (304) 766-4249; natsisja@wvstateu.edu

# International Potpourri

## International Geri-Olympics

The International Geri-Olympics Planning Committee, chaired by Professor of Health and Human Performance, Ted Muilenburg, met in April to review the results of the 2008 WV Geri-Olympics, and to discuss the forthcoming International Geri-Olympics scheduled to take place Fall 2010 in Prague, Czech Republic. Czech physician and liaison to the project, Dana Lorenz, traveled to Charleston to observe the WV Geri-Olympics for the second time, and to meet with the planning committee. Dr. Lorenz is representing Dean Vlasloc Bunc and the Department of Sports and Psychology at Charles University in Prague. The committee hopes to expand the International Geri-Olympics by adding participants from other neighboring European countries.

## New International Degree Program

West Virginia State University received approval from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission to submit a full proposal for a new Bachelor of Science in International Studies. Students would choose from four concentration areas: Political Science, Foreign Language, Business, and Communication/Media Studies. The University seeks to offer the program in the Fall 2010. For more information, please contact the Office of International Affairs @ 302 Hill Hall. Phone: 766-4249.

## Promo Video for International Students

A video to promote WVSU to potential international students is now available on the International Studies webpage. The video was created thanks to a mini-grant provided by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. To view this video go to: [http://www.wvstateu.edu/international\\_studies/default.aspx](http://www.wvstateu.edu/international_studies/default.aspx)

## Masters in Biotechnology Program

In the Fall 2009, two new international students enrolled in the Masters in Biotechnology Program. Rahul Nagmal is from India, and Niraj Nepal is from Nepal. Of the 12 full-time students enrolled in the program, five are international students.

## Visiting Scholars from the Instituto Politecnico Nacional, Mexico

Visiting professors from the Instituto Politecnico Nacional (IPN), Mexico, Drs. Fabian Robles Martinez and Enrique Duran Paramo, spent several days on campus visiting facilities and sharing presentations with WVSU researchers. WVSU and IPN are exploring ways to strengthen their relationship, especially in the area of research. The two professors were joined by IPN student Victor Rivera-Salvador in the MS of Bioprocess Program.

## Summer Trip to Prague

Professor of Communication, Robin Broughton, led a group of 27 students and community members to Prague in May 2009. Broughton informed *Le Journal* that the number of community members was high this year (14) "because we had an entire family of sisters and brothers and in-laws join us." For students interested in traveling to Prague in 2010, check with Daniel Boyd (Communication) or Robin Broughton.

# The Language Corner

Test your knowledge of language by completing the following quiz (Answers are below).

1. When you say “Itadakimasu!” in Japanese, what do you mean in English? Time to eat, Time to sleep, Time to leave, Time to Dance
2. A Japanese person says: “I’m looking forward to the mirai” what does “mirai” mean in English? Future, sky, Light, Day
3. I came, I saw, I conquered. This translates into what in Latin? (Veni, vidi, vici), (vici, veni, vidi), (vici, vidi, veni), (veni, vici, vidi)
4. With what country do you associate the motto: “E Pluribus Unum”? France, Italy, United States, Greece
5. In the phrase: “Fortuna favet fatuis”, who does Fortune favor? The Brave, The Strong, The Foolish, The Weak
6. What does Descartes’ “cogito ergo sum” mean? Think about the sum, Cognition is the sum of all knowledge, I think therefore I am, I am that I am
7. If you are a fan of Disney films, you must be familiar with the Swahili word for lion. What is that word? Simba, Mufasa, Nala, Sarabi
8. Food is an important part of Korean culture. What is the dish that is served at every meal? Bibimbap, Mulgogi, Kimchi, Samgyopsul
9. The often-heard “Capeesh” is a distortion of “Capisci”, meaning? You understand? You need to help? You hungry? Ready to go?
10. Papa is the pope. Papa’ is dad. What is Pappa, in Italian? Baby food, A container, A Priestess, A brand of car
11. In case you were wondering, the name “Beijing” means what? Rice pot, Northern Capital, Peaceful city
12. The term “sau reing” literally translates into English as “private sorrow” is used for what fruit in Vietnamese? Tangerine, Jackfruit, Durian, Longan
13. What does “hysteria” mean in Greek?
14. Which is not an official language of Switzerland? Romansch, German, French, English.
15. From what language does the word “taboo” come? Zulu, Chinese, Hindu, Tongan
16. Which of these Native American languages has the fewest speakers? Mohawk, Navajo, Delaware, Cree
17. “Tuffly” are shoes in what language? Russian, Czech, French, German

1 (1) Time to Eat (2) Future (3) Veni, Vidi, Vici (4) United States (5) The Foolish (6) I think therefore I am (7) Simba (8) Kimchi (9) You Understand? (10) Baby Food (11) Northern Capital (12) Durian (13) The Womb (14) English (15) Tongan (16) Delaware (17) Russian

## Africa Network Conference to Feature HBCU Panel

The Africa Network, a nonprofit consortium of liberal arts colleges committed to literacy about and concern for Africa in American higher education, will hold its annual Conference at Denison University in Granville, Ohio on April 16-18, 2010. One of the features of this year's conference will be a representative panel from Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) where the need for African expertise and curriculum is especially acute. Although it welcomes the counsel and partnership of African studies scholars and departments in the large research institutions, the Africa Network focus is on the nation's relatively small but influential liberal arts colleges.

The Spring 2009 conference held at the Hickory Ridge Marriott Conference Center in Niles, Illinois drew over 200 faculty, administrators, and consultants from 50 colleges and universities,

Study Abroad programs, African consulting businesses and Bureaus. One HBCU was represented. Thus the need for outreach to HBCU's whose emerging college students are viewed as crucial participants in stimulating economic growth, improving public health, environmental issues, security and other issues on the continent. The Network has extended invitations to HBCUs in the past but the upcoming conference hopes to accomplish its goal of HBCU involvement through a participatory panel from institutions as Cheyney University, Fisk University, Claflin College, Wilberforce University and others. WVSU professor Dr. Tee Ford-Ahmed will chair the panel.

The Africa Network sponsors two key programs: (1.) The Annual Conference mentioned above, which focuses on creative teaching and the study of Africa in the liberal arts context and (2.)

an inter-institutional consultancy program that enables member institutions to visit one another's campuses and to connect the expertise in one institution with the developmental needs and aspirations of another.

For example, an Africanist at a member institution who is seeking a more substantial role for Africa in the general education program could apply to bring to their campus an Africanist from a member institution with an exemplary general education program. This program, building on the creative energy and good will found at the annual meetings, fosters new levels of understanding, common purpose and cooperation.

For more information on the Africa Network or April conference go to [www.africanetwork.org](http://www.africanetwork.org) or contact Tee Ford-Ahmed @ 304-766-3303

## International Studies Minor "A Minor with Major Benefits"

The *Introduction to International Studies* course (GED 211) will be offered in the Spring 2010 semester. The General Education course is team-taught by Tee Ford-Ahmed and James Natsis.

Through the use of readings, lectures, films, and group activities, the course moves along a journey that encompasses the regions and continents of the world in an effort to establish a base from which other content courses in international studies may be approached with more sophisticated awareness for working across national and cultural boundaries.

To obtain more information regarding the International Studies minor, visit the Office of International Affairs, 302 Hill Hall. Telephone: (304) 766-4249. Email: [natsisja@wvstateu.edu](mailto:natsisja@wvstateu.edu).

## West Virginia State University

Office of International Affairs

302 Hill Hall

P.O. Box 1000

Institute, WV 25112-1000

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**Office of International Affairs Staff:**

Editors: James J. Natsis and Tee Ford-Ahmed

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