Welcome back! I hope you had a wonderful break with enough time to recharge your batteries for the semester that starts.

Last year, the International Student Union organized a variety of activities for the WSU and Wichita communities to learn about cultures and countries around the world.

The pictures above show our engagement with the campus and the Kansas Department of Social Rehabilitation Services.

Every event is an opportunity to experience other cultures without paying a plane ticket or arranging expensive tours far away.

In this issue, ISU wanted to capture special moments. Those that are part our memory and that create an understanding of who we are in the world and why we do what we do.

Have you ever thought that you can experience a completely different culture than yours and that of the U.S if you talk to your neighbor? For the January issue, different people told us about their experience in other cultures. A mission trip that changes a life, a new cultural experience and how culture shock affects people are some of the articles that you can read in this issue that was thought for you.

Take the time to read with your heart and learn the value of diversity in the words of your peers.

Cecilia B. Martinez Gomez, Paraguay.
Communications (IMC)
cbmartinezgomez@wichita.edu
**Who is who in ISU** by Cecilia B. Martinez Gomez

**Name:** Roxanne Adeline Zuñiga Uy (Adi)  
**Country:** Republic of the Philippines  
**Languages:** Tagalog and English  
**Major:** Chemistry  

**Hobbies:** Studying (hahaha, yeah right), watching Korean dramas, listening to/reading the Harry Potter series over and over again and sleeping.

**Why did you join ISU:** I don’t remember exactly why, but I am really glad I joined! I initially wanted to be the Vice President of Events, but I am glad I was put on the Vice President of Publicity instead. My big mouth and loud voice were perfect for the job. I have always been interested in different cultures, and being part of ISU made me aware of all the cultural events taking place on campus. Being with students from different countries and trying to organize events can be chaotic sometimes but working with the ISU team has been really fun and interesting.

**About the Philippines:** Being a colony of Spain for 333 years and the US for about 50 years, the Philippines is a mixture of Spanish (religion and holiday celebrations), American (music and clothing) and native Filipino culture (personalities and attitudes). My beloved country is an archipelago of 7,107 islands, surrounded by water at all corners, so beaches are everywhere. It is also a tropical country so getting a tan at the beach can be done all year long. The Filipino people are very hospitable, religious, hard-working, and almost everyone can speak and understand English.

**Final thought:** If you want to hear me sing, come join us at the next ISU meeting!

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**Who is who in ISU**

**As an international student, how did you deal with...**

**CULTURE SHOCK?**

“I didn’t really have any culture shock because everyone was nice and open-minded. When I came, I knew some things would be different so I kept an open mind and adapted to my new environment.” **Sharazad Maricar,** Malaysia, Human Resource Management, undergrad.

“When I came to WSU, I got adapted very quickly to the culture in the U.S. because I had a similar experience when I was 15. I guess my personality type makes it easy for me to understand and deal with changes. However, sometimes I still miss home after almost 4 years. I like Wichita, but I’ll always miss home.” **Maria Caballero,** Paraguay, Psychology, undergrad.

“At the beginning, I didn’t miss my family. When they called me, I didn’t want to answer. That went on for almost three months. I couldn’t feel anything. Now, I miss them a little but I ask them not to call often because I will start missing more and I don’t want that.” **Maram Jaradad,** Jordan, Education Leadership, Ph D.

“When I first came, I didn’t feel culture shock because there are a lot of students from my culture at WSU. Their friendship, a lot of study hours and the mosque helped me stay active so I didn’t think about my family and friends back home. I miss them a lot. However, I have to recognize that I was shocked by two things: the way people dress and the interaction between opposite sexes. In the same way, I was surprised is the instructor-students interaction. I don’t think there is a specific way to deal with culture shock.” **Mohammad Mustafa,** Jordan, Education Leadership, Ph D.

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**Philippino Flag**

**Makati City, Philippines at night**

**Chocolate Hills in Bohol, Philippines**

**Boracay, Philippines**

Adi Uy is the Vice-president of Publicity at the International Student Union.

If you want to contact her, feel free to send her an e-mail to rzuy@wichita.edu
Leave all influences behind by Abigail Rich

I looked around past the poor living conditions to see a beautiful setting. The ocean was a chocolate mixture behind the sea wall. I could hear toucans in the distance. The rainforest was the backdrop of this land. The weather was warm and the sun was shining.

For the first time of leaving all materialistic behavior behind, I found pure beauty that was comforting. I now know why Americans have to leave the U.S. to become truly appreciative. You have to leave all influences behind to appreciate a culture different than your own.

Abigail Rich, USA
Guitar (Performing Arts)
aarich@wichita.edu

Effects of culture shock by Dr. Gregg Buell

Having been on the WSU Campus for over 30 years, I am pleased for the opportunity to make observations regarding my work with international students.

My colleagues and I at the Counseling and Testing Center are aware that symptoms of culture shock are not too different than frequent stress reactions we observe.

These symptoms include irritability, withdrawal, homesickness, loss of appetite, excessive sleep, headaches, stomach pains, crying and fatigue.

A clear pattern exists where we have come to believe moving from one culture to another fits a rather predictable sequence consisting of four phases.

The first phase, “transition in” is usually rather positive. It’s like a “honeymoon” period where all are eager to meet you and assist you with the welcome part of the process.

It’s often followed by “shock.” Shock simply means we discover all isn’t perfect, there are some misunderstandings, or an occasional unfortunate incident or bad luck and the next thing we know there’s homesickness.

Step three is learning to “cope” better with the symptoms revealed during the shock phase. This is where practicing various adjustment strategies pays off.

Please see CULTURE SHOCK on PAGE 4

Experience in other cultures (In (Ki) Swahili Language) by Esther Majani

I was unsure of what the decal represented until we began driving through the streets of Georgetown, the capital city.

I wasn’t prepared to see the living conditions of the natives. After seeing what appeared to be shacks instead a place I would call home, I asked questions to our host about the economic situation.

She explained that the Guyanese government was unconcerned about the living conditions and the education system in Guyana.

I realized what she was talking about when we woke the next day and began our journey.

We walked through neighborhoods that consisted of run down homes and many homeless people. But as we kept walking, I realized that everyone greeted us with a smile.

I wondered why these people were so happy when even I felt unsettled by the living conditions.

Abigail Rich

You have to leave all influences behind to enter one that is completely foreign.
My unforgettable experience by Muzhafar Adnan

This was definitely not my first Thanksgiving in the United States, but it was most definitely the best so far.

It was that time of the year again and I went to Houston to spend time with my best friend. It had been more than one year since I last saw her, and would be a great time to catch up.

She told me that her friend invited us to spend Thanksgiving with her family, and I was really excited about it—it would be my first time celebrating Thanksgiving with an American family.

My friend's friend has a beautiful house facing a lake in Magnolia, Texas; I thought things could not get any better.

But they got better. With 45 family members all together, they welcomed me with open arms.

My favorite part of Thanksgiving was the food.

There were 4 turkeys, 15 different types of pies, fruit dips, stuffed potatoes, and lots more!

The whole family was involved in preparing the food, which reminded me of ‘gotong-royong’, the Malaysian concept of working together as a unified community.

Everyone was incredibly friendly and kind enough to make me feel at home. They also included me in family traditions such as sitting around a small bonfire next to the lake after Thanksgiving dinner, where they exchange stories and experiences.

I hope I get to spend more Thanksgiving celebrations like the one in Texas. This kind of event help me learn about American culture and family life in this country.

Muzhafar Adnan, Malaysia
Management Information Systems
optimuz_nonimuz@hotmail.com

Don’t forget...

1. REMEMBER!

You must enroll in a full course of study each semester. A full course of study is 12 credit hours for undergraduate students and 9 credit hours for graduate students. Six hours in the summer is generally considered to be full-time for both levels. Summer courses do not affect your status unless it is your final semester.

If you feel you need an exception to the full course of study requirement, you must visit with an immigration advisor in the Garvey International Center before dropping below a full course of study. Exceptions are not automatic. They must be authorized by an immigration advisor before you enroll for a reduced course load or before you drop a class.

2. CROSS-CULTURE PARTNERS PROGRAM

Do you want to be part of a program that helps international students to adjust to WSU overcoming language and culture barriers? This program brings international and American students together promoting friendship and cooperation.

Sounds like fun? Be part of it. For more information on this program contact ISU atisu@wichita.edu

3. FEDERAL INCOME TAX FILING

Again this year, the Office of International Education has purchased CINTAX, the Internet-based U.S. income tax filing system for international students.

If you had income from employment in 2008, you can go to the Garvey International Center and purchase a user ID for $2.00 (exact change or check only). It allows you to compute your income tax on the Internet (federal only, not Kansas state tax, which must be filed separately). However, you cannot file on the Internet. You must print out your calculated income tax forms and mail them to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office in Austin, Texas.

Don’t miss this opportunity to get the tax refund most international students who were employed in 2008 are entitled to receive. Keep in mind that the Office of International Education cannot answer tax related questions. Tax questions should be directed to the IRS.

REMEMBER: You must bring exactly $2.00 to purchase this user ID. The OIE cannot make change for you.

Want to submit an article, an event or comment on the articles? , send us an email:
isu@wichita.edu or cbmartinezgomez@wichita.edu

Visit us at
http://webs.wichita.edu/isu