On Monday, August 16, 2010, the newest members of Bucknell’s international family gathered for the first time. Despite a few obstacles—jetlag, long airplane rides, delayed shuttles, late night check-ins, and a few lost suitcases—the room was filled with excitement as International Student Services director Paula Myers and graduate assistant Nadir Sharif kicked off this year’s International Orientation.

International Orientation, also known as IO, is a four-day pre-orientation program designed to help students from other countries during their transition to Bucknell and to the United States. Activities include a fun-filled afternoon with the Building on Foundations program, a trip to Knoebels amusement park, a cruise on the beautiful Susquehanna River, and the newest addition, a US culture night featuring American sports, television shows, music, and snacks.

With the help of International Orientation Leaders and Assistants (IOLs and IOAs), these students become acquainted with the Bucknell campus and with Lewisburg. For many, it is not just a time to adjust to the time difference, but a time to adjust to life in the United States as they settle into their new “home away from home”. The best part about International Orientation: it doesn’t stop there! International Student Services and the IO staff organize more events throughout the year to bring everyone together once again.

At Bucknell, the international community has grown significantly over the past few years. This year, the IO staff welcomed its biggest international group yet: 50 first-years, 4 transfers, 3 exchange students, and 11 language teaching assistants. Some countries represented include Mozambique, China, Russia, the Philippines, Ecuador, Botswana, France, Ethiopia, Australia, and so many more.

Nineteen of this year’s students are also Fremont scholars. As recipients of this scholarship, established by gifts contributed by Michael M. Fremont, scholars meet regularly during the fall semester to participate in a study of American culture. In the spring, the group organizes an event for the entire Bucknell community, like the Many Nations, One Bucknell culture showcase and the Bison World Soccer Cup.

This year is my second year as a member of the IO staff. Over these past few weeks, I have gotten to know people from all over the globe, each with their own stories and their own unique identities. I have heard about their lives at home, their first moments of culture shock, and their impressions of life in America. Every year, I find that I am learning so much about other cultures, as well as about myself and my own culture. I can honestly say that being able to participate twice in this exciting program has been one of the best experiences of my college career and I wouldn’t trade it for anything. So to all those new international students out there, welcome to the family and enjoy your time at Bucknell!
“Why did you join the T.E.A.M. Program?” This question, circled around the tables of the Williamsport Hiawatha Riverboat during fall training. The responses were nearly all the same. Most mentors answered that due to the difficulties they faced as freshmen, they wished they had been fortunate enough to have a mentor themselves. Those who did have mentors during their freshman year knew what a difference they made in their first year experience at Bucknell and wanted to pay it forward by joining the T.E.A.M. Program.

So what is T.E.A.M.? The name itself speaks to the core principle of this program; Together Everyone Achieves More, and together the mentors and directors of this program work with the protégés (the first year mentees) to be successful within Bucknell and the Lewisburg Community. By way of their upper-class mentors, protégés are provided with first-hand resources and personal guidance as they face issues such as being homesick, trying to fit in, adjusting to college course loads, and adapting to living with a roommate. Social events and team building trips are also benefits enjoyed by T.E.A.M. protégés, not to mention the laundry baskets filled with personalized gifts they received the first week of classes.

The benefits of the T.E.A.M. program extend beyond the protégés. Through in-depth training, workshops, and one-on-one interactions with protégés, mentors are able to gain leadership experience, improve interpersonal skills, and form long lasting friendships. In fact, mentors also have their own “mentors”, the directors of T.E.A.M., Jessica Hess and Dr. Shal lary Duncan, who meet with each mentor individually to ensure that they also receive the guidance and resources needed to be successful at Bucknell.

For us, the mentors, T.E.A.M. is a way to give back to the Bucknell community and to offer what we wish we had as freshman. We are part of a group that is completely dedicated to each member’s success. We share in each other’s joys and are there for one another through sorrows. Within the first few weeks of classes, we have already witnessed the power of working together and can attest to the fact that together, everyone achieves more.

Mark Your Calendar

International Potluck diner Thursday November 04, 2010 at 6pm

International Education week from Monday November 15– Friday 19
Insight on the World Cup

Most U.S. soccer fans enjoy multiple sports as well as soccer (or at least forced to pretend they do). But in a country where US Senators have actually albeit misguidedly referred to soccer as “communism’s sport”, there seems to be some inherent prejudice to the game (and fans). I am unsure where these negative sentiments originated, though I’m sure it could be somewhat attributed to our relatively dismal skill comparison on an international level.

As an international relations major, the global aspects of the game are incredibly enticing. Sports in general are prime examples of diversity and learning of other cultures or ways of life. But soccer continually transcends every social, political, and geographical boundary it encounters. Though debatable, some claim that in reference to the Ivory Coast, soccer has the capability and prowess to end civil war. The fact that this sport is so closely tied with economies, nationalism, social trends, and exposes me to areas that otherwise I would have not known is what solidifies my love for it.

With South Africa hosting the Cup this past summer, it provided the world with another opportunity to reflect on a political history that for whom it is familiar, would rather forget. But again, this opportunity for those unfamiliar is valuable. It was immensely rewarding to be able to discuss apartheid history and its political repercussions thereafter with friends and families between games. I’m not lying, we truly did talk about it.

Perhaps conversations topics you’d be more inclined to believe would be the omnipresent vuvuzela. Described as a “constant buzz similar to that of a drone of bees”, the vuvuzela became a highly controversial icon for the World Cup. However, when the cultural relevance of the vuvuzela was explained, people were usually more accepting of this “slight annoyance”. This example may seem trite, but it further proves that education leads to tolerance.

Okay, okay I surely won’t pretend my entire month long obsession with World Cup was solely because of its educational and cultural value. There were teams I liked, teams I didn’t like, moments I’ll never forget, and some music that I’ll take with me for the rest of my life. More specifically, Cristiano Ronaldo’s performance just further cements my distaste for the lad, and I was extremely satisfied with his horrendous showing. Because Latin America is my area of concentration for my studies, all of our neighbors from the south held a special place in my heart. Thankfully, I was able to discover Shakira’s smash hit “Waka Waka” early last spring semester. I listened to it every morning before the World Cup officially commenced, and I accumulated far too many plays in one month on iTunes than I can share with you.

The US team’s fairly successful run blindly led me to believe that soccer might have finally caught on in the States. It seemed as though the entire country caught the World Cup fever. But, like all fevers, the loss to Ghana broke said fever. But we the dedicated fans remained glued until Spain’s final victory to conclude this year’s Cup.

Though it certainly was more fun enjoying the sport knowing the rest of my country was as well, I won’t contain my enthusiasm for another four years until the next World Cup. Plus, it’s always reassuring knowing there are a few other billion people from different countries who share my passion for this game.

From Cultural Center Staff....

Please keep the Vedder Cultural Lounge in mind for a unique place to hold your weekly office staff meetings, club meetings, or just a quiet place to study. In order to reserve the space, you may contact the RICS office to schedule your meeting or luncheon. You can also reserve it by logging in to mybucknell, click on Schedule an Event and fill out the form. If the space is available, we’d love to have you join the many organizations that have already made use of our wonderful lounge.