

**International Student
Services**
**Multicultural Student
Services**

125 Vedder Hall
Bucknell University
Lewisburg, PA 17837

ph: 1.570.577.1095

fax: 1.570.577.3163

Cultural Center Hours:

Monday-Friday: 8:30-4:30

Monday-Thursday: 7-10pm

Directors

Jennifer Figueroa (ISS)

Vincent Stephens (MSS)

Office Assistant

Myrna Perkins

Graduate Assistant

Lindsay (ISS/MSS)

Student Staff (ISS)

Gabrijela Andric, Kunga Dagpo, Philipp Leite,

Judy Anne Romero, Mahilet Oluma,

Student Staff (MSS)

Melissa Harrington, Jessica Jara, April Ma,

Raissa Sorgho, Mike Tonge

Editors

Kunga Dagpo, Malyse Uwase

This newsletter is published by the

Cultural Center. Its overall purpose is to promote and reflect the ethnic richness and diversity of Bucknell's student body.

To make contributions to
Bison Spectrum, contact

Malyse Uwase

mu006@bucknell.edu or

Kunga Dagpo

kcd007@bucknell.edu



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International Orientation

RUBY FAKO'15

After a crazy trip from Botswana to South Africa to Philadelphia *and then* JFK, which began in the afternoon of August 13th and ended late afternoon August 14th, the only thing I wanted to see was a friendly face who knew, unlike me, what was going on. And there they were: a rainbow of people who were clearly international students, like I was, and a few wearing light blue shirts, carrying a large orange poster with BUCKNELL painted across in blue. And so began the “rays” of orange and blue. Fast forward about four hours and 199 miles later and more light blue shirted people anxiously await our arrival, screaming “Ray Bucknell! Welcome!” and so forth. We are each greeted by one of them (at this point, names are not even sticking with me) and taken to the rooms we will call home – for this year at least.

The next day marked the start of extraordinary names, unique accents, and wild laughter and the following days staged the beginning of friendships and interesting conversation and *then* names began to stick, and the faces that went with them. In a couple of days I could recognize voices and individual style. Love blossomed and bonds bloomed, some, into flowers that will never lose their beautiful scents. At the end of it all, we were told to go and do it all over again at New Student Orientation, but, for me, it was impossible because International Student Orientation was beyond amazing. Some of it, the technical, form-filling, and other required sessions weren't great but overall it was good. It provided us with sound advice and I truly felt like I was being rightly guided in insuring a smooth sailing college career. The rest of it, the group activities, dance parties, Wal-Mart trips, boat ride (I could go on but I won't), all of that was phenomenal.

I couldn't have thought of a better way to ease people from all over the world into the phenomenon known as college, *in America*. Because what the International Orientation Assistants, Leaders and Coordinators did was open up to us and be honest. The experience felt real and almost everyone tried to get to know each and every single one of us. I was sad when it ended because it meant the real work would soon begin but I am really looking forward to the next four years that lie ahead.

These past weeks have not been easy. I don't think any amount of speeches and advice from faculty about how to manage time and be prepared to spend however many hours outside of class on your studies can truly make you ready for every single little thing you have to do each day. It's not impossible but it sure isn't a stroll in the park. Talking to upperclassmen, I tell them how stressed about school I am and all of them laugh and say, “You think you've had enough now? Just wait and see...” I don't even want to think about what they mean or what really lies ahead in terms of course requirements, quizzes, papers, assignments, projects, group work and exams, but I am looking forward to getting to know as many of my classmates as I can, as well as people who aren't in the Class of 2015, and making memories that will stay with me forever. I'm excited to be a Bucknellian and something tells me, I'm in for an insanely fun ride.

Machu Picchu, the towering Andes, and the incredible cuisine were not the highlights of my six weeks in Perú. Instead, the magnificent people of Huancayo, Perú overshadowed these marvelous things. Upon arrival, it was clear that I was not in Lewisburg or Michigan (where I grew up) anymore, and the change was exhilarating. Every day was filled with public health programs at orphanages, public hospitals, private hospitals, HIV shelters and local schools. Needless to say, every day was an unexpected adventure. Granted, there were challenges. For instance, off the bus upon my arrival or the language barrier when a mother asked if it would be okay for her to perform a makeshift tracheotomy. However, my time volunteering in Perú with the Foundation for the International Medical Relief of Children (FIMRC) was the most amazing six weeks of my life.



While I was anywhere that I've called home, Huancayo became home to me, and I grew a lot there. Possibly one of the most profound moments came one day at the HIV Shelter, is unique and is valuable when we were doing a lesson on how everyone in society. I somehow found myself next to one of the mothers and we began to chat as she crocheted a scarf. At first she seemed rather shy, questions about me, our organization, and such. Wanting to take the spotlight off of myself, I started asking her questions, questions about her crocheting, her time in Huancayo, her family and even politics. I loved hearing her talk about the recent election, the public consensus and her personal opinions about the two candidates. It was incredible to see the transformation, in just a half an hour her posture, voice, tone, everything changed from one that was self-conscious and skittish to one full of confidence, poise, insight and dignity. This great metamorphosis took place just because someone asked for her opinion sincerely. One of the great nuggets of wisdom that I took away from our conversation was that if you plan to work **with** marginalized populations, you need to **know** the marginalized people, and not just about them, but to know them on a **personal and relational level** (for Spanish speakers, necesitamos **conocer** a los marginados).

However, one of the greatest things I learned this summer was about myself. Last semester I had decided to switch my life path, from pursuing a career in medicine as a doctor, to working in public health. When I think back to my time in Perú, I clearly made the right decision. My mind races through the activities I've been doing during my weeks in Huancayo, and it all just made sense. For me, the hospital is not where I thrive. It's interacting with the kids, it's learning from the moms at the HIV shelter or the volunteer "moms" at orphanage discussing first aide or nutrition where I feel like I'm fulfilling my purpose. Honestly, the validation, peace and overall feeling of content is worth it all. All in all, I found my personal paradise in the arena of global health and making personal connections that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.



MEET THE NEW DIRECTORS OF THE CULTURAL CENTER



Jennifer Figueroa: Director ISS

Hi! My name is Jennifer and I am originally from rural western North Carolina, in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains. I attended Western Carolina University for my undergraduate degree, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and Sociology from the Honors College. Later, I attended the University of South Carolina for a Masters degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs, focusing on international and comparative education. Previous to Bucknell, I worked in El Centro Comunitario in Hendersonville NC,

where I held a variety of paid and volunteer positions assisting the immigrant Latino community. I have also taught Spanish, and have worked as an Advisor as well as Assistant Director for International Students at the University of South Carolina before moving to PA.

It is my pleasure to begin here at Bucknell recently! My office coordinates various programs for the benefit of international students as well as the broader campus community. Some examples include International Student Orientation, International Education Week (Nov 14-18), Fremont scholars, Projects for Peace, and the International Friendship Host Family Program. In addition, ISS collaborates with offices and academic departments to provide academic success programs and intercultural competence training for the campus. Aside from programming, I also advise international students and student organizations on academic, social, personal and immigration issues as they arise. Stop by my office sometime in Vedder 130, I would love to meet you.

Can you tell us one thing that people don't usually know about you?

I love cooking, especially authentic Mexican dishes.

If you could change three things in this world what would they be?

- 1) Prejudice and close-mindedness: Get people to open their world view and be more accepting of others.
- 2) Poverty: that tomorrow, every individual and government with the means to alleviate suffering would invest to do so.
- 3) Create and encourage a truly engaged citizenry: build up truly representative democracies...creating peaceful communication instead of war.

What do you enjoy most about working in a university and with students?

I love working with students that are excited, engaged and energetic! The wide-ranging interests and creativity in the university setting is fabulous.



Vincent Stephens: Director MSS

I was born in Jacksonville, Florida. I earned a B. S. in Mass Communication, with an Emphasis in Print Journalism, from Boston's Emerson College in 1997. I completed an M.A. in Popular Culture Studies at Bowling Green State University in 1999. In fall 1999 I began a doctoral program in American Studies at the University of Maryland College Park. In 2005 I completed my Ph.D. My dissertation received the Carl Bode Prize for

Best Dissertation in American Studies and received the University's first award for LGBT Studies, the Rodler-Wood Scholarship. In 2006 Syracuse University hired me as a Postdoctoral Faculty Fellow in the Humanities where I taught a series of interdisciplinary seminars and advised 20 students. During my summers I advised incoming Arts & Sciences students and worked for the Summer Start program, a summer program focused on incoming freshmen.

My primary job as MSS Director is to be an advocate for the needs of underrepresented students. This entails creating programs and initiatives that offer academic and social support for multicultural students. It also means communicating the importance of multicultural engagement for the wider campus community.

Can you tell us one thing that people don't usually know about you?

I am an avid automotive enthusiast. I actually wanted to be an automotive designer as a child and designed cars in my spare time until middle school. I've read automotive magazines since I was a child and still subscribe to *Automobile*, *Car and Driver*, and *Motor Trend*, and catch *MotorWeek* on PBS occasionally.

If you could change three things in this world what would they be?

Motivating people to be more aware of their role in challenging economic and social inequities

Inspiring people to view education as a lifelong goal not simply a means to getting a job and being a consumer

Helping people to see that being humane toward each other, animals, and the earth is the highest moral achievement within human existence

What do you enjoy most about working in a university and with students?

The University environment is one that attracts students who, at their best, are enthusiastic about learning and expanding their understanding of themselves and the world they inhabit. This openness fosters a genuinely dynamic culture of learning which propels all of us forward.

Need to relax and take a break from studying? MSS has a great program for you every other Wednesday. It's Wacky Wednesday, you definitely want to check it out at least once. Here is information on the first session.

Wednesday October 5th Wacky Wednesday "Beyond the Horizon":

Part 1: Multicultural students and residents of the Galloway House ("Fran's House") break bread together by cooking a community dinner celebrating Hispanic/Latin@ Heritage Month and National Coming Out Month (7:30-9:30 pm , Galloway House). Interested students should RSVP Adriana Zemenko by September 27.

Part 2: Take a study break with MSS and residents from Fran's house for delicious desserts, discussion and games (10 pm-12 am, Vedder Lounge)

Are you having trouble staying on top of deadlines? Do you want some advice other than drink coffee and more coffee? Then go to this session put together by the MSS.

Thursday October 6th: Student Success Series: "Time management" 6:30pm-7:30pm session facilitated by Professor Linden Lewis.



International Education Week: November 14th-November 18th

Be on the lookout for this fun week, that happens nationwide. There will be many different activities for everyone from Traditional Day, to International Trivia Night and so much more...

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