Any student belonging to a minority will probably tell you Bucknell is a tough place to be at. I am well aware I am white, which makes it much easier for me to feel comfortable among the majority of the student body. However, when only one other person on campus shares an experience similar to yours (by "similar," I mean there is only one other trans girl I know of on this campus), having a vastly unique experience can feel isolating. While the administration is working to bring our campus up to speed on inclusivity, life here on the ground can, truly, feel isolating.

People here might know trans people outside of Bucknell, have questions about the trans experience, what the hell are gender pronouns?... but having those questions and knowing those people does nothing for the isolation that comes naturally for those living out a topic of discussion that is not often brought up. If you do or do not know a trans person (Hi, I'm Jackie, my gender pronouns are she/her/hers), fear not: you can make Bucknell, the land of a thousand Greek organizations, a bit more welcoming to those who don’t fit into the (vast) cis majority. Introduce yourself with your gender pronouns. Those few words (he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, etc.) can convey a lot about your cognizance for- and your willingness to recognize- the struggles minorities (not limited to trans people) go through every day. To be a minority, logically, means to have less of a voice. As one of the few trans people in a campus community of nearly 4000, starting those conversations with such a small voice can be cumbersome. I ask you, dear reader, to be mindful of what you don't have to think about daily. (I realize I devoted much just now to trans issues on campus and did not specifically name many other issues. I am aware of issues that exist surrounding race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and I’m sure the list goes on. Since most of the student body is affected by these issues, I have kept my focus narrow for this article.)

A few words about the Vagina Monologues: a big shout-out goes to Nicole Srbin (who filled all four positions this year of director, producer, treasurer, and marketing director) for making my dream of getting my experience out to the Bucknell community a reality. Ever since I started (doing what I considered then as) cross-dressing last spring, I have felt the stares of confusion (which are too easy to perceive as intimidation) when people look at me and try to understand my appearance. Since the Monologues, young women who I don't know smile at me, sometimes telling me how much they appreciated my performance. On this campus where gender discussions don't get much air time, knowing I've influenced how people understand gender is one small step in the direction of gender equality.
Annual Black Solidarity Conference

By Brianna Cunningham ’16

This year, I attended the 21st Annual Black Solidarity Conference at Yale University. This year’s theme was The Miseducation: Changing History As We Know It. The Miseducation is defined as an analysis of how black histories have been misrepresented and Changing History As We Know is defined as the celebration of a variety of unique black successes. It is through this theme that together, seven hundred black students from over fifty different colleges and universities united to discuss issues that distinctly affect the Black community and learn from not only each other but also experts and pioneers, who led and attended the conference. While there are a number of sessions I could expand, there are two sessions I would give praise to. First off, I would like to give praise to the Ujima groups, where for an hour myself and other students discussed and reflected on not only topics and events during the conference but also our own experiences as black students at our universities. Immediately during the first session I was impressed with the open-mindedness that these individuals held to. Secondly, I attended a workshop titled “The Future is Now..Ori Inu, Afro – Futurism and the Road to Equity of Representation.” This workshop impacted me the most. In today’s world, many people spend time watching television. What we see and/or choose to watch on television has an impact on how we see ourselves and the people that surround us. This workshop, specifically, directed out attention to lack of positive black representation in film. A concept used to act as a solution to this problem was the concept of Afro-futurism. In our booklet, there is a quote that says “When I dare to be powerful—to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid” by Audre Lorde. Ultimately, one of the things that I take from this conference is the significance of being confident in myself, the significant of never overestimating or underestimating myself, and the significance of surrounding myself with people that reflect who I want to be and are going to lift me higher.
CCSA Spring Festival

Hongyuan Chen ’18

Spring Festival (春节) is a well-known festival in the lunar calendar. It is the most important and celebrated festival in many countries in the East Asian cultural sphere. This grand festival not only holds much of the traditional Chinese culture, but also unifies all the Chinese people. It is a time for family to reunion, friends to bless each other, individuals to commemorate the past year, and pray for the next year.

As Chinese people who could not reunite with our families, we decided to celebrate this splendid festival with our beloved Bucknell Community. On February 20th, 2016, with the support from more than two hundred students, faculty, staff, and locals, CCSA held the Spring Festival celebration for the year of the monkeys.

The event this year was a completely renovated celebration from those of the previous years. The performers included both Chinese and non-Chinese students, and it was the first time we had non-Chinese speakers performing in Chinese. In addition to the indispensable tradition performances, modern Chinese culture was also added into the performance list. The Guangchang dance performed by international TAs and Chinese class students was definitely the most entertaining performance. Performers all dressed up in Red, the blessing color, danced in hilarious and exciting moves according to the lively music. In addition to the renovated performances, the general style of the celebration is also renewed. This year, we offered more than 10 kinds of authentic Chinese food including Roast Duck and Dumplings. The dumplings are prepared by volunteers from the club members and it was actually the first time some of the non-Chinese volunteer made dumplings. Nevertheless, the event turned out to be a huge success and really made the Chinese people on campus feel like back at home.

As the president of the club, my staff and I are very pleased with our successful celebration. Although we had difficulties preparing the event, we managed to overcome all of them with the support from many people. Therefore, we would like to present of utmost appreciations to all the people who helped us preparing the event and coming to the event. We would also like to give special thanks to Mr. John Cummins for his advice and assistance.
Senior Student Profile

Name: Vanessa Isabel De Leon

Major(s) and minor(s): Sociology major with a minor in International Relations

Hometown: I was born in Torrance, California but then moved to Quetzaltenango, Guatemala so that I could be raised in the culture of my family. Now, I currently live in Houston, Texas.

Favorite/Most meaningful Bucknell Experience(s): Whoa. That is a difficult question, even more difficult than figuring out my hometown, because I think my Bucknell experience consists of different moments that make it meaningful. But for this semester, I think a memory that I will take down the road would be of participating in the Vagina Monologues. I love acting, but I thought that by participating in the monologues it would help me get out of my comfort zone. And indeed it did. When I finished, it made me filled with a sense of accomplishment. Some of my friends even came to watch me and told me that the only reason they came was because I was acting – and thanks to that they were able to go to a great performance that they have never heard about.

Plans after graduation: I am still in the process of applying for jobs, but I would love to work in the future with immigrant children and help them adapt to a new culture. I do not plan on helping them assimilate, for that would mean that they would lose their culture, instead I want them to learn a new culture while embracing their own.

Advice for non-seniors: Seek out opportunities, for there is a limited amount of time that people can spend in advertising. Through my years in Bucknell, I have participated in different events of which when I mention them to my friends, they are mostly surprised that such events did exist. Many times we wait for things to arrive to us and such mentality will not really get us anywhere. We are in a University that offers many opportunities, but in order to truly have a fulfilling experience it is important to open our eyes and find them. Also, do not be afraid of going to events alone. I think one significant mistake I made during my first years in Bucknell, and that was that even if there were interesting events that I wished to attend, if I could not go with one friend, I usually opted to skipping the event. Don’t be like me!
Senior Student Profile

Name:
Bwalya Andrew Gefason Mwaba

Major(s) and minor(s):
International Relations and Environmental Studies double major with a French and Francophone Studies minor

Hometown:
I am a proud citizen of the Republic of Zambia but I was born and raised in Côte d’Ivoire

Favorite/Most meaningful Bucknell Experience(s):
This is a difficult question because there really are so many! Bucknell has gifted me a myriad of fantastic memories and experiences that I’ll continue to cherish long after I am gone.

Two of my most meaningful experiences were actually when I was working as a Commencement Ambassador for the 164th and 165th Commencement ceremonies. Both occurrences were emotive, tiring, and extremely satisfying. Being able to celebrate your friends’ four years away from their home, partake in the festivities, and meet with their families was amazing. It is one weekend on campus where spirits are high and the mood is jovial. I especially enjoyed the commencement celebration, which happens the night before commencement in KLARC. Food, merriment, and a whole lot of dancing happens during the weekend. But, it is the night before commencement that the energy is at its highest point and I loved every minute of it. Looking forward to my own this summer \^.^/

I’ve also been blessed be a part of the Executive Internship Program here at Bucknell, which has grown into a family for me. I have been able to explore facets of Bucknell that I would not have been privy to and have had conversations with people I would not have even met otherwise. This program has cultivated many great experiences for me and one that will remain with me was when me and my fellow interns got to attend the Trustees Dinner last semester. It was a reaffirming moment for me about my appreciation for Bucknell. I was able to speak with trustee members about the campus climate and on going University projects and it was an opportunity for me to raise personal concerns. It was also an opportunity to see a few of my professors let loose a bit!

Plans after graduation:
After graduation, literally right after graduation, I’m giving my parents the most aggressively-jovial hug imaginable! In all seriousness, I plan on pursuing a graduates degree in the United States. I am excited about starting a new adventure!

Advice for non-seniors:
Be fearless and don't be lazy! Fear and discomfort are paralyzing forces, yes, but they can be used to your advantage because it is in such instances where growth occurs. If you’re interested in something, do yourself a favor and explore it. College is a finite time, guys, and it’s over before you know it. As cliché as its sounds, make the most of it.
Upcoming IEA Events

Asian Gala
Event showcasing Asian culture and traditions through performances and delicious food
Date: Friday, 25th March
Venue: Larison Dining Hall
Time: 6pm—8pm

Film and Discussion:
Feminism Inshallah
Thursday 3/24 at 7pm
IEA 045
Panel Discussion with Faculty and Students

"Empty Bowls"
Fighting World Hunger and focusing on International Women's Day- $10 for soup and a handmade clay bowl:
Thursday March 10th,
Walls Lounge ELC

A Trip Around the World
International food and creative, interactive displays of the culture.
April 6th at 5:30pm, Terrace Room

Coffee Hour
Casual Conversation with hot chocolate
IEA 045
March 30th from 3 to 4pm

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