Upon entering the room, one can immediately sense the friendly atmosphere that dwells within. One can see the numerous medals hanging on the walls and the countless certificates lying in the wooden cabinet, not to mention the Thank You cards that are spread all around. “Amazing” is the word that pops to mind and the only word that aptly describes the feeling one gets in this room.

“Hello,” he said kindly. Mr. Hsieh Chi Fong (文山區萬興里長謝啟峯) is the chief of Wangxing Village in Wenshan District. It soon becomes clear why this man has been serving in this position for many decades.

National Chengchi University (NCCU) has held international events for about four years. The opening of I-House, the new resident hall for international students and visiting scholars, has provided more opportunities for people from different cultures to join NCCU. Mr. Hsieh firmly believes that promoting local culture is a must. “As the number of international students increases in Wanxing Village, the community needs to gain more knowledge in order to embrace different cultures. It is for this purpose that I have participated in school events with NCCU for four years in hopes to bring each other closer,” said Mr. Hsieh.

Mr. Hsieh and local citizens organized the performance of World Festival 2012, which included the dragon team from Taipei Municipal Wanxing Elementary School, the lion dance from Taipei Municipal Mu Zha Junior High School, the Taiwanese aboriginal dance and, last but not least, a variety of local dishes. The whole Wanxing Village wished to instill the vivid image of Taiwan to students who have never experienced such a unique local lifestyle. “We are like unofficial ambassadors,” Mr. Hsieh expressed with a laugh.

“Besides the World Festival, I also joined the events of community cleaning day as well as second-hand clothes exchange. As for upcoming activities, I sponsor the dragon boat racing game for both international and local student, and even hired a professional trainer. To help students apply themselves seriously to this competition, I also provided custom-made uniforms to make it more real,” said Mr. Hsieh. “Though we had to assemble before sunrise, at five o’clock in the morning, we had fun and cherished the chance to accomplish the same goal together.”

Mr. Hsieh encouraged students to deliver any event messages to the local community more actively. He noted that because he might not always have time to spread news regarding NCCU to the whole Wanxing Village, students who want to participate should initiate communication with the local citizens.

“In the four-year period of college life, I hope students can care about the community and learn not only to take but also to give which is an important lesson of life,” Mr. Hsieh said. He welcomed students to share their thoughts with him in order to connect the community with the university.
Every year during the Dragon Boat Festival, it is a tradition for the Wenshan District residents to form a team to participate in the dragon boat races. This year, eight National Chengchi University (NCCU) international students joined the Wenshan District Dragon Boat Team and attended the 2012 Taipei International Dragon Boat Championship and 2012 New Taipei City Speaker Cup. Although most of them didn't have any prior rowing experience, they won seventh place in the 2012 New Taipei City Speaker Cup.

For half of them it was the first time being seated on a dragon boat, yet they were not afraid of the obstacles they would encounter during the process; on the contrary, many of them were diligent and conscientious. The training program started in April and lasted for two and a half months. Each member needed to arrive at the Bitan practice area before 5:45 a.m. every morning except for Thursday and Sunday. In addition, they needed to practice the basic rowing movement hundreds of times and to keep correcting their paddling position.

Joining the dragon boat team is a really good way for foreign students to know more about the traditional Chinese festival and experience the completely different culture. Most important of all, it is a chance for all of the rowers to learn how to cooperate with one another and understand the importance of team spirit. If one person loses speed, the whole boat would be in a chaotic rhythm. All the rowers need to work together with one heart because they are seated on the same boat.

Mr. Hsieh Chi Fong, the chief of the Wanxing Village and leader of the dragon boat team, really appreciated the foreign students’ attitude during the training process. “First, even though some of them got hurt, they were still present in the early morning. They regard it as a chance to discover their own shortcomings. Second, if they can’t be present on a certain day due to personal affairs, they will ask for leave first,” said Hsieh. He emphasized that these are the main points Taiwanese students lack and can stand to learn from international students.

As the head of the Wanxing Village, Hsieh also pointed out that this is a good chance to promote the cooperation between school and community. “We’d like to build the connection between community and students, with both local and international students. The whole team is just like a big family. Every day we eat breakfast together, share everything with them and take care of one another,” he said. “I really like the team climate of the Wenshan District Dragon Boat Team. I give it a very high rating,” he added.

In addition to the dragon boat races, there are still many events held by the community. Every student is welcome to participate and become a part of the community.
Say “hello” to a new exchange program in Virginia

STORY
BY Jennifer Chou
PHOTO
BY OIC

Our Office of International Cooperation (OIC) just came back from their NAFSA (Association of International Educators) trip earlier in June and brought back very exciting news with them: an exchange deal sealed. The primary point of the trip, from May 24 to June 7, was to participate in this year’s NAFSA 2012 Annual Conference & Expo, held in Houston from May 27 to June 1, and to visit some universities in the U.S.

Weeks in advance to the conference, we made appointments with our partner schools from around the globe who also attended. OIC representatives met a total of 53 partner schools for the latest updates on our cooperation programs and to follow up on any issue that needed to be further discussed face-to-face. Our representatives also joined the “U.S. Higher Education Partnership Fair” that NAFSA held, in which many universities participated. At the fair, we were able to meet university representatives we could previously not get in touch with as well as more non-partners. While in Texas, OIC representatives took the chance to visit two universities: Rice University, often referred to as the “Harvard of the South,” and the University of Houston (main campus).

The signing of a new exchange program is one of the most thrilling and desirable things that could happen. And indeed, it happened. Out of the two schools which we were invited to in Virginia, Mary Baldwin College (MBC) and James Madison University (JMU), we successfully signed the agreement of an exchange program with MBC. During the visit to MBC, one of our OIC representatives Claire Tao (陶韻惠) thought that MBC’s campus is small but very beautiful. She observed that though the dorms of MBC were not as new as our recently built I-House, their dorms are fully equipped. Besides visiting the accommodation environment, the food of the cafeteria was also a major highlight of the campus tour. Not only was the food delicious, their chef also provided a special service that might be hard to find in other college cafeterias: using the students’ own recipes. Tao said that students can bring in their own recipes and ask the chef to cook a designated dish for them. Moreover, there are many festivals throughout the year that students can attend, such as apple picking. Tao had a strong feeling that our students will definitely love the environment there.

Compared to the progress we made with MBC, we took smaller steps with JMU to share and communicate our thoughts. In our current cooperation, students from both universities can apply for the counterpart’s summer courses, but an exchange program is not yet available. Tao’s greatest impression during her visit to JMU was that the students were all very united in their passion for their university because their faculty maintained a very close and positive relationship with the students. Tao felt that if our students were to study in JMU, they would surely be treated with the same kindness.

With a new relationship established, we look forward to sending our students to these schools, as well as accepting those who come here from MBC. NCCU students would no doubt have a lot to explore in Virginia since the state is richly cultivated with history. OIC’s endeavors are certainly reflected in the opportunities they have created for NCCU students.

For more information regarding the OIC’s visit to MBC, please check out the links below.

MBC campus news:

Local news (Staunton, Virginia):
http://www.newsleader.com/article/20120615/NEWS01/206150320/

http://oic.nccu.edu.tw
For the very first time, the Foreign Language Center (外語中心) of National Chengchi University (NCCU) hosted a “NCCU Culture Café” which consisted of a total of three workshops held in the Conference Room on the 3th floor of the International Building (國際大樓). In each workshop, international and local students sat down to talk about various topics related to culture and modern society itself.

“Living Overseas” was the discussion topic of the first workshop. A total of ten students joined the discussion: half of them were local students and the other half was composed of international exchange and full-time students. Taiwanese students shared their experiences, including the culture shock they felt while on exchange programs abroad in countries such as Turkey, USA and Canada. International students, on the other hand, shared some mindsets and feelings towards Chinese culture, as well as some difficulties during their time studying in Taipei. This first workshop was held on Wednesday March 28th, and even though it was the first attempt of the “NCCU Culture Café” project, the workshop ended up being very useful and interesting to the audience. Most of the students and professors in the audience that day said that they really enjoyed the entire concept and the ideas behind it, and they would like to join the upcoming two workshops.

The second workshop, which was held on Thursday, May 31st: “Cultural Differences in Views of Relationships”. This time, the seven students who joined as guests were all foreigners. “Is it ok to kiss on the first date?”, “Would you be comfortable with homosexual displays of public affection?”, and “How important is the body language?” were just some of the questions that the international guests were asked. The most memorable statement was given by Moises Souza, a Brazilian full-time student, who said: “In Brazil, everything starts with a kiss and if you are not a good kisser then you might have problems finding someone...” NCCU Culture Café provided a very effective platform for both local and international students to discuss culture and to be involved in a mutual process of internationalization and globalization within the campus. According to the Foreign Language Center, the project aims to be expanded and if possible offer this platform for students every semester or once every academic year.
Georgia Institute of Technology’s visit to explore Taiwan issues

STORY
BY Vincent Chong
PHOTO BY Nina

Eight students and two teachers from Georgia Institute of Technology (GA Tech) came to Taiwan for 15 days on an academic trip. National Chengchi University (NCCU) Office of International Cooperation (OIC) arranged a tour for the team at NCCU campus and important government or industrial sites in Northern and Southern Taiwan. The members of the team come from various departments, including Law, International Relations, Business Administration and Electrical Engineering. This visit in Asia lasted two months, which also included stops to Mainland China and Southern Korea.

In 2010 and 2011, our own students were invited to attend the customized summer program at GA Tech. This time, GA Tech students came back to Taiwan and NCCU since their last visit in 2009. The trip started from June 11 to June 26, including eight days in Taipei and the remaining time in Kaohsiung and Southern Taiwan.

They came to NCCU on June 13, starting with a tour around the campus. Ho, Szu-Yin (何思因), professor of the Department of Political Science held a class discussing the connection between the Mainland’s economic policy and Taiwan’s politics. Dean of the College of Social Sciences Chuang, Yih-Chyi (莊奕琦) guided them to understand the current state of Taiwan’s economic development.

This trip was not only a tourist visit for the students. The representative of OIC Nina Hsu (許純綺) said that this trip is packed with activities and was highly academic. In conjunction with the curriculum, the tour focused on the political and economic side of Taiwan with the hopes that the students from GA Tech may learn more about Taiwan’s issues. This trip was not only a tourist visit for the students. The representative of OIC Nina Hsu (許純綺) said that this trip is packed with activities and was highly academic. In conjunction with the curriculum, the tour focused on the political and economic side of Taiwan with the hopes that the students from GA Tech may learn more about Taiwan’s issues.

Students and professors from Georgia Institute of Technology (GA Tech) visit Nantze Export Processing Zone (楠梓加工出口區) where they are introduced to the products made in the Export Processing Zone.

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GA Tech may learn more about Taiwan’s issues. They visited Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall (中正紀念堂) on the first day. GA Tech Professor John W. Garver, who specializes in East Asia foreign affairs, gave a lecture on the site about the relation between Chiang Kai-Shek (蔣介石) and the current identity of Taiwan in the world.

The team visited political facilities, like the Office of the President (總統府), Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) headquarters (民進黨黨部), Kuomintang (KMT) headquarters (國民黨智庫) and the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT). They also went to the Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan (行政院農業委員會), the Hsinchu Science Park (新竹科學園區), Southern Taiwan Science Park (南部科學工業園區) and Kaohsiung Harbor (高雄港) to learn about the current economy and industries that support Taiwan.

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