



INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Newsletter

Spring 2020 | www.shepherd.edu/international-shepherd

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The Director's Corner

Spring semester has come to an end, and who would have guessed in January that we would have had a huge roller coaster ride to end the academic year! I am so proud of the resilience of our international students. Some returned to their home countries, others went to stay with family members in the US, and some remained on campus. After settling in to life at Shepherd, our students have experienced a great lesson in how our individual attitudes impact our responses to emergencies.

I am proud of our students and proud of our team of staff members. We are going through uncharted waters and learning as we go. I know we will come out of this crisis stronger and better.

Stay safe...and wash your hands!

Dr. Lois A. Jarman



Eva Olsson
IELP Instructor

The English Corner

In our small (and pretty cozy) classroom in Erma Ora Byrd — and later in our (cozy, perhaps, but lonely) quarantine — the international students taking Intensive English worked hard together this semester. We read, wrote, and talked about personal subjects, such as health and relationships, as well as broader subjects, like government and crime. We traveled in our minds to Sudan with Salva in the book *A Long Walk to Water*. We took trips via video through a couple of the beautiful national parks in the U.S. We educated each other with presentations on African Americans and Native Americans. There was also time for an occasional song, a couple of poems, and a great deal of stretching between classes. There were times of insight but also moments of confusion, most notably when trying to grasp the use of ounces, inches, and gallons — and why people insist on calling 30 degrees cold! (That’s a nice summer’s day in Celsius!) We mostly figured it out.

The Recruiting Corner

Led by our international recruiter, Siriki Diabate, the International Affairs team had arranged a visit to Shepherd by His Excellency, Ambassador of Cote D’Ivoire, Mamadou Haidara on April 2nd, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the visit has been postponed until further notice. We hope that when we return to campus, this very special guest can share with us

the culture and history of his beautiful country.

To date, all U.S. Consulate offices have suspended visa processing, so it remains unclear how many students will be able to join us on campus when we return. Siriki is giving his all to help students who want to attend Shepherd realize their dream.

All of our accepted summer 2020

students have deferred admission to the fall semester, hoping for a re-opening of U.S Embassies around the world sometime soon. With that, we have well over 100 international students who have applied to be part of Shepherd when we begin face-to-face instruction. Our international staff works diligently to bring a diverse population of students to campus.



Siriki Diabate
International Recruiter/Admission

Spring 2020 Dean’s List Recipients

Olamide Adegbamide	Kady Sanogo	Spandan Shrestha
Audrey Assamoa	Frank Santiago-Cabrera	Samuel Sloboda
Samon Bhatta	Valentina Preciado-Bello	Mamata Subedi
Laura Castro-Vargas	Henry Navarrete-Mendez	Pustak Sunuwar
Abdelrahman Elmasry	Viet T. Nguyen	Trinh Tran
Sankalp KC	Maria Rivas	Anulika Umunnah
Jean-Emmanuel Kouadio	Anuska Shakya	
Naa Koshie Lamptey	Sujata Sharma	

Spring 2020 Graduates

Bachelor’s Degree:	Master’s Degree:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry Navarrete-Mendez—Cum Laude • Pang Honghui • Naa Koshie Lamptey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thubelihle Ncube • Zari Hassenzadeh • Hanqiang Zhang • Felix Gouanette



Chinese New Year Celebration Explained by a Taiwanese Student



On January 24th, 2020, International Students from Taiwan and China celebrated Chinese New Year. Yu-Wei Tzeng, a Taiwanese graduate student in the M.B.A. program reflected on the traditions observed in Taiwan and throughout Asian cultures during this time of year. Chinese New Year is the most important holiday of the year for Asians. It's on the first day of the first month of the Lunar Calendar. Family members get together on Chinese New Year's Eve to celebrate the upcoming year. New Year's Eve is also the busiest time. People not only go shopping, but also partake in cleaning their entire house and putting up red couplets on windows and doors to decorate. It's like people here celebrating Christmas, everyone has a big smile on their faces as they welcome the new year.

Chinese New Year celebrations include eating dinner with family, giving red envelopes, firecrackers and new clothes. Many cultural activities are arranged during the festival. Rural areas and small towns retain more traditional celebrations than the cities. These activities include setting off firecrackers,

ancestor worshipping, and dragon dances. During Chinese New Year, everyone greets each other by saying "Gong xi fa cai". The meaning of this sentence is to wish people good luck all year long.

Chinese New Year is a time for families to be together. Wherever they are, people come home to celebrate the festival with their families. The New Year's Eve dinner is called "reunion dinner" and is believed to be the most important meal of the year. Big families of several generations sit around round tables and enjoy food and time together.

Giving red envelopes is a custom at Chinese New Year. The color red denotes good luck, fortune, happiness and abundance in the culture. Red envelopes have real money inside and are given to children and seniors. It is not customary to give red envelopes to adults who work, except by employers. Red envelopes are used in hope of giving good luck (as well as money) to the receivers.

It has long been a Chinese tradition to set off firecrackers at the beginning of the New Year. The tradition is to set off one string of small

firecrackers first, and then follow with three big firecrackers which symbolize "sounding out" the old year and "sounding in" the New Year. People believed that the louder the firecrackers, the better and luckier business and gains would be in the coming year.

The dragon dance is present in many cultural celebrations and represents prosperity, good fortune, and protection from evil. It is also used as a way to create a happy environment during the celebration.



From left to right: Pang Honghui, Yu-Hsin Huang, Szu-Pin Wang, Nian-Sin Chen, Yu-Wei Tzeng

First Year International Students Share their Experiences



Kady Sanogo
Mali

"I'd heard a lot about first-year college experiences before and I thought I was prepared. However, I soon found out that everyone's experience as a freshman, and especially as an international freshman, is different. From my first day before classes began, I felt welcomed by the international community who made me feel like family. They were like an anchor because even though I'd lived in the U.S. before for six years, I'd never felt this overwhelmed. I remember my first few days living on

campus. I'm not someone who usually approaches other people first, so for the most part I stuck to talking to the other international students. I was much too intimidated to talk to the other students, even though they all seemed friendly enough. It wasn't until after my first day of classes that I finally made a new friend, and after that it was almost like a wildfire. I got to know more and more people within a short span of time, and as I did, college suddenly didn't seem so daunting anymore. I was a lot more at

ease. From time to time though, I still feel a little homesick. I miss my country and especially the taste of homecooked meals, like 'Yassa' and 'Tiguadèguè na' from back home in Mali. But it's always good to know that no matter what, the friends I've made over the course of these past two semesters and the experiences I've accumulated have made being a freshman a whole lot easier for me, and I can't wait to see what the next three years have in store for me."

"My name is Badou Audrey Roseanne Assamo. I am from the Ivory Coast and my major is Accounting. I arrived at Shepherd University during the Fall 2019. Being an international student at Shepherd University, I encountered some challenges. At first, I was shy and reserved because I did not know anyone. Also, I missed my family, friends, and food from my

country. It is not easy to leave your whole family and study in a foreign country. Everything was new to me, the language, the culture, and the environment. But over time, I've blossomed. The various activities organized by the International Department contributed to my personal development. I learned to open to others and share my culture. In addition, English was a barrier, I

could not communicate and understand what I was being told. I took intensive English classes and it has helped me a lot. Today my vocabulary has improved, and I am more confident.

I can say that coming to study in the United States, precisely at Shepherd University, has been beneficial to me. I discovered leadership skills, met great people and improved my English."



Audrey Assamo
Ivory Coast

"Learning at the University was an exciting experience for me. My first year at Shepherd University was not easy and was also a great challenge. This challenge was to adapt to a new language, new culture, new lifestyle. It is hard to achieve, but it is possible. I had great difficulties with writing and speaking. Thanks to the IELP classes I took, I learned a lot about how to write essays, improve my pronunciation, and my vocabulary. These classes really helped me improve my English skills. When I first started, I had low grades. However, I

practiced and practiced and followed the advice of my professors until I improved. The one thing that helped me, which I found boring, was to write in a journal and read a book. In this journal, I had to write everything I did during the week, as well as write about the readings. In the beginning it was boring and difficult to understand but after reading and reading I learned new words and it began to be very interesting. I think reading and writing are the best ways to improve my English skills. I would greatly recommend it to anyone. I believe the

key to success is self-motivation. If you put in your mind that it is difficult and you can't do it, it will be impossible to succeed. It will be a chore, not a pleasure to learn. So, I always stayed positive and tried to keep an open-mind. All of these experiences allowed me to improve my English skills. The advice I would give to those starting university is to be courageous, motivated, confident, and believe in yourself. If you follow these, you will succeed and have good grades."



Larissa Mendy
Ivory Coast

A Senior Student Embracing Cultural Differences

Hi everyone! My name is Maria Jose Acevedo-Cabrera, I usually go by MJ. I am the President of the SU Nursing Student Association. I am from Costa Rica, and my parents are from Nicaragua. I am a senior working towards my Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Since I was little, I have been in a mixture of two cultures. I have learned to be open and love all the cultures around the world. I have always been eager to learn about them. When I came to the United States; I fell in love with the amount of diversity its population has.

When I started to attend Shepherd University in 2016, the diversity on campus was small. Now, I can say there is a huge growth of diversity on campus. It is so exciting to see how much Shepherd University's population is growing and the different cultures it has. I am happy to say I am part of that change and have been part to help bring that change. I have been able to contribute to that growth by participating in different events and educate people about the importance of having an open mind and be accepting of the different cultures on campus. Throughout the school year, Shepherd University holds several events that give students the opportunity to learn about different countries in very unique ways. Some of these events are a Taste of Latin Culture, Ram's rally for Respect, Diwali Festival of Lights, Peace on Earth Cook-off, and more.

I believe that learning from each other and where we come from it is very important for the growth of our community. It is essential for every single student to be open to different cultures in school. What would the world be without flavors or colors? Dull and boring! This applies to people as well. Where would we be without all the different cultures, beliefs, and traditions? dull and boring! There wouldn't be diversity! We all would be the same and where is the fun in that? The more the better! Life is beautiful and everything in it! So why be closed mind it when you can educate yourself, grow as a person, and enjoy life to the fullest!



MJ Acevedo-Cabrera
Costa Rica

A Graduation Poem

As a graduating student from Shepherd University has been an interesting roller coaster. But not one of those that simply go up and down, more like the kind that goes up, down, and sideways and at the end it feels like going through hoops of fire just to land safely and softly on the other side. I am talking of course about my whole college career and not just these past few months. When I started college, as an international student from El Salvador, who also happens to be a first-generation college student, school seemed to be a dream come true. But unlike a dream where everything just happens magically, this dream took hard work and dedication. Here, a little poem to describe my college career:

Freshman year was a dream come true, I met many friends and lost a few; Life-long people who became my group also became my family.

Sophomore year was a little... hectic, I had more time to get used to my new life although life does what it does and I had to switch majors. That day my dreams were shattered, And I thought it would never get better.

Alas a light – After thinking my dreams were over, I decided over a new major. That's when it happened, during my junior year of college like a shooting star I found a new passion.

My college career was a series of adventures, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Although, the global pandemic was a bit much. Nevertheless, it is part of my history and part of my own tribulations. Hopeful for the future

With a new goal, and a new outlook, I faced off my senior year. This year was like a hydra, it had many heads and every time you would cut on off two more would grow in its place. There I stood, there was a door that countless others had faced but I was the first. The first of my tribe to make it this far. And so, I stepped through and defeated the beast.

When I thought the worst was over, there was something new. A disease like we had never seen before, The 'Rona. But at the end, I managed to get across safely. I can't wait to put on my gown and cap, and walk proudly across that stage.



Henry Navarrete Mendez
El Salvador

The Water Project



Painting made by the Nigerian Artist

“I am currently working, with the Shepherd’s Office of International Affairs on a water project to raise awareness about water scarcity in the world. Ultimately, we hope to raise funds and efforts to provide a water pump to a poor village of Affa in Nigeria.

A few months ago, I acquired a painting by a Nigerian artist. The painting illustrates the serene reaction of a young girl as her mother splashed her with water to refresh her from a very hot day.

I was able to friend the artist in an

online chat, and after some hours of discussion with him, I asked him about the inspiration for his work. He explained that people in his village are having a hard time understanding climate change and its effects on their environment.

I also learned that these villagers walk for miles every day just to get some water from a dirty river nearby. The water is dirty because there is a lack of water filtrations systems in their region.

With the Shepherd project we hope to raise enough money to be able to

build a water pump and filtration system to install in the village. Another goal for the project is to be able to educate the people of the area about climate change and global warming. We think that this could be a wonderful collaboration opportunity for Shepherd, the people of the Shepherdstown community, and those in Africa.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to delay events related to our water project, but we plan to continue working towards this goal when we are all back on campus.”

By Abdoul Nasser Achirou



These pictures show where the villagers, from kids to adults, are getting the water that they use for their daily needs.

Language Lunches

Our language lunch program continued this semester with student leadership. Our Spanish-speaking leaders were Valentina Preciado-Bello and Frank Santiago-Cabrera. French leaders were Audrey Assomoa and Youssouf Bakayoko. Cem “Kayra” Demir led our Turkish learning classes, and Yu-Wei Tzeng taught Chinese. We are very proud of our students for sharing their native languages and cultures to help the Shepherd Community become more global.

International Student Leadership Team

We welcomed five students to our International Student Leadership Team (ISLT). Those students are Sujata Sharma of Nepal, Audrey Assomoa of Ivory Coast, Anulika Umunnah from Nigeria, Frank Santiago-Cabrera of Puerto Rico, and Youssouf Bakayoko from Ivory Coast.

Student Recognition Day

In April, two international students were recognized at the Student Recognition Day for Outstanding Academic Achievement. Henry Navarrete-Mendez was recognizing as an Outstanding Spanish Major. Kady Sanogo received the C. Brown & Hazel Hendricks Scholarship, which is awarded to a rising sophomore Psychology major who has shown outstanding academic potential. We are very proud of their accomplishments and wish them the best in the future.