

## MSU Students Participate in International Student Summit in Japan

Two MSU students from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) were in Tokyo, Japan, in late November to participate in the seventh annual International Students Summit on Food, Agriculture, and Environment in the New Century (ISS).

Representing MSU at this year's conference were Deanna Nelson (senior in agribusiness management), who presented a paper titled "The Role of Education in Food Safety in the United States of America," and Julie Thelen (sophomore in agriscience), whose paper was titled "Education and Innovation in Agriculture Production in the United States."

The conference was established in 2001 by Tokyo Agricultural University (TUA) "to provide students from our global partner universities as well as international and Japanese students at TUA with an opportunity to gather and exchange views and ideas on global food and environmental issues, and also to discuss their own roles in sustainable development." The TUA Office of International Education website lists 18 universities around the world, including MSU, with which it maintains academic cooperation agreements.

TUA pays the entire cost of one MSU student to attend the summit each year, as well as in-country expenses for a second student, with CANR picking up the remainder. MSU and TUA have a history of collaboration that goes back 40 years and includes an ongoing student exchange program.

Deanna Nelson's first international experience was actually a study abroad program in Australia and New Zealand in May 2006. She admitted that she was a bit nervous about traveling to Japan, foreseeing possible language difficulties. Fortunately, TUA students serve as hosts for the international participants. "It was wonderful going there and learning about the culture and grasping as much as I could in the nine-day span I was there," she said. "We got to see many sights of Tokyo, and we also got to travel outside of the city..." Students were able to visit Kawaba Village, an agricultural community, as well as Fukiwari Falls. "I believe that situations like these are the best way to learn about a culture," she said.

There were 26 students from 19 different countries participating in the conference. "It was wonderful to meet all of the different students and hear a little bit about where they come from as well," Nelson said.



MSU undergraduates Deanna Nelson (left) and Julie Thelen (right) represented MSU in the seventh annual International Students Summit on Food, Agriculture, and Environment in the New Century. The conference was sponsored by Tokyo Agricultural University, a longtime MSU partner institution.

Julie Thelen, who wrote a report of the trip that was recently published in *The Michigan Cattleman* magazine, said she "was selected to participate in the summit activities because of her experience with Future Farmers of America, 4-H, Michigan Junior Angus Association, and her involvement in production agriculture as a beef producer." Other than a trip to Canada in elementary school, she had not been abroad prior to this conference. Her paper was the opening student presentation of the conference.

Thelen expressed her agreement about the cultural benefits of the visit and also stressed the value of the conference, particularly the interactions with the other participants, in enhancing their understanding of international agricultural issues. "The ten-day trip was filled with student-led discussions to better connect our presentations and develop the final Joint Communiqué," she said.

Murari Suvedi, professor in the Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation, and Resource Studies, serves as the academic advisor of ISS at MSU. He works closely with Office of International Programs in CANR to identify student representatives to ISS, works with them to develop their papers, and attends the summit himself. At the 2006 conference, Suvedi delivered a keynote presentation on "Higher Education in Food, Agriculture, and Environment in the 21st Century."

To learn more about TUA's International Students Summit, visit the website at <http://www.nodai.ac.jp/campuslife/oversea/iss/en/statement.html>

MSU Senior International Admissions Counselor Romelia Widders speaks with a potential student at a fall 2006 college recruitment fair in Buenos Aires, Argentina.



## MSU Intensifies International Recruiting Efforts

Michigan State University boasts a population of more than 3,500 international students, placing it among the top 25 U.S. universities in this regard. While the university continues to be a favorite among students from Asian countries such as South Korea, China, India, and Taiwan, more than 130 countries throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East are sources of current international students. Not surprisingly, MSU also hosts many Canadian students.

MSU's diverse student population is achieved, in part, through targeted recruiting efforts of the Office of Admissions and Scholarships. Senior International Admissions Counselor Romelia Widders heads up those efforts. She, along with former Assistant Director Barbara Kolar, traveled the world during fall 2006, visiting schools, college fairs, and other international events. Among the Asian and Middle Eastern countries they visited were China, Singapore, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi

Arabia, Jordan, and Bahrain.

One of Widders' international recruiting trips, a 17-day, eight-country journey, began in Chile, and took her through South and Central America, as well as Mexico. According to Widders, student interest in MSU was very high.

"Having a presence at college fairs overseas demonstrates to students and school officials that, as an institution, we are committed to international students," Widders said.

During the fall, Widders became the first MSU admissions counselor to recruit students in Turkey. She visited several bilingual high schools and a number of privately owned advising centers. Widders hosted receptions with MSU alumni and met with İbrahim Özdemir, director of international affairs for the Ministry of Education.

With a vibrant economy, a higher education system that often cannot absorb all the high school graduates, and a population of more than 70 million people, Turkey provides many opportunities.

### Sponsored Student Recruitment a Heightened Priority

The recruitment of more international "sponsored students" is a high priority for MSU, as it is for many other U.S. universities. Sponsored students are those whose costs are paid by an external entity such as their government, their employer, or an agency such as the Fulbright Commission or the Ford Foundation. To increase the number of sponsored international students choosing MSU, a new project has been initiated by the Graduate School, the Office of Admissions, and ISP. The aim of this initiative is

to identify funding programs, create linkages with them, and help their sponsored students through the admissions process in collaboration with the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS).

Anne Schneller has been appointed to coordinate these activities. Schneller has served as a specialist in the College of Education for the past 20 years, and prior to that directed a major U.S. government-funded scholarship program in Zimbabwe. Although she has only been in this position a short time, she has already begun working with several scholarship programs funded by the governments of Thailand, Vietnam, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

"Michigan State has plenty to offer these students," Widders said. "I fully anticipate the number of students from Turkey at Michigan State to increase in the coming years."

Seventy-four Turkish students – 22 undergraduate, 51 graduate students, and one non-degree student – were enrolled at MSU for the fall 2006 semester.

MSU's expanded efforts to recruit high-quality international students are succeeding. The number of international students increased 7 percent from fall 2005 to a record 3,526 students in 2006, according to the Office for International Students and Scholars. The trend would seem to continue: as of March 15, the number of applications received for fall 2007 from prospective freshman international students increased 67 percent compared to the previous year.

— Adapted from previously-published articles by Gabe Santi, Admissions Office.

"This is a win-win situation for MSU and for the sponsoring agency," Schneller said. "The students who have been selected for these scholarships are the best in their countries, and have already undergone a rigorous selection process before being awarded a scholarship. They are funded either entirely or partially by external agencies, which allows MSU to recruit outstanding new students at minimal cost. In addition, having an office like OISS to assist in the application process is very helpful to both the individual and to the sponsoring agency."

## International Education Week Enhanced by Annual International Film Festival

MSU International Education Week was bigger and better than ever this year, thanks, in part, to the addition of the new Communication Arts and Sciences International Film Festival (CASIFF).

Planned as an annual event, CASIFF 2006 featured Middle Eastern films.

"The festival was intended to promote understanding of the people, the culture, and the issues of the Middle East," said Chuck Salmon, dean of the College of Communication Arts and Sciences. "In an era when events in the Middle East typically dominate the evening news, it is important now – more than ever – to raise awareness and increase understanding of this area of the world."

Planning for CASIFF 2007, which will showcase films from Latin America, is already underway.

For the seventh year, MSU joined other educational institutions, organizations, and government agencies around the United States, and beyond, in observing International Education Week. MSU's extended observance ran November 11–19.

In addition to the film festival and a number of other films sponsored by campus units, International Education Week 2006 offered:

- Lectures and presentations about international issues and MSU's international involvements
- International food and cultural events in residence halls
- Recognition of international essay and photo contest winners
- Musical events

Concluding the week was the MSU Global Festival on November 19. This festival, in its 21st year, drew thousands of people from MSU and the surrounding community for a Sunday afternoon of displays, food, and performances.

For more information about MSU International Education Week, visit <http://www.iew.msu.edu>.

The Global Festival website can be found at <http://www.isp.msu.edu/cvip/section.php?section=global>

### Top 10 Countries of Origin for Fall 2006 MSU International Students

MSU's international student community numbers 3,526 individuals from 134 countries. Here is a list of the top ten source countries for fall 2006. These countries account for 70 percent of MSU's international students.

- South Korea (794)
- China (600)
- India (371)
- Taiwan (206)
- Canada (136)
- Japan (131)
- Turkey (74)
- Hong Kong (66)
- Thailand (54)
- Saudi Arabia (53)

In addition to international students, MSU also is hosting 782 visiting scholars this year.  
Source: MSU Office for International Students and Scholars

For more statistical information, visit the OISS website at [http://www.oiss.msu.edu/about\\_stats.php](http://www.oiss.msu.edu/about_stats.php)

## MSU Observes World AIDS Day

**M**SU commemorated World AIDS Day on December 1, 2006, with a symposium focusing on the millions of children in Sub-Saharan Africa who have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS. The program, “No Place to Hide – World AIDS Day Symposium,” featured presentations of scholastic work and student field projects, in addition to a showing of the video *No Place to Hide*.

The program was sponsored by the Office for International Students and Scholars, the African Studies Center, and Multi-Racial Unity Living Experience (MRULE) and was held in the Delia Koo International Center.

“World AIDS Day is when we look at where we are as a global community and look at what more needs to be done,” said MRULE Director Jeanne Gazel. She explained that Sub-Saharan Africa is of special concern because 13 million orphans – or 90 percent of all children orphaned by HIV/AIDS – live in the region. That figure is expected to reach 18 to 20 million by 2010, according to UNAIDS/UNICEF.

Earlier in the year, students in MRULE, along with an instructor and students in an interdisciplinary social science honors class, organized a two-day AIDS conference on campus. “No Place to Hide: Student Activism and the Fight Against the Global AIDS Pandemic” was held in the MSU Union March 24–25, 2006. The event attracted approximately 600 people, according to Gazel. A few months later, six MRULE participants presented a skills-building workshop at the 2006 International AIDS Conference, which was held in Toronto August 13–18. The students presented “Making Connections and Creating Coalitions,” which focused on utilizing peer education to explore the relationship between race, class, gender, and the global AIDS pandemic.

The purposes of both the conference and symposium were to increase awareness of the AIDS crisis, highlight current interventions, identify upcoming battles, and encourage participants to take action.

The World AIDS Day symposium included presentations of academic work from Ken Ombonga Ongaga, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Educational Administration, who spoke about

HIV/AIDS education programs in rural Kenyan schools; Sheba Onshiri, who spoke about the impact of HIV/AIDS on gender in Sub-Saharan Africa; and Andrea Freidus, a second-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Anthropology, who discussed transnational organizations’ role in raising orphans in Malawi.

The student group presentations included:

- **MRULE** – In 2006, MRULE celebrated its 10th anniversary as a residential living community at MSU. “MRULE offers students in residence halls opportunities to increase knowledge and understanding of what they can do to contribute to positive race relations in their lives and on campus,” according to MRULE’s website, [www.mrule.msu.edu](http://www.mrule.msu.edu)
- **Family of Strength Organization** – “A group of MSU students who have come together to offer services and care to orphans and vulnerable children in Sub-Saharan Africa struck by the HIV/AIDS crisis,” according to the group’s site, [www.msu.edu/~foso/](http://www.msu.edu/~foso/)
- **Serving Citizens of Uganda Today, Because Africa Needs A New Ambulance – SCOUT BANANA** is MSU student Alex Hill’s nonprofit organization dedicated to providing medical supplies to Uganda. Visit it online at [www.scoutbanana.org](http://www.scoutbanana.org)
- **Nyaka School** – A school for AIDS orphans in Uganda. Visit online at [www.nyakaschool.org](http://www.nyakaschool.org)
- **Face AIDS** – A student campaign raising \$1 million to fight AIDS in Africa. Visit online at [www.faceaids.org](http://www.faceaids.org)

Additional World AIDS Day events on campus included a showing of the film *A Closer Walk* and a 12-hour fundraising dance-a-thon in support of Partners in Health’s Rwanda project.

— Kristin V. Johnson, *ISP news intern*

## Students Share Thoughts in Two MSU International Essay Contests

Students read prize-winning essays about their international experiences to a large, enthusiastic audience at an awards reception in the International Center during International Education Week in November 2006. The event honored winners of the first annual MSU Study Abroad Essay Contest and the fourth annual International Student Essay Contest. It was co-hosted by the Office of Study Abroad and the Office for International Students and Scholars.

Having the awards ceremony for both essay contests at the same event highlighted MSU’s holistic approach to international education, according to Inge Steglitz, assistant director of the Office of Study Abroad.

The new study abroad essay contest, sponsored by the Office of Study Abroad and the Center for International Business Education and Research (MSU-CIBER), was designed with specific goals in mind. “It provides a structured way for students to reflect upon their experiences, share their stories with a wide audience, and give people a greater insight into study abroad,” said Steglitz.

Patricia Kota, a junior majoring in advertising, expressed her appreciation for the experience of writing her essay. “I would like to say thank you for organizing and offering this contest. It allowed me to methodically reflect and put into words what my trip really meant,” she said. “Although I only picked one aspect to write about, I felt myself diverging into several facets that I didn’t recognize, and I found new aspects of my trip that I intend to apply to my everyday life.”

For the 2006 study abroad contest, 54 entries were received and Steglitz expects that number to increase as the contest becomes more established. The award prizes were \$1,000 for first place, \$500 for second place, and \$250 for third. Honorable mentions were also recognized.

The International Student Essay Contest grew out of post-9/11 concerns in the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) that international students might be feeling less welcome than before. The contest provides an opportunity for the international students to share their stories with each other and for the MSU community to learn about the experiences of overseas students.

“By writing their stories,” said Peter Briggs, director of OISS, “the international students get a chance to reflect on their experiences and the rest of the campus gets a powerful reminder of the challenges of living away from all that is familiar. The contest has generated some outstanding literature from MSU international students.”

In the past, top essays were printed in the *Lansing State Journal* to afford the community the benefit of learning how people from other cultures experience life at MSU and in the Greater Lansing area.

### Winners of the 2006 MSU Study Abroad Essay Contest:

- First Place: Amber Morris
- Second Place: Clark Llamzon
- Third Place: Nick Micinski
- Honorable Mentions (in alphabetical order): Elvia Gonzales, Sarah Little, and Haruko Ueda



Amber Morris

### Winners of the 2006 MSU International Student Essay Contest:

- First Place: Ting Hong, China
- Second Place: Hiep T. Chau, Vietnam
- Third Place: Borzoo Bonakdarpour, Iran
- Honorable Mentions (in alphabetical order): Corvell Cranfield, South Africa; Zuofei Liu, China; Violette Ruppanner, Switzerland



Ting Hong