

FALL 2009

September 17, 2009



Fall 2009 ASPIRE NEWSLETTER

WELCOME BACK ASPIRE SPARTANS!!!

By Jeannine Slater, ASPIRE Director



This is a fall semester to be remembered. With our governor drastically cutting the higher education budgets, it has been difficult on both sides. Students have faced challenges finding classes and compiling the units

needed to receive their financial aid. Faculty and staff are being asked to complete more work in less time and with less salary. The administration is trying to run a university with a lot less funding. So everyone on campus is under stress but still trying to do what is needed to keep SJSU on track. With that in mind I am so impressed with our ASPIRE and McNair students. You have done what was needed and survived the beginning of the year with a brave face. Students gathered, at the front desk, voicing

worry and concern the first few days. Then you all got busy! You returned one by one, telling us you had found your needed classes and required units. I want you all to realize how strong and self-reliant you proved yourself to be. This only reinforces the fact that you are true college material. We have some great events and opportunities planned for the semester. So get ready to kick some academic butt and finish this semester as strong as you started. Go ASPIRE students!

FYE Creates Special Bonds Between Freshmen

By Jose 'JP' Pineda, FYE Student



All of us who were part of ASPIRE's FYE this summer agree that we would do it a million times over and over again because it was such a blast. Once we got comfortable with each other, which was only a matter of hours, we knew

we were learning about the many resources on the SJSU campus, but also meeting lifetime friends. Even the shyest of people were able to come out of their shells and share their experiences with us. "I'm not the most comfortable cont. pg. 2

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DID YOU EVER THINK ABOUT STUDYING IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY?

ASPIRE Study Abroad Workshop

Tues Oct 13, 2009

12pm, Clark Hall Rm 100H



person when it comes to new people because I am a little shy at first and it takes a while for me to warm up, but you really get the feeling that everyone in ASPIRE looks out for each other, especially since everyone gets so close on the last couple of days. I was overjoyed to be part of ASPIRE since I had people to hang out with on campus that were going to go through the same tough situations that college gives us as low income students.”- Rosaura Mendoza

Chiefly because of all the fun ice-breakers like ‘Ride the Pony’ and ‘Junk Building Activity’ we were able to stay awake after pulling all-nighters. Ride the pony was highly popular with the ASPIRE students because it consisted of a few people galloping inside a large circle until the chanting ended and then they would have to dance with the person that they stopped in front of. At first some people were timid and didn’t really get their groove on, but after a few rounds things changed and the room was filled with laughter. I still remember Margarita Lozano surprising a few people with her moves. Also a fairly popular exercise that was my favorite was the junk building activity. We were split into six groups and we chose a leader to play the infamous name game and which ever team leader knew the most names out of the ASPIRE freshmen, got to chose which pile of junk they wanted to receive. With that junk we were supposed to build something without speaking. This proved to be very difficult, but the six teams

came up with an insanely creative masterpiece like a Cyborg (Johnny Lam), as well as a transgendered male, a wedding cake, and a ship. From this activity, we all discovered the importance of communication and the importance of teamwork that is much needed to be successful in college. A part of this week’s orientation process we were scheduled for many presentations that ranged from student organizations such as Students Advocating for Higher Education (SAHE) , (which I am now a member of), the Environmental Club, the Learning Academic Resource Center (LARC), PIP, (I am also a member of), as well as various sororities and fraternities. The idea of it all was to get us involved early so we would feel part of the student body . It might seem that I’m glorifying ASPIRE but the truth is that even after FYE, they have your back because they encouraged us to join EDCO4 which so far has made me understand how the school academic side really works. EDCO4 is designed to help freshmen and sophomore students choose the majors right for them by forcing us to look at all possible options. I learned to use the school catalog like a pro thanks to Professor Donna Bender, who is an outrageously fun and vivid teacher who is passionately dedicated to her job like no other teacher I have had. Angela Martin agrees that EDCO4 is great and said, “With EDCO4 I have a more open mind to other possible majors and minors now that I have been avidly researching in the University catalog” . College is about discovering yourself and

your interests so you will make the right career choices and be happy. ASPIRE also has many other fun activities throughout the year such as field trips, holiday parties and advising services, all for free!



“I was overjoyed to be part of ASPIRE since I had people to hang out with on campus that were going to go through the same tough situations that college gives us as low income students.”- Rosaura Mendoza

MEET THE NEW 2009-2010 PEER ADVISORS



The ASPIRE program at SJSU is proud to welcome Peer Advisors Claudia Gonzalez and Joshua Barousse to the 2009-2010 team.

The ASPIRE Program is happy to have Claudia Gonzalez as one of the newest additions to our family! Claudia is a Communication Studies major with a double minor in Sociology and Business here at San Jose State University. She was an active participant of the UC Berkeley Upward Bound Program and continues her student involvement at

SJSU by being an active participant of the ASPIRE Program. She may look familiar to you as she had worked in the Bursar’s Office for the past year. She has always had a passion for activism and making a difference within her community, which is why she hopes to attain her dream one day directing a TRiO program or a non-profit organization geared towards low-income students. Clau-

Welcome Claudia and Joshua!

(continued from Page 2)

dia is an artistic individual who enjoys having fun and trying new things. Adventures are not an unknown domain for her, but most importantly, she enjoys spending time with her family and eating grandma's cooking!

Joshua Barousse feels blessed to be part of the wonderful ASPIRE team. Without a doubt, his community involvement began as a young undergraduate student at SJSU, when he had the opportunity to become a student mentor for an under-



served, at-risk youth in downtown San Jose. After two years as a mentor, he became the Program Coordinator of the 'Students In Action' Youth Mentorship Program of the Cesar E. Chavez Community Action Center at SJSU. Since then, Joshua has developed an infinite passion for community service learning and social justice. Upon graduation in 2007, with a B.A in Sociology with an emphasis in Community Change, and a Minor in Justice Studies at SJSU, he had decided to continue his education to prepare himself for a career in the public sector. Currently, Joshua is studying for a Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) degree at SJSU. During his Graduate studies, he has worked as a Community Organizer with the

South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council in San Jose, and had recently fulfilled a Congressional internship in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. Moreover, Joshua believes that this wonderful experience as a Peer Advisor with ASPIRE will give him the opportunity to empower young SJSU students to reach their full potential and ensure that their time at SJSU is indeed a transformative experience for them to grow as an individual and perform to the very best of their ability. When not working with his students, Joshua enjoys sports, music, writing, community organizing, practicing his faith, and spending time with family/friends.



I Love Vietnam!

An Emotional Journey for Peer Advisor Minh Pham

By Minh Pham, Peer Advisor

Beautiful ... mystical ... loud and crowded. The divide between all these visuals are quick and dramatic in Vietnam.

I had the amazing opportunity to return to the country this summer, for the second time in my life. The reason for the trip was a somber one, as I was bringing my mother's ashes back to her homeland to place them in her childhood church. Witnessing the beauty of my surroundings and interacting with the personalities I met, my perspective on how we live has changed immensely. I arrived in Ho Chi Minh City Airport on a balmy Wednesday afternoon. As I stepped off the plane, I felt the humid air warm my skin and beads of sweat form along my hairline. I was warned to put a 10 dollar bill in my passport to ensure an easy exit through customs, but since we weren't bringing anything illegal in, I figured I'd save 30 bucks and give nothing. It worked. Vietnam is a mixture of districts, provinces and towns. I stayed an hour southeast from Saigon, in Tan Phu.

The ride from the airport to my family's house was a shocking welcome to the traffic we would be witnessing for the rest of our three weeks there. Ten years ago, the streets were congested with bikes and some mopeds. Now everybody seems to have a moped, making crossing the street a test for all your senses.

Though there are traffic lights, they're only really followed on larger roads. At a four-way stoplight, tons of mopeds will still race across their red light, leaving the oncoming traffic to just creep slower and slower until they took over the road and rev back to full speed. Luckily, traffic is relatively slow, with most vehicles topping off at 40 mph. Hungry and shaken from our drive, we decided to go for a bowl of Pho Ga- the Vietnamese version of chicken noodle soup. Here, a dollar equals roughly 18,000 dong. A bowl of pho typically goes for 15,000 dong. Yeah ... I was in heaven.

After a filling meal, the tradition of Vietnam natives is to go for a cup of coffee. But not just any cup of Joe. This is strong coffee, with filter cups sitting atop of your ice-filled cups, slowly dripping droplets of dark, almost syrupy goodness. Most Vietnamese people prefer just the coffee, but I like mine with a spoonful of condensed milk to sweeten up the deal. God, just thinking about it makes my mouth water - gulps of heaven for a mere

70 cents. In Vietnam, it's the conversation that makes the coffee. The time spent drinking and talking is supposed to go for about two hours or

even more. People enjoy their coffee, mulling over the hardships of the day and laughing at the irony of them, too. Coffee was needed every day, as most of the time was spent battling it out with market vendors, bargaining for the right price.

Market places are huge here and everyone wants you to buy, even if you're saying no for the 10th time. "It'll look good on you. Trust me," they'd say. Piles of clothes cram tiny booths and every available space has a purpose. And again, most items - such as my "I Love Vietnam" t-shirts - were a dollar.

For a long time, whenever Vietnam was mentioned, the word war was likely to come after. Visuals of smoke, death and military artillery were the main images people knew of Vietnam.



Minh showing her moped skills



A neighborhood in Tan Phu

But since the country took back its government in the '80s, it has been showing what has been there all along— lush scenes of rice patties and its mystical mountains serving as a background, its people who have preserved through oppression and war, and the strength that emanates from its streets and coffee.



A Bowl of Minh's favorite, Vietnamese Snake Soup



A Busy Market in Saigon

"Witnessing the beauty of my surroundings and interacting with the personalities I met, my perspective on how we live has changed immensely"- Minh Pham

HAVE YOU MADE AN APPOINTMENT TO MEET WITH YOUR ADVISOR YET THIS FALL?

ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR SECOND APPOINTMENT?

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP WITH CLASSES AND/OR RECEIVING YOUR FINANCIAL AID AWARD?

What are you waiting for???

Come to the ASPIRE office in Student Services or call (408) 924-2540 to make an appointment!

Fall 2009 Spartan Spotlight: Ryan Wu

By Joshua Barousse, Peer Advisor

When I sat down to speak with San Jose State ASPIRE student, Ryan Wu about his memorable summer in Washington, D.C. as an intern with the U.S. Department of State, he couldn't tell me everything about his experience because some of his assignments were strictly confidential. However, the Senior Global Studies Major mentioned that he had known about the opportunity for the past two years, and had researched it on his own, as many people were actually unaware of the internship. Needless to say, Ryan took interest in finding an internship in Foreign Service because he wants to one day work as a diplomat in a foreign nation. When asked what he was looking forward to most about the internship in our nation's capitol, he replied, "I left with an open mind, and since the department was not allowed to give me much detailed information, I honestly did not know what to expect".

As Ryan then finally embarked on his three month adventure interning with the U.S. Department of State, he soon realized exactly what the experience entailed, which he explained was "a hands-on experience to see the daily routine of how the department operates and how they do their jobs, I really did learn a lot from them".

Although a majority of Ryan's work was

confidential, he did mention that his responsibilities included briefings with Undersecretaries and other top officials in the Department, and served as a tutor to Foreign Service Officers in two different languages. Ryan also noted that some of the main highlights from his experience included meeting former Secretary of State General Colin Powell at a V.I.P. reception, who even took a few minutes to thank Ryan for his service and posed for photos with him. Another highlight Ryan recalls were experiences networking with various Ambassadors and other top Foreign Service Officials that he met at diplomatic receptions at foreign embassies, noting one such high ranking officer from the Pakistan Embassy who approached Ryan at a diplomatic reception at the Hall of America hosted



Ryan with former Secretary of State, Gen. Colin Powell



Secretary Wu?

by the Moroccan embassy, and recognized him after who approached Ryan at a diplomatic reception at the Hall of America hosted by the Moroccan embassy, and recognized him after meeting him days before at the Pakistani embassy reception. Ryan was also privileged to attend exclusive tours of various foreign embassies, the United States Supreme Court, Organization of American States (OAS), as well as the Pentagon during his summer with the State Department.

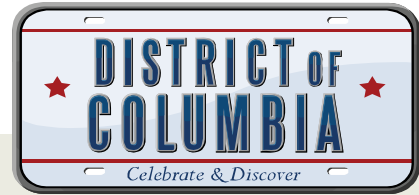
Upon arrival back home to San Jose, Ryan is continuing his service with the State Department, volunteering as the Foreign Affairs Campus Coordinator on the SJSU campus, where his functions are to educate students on the possibility of an internship with the State Department, as well as coordinating guest lectures and semi-

on the SJSU campus. At length, before I concluded our interview, I asked Ryan what advice he has for young college students who are looking to fulfill an internship during their college experience. His response was for students to “first off, find what your passion is. Research internship opportunities in your field of study, and even if you feel you are unqualified for whatever reason, still apply, and stay committed, if you do not apply, you will never know what may come of it”. Upon graduating from SJSU this spring with a BS in Global Studies, Ryan is contemplating between pursuing a Graduate degree in International Relations, applying for a position as an Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Department of State, and joining the U.S. Navy’s Officer Candidate School (OCS). Whichever path he chooses to follow, we are proud of Ryan for being such a great example for our

young ASPIRE students. Thank you for your service Ryan!



Ryan at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.



“I left with an open mind, and since the department was not allowed to give me much detailed information, I honestly did not know what to expect”.- Ryan Wu

ASPIRE Travels down to San Juan Batista/Monterey Bay for First Field Trip of the Fall

By Minh Pham, Peer Advisor



A group of students and staff gathered early on a warm Friday morning for ASPIRE’s annual Fall field trip. Each semester, ASPIRE takes a group of students off-campus, for an unconventional learning experience. This is one of the many activities hosted by the ASPIRE program. In our program, the goal is to create a learning community, where students can bond with other students in the program and use each other as a resource for college. To fulfill that goal, there are day trips, cultural events, barbecues and counseling workshops offered to students throughout the semester. For this Fall 2009 semester, the day was devoted to learning about the area surrounding San Jose. For many students, this is was either their first time getting out of San Jose or

seeing the Monterey Bay. The itinerary consisted of breakfast at the San Juan Bautista Mission, about fifty minutes south of SJSU’s campus. Students recalled working on projects on the Bay Area’s missions in elementary school, but had not seen one until that day. At the mission, students were able to tour the Plaza Hotel, a popular stop for rest and drinking for travelers during the last half of the 19th century.

Though the weather was unusually warm, students still explored the beautiful church, built by native workers under Catholic order during the 1800s. Behind the church was the cemetery where about 4,000 people were buried. Students also toured the sleepy town of

San Juan Bautista, exploring their many shops and ice cream parlors. The mission was a refreshing change of pace, letting students immerse themselves in the history of the Bay Area. Visibly exhausted from the weather and walking, students gathered back on the air-conditioned bus to begin the forty minute drive southeast to the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Rested from the bus ride, students were revived and ready to explore the marine life the aquarium had to offer. Luckily for everyone, the aquarium had just received their first great white shark, which would be displayed at different times of the day. Some other attractions were the pregnant male seahorses, penguins and jellyfishes. For many students, it was their first

time looking at creatures they didn’t even know existed.

The day concluded with a dinner at Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. Restaurant & Market, to the delight of many students. By the time the group came back to campus around 7 p.m., everyone was reluctant to part ways but ready for a good night’s sleep. And after a full day of so many discoveries, it was well deserved.



The Mission at San Juan Bautista



ASPIRE COUNSELING WORKSHOPS

SJSU Office of Counseling Services
Administration Bldg. 201

Phone: 408-924-5910

E-mail: cs0035@email.sjsu.edu

<http://sa.sjsu.edu/counseling/index.html>

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www.sjsu.edu/aspire/

ASPIRE FALL 2009 CALENDAR

- * **Sat 10/10**- SJSU Homecoming Football Game and Tailgate
1 - 8 pm @ Spartan Stadium
- * **Tues 10/13**- Study Abroad Workshop
12 - 1 pm @ Clark Hall Rm 100H
- * **Sat 11/7**- Graduate School Forum for Diversity in Education
7:45 am - 5 pm @ UC Santa Cruz
- * **Thurs 12/3**- Mask Making Party (for ASPIRE Masquerade Ball)
9 am - 5 pm @ ASPIRE office
- * **Fri 12/4**- ASPIRE Masquerade Ball
7 - 10 pm @ University Room (Next to the SJSU Student Union)

For more information, please call the ASPIRE office

(408) 924-2540

Don't miss out on these great events this Fall!

Thinking of Attending Graduate School?

Beyond the Baccalaureate, an ASPIRE Program

By Lois Mardis, Graduate Advisor



Greetings!

My name is Lois, the advisor of Beyond the Baccalaureate component of ASPIRE. If you are an upper division and transfer student that needs help with graduate school advising, job, and career exploration, I am available to help you explore what you plan to do after you receive your undergraduate degree.

As a junior, senior, or transfer student you may be asking yourself questions like:

- * **What do I want to do after I graduate?**
- * **Do I want to go straight into the job market?**
- * **Would I like to attend graduate school? How do I apply and what is the process?**
- * **What jobs can I qualify for with the undergraduate degree I majored in?**
- * **What do I need to do to qualify to work in certain careers?**
- * **What is the benefit of getting a master's degree?**

We'll discuss the possibilities and I can work with you to develop an action plan to help you realize your goals. Additionally, I can assist you with academic advising concerns and questions. I can make sure you are meeting your requirements for your major and for the university so you can graduate according to your timeline.

If you are interested in this process, feel free to contact me or come in for an appointment.

Lois Mardis (408) 924-2543,
lois.mardis@sjsu.edu

