



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS EXPANDING OUR CULTURAL TAPESTRY



Venezuela native Luis Rodriguez

The news that Kalamazoo Valley Community College offers quality education at a fraction of the cost of four-year public and private universities is spreading worldwide. International Student Recruitment staff members Felix Brooks and Diane Finch have already surpassed their goal of enrolling 25 new international students by fall of 2016.

By fall semester there will be more than 60 full-time F1 (non-immigrant status) students enrolled at Kalamazoo Valley. The majority of the college's international students are from Africa, followed by Saudi Arabia. "We are seeing a surge in Saudi students," Brooks says. A change in government funding has meant that students and their families are responsible for the first 30 credits of their schooling. Brooks and Finch are working to build the International Student Recruitment program back up to the enrollment levels that were in place prior to September 11, 2001.

In all, students from about 20 countries are attending Kalamazoo Valley. Last year, 1.13 million international students were enrolled in colleges in the U.S., contributing \$31 billion to the U.S. economy. "It's a two-way street," says Brooks, who serves as director of diversity, inclusion and international admissions. "It gives them a better understanding of our culture. If you want to gain a global perspective, what better place to study than in the U.S.?"

Luis Rodriguez came to the U.S. as a high school exchange student. After studying at Kalamazoo Valley he transferred to Western Michigan University. "My first encounters with Kalamazoo Valley were great," he

says. "I very much liked the campus and the people. Everyone I met – students, faculty and staff were very approachable and friendly. I felt at home, even though I was thousands of miles away from my home country."

"Students tell us repeatedly that this a great place to start," says Finch, who is the associate director of international students. "International students are immersed in a new culture in a new country, so our small class size and individual attention help ease the transition so it's not so overwhelming. And cost is an advantage for sure."

To help spread the word about the benefits of enrolling at Kalamazoo Valley as an international student, Finch recently traveled to Costa Rica to attend a college fair and meet with students. Community Colleges for International Development headed an education fair to Costa Rica where Finch joined 14 other U.S. community colleges to recruit students and meet foreign partners. The recruiting efforts focused on students in their last two years of secondary school. Finch

visited four private high schools and talked with more than 800 students. She also attended a reception with 40 high school deans and participated in a public education fair attended by more than 400 families.

"The students were most interested in studying engineering, medicine, and business," Finch says. "There was also a lot of interest in our new culinary program and our programs offered at the Center for New Media."

In addition to describing the academic programs Kalamazoo Valley offers and explaining how they can transfer to Western Michigan University, Finch tried to entice students with the exposure to winter and their first snow as well as the diverse Kalamazoo community.

Thanks to a new partnership, the international student exchange organization Foreign Links Around the Globe (FLAG) will start assisting Finch and Brooks with their recruitment efforts.

Finch says personal connections are essential in bridging the gap between Kalamazoo and distant countries. "A lot of our students are here because of a friend of a friend or a relative," Finch says. "We're always trying to reach out to our current international students to help us keep that pipeline open."

Brooks and Finch are also helping to educate staff and students about other cultures. "We're trying to provide opportunities for our international students and domestic students, faculty and staff to learn about each other's cultures," Finch says. A Taste of Africa event that International Student Recruitment co-hosted in March was well attended and included a catered African meal and presentations by faculty and international students. A similar event focusing on the Middle East is planned for October. In addition, Finch and Brooks will present an international forum for staff this winter.

"International student recruitment is not new to our campus, but this is a renewed emphasis," Brooks says. The new sustainable brewing and culinary arts programs are also gaining the interest of students from afar.

Brooks says Kalamazoo Valley students also benefit when they interact with their international classmates. "This might be their first experience with another culture," Brooks says. "This is a nation of immigrants, and immigrants have contributed to our culture in a multitude of ways. All of our students are welcome and have something to contribute. Our international students add one more facet of diversity in terms of student body and we think everybody benefits."



Taste of Africa participants (l-r) Gabriel Agor, Angella Nabaweesi and Emmanuel Oladipupo

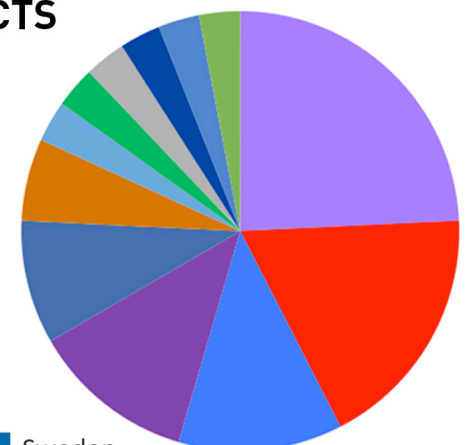
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUMMER 2016 FAST FACTS

International students: 33

- Engineering (8)
- Liberal Arts (6)
- Business (4)
- General Studies (4)
- Computer Science (3)
- Nursing (2)
- Criminal Justice (1)
- Respiratory Care (1)
- Social Work (1)
- Automotive (1)
- Marketing (1)
- Communication (1)

Countries represented: 19

- Bahamas
- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- Egypt
- India
- Kenya
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Saudia Arabia
- Senegal
- South Korea
- Sudan
- Sweden
- United Kingdom
- Vietnam
- Zimbabwe



UNIVERSITY CENTER

A SEAMLESS TRANSITION

Continuing to pursue key strategies that provide enhanced opportunities for its students, Kalamazoo Valley Community College has created its University Center which combines the degree completion opportunities of four-year schools with the local convenience and services offered at a community college campus.

To put it another way, the University Center concept tightens the linkage between a two-year associate degree and a four-year baccalaureate degree. It allows students to seamlessly transition from one level of education to the next without leaving Kalamazoo Valley's campuses.

Throughout its five decades, Kalamazoo Valley has worked with four-year schools on articulation agreements, meaning that individual courses successfully completed could transfer and apply to earning the four-year degree.

"That is a course-by-course articulation," says Craig Jbara, the college's vice president for strategic business and community development, who is shepherding the evolving approach for the college. "The University Center is a program-to-program articulation."

First on board in the University Center team was Davenport University,

which moved from its long-standing campus on West Main to partner with Kalamazoo Valley in July of 2015. That fall, the first Davenport courses began being offered on the Texas Township Campus. These courses could lead to bachelor's degrees in accounting, general business, management, medical-case management, and nursing. There will be no loss of Kalamazoo Valley credits that apply to a particular degree.

Discussions are underway with a half dozen other four year institutions to expand the degree opportunities for students in the near future, Jbara says.

He believes this is a win-win-win situation for all concerned.

For students facing the ever-growing cost of higher education and training, they can stay in their home communities, lower expenses as much as possible, and advance in a convenient and rich learning environment.

The center simplifies the degree-completion process as students stay in the same buildings and take advantage of many familiar college services such as the libraries and computer labs in addition to the variety of new services offered by the four-year school.

For universities and colleges that come under the University Center umbrella, there is a take-off on the adage that half a loaf of bread is better than no loaf at all. Chances are substantial that schools in other parts of the state would not be connected to certain students without this approach.

The third "win" is the rest of the community. "The economic development of a region," Jbara says, "has been shown to be related to the proportion of residents with advanced educational degrees. Programs that expand the pool of qualified candidates in support of economic-development plans of the region are encouraged."

"The positive feedback has been great so far," Jbara says. "It seems to be a great benefit for students who are watching their dollars." This program has evolved from the 50-year legacy of Kalamazoo Valley – what is best for students. Another positive is the opportunity for connections and linkages to potential employers, which is another hallmark of Kalamazoo Valley.

"I know this program articulation concept may be something of a stretch for some universities because of the traditional approach," he says, "but everybody knows that



Kristi Zimmerman, Sr. Advisor meets with student Marcia Brew in Davenport's Texas Township office.

times are changing. The Davenport collaboration has been very successful with more partners offering a variety of other program area degrees to come. I believe this is a long-term approach to helping students in Southwest Michigan."

Here's the basic tenet of the University Center, according to its guidelines: "Kalamazoo Valley Community College wishes to cooperate with all four-year colleges and universities that desire to bring the final two years of undergraduate degrees, entire graduate degrees, and other credit programs of study to Southwest Michigan."

DR. PHILLIP POTTER

RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD



Dr. Phillip Potter receives the Distinguished Alumni Award from Foundation Director Steve Doherty.

Dr. Phillip Potter, an acclaimed physician, is Kalamazoo Valley Community College 2016 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year.

Each year, an alumnus is chosen based on their personal achievement and contributions to the betterment of the community. Potter, 70, of Atlanta, Ga., was honored at the Kalamazoo Valley Community College Foundation's May 19 Opportunities For Education fundraising event for student scholarships.

Potter's story is one of transformation, from a humble farm boy to an experienced perinatologist.

Following his graduation from high school in Kalamazoo, he recalls a short unsuccessful stint in college where, he says, "I didn't have a clue." He had never been away from home and "to make a long story short, I packed my bags and joined the Navy." He was 20. At that time there was, as he puts it wryly, "a discussion going on in Vietnam." And so he served during the war, returned home and registered to attend Kalamazoo Valley. He was 26.

Potter was assigned a special counselor specifically for veterans, who asked him what he wanted to do. His reply? "I want to go to med school." He never forgot that counselor, who outlined what he had to do. That direction, and the college writing course he needed, helped to lay the foundation for everything that followed. "The rest of it wouldn't have happened if not for Kalamazoo Valley," Potter says today.

It's difficult to estimate the number of women and infants Potter has saved with his devotion and care – but that number is considerable.

Dr. Potter says he may not be able to personally thank those who helped him when he was a student, but he can make a difference in the lives of students now.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT
Natalie Patchell

has taught transitional courses in reading, study skills, career development, "First Year Experience" and children's literature for more than 30 years and has served as the lead instructor for the transitional education courses in the English department. She was co-membership chair for MDEC and has served in other leadership roles for the consortium.

"Natalie has not settled for the status-quo," Lindsley says. "She has continued to serve her college and community with great dedication and enthusiasm. She is fiercely committed to creating and supporting quality educational opportunities for all students and exhibits a passion for teaching and leadership that deserves to be recognized."

Patchell developed and launched a "First Year Experience" course for all first-time-in-college students. Under her leadership, the pilot course has expanded to multiple sections and involves instructors from many different content areas across the college. Since 2014, Patchell has led the college-wide team in developing and launching this First Year Experience course as part of a college-wide retention initiative.

Kalamazoo Valley Community College English instructor Natalie Patchell received the Michigan Developmental Education Consortium's 2016 Outstanding Educator of the Year award. Patchell was nominated for the award by Cheryl Almeda, chair of the English department, and Denise Lindsley, director of learning and testing services for the college.

The Michigan Developmental Education Consortium serves post-secondary education by creating a network for educators to research and share best practices, to refine strategies, and to advocate for developmental education.

Patchell, who has worked at Kalamazoo Valley since 1980,

PHI THETA KAPPA BUZZ ON

The honor society at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Phi Theta Kappa – Alpha Rho Nu, is working to combat and spread awareness about the declining bee populations.

The chapter's 2016 Honors in Action project is called "Buzz On" and involves hosting the documentary *Queen of the Sun* throughout the year for free, selling DIY bamboo bee habitats to provide housing for native bees in gardens, and giving out free seed packets at all Honors in Action events to supply food for bees in area gardens and yards.

The starter habitats are currently available for \$6 each until December. Orders can be placed by sending a message to the PTK email at ptk@kvcc.edu.

PTK's objective is to recognize and encourage scholarship among two-year college students by providing opportunities for the development of leadership and service, for an intellectual climate for exchange of ideas and ideals, for lively fellowship for scholars, and for stimulation of interest in continuing academic excellence.

Kalamazoo Valley's Lead Student Success Advocate Cristina Babaris serves as the Advisor to PTK. She

says involvement in the organization continues to grow. "The students have created a system that allows new students to get involved on campus and in the community," Babaris says. PTK membership is open to students who have successfully completed 12 college-level credit hours with a 3.5 grade point average or better. To maintain membership, students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.25.

"Alpha Rho Nu is an active chapter, offering activities in the four hallmarks of Phi Theta Kappa: scholarship, leadership, service and fellowship," Babaris says. She noted that Alpha Rho Nu officers Krysta Mahl, Justin Wood and Hayley Younce were three of the eight students who were named the Distinguished Regional Officer Team for 2015. Kalamazoo Valley's PTK chapter currently is working toward five-star status. Phi Theta Kappa chapters have five levels of engagement that progress from local, campus involvement to regional involvement to international involvement. The Five Star Chapter Plan is the road map guiding the chapter through the levels. Chapters should use the plan as a guide for building strong, active chapters.

"One of the things I love about PTK is that the students who want to get involved go above and beyond,"



PTK officer Elaine Chiu displays a completed bee habitat.

Babaris says. "They take on everything they can to get the most out of their experience. It's cool to see how hard they work on things. These students really push the boundaries of what we think of as experience in a community college."

PTK member Ariel Bradford serves as vice president of public relations and chair of Honors in Action for Alpha Rho Nu. She says PTK involvement has enhanced her college life. "My involvement in Phi Theta Kappa has helped make my college experience more fulfilling," she says. "Prerequisites can be frustrating, but knowing that having a high GPA will continue my membership in PTK keeps me on track. The Society graciously sent me to Washington, D.C. and to Mount Pleasant for conferences, and I'm looking forward to attending the Honors Institute in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. These conferences allow me to meet the real future of the world – students who are aspiring to make a change for the good."

ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION HONORS KALAMAZOO VALLEY

Kalamazoo Valley Community College was honored with 2015 Tree Campus USA® recognition by the Arbor Day Foundation for its commitment to effective urban forest management.

Tree Campus USA is a national program created in 2008 by the Arbor Day Foundation to honor colleges and universities for effective campus forest management and for engaging staff and students in conservation goals.



Kalamazoo Valley Community College achieved the title by meeting Tree Campus USA's five standards, which include maintaining a tree advisory committee, a campus tree-care plan, dedicated annual expenditures for its campus tree program, an Arbor Day observance and student service-learning project. Currently there are 254 campuses across the United States with this recognition.

Kalamazoo Valley's Arbor Day tree-planting ceremony was held on April 26. The activity was led by the Phi Theta Kappa honor society and included help from students, faculty, staff and community members.

"Our Arbor Day ceremony gives us a day annually to reflect on the importance of being environmentally conscious and the positive impact trees make on our world," says Dan Maley, director of facilities and construction management for Kalamazoo Valley. "Planting trees is a way of giving back and getting together as a community to celebrate the importance of our forests."

Matt Harris, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation, praised the effort. "Participating in Tree Campus USA sets a fine example for other colleges and universities, while helping to create a healthier planet for us all," he says.



Volunteer and alumni Randy Counterman of Native Landscapes plants a tree.

The Arbor Day Foundation has helped campuses throughout the country plant thousands of trees, and Tree Campus USA colleges and universities invested more than \$36.8 million in campus forest management last year.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT
Monica Henry

Cooper Township resident Monica Henry asked for a blood pressure cuff for her ninth birthday. She knew way back then that she wanted to work in the medical field. Despite a number of challenges, the non-traditional student has graduated from the Kalamazoo Valley Community College nursing program with an associate degree in applied science and is studying for the state board exam before she transfers.

"After high school I attended a four-year college, but I had a stroke and was left thinking maybe my dreams were over," Henry says. In 1995 she attended the EMT program at Kalamazoo Valley. She worked at a local ambulance company for years before becoming a nurse's aide. Henry's husband Mark is still an EMT. Henry was pregnant with her second child when she had another stroke. "Again I feared my dreams would never be reached," she says. Her daughter was born with many complications and has gone through 17 surgeries.

Henry stayed home to take care of her youngest daughter who is now 14 and doing well. Still, she felt there was something missing. "Four years ago with crazy nerves and a lump in my throat I announced to my family that I was going back to school to get my degree," Henry says. "Kalamazoo Valley welcomed me with open arms. I was nervous because I suffer from dysphasia and there are times when I just can't get my words out. To show my two beautiful daughters that with hard work and determination, anything is possible, I went back to school."

Henry maintained a 4.0 average throughout her prerequisite courses. She received scholarships that were a huge help to her family while she completed her studies.

She graduated from the nursing program in April with honors. "I proudly walked on to that stage and shook the amazing president's hand with gratitude for allowing me to reach my dreams and show my girls, Victoria and Makayla, that anything truly is possible with hard work and determination. I cannot say enough about this amazing college. They worked with me and everyone in my class to help us succeed."

KALAMAZOO VALLEY'S HIDDEN GEM: THE HONORS PROGRAM

Never heard of the Honors Program at Kalamazoo Valley Community College? That's not surprising. It has been quietly fulfilling its mission without fanfare since it began in 1986.

It's a bit of a "stealth program," says Kalamazoo Valley faculty member and honors program director Stephen Louisell, who conceptualized the program.



Jesse Kooistra, Honors Program graduate

Recent graduate Lydia Mott called it "Kalamazoo Valley's hidden gem."

The Kalamazoo Valley Community College Honors Program recognizes students, selected on a portfolio of grade point average, test scores, essays, community service, character and leadership. It emphasizes studies that deepen and broaden student knowledge in and across disciplines.

The myth of community college, Louisell says, is that coaches send their athletes there to improve their grade point averages. The reality, he says, is an educational program not unlike that of four-year colleges and, in the case of



Lydia Mott, Honors Program graduate

Kalamazoo Valley Honors Program, an academic rigor that's equal to and, in some cases, surpasses that of four-year colleges.

Louisell's inspiration for the program was Jane Jacobs and her acclaimed book, "The Death and Life of Great American Cities." The theme of the program is New Urbanism and Jacobs' ideas on how to create vibrant cities, since 70 percent of the world's population will likely live in cities by 2050.

The importance of critical thinking is at the heart of that philosophy.

"We've had good success," Louisell says. "Many of our students go on to the University of Michigan." He also mentioned Kalamazoo College, where a number of their graduates have matriculated following honors, as well as Ivy League schools, such as Columbia, and the Seven Sisters, such as Mount Holyoke.

Honors Program students spend a considerable number of hours each week

preparing their assignments, he noted. "The workload is equivalent to what is expected at selective liberal arts colleges." No exceptions are made to program requirements, which specify weekly writing assignments, seven honors classes in English, the humanities and math, as well as 15 hours of community service each semester.

Students must apply to the program and provide a resume of their accomplishments, as well as official transcripts, ACT scores and evidence of their composition ability. Finalists are interviewed by the director and notified about the decision.

"Being an honors student completely changed my perspective on education and reshaped my academic priorities, kindling a desire for achievement, excellence and passionate studies," says recent graduate Jesse Kooistra.

"The Honors Program made a difference in my education," recent graduate Shawn



Shawn Fillenworth, Honors Program graduate

Fillenworth says. "I was able to be in very small classes as well as with other students who had the same desire as me to perform well in the classroom."

Fillenworth says classes were rigorous, but noted that the Honors scholarship pays back tuition costs, which is a boon to students.

This year's graduating class of Honors Program students are:

Emily Crandall, a Schoolcraft High School graduate, who will transfer to Western Michigan University to specialize in secondary education and history.

Mara Fazio, a Plainwell High School graduate, who will transfer to WMU to specialize in biomedical science.

Shawn Fillenworth, a Mattawan High School graduate, is transferring to WMU to study chemical engineering.

Ayanna Gray, a home-school graduate, will marry soon and transfer to a yet-to-be-determined college near her new home.

Cassandra Kiewiet, a Heritage Christian Academy graduate, who will transfer to WMU to study biomedical sciences.

Jesse Kooistra, a home-school graduate, who will transfer to Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina to specialize in biology.

Lydia Mott, a Portage Northern High School graduate, who will transfer to Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, to study nursing.

Lynsey Wall, a Paw Paw High School graduate, who will transferring to the University of Michigan, to specialize in microbiology.

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Honeybee hives were recently installed at the Food Innovation Center on the Bronson Healthy Living Campus. The bees will help pollinate the center's vegetable crops and their honey will be harvested in the fall for use in the culinary training kitchen.

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KV Focus is a publication of Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Questions about the publication may be directed to the college marketing department at 269.488.4821.

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