

Thursday, April 16, 2009

International Village welcomes global students

By **Katie Land**, news editor

Oakland University's increased focus on diverse and global views is being brought home, quite literally. This fall, a new on-campus residence hall, the **International Village**, will welcome students from across the globe.

The village will open with four apartments housing a total of 16 students, and will grow to encompass the entire building. The village is open to all Oakland students, both domestic and foreign, and is centered on cultural exchange, learning and celebration. It offers a complete immersion experience and fosters new opportunities for students, faculty and staff.

"International students, who often share apartments with students from their own home countries, may step out of their comfort zones by rooming with domestic students," said Petra Knoche, assistant director of the International Students and Scholars Office. "Few situations provide such a dynamic and engaging experience of another culture as daily, personal interaction with someone from a foreign country."

The village will regularly celebrate cultural holidays and diverse social activities, as well as organize international potlucks, movie nights and excursions to plays, museums and festivals. The goal behind all this, of course, is understanding and inclusion. It is to encourage diversity in every sense of the word, according to Amanda Fylan, assistant director of housing, enrollment and marketing.

"It will definitely attract a more diverse group of students. Students with different majors, whether it is political science or French, will find it refreshing to engage in a conversation with a student coming from a different country and with a different perspective," Fylan said. "The village will provide an atmosphere for students to gain a global outlook and become well-rounded, well-informed individuals."

Students will work closely with the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO), participate in the International Allies Organization's Learn About Me and Open Doors Virtual Tours programs and will be welcome to join any of Oakland's 16 multicultural student organizations or 170 general student organizations.

"Since this is the first time this type of housing is being offered to Oakland University students, I will stay in touch with the students to assess and acknowledge their needs and to see what ISSO could do to enhance their experience," said Sehar Kazi, an ISSO graduate assistant who will correspond between the office and residents.

The ISSO will sponsor monthly meetings and events to promote discussion and address questions or concerns and learn about campus events, activities and organizations. Additionally, they will schedule resident transportation to shopping malls, grocery stores, government offices, pharmacies and more.

The four bedroom apartments come furnished and the building provides community recreation rooms, two fire places, laundry facilities and more. The benefits of this type of housing go both ways and encourage cultural exchange for both international students at OU and American students.

"As the world itself becomes more and more a global village, domestic student residents of the village can take advantage of a rich opportunity to grow with relationships and knowledge of people from other countries and cultures," Knoche said. "Without the expense of international travel, American residents of the village will be able to help develop peace and understanding among people of different perspectives, unfamiliar customs, and with a wide range of personal styles and beauty."

SUMMARY

The International Village, Oakland University's new on-campus residence hall, will welcome students from across the globe this fall.

Created by Katherine Land - Deleted (land@oakland.edu) on Thursday, April 16, 2009

Modified by Katherine Land - Deleted (land@oakland.edu) on Thursday, April 16, 2009

Article Start Date: Thursday, April 16, 2009