Terry Campus Celebrates International Students Day

DOVER – The classroom came alive with the colorful costumes, lively music and dancing, and stories of their native countries as international students shared their presentations with classmates and faculty members in November.

A former student also “Skyped in” from South Korea to be part of the celebration of cultures. This learning event gave students for whom English is their second language the chance to practice their skills in front of a friendly and enthusiastic audience.

A presentation by Liberian students centered on the timely topic of elections. Their purpose is the same as in the U.S.: to decide public questions and elect representatives. On election day, although they have two tribes fighting for power, the people try and put aside their differences and push the country forward. Although they have not fully succeeded, Liberians desire a free, fair, and transparent election process that provides citizens with freedom of speech and choices. Students from Cameroon depicted their country as “diverse, fun-loving, and friendly.” French and English are the national languages, as well as many tribal dialects. These students showed off beautiful native dress, as well as examples of local cuisine such as koki beans with plantains, yams or potatoes, and water fufu (finger food) for dipping in eru(mixture of cow skin, vegetables and fish). They demonstrated some native dances performed at weddings, before battles, or to install a new tribal chief.

“Diwali – Festival of Lights” was the topic of students from India. Their presentation was given on Day 4 of this 5-day festival featuring activities that depict “good over evil,” forgiveness, and brotherhood. People decorate and dress in beautiful and colorful ways for Diwali. They wash coins to worship the Goddess of Wealth, go to Temple to pray for protection from evil spirits, and celebrate the return of their king to his kingdom after 14 years in exile. Love between siblings is central to the celebration. Brothers visit their sisters and sisters welcome brothers with sweets and gifts. Fireworks cap off the celebration. Haitian students spoke about independence, giving a brief history of their country located in the Caribbean Sea and how it became the first Free Black Republic on Jan. 1, 1804. Explorer Christopher Columbus established the Republic of Haiti in 1492 as part of his North American expedition.

Students from Mexico and Guatemala focused their presentation on music and architecture. They discussed the genesis of instruments beginning with gourds and wooden boards and, in the 20th century, replacing gourds with metal parts. They showed a video of five musicians playing a marimba – a sort of xylophone instrument. The students then showed photos of Spanish architecture, colorful Aztec Temples and Pyramids, and Indian and Arabic temples.

Nigerian and Kenyan students contrasted educational opportunities in their countries with the United States. The number of students per teacher is high in Africa, and students there and in the U.S. understand that finding work will require them to have more than a high school diploma. With the opportunities afforded to college students, the students said, “The sky’s the limit!”

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