First Generation September Recap

The First Generation program hosted its first social of the year on September 15. The participants enjoyed the great weather at the picnic and we also played two games of volleyball. 28 students attended the event. On September 26, the First Generation Retreat took place at Camp Friendship. The group of 7 women earned two credits for the Bronze certificate on the ILCP program, participated in low and high ropes course, and got to know other first generation students. We ended the day with a bonfire and roasted marshmallows.

The Mentor Program was kicked off on Monday, September 28, with a dinner. Currently there are 13 students participating in the mentor program. We also held our First Year Workshop: Time Management on the 29th.
The Institute for Women’s Leadership

The Institute for Women’s Leadership – A place for YOU!

The Institute for Women’s Leadership – formerly the Center for Women – is a completely student-run institute that works to empower women to become leaders, both locally and globally, by inspiring inclusive dialogue, reflective thinking, and ethical action that celebrates and recognizes women as shapers of our world. So far this year the IWL has had extremely successful programs, and is looking forward to the many events that are coming up soon… We hope you are too!

• What we’ve done

With two Program Coordinators, the IWL is able to offer even more of the programs you love. The first reading group of the year filled up after just one announcement, and has nearly 30 people on the waiting list for the next group (but don’t get discouraged, there is plenty of room for you to get involved!). Lunch With A Leader – an opportunity for Bennies to have a free lunch with prominent women leaders from our community – has also been hugely successful. Debra Leigh, a professor of dance and organizer of anti-racist efforts in St. Cloud, was the IWL’s first guest.

• What we’re doing

Next month’s Lunch With A Leader promises to be just as stimulating and thought-provoking – and we hope you can join us! The IWL is also planning a film series and discussion; more reading groups; and several outdoor expeditions from our Women’s Expeditions Coordinator. The first trip is free of charge, and 12 Bennies will make their way to the Black Hills of South Dakota to orienteer, hike and develop their leadership skills as outdoorswomen. Look for more trips to come – including a dog-sledding trip just for women this winter.

• What we want YOU to do

Stop into our office (in the HCC, next to O’Connell’s), check out our website at www.csbsju.edu/iwl, suggest speakers and ideas, or come to our events. The Institute for Women’s Leadership is here for YOU, and we will do what we can to help you develop your leadership skills in whatever ways you want to explore them.
I never thought I would ever go to China in my lifetime. It was never a place that stuck out as one of the countries in the world I wanted to visit. I was not against the idea of going there, it just did not appeal to me like other places did. I was struck by the wonders of Europe, but I never thought twice about going to China. That was until I was given the opportunity to participate in CSB/SJU’s Summer Research Exchange Program to China.

When one of my professors suggested that I apply, I thought about what I really did know about the country. It was not much. Images of the Great Wall, Chinese food, chopsticks, the recent Olympics, and pandas popped into my mind. But that was about it.

However, as I started to think about what all these places, things, and ideas really were, I was intrigued. How much more was there to the story of the Great Wall? What is considered Chinese cuisine in the United States anything like the food common in China? Are all meals really eaten with chopsticks? How has the Olympics changed the face of China? And are pandas really as cute as they seem to be?

My mind was abuzz, and I knew I wanted to go to China to explore all these ideas and more. Soon, I found that I was accepted on the program and come last May, I found myself on a plane to Beijing. I could not believe it. By the end of my six weeks of adventures to Beijing, Beibei/Chongqing, and Chengdu, I still could not believe all the wonderful experiences I had had and all that I had learned.

I climbed the Great Wall. I ate some of the most wonderful (and weirdest) food I have had in my life. I mastered the art of chopsticks. I visited baby pandas at a panda base. I played badminton with the locals. I helped Chinese students with their English. I learned how to play mahjong. I visited the largest carved stone Buddha in the world. I saw a Sichuan opera. And so much more, including conducting research.

As I stated above, I was a part of the Summer Research Exchange Program, which was about much more than just going to China. On this program, participants are given the opportunity to do undergraduate research abroad. I was able to begin my research for my senior Honors thesis project by researching Chinese history and culture as well as popular Chinese folktales which could be adapted into an improvisational drama format that could inspire a participation drama for second and third graders.

Returning to the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University, I continued my research focusing on the use of theater as pedagogy.

This semester, I have been acting as a team-leader/director for six college students who have developed and rehearsed the improvisational drama scenario, which will be performed at area elementary schools over Long Weekend.

Jen applied for and received some of the out of the classroom first generation funds to help support this trip.

By Jen Richter, Senior
**Upcoming First Generation events!**

**Mark your calendar for these upcoming First Generation Events!**

**First Year Workshop:**
**Study Skills and Test Preparation**  
Thursday, October 15 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm  
Murray 001  
Presenter: Mark Shimota, Academic Advising

**Sophomore Workshop:**
**Starting Your Resume**  
Tuesday, October 20 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm  
Career Services Conference Lounge, Academic Services Building  
Presenter: Career Services Staff member

**Family Weekend**  
**First Generation Reception**  
Saturday, October 24 4 pm to 5 pm  
President’s Conference Room, Gorecki

**Social:** **Make Your Own Cards**  
Wednesday, October 28 7pm to 9 pm  
Mary Commons Lounge  
We will have four stations of different cards you can make. Refreshments served. Make one or all of the cards.

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**Upcoming Campus Events and Activities**

**October 2009**

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