

# The Holy Cross Chronicle

Student Newspaper at Our Lady of Holy Cross College

New Orleans, Louisiana

Fall 2015



Photo by Matt Picard

## Change Is In the Air at OLHCC

By Alane Templet

As Our Lady of Holy Cross College approaches its 100th year of founding, the College is attracting more and more students. According to the latest statistics, the College increased its enrollment by approximately 100 students over the previous year.

The reason for the increased enrollment is the availability of more scholarships, more rigorous recruitment, and the growing interest in graduate programs at OLHCC. There are more organizations for students to participate in than ever, and every student is bound to find a club he or she would be interested in.

In addition, there have been many changes around campus. As soon as you walk in the door, you'll immediately notice that the signage and room numbers have changed. Many students were slightly confused at first, but after a couple weeks, students were well adjusted and found their way around campus easily.

Welcome Week changed its routine this semester. This time, Welcome Week began the very first week of school. Monday was a sweet kick off to the semester with an ice cream social. Tuesday came in style when students and staff members participated in a fashion show. Even Dr. Landry showed off his moves on the runway! Wednesday was the day to get your grub on—there was delicious barbeque for

everyone to enjoy. There were TWO events on Thursday—the Back to School Mass and the NOLA Zephyrs game! Students were given free tickets to the baseball game, courtesy of Student Life.

You may have noticed some changes in the Hurricane Café as well. The dining area has been expanded, so there's more space to enjoy your tasty meals. Also, there is delicious Community Coffee and flavorful teas for you to enjoy.

The Library began Saturday hours on September 12 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This is on a trial basis; the more students who come into the Library on Saturday increases the probability of Saturday hours continuing in future semesters.

On August 29, 2015, OLHCC volunteers joined others as part of New Orleans's Katrina 10 Service Day. OLHCC volunteers went to Dwight D. Eisenhower Academy of Global Studies School, where our own provost, Dr. Dahmes, was principal for 14 years. Volunteers painted exterior doors, worked on landscaping around the campus, and prepared the courtyard spaces for the student gardens. It proved to be a wonderful experience of working with others to benefit the community.

(Continued on page 2)



Photo by Tracey Allen

Tracey Allen, Sarah Wiltz, and Alex Kloor of the Ecology Club and Katelyn Sannasardo and Lauren Laurent of the American Medical Student Association make rain barrels to collect rain water without using the school's water system.

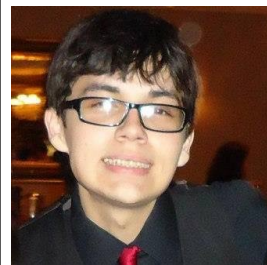
**Our Lady of Holy Cross College Business Club/SGA Golf Tournament**  
Benefiting: Help 4 Heroes, Autism Society of Greater New Orleans, and Team Gleason  
**Celebrity Golfer: Terry McDermott from The Voice on NBC**  
Date: Monday, March 7, 2016  
12:30 Shotgun Start  
English Turn Golf and Country Club

## OLHCC Grads Create New Businesses

By Ricky Twigg\*

There are two young entrepreneurs that are making a difference in the city of New Orleans. They graduated from Our Lady of Holy Cross College, both have been awarded the Dean's List achievement, and both are guest lectures in the Business Program. These two alumni are David Lamouranne and Ricky Twigg. Together, they are designing and building sustainable cool roofing systems and reducing the Urban Heat Island Effect in the city of New Orleans.

Ricky graduated from OLHCC in 2014 with a degree in Psychology and a minor in Philosophy. He is currently a graduate student studying Clinical Mental Health. After he graduated high school, he founded his first company, Unchained Thought Enterprises, LLC. Ricky targeted an untapped market at the time and focused on social media consulting, which was quickly becoming a necessary business marketing tool. Several companies acquired his services for consulting, such as Enphase Energy, companies from the hit TV show *Shark Tank*, and other non-profits. The company expanded into emerging technologies, such as 3D printing, GMO's, and solar consulting. He has been featured on WWL, NOLA.com, and many national syndicates. Eventually, he became the director of research and development for GreenStar, a business created by fellow alumnus David Lamouranne.



David received his B.S in Business in 2012. He has earned his own success by creating jobs and saving the environment. His driven purpose emerged primarily from being forced into a new life after Hurricane Katrina. He felt a sense of

responsibility that we all felt after the hurricane: if we want this city to return, it will take everyone to make it happen. He began to push and usher in sustainable thinking and business practices, both at work and at home. This created his clear direction for where to go and how to grow.

David started in commercial construction building McDonald's restaurants.

Quickly rising through the ranks and directly working for all 50 McDonald's corporate locations in Louisiana, and some from Mississippi to Florida. David's entrepreneurial spirit had kicked into full gear again—he was in the back painting a corral for McDonald's and realized a lot of waste oil being carried away. He inquired where it was going and was told it was used in animal byproduct, binders in dog food, and even cosmetics. Appalled by this, he began to devise different ways to change the world by converting McDonald's oil into fuel. After Katrina, people were paying \$4.00+ per gallon of fuel right after the storm, but he believed and knew he could do better.

David left for Colorado and went to the N.R.E.L. (Nation's Renewable Energy Laboratory) where he learned how to transesterify waste oils into biodiesel fuel. He later traveled to California and learned how to convert a diesel engine to run on waste grease. He brought both of these technologies home, started and partnered with a small startup biofuel company and converted his entire fleet to run on waste oil produced from McDonald's and got off the petroleum pipeline.



This was all in response to the adversity faced in a post hurricane-stricken landscape.

David decided that it was time to take the next step and bring this to McDonald's. After all, he was taking McDonald's grease and powering his vehicles down the street, so why not take their waste oil and build a co-generator to take the restaurant off the grid? He invented a few clever ways to get in touch with the V.P and national decision makers, and he pitched the idea. They loved it, but told David "all they cared about was hamburgers," and if he funded the project himself they would give him a pilot store to implement it in. A generous investor found him, funded this project, but then passed away in the second month, and so did the money.

This heartbreaking event caused David to re-evaluate how to make McDonald's more sustainable without the money to fund the past project. He needed to start thinking differently about how the restaurant consumed energy. After extensive research he found several different technologies that cut down the electrical consumption. The most effective was a solar reflective white coating that went on the roof top of the building. This cut the heat down dramatically, 50-60 degrees cooler. It was quite impressive. In addition to cooling it down, it also made it wind and storm resistant by creating a seamless monolithic surface, and waterproof! He did three more locations and got the attention of many companies. He then got a call to do John Deere Manufacturing plant in Thibodaux, Louisiana. One of their buildings alone was over 250,000 sq. ft. It was at this point that David started a roofing company.

(Continued on page 2)





Submitted by Paul Trinh

2015-2016 Student Nursing Board at State Convention. Pictured above are top row L to R: RJ Pedroso, Megan Southwood, Mrs. Marie McGregor, Lacey Rowell, and Paul Trinh. Seated L to R: Camrynn Dodge, Jocelyn Amador, Megan Gaines, and Angelica Walton.

### \*Nursing & Allied Health Spotlight\*

-Three Junior Nursing students were elected to state office at the Louisiana Association of Student Nurses convention in September: Angelica Walton, President; Megan Gaines, Treasurer; and Maggie Gatlin, Parliamentarian. Two Junior nursing students were awarded scholarships: Vanyti A. Rodriguez, Financial Need Scholarship, and Amber L. Bladsacker, Breakthrough to Nursing Scholarship. The OLHCC Student Nurses Association won the state Community Health Project Award.

-Senior Rad Tech student and class President Ashley Puglise was asked to represent the Louisiana Society of Radiologic Technologists at the American Society of Radiologic Technologists Student Leadership Development Program in Las Vegas, which will take place in July.

**Congratulations! OLHCC is proud of you!**

#### (Changes, from page 1)

The food science program is well under way at OLHCC. Five students are food science majors, and there are two classes scheduled for the Spring 2016 semester: Food Laws and Regulations, and Food Processing and Preservation. A new laboratory has been built so that more biological sciences classes can be available. It is located near the Moreau Center. Classes are now being held in the new lab, and the modern technology in the facility is outstanding.

On October 2, former New Orleans City Councilwoman Jackie Clarkson and Sr. Carolyn Bourgeois MSC were honored as the Marianites of the Year at the Excelsior Scholarship Fundraising Gala held at The Henry Shane Cars of Yesteryears Museum.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast was held on Thursday, November 12 at the Metairie Country Club. Over 250 members of the OLHCC community attended the record-breaking event,

and over \$100,000 was raised for scholarships. The keynote speaker was the President/Chairman of the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation, Mrs. Phyllis M. Taylor. Dr. Landry said Mrs. Taylor “delivered a warm and heart-felt talk” and was “outstanding” and “memorable.”

There are many things to look forward to in the upcoming year. Planning for OLHCC’s Centennial celebration is already underway. The College was founded in 1916. A committee has been formed, which consists of students, faculty, alumni, and board members, led by Vice President Ken Tedesco to ensure the Centennial will be a remarkable celebration. The celebration will begin with the May 2016 commencement ceremony held at the Mahalia Jackson Theater of Performing Arts and will continue through the May 2017 graduation. There are plans for a huge public relations and fundraising campaign to help ensure the Centennial celebration will be an unforgettable experience.

#### (Business, from page 1)

Today, David has been featured in multiple publications from *Biz New Orleans*, *New Orleans City Business* *Innovator of the Year*, “Out to Lunch” on NPR radio, WWL T.V., to *Gambit*, along with being a member of some prestigious organizations, such as the U.S.G.B.C, LifeCity, Energy Star, Cool Roof Counsel, plus many more.

He has donated work to the Legacy House in the Lower Ninth Ward. He has designated 1% of all jobs to be donated to charities, such as The Center for Missing and Exploited Children, St. Jude’s, MD Anderson, and many more. He has offset over 7,800,000 metric tons of CO2 emissions in the city of New Orleans and has coated 1,000,000

square feet of dark and heat absorbing roofs to be cool and solar reflective. This directly reduces the Urban Heat Island Effect, helps to keep utilities bills lower, and prevents people from overheating in the work place.

When asked how has the search for energy independence impacted his life, David responded, “It has been a long road of testing and retesting the validity of the things you have come to believe are true. The most important of these is questioning the status quo.” David added, “The cleanest form of energy is the energy you do not use.”

\*with contributions by OLHCC alumnus David Lamouranne

## Food Science Club Cooks Up Membership and Activities

By Crislyn Braud

The newly formed Food Science Club has a lot of ideas cooked up for the year!

The first meeting of the OLHCC Food Science Club was held on September 2, 2015. The club is working in conjunction with the Our Lady of Holy Cross College Food Science program. Food science is a growing field with many opportunities. The Food Science Club aspires to show students these opportunities through demonstration and active participation in the combined disciplines of culinary arts, food sciences, and technology.

The Food Science Club faculty advisor, Dr. Kevin Mis Solval, is excited to enrich the learning experience of the club members through various club activities. At the club meetings, members will participate in the planting and maintenance of the garden boxes for the Food Science program, guest chefs will make appearances, potluck lunches will be held featuring food from different cultures, and presentations on food

processing and technology will be given. The club will participate in service projects that involve feeding the homeless.

The Our Lady of Holy Cross College Food Science program is being developed by Dr. Darryl Holliday. This program explores food science by offering courses in food and beverage science, food business, and culinology. The food science program is working in coordination with Edible Enterprises, a pilot plant working with other tenants to help ensure food safety and assist in increasing processing volume through improved technology and methodology.

The Food Science Club will hold monthly meetings. Anyone interested in becoming a member can contact Ms. Kimberly Bourgeois at [kimberly\\_bourgeois@olhcc.edu](mailto:kimberly_bourgeois@olhcc.edu) or sign up on the food science board located outside office 2605 on East Hall.

We hope all OLHCC students consider joining the club!

## Student Government Works for You!

By Mallory Ottaway

As we entered the new school year, we have had many new exciting things happening at OLHCC. We have new officers to welcome to our Student Government Association board: President Mallory Ottaway, Vice President Amanda Bell, Secretary Trenelle Jourdan, and Chief of Staff Paige Turner. When people think about the OLHCC SGA, they automatically assume politics.

While Student Government does have a lot to do with politics, that is not the only thing the organization represents. As a student government we represent the student body as a whole. We like to think of ourselves as the voice of our fellow students. Student Government is a great way to be involved, whether it is gathering students together for a function, or listening to what each student needs.

Want to become involved but don’t know how? Have no fear—as an OLHCC student, you are already a member of SGA. All students are welcome to attend meetings, to give suggestions on student activities, and to help make OLHCC the great place that it is.

As always we will be listening to the concerns our fellows students may have, and we will focus on ways to address any problems that may arise. We will continue to work as a united front with Student Life, helping with all the big events throughout the year. SGA is also very excited to be working closely with the Business Club this year, as we come to make a difference together! Since Our Lady of Holy Cross College is a very tight knit community, we enjoy working closely together because the majority of the time each club is working toward the same goal.

We want a bright future for each of our students. However, what we want most importantly is to create a truly memorable college experience for each individual. Our Lady of Holy Cross College may be small, but it’s filled with a lot of motivation, and as we all work together for a successful year we plan to make memories that will last a lifetime. Our goal is to make all students feel that they are very important to this campus.

If you have any questions about SGA, send an email to [mottaway@olhcc.edu](mailto:mottaway@olhcc.edu) and check out the SGA on Facebook!

<http://www.facebook.com/olhccsga>



Photo by Alane Templet

Dr. Lehman Ellis lectures to students in the new biology lab, which is located near the Moreau Center. The new lab has high technology integrated into its facility.



# Students Work Hard and Play Hard at OLHCC



Submitted by Sr. Keri Burke

Sr. Keri Burke, Dr. Fawn Ukpolo, Sr. Gretchen Dysart, Ronicka Briscoe (principal, Dwight D. Eisenhower Academy of Global Studies School), Ms. Meredith Reed, and Sr. Rochelle Perrier with student volunteers at Katrina 10 event.



Submitted by OLHCC alumnus Ruben Balli III

OLHCC Hurricanes and alumni after a softball game. Top row L to R: Nicholas Balli, Matt Picard, Mark Guillory. Second row L to R: Chris Mace, alumnus Ruben Balli III, alumna Mary Khouri, and Randall Michel. Bottom row: Melissa Victoriano. Missing from picture: Emily Patroliia

## Inspired By an OLHCC Teacher

By Anna Maclellan

It was Socrates who said, "I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think," but it could have just as easily been said by Mr. William Bischoff. Mr. Bischoff taught philosophy at Our Lady of Holy Cross College for nearly 40 years and was a very popular professor whose classes always filled up, in large part due to his way of teaching not through traditional means of texts and tests, but through discourse and film.

When I began my time at OLHCC, I was dreading the classes I would be required to take in philosophy. I am naturally a pragmatic person and struggled to embrace anything that required me to think theoretically or in the abstract. I chose a philosophy class

that was filled entirely with watching and analyzing films and planned on enjoying the movies and ignoring all allusions to existentialism. But Mr. Bischoff saw a spark in me and refused to let me pass his class without at least exploring that a little.

Only a teacher as patient and passionate about truly educating the hearts and minds of his students could have put up with my resistance. I was determined to do as little thinking as possible. I distinctly remember telling a classmate that philosophy was my "blow-off" class. Mr. Bischoff had a talent for asking questions that weren't just difficult, but were also so relevant and intriguing you found yourself wanting to answer them, and answering them well.

Many students can share in my testimony to Mr. Bischoff's tireless efforts to better each and every student who came into his class. He touched countless students. I'm proud to say I'm one of his success stories—I ended up minoring in philosophy entirely because of that first class I took with him.

Though Mr. Bischoff has retired from our school, his legacy will continue through the students he impacted and the environment he created which fostered an unquenchable desire for searching out the truth and goodness in life above all else.



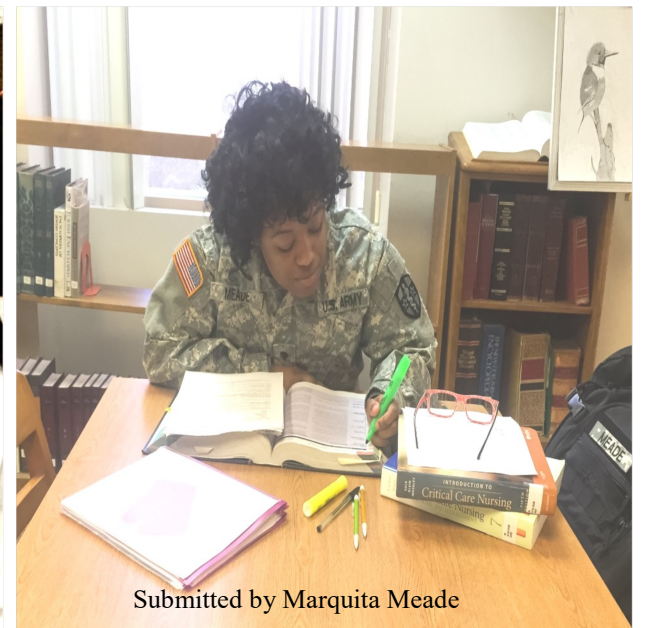
Submitted by Kimberly Bourgeois



Submitted by Angelica Walton



Photo by Alane Templet



Submitted by Marquita Meade



Photo by Matt Picard



Photo by Heidie Randle



Photo by Raegan Rivere



## From VA to LA to M.A.

By Erika Meggs

Who drove approximately 16 hours from Sterling, VA to arrive in New Orleans on the first day of classes? Sopheia Jones, graduate student in counseling did.

I first met Sopheia in our Theories class. When I asked her where she was from, she responded, “D.C., and I just arrived in New Orleans today.” I was shocked! Power to us graduate students, I thought.

Sopheia knew she wanted to help troubled kids. While majoring in Psychology and minoring in Spanish at Howard University, Sopheia was in a work study program at a charter school; she worked with sixth graders. She credits this position for guiding her into the field of helping others: the field of counseling.

How Sopheia came to New Orleans is a colorful story. In addition to knowing she wanted to help troubled kids, Sopheia always knew she wanted to leave the Virginia area, but she needed a little help to manage some personal issues before actually making the move. Thus, she started therapy. While going through therapy, Sopheia grew an interest in the field of counseling and was curious to learn more about it. Her counselor encouraged her to seek a degree in counseling.

Sopheia searched for a graduate program and found OLHCC. She wasn't looking for just any program. In addition to being accredited, the program needed to have a strong religious component. After networking and talking to more and more people about the city of New Orleans, Sopheia packed her car and headed to the Big Easy, where she is looking forward to Mardi Gras.

Sopheia's first time ever in the city was the week of late registration. Upon arriving in the city, she knew she would like it here. She knew that New Orleans was the place for her. During her 16 hour drive to the city, her favorite song came on the radio as she was crossing Lake Pontchartrain. That was a sign that solidified she was supposed to be here. “We were listening to the regular radio stations not looking to hear that song and it came on and I haven't heard it since then!” she said.

Sopheia is glad she made the choice to attend OLHCC. She was impressed with how smoothly registration went. Another positive sign that indicated Sopheia is in the right place is that during registration, she met two people that have become her good friends – they helped her find an apartment and a job. Now she has a home for Beaux, her new ferret. She also has something new: an accent.



Sopheia Jones

Sopheia said, “I've only been here a few months and I already hear an accent and I'm saying things I wouldn't normally say, like 'huh.'”

Once Sopheia obtains her Master's degree, she would like to share her skills and gain more experience by working with a nonprofit agency and eventually opening her own counseling practice. Sopheia is currently in the Clinical Mental Health (CMH) track, but would like to practice Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) as well.

If there was one thing Sopheia would bring to New Orleans from Virginia, it's the pay scale. Good choice, Sopheia! If she could, she would bring hospitality from New Orleans to the VA area.

As a counselor in the making, Sopheia shares her motto: You have control of your own life.

Wow, great friends, great graduate program, great city, great advice! This truly solidifies that Sopheia is in the right place!

Welcome to OLHCC and New Orleans, Sopheia!

## Shining Bright Like a Diamond

By Patrice Johnson

I would like to spotlight the newest member of the Our Lady of Holy Cross College family, Dr. Kevin Mis Solval, Assistant Professor of Biology and Physical Sciences. He joins the family as a graduate from Zamorano University located in Honduras with a B.A in Food Sciences. From there he moved to the United States and enrolled at LSU where he received his M.S in Food Sciences and a Ph.D. in Bioprocess Engineering. Our family really got lucky with this new addition. He is an amazing professor; he teaches like no other professor I have known. Every day you walk in his class is a new experience.

We all know physics can be very challenging, but Dr. Mis Solval goes the extra mile to put that assumption to shame. He really brings physics to life and keeps the class engaged. Each experiment he presents to us brings out the best in it. He is very hands on. His number one goal is to have students understand the material and the actual process it takes to arrive at the answer. Dr. Mis Solval really goes the extra mile to teach his students the proper tools to succeed. When you walk into his classroom, be prepared for an

experience like no other. Attending his class is the highlight of my day. I'm very proud to say that I'm under the teaching of Dr. Mis Solval.

When I spoke with my fellow classmates about our new addition, they were just as excited as I was to have a professor like him. “I enjoy coming to class and compared to Physics I, I'm really understanding the material being taught. Dr. Mis Solval really takes his time to provide the extra time attention we need” (Raelyn Rogers, classmate). Please join me in welcoming Dr. Mis Solval, the newest, most talented, brightest, and most promising physics teacher I have encountered thus far in my college experience.



Dr. Kevin Mis Solval



Photo by Anna Maclellan

## Graduate Student Incorporates Healthy Living in Services

By Omolola Taiwo

One of our very own Master's students Omolola Taiwo has started her very own business. Not only is she studying Clinical Mental Health Counseling, she also wants to incorporate a healthy way of living in her services.

OMi's Beverages is a line of Alkalizing, Cleansing, and Energizing Tea and Fruit Juices. Every beverage is 100% organic. While using local produce, natural sugar substitutes, and alkaline water, OMi's Beverages is the ultimate idea for a well-rounded approach to Health and Wellness! Support her business by donating at [www.GoFundMe.com/OMiBeverages](http://www.GoFundMe.com/OMiBeverages). Cheers to a healthier lifestyle!

The website has been recently launched, so there is lots of information at [www.OMiBeverages.com](http://www.OMiBeverages.com) and on her Facebook page under OMi Beverages. It's been two

years since Omolola started brewing organic tea. Over time, OMi developed into a line of organic beverages that served a high purpose. She thinks it's important to emphasize OMi's Beverages as supplemental in multiple ways, such as post and pre workout juices, fasting and detox teas, and pure alkaline water.

A piece of advice to give to fellow students who are entrepreneurs is utilize their resources and network by any means. You have to be on the up when opportunities that can benefit your idea come along!







Submitted by Darius Cosse'



Photo by Ashley Andrews

## The Holy Cross Chronicle Announcements

Thank you to everyone who submitted stories and photos to us! We received so many entries that we decided to extend this edition to five pages.

The winners of our story contest are:

First place: Ricky Twiggs, "OLHCC Grads Create New Businesses"

Second place: Anna Maclellan, "Inspired By an OLHCC Teacher"

Third place: Vivian Valdez-Lazatin, "OLHCC—My Home Away From Home"

We had so many great picture submissions that we decided to award the top four photographs. The winners of our photograph contest are (in no order):

Matt Picard, Tracey Allen, Angelica Walton, and Raegan Rivere

Congratulations to our winners!

### The Holy Cross Chronicle Staff Members:

Editor: Alane Templet

Reporters: Ricky Twiggs, Alane Templet, Crislyn Braud, Mallory Ottaway, Anna Maclellan, Ericka Meggs, Patrice Johnson, Omolola Taiwo, and Vivian Valdez-Lazatin

Photographers: Matt Picard, Tracey Allen, Ronnie Luman, Ricky Twiggs, Paul Trinh, Alane Templet, Sr. Keri Burke, Ruben Balli III, Angelica Walton, Marquita Meade, Heidie Randle, Raegan Rivere, Ericka Meggs, Kimberly Bourgeois, Anna Maclellan, Omolola Taiwo, Darius Cosse', Ashley Andrews, and Vivian Valdez-Lazatin

Faculty Advisor: John P. Travis

**DISCLAIMER:** *The Holy Cross Chronicle* is a publication written for and by students of Our Lady of Holy Cross College. Anything written is strictly the original work of the authors and may not represent the views of the faculty and staff of the College. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the publication. If you see an error, please contact the newspaper staff immediately by email at [newspaper@olhcc.edu](mailto:newspaper@olhcc.edu)

## OLHCC—My Home Away From Home

By Vivian Valdez-Lazatin

My name is Vivian. I'm 43 and yes, I look like 29, especially if you forget to wear your glasses and the place you see me has a poor lighting. I'm a foreign student and my journey here started 3 months ago. I'm a proud citizen of the Philippines. I was a struggling government officer in my country back then, but I was surrounded by a bunch of alligators. I thought I could fulfill a dream of making my nation great again, but I failed. I decided to shift gears and flew to Singapore to work as a Public Relations Officer. But the people there are too afraid that their small planet will soon be invaded by migrant workers. After a year in Singapore I then moved to Vietnam and Cambodia to fill the shoes of an ESL teacher. I attained my dream and reached my goal, making lots of students laugh and learn and touching hundreds of lives.

I was planning to move to Myanmar for another teaching adventure until I met the person who believed that I can make it better in the land filled with milk and honey... The United States of America! I wondered if this place is overflowing with cows and honeybees or they have such a big factory that processes milk and honey. I get to Belle Chasse, Louisiana and I saw a lot of oranges, creole tomatoes, alligator meat, po'boy sandwiches, and Popeye's chicken and biscuits that I also frequently visited both in Philippines and in Vietnam. Most of all, there were a multitude of happy faces passing by saying "Hello, how are you doing?" on all corners and every place. I am so delighted with how friendly these people are. I'm glad there's a place in America with weather close to mine. Except I have some issues when it's cold outside. I saw how grand downtown New Orleans is. The well preserved houses and the establishments in the French Quarter really made my jaw drop and the same thing happens when I watch a Saints game. The World War II Museum, the Audubon Aquarium and the Riverwalk are astonishing sights, and they all took my breath away. The Louisiana cuisine experience made me shout, "Wow!" However, living here is like a football game: my brain is constantly running toward the goal of communicating with people in such a way that they can

understand me even if my accent is difficult to understand. I am proud of my brown skin, my 4 ft. 9 inches height, my humble beginnings, and my very simple life. However, I am not sure if my craziness would add color to the life of my classmates.



Vivian Valdez-Lazatin

Here at Our Lady of the Holy Cross College, the first Fairy Godmother who helped make my dream come true to study here is Ms. Meredith Reed. She guided me every step of the way to process my documents. Ms. Kelly Allemand is so patient in explaining over and over how I can get certified as a teacher when I finish the course. When I started my class August 26, I was so happy to meet my seatmate Tiffany Smith. She welcomed me with open arms and even shared her highlighter because all I had at that time was just a pen and a small 3 ring binder. Mrs. Foret is so sweet, and she constantly is telling me not to worry if I don't understand other people when they talk because she is having the same dilemma sometimes. She encourages me to talk and share my experience as a university teacher because she said it's nice to learn education from other countries' perspectives. Dr. Muntean also concurred, and she said she was happy that

there will be diversity of opinion on the discussion board of our online ESL class when I joined. Ms. Campbell never fails to surprise me with all her lectures and activities that made me fall in love with the subject I hate extremely—math. Her passion to teach is very contagious. I also tried to find some foreign classmates, but they all grew up here, so they don't have any problem coexisting with local people. Ms. Rosa Cuny from Honduras is my best cheerleader who always praises me and lifts me up. Jumana from the Middle East said she loves my presentations with Ms. Faherty. Yes, our teacher Ms. Faherty has given me 3 exciting exposures to present on our Children's Literature class, and all were blockbuster hits, my classmates said.

My journey here to OLHCC is as colorful as a rainbow, plus I have a home and family here that provided me with love, appreciation and encouragement. My sponsor never fails to promise that even if I constantly give him terrible headaches because I don't know how to clean the house, he will still keep me. My neighbor, Ms. Monica Wertz, of Plaquemines Parish School Board, is the wind beneath my wings. She is constantly reminding me that I am needed here. I am so happy that I am with great people who always see the best in me even if I sometimes can't believe I have it. The committed teachers inspire me so much that I can also be like them in the near future.

My OLHCC home never fails to unleash my full potential. It's an institution that made me really feel I belong. I wish to meet other foreign students here and eventually spread the good news of how wonderful it is to study here. Above all, I'm so grateful to this country that accepts and inspires me that when I go back home I can still make my nation great again!!!