

MSS NEWSLETTER

Multicultural Student Services

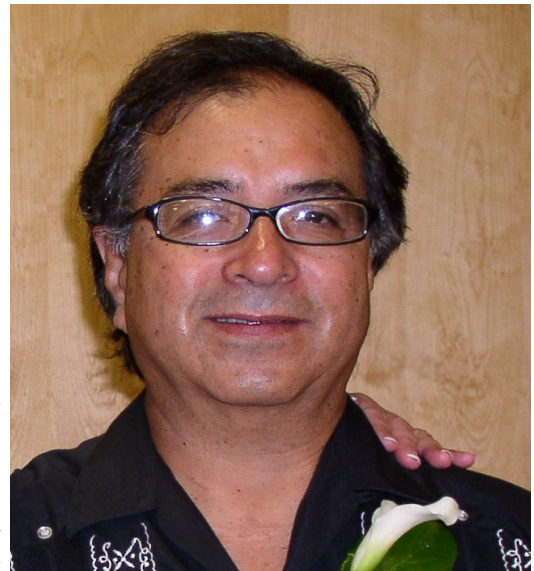
In Memory of

Steve Casanova

November 1949 - January 2009

Multicultural Student Services, along with the campus of SCSU, deeply mourns the recent loss of Dr. Steve Casanova, professor of Ethnic Studies at St. Cloud State University. He passed away on Jan. 22, 2009, after a short battle with cancer.

In his 10 years at SCSU, Casanova touched the lives of many students, including graduate student Amer Lam who studied abroad in Mexico with him. She said, "I was shocked to hear he had passed away." She indicated that she and a few students had planned to go to visit him in the hospital in Arizona when they heard he had passed away. She said the trip to Mexico with Casanova gave her a reality check. "We lived in a village without running water or electricity." She said they met a lot of new people and had the opportunity to paint an elementary school during the trip.



Casanova earned his bachelor's degree in 1978 from Southwest Texas State University. He then moved north, earning his master's degree in 1987 and his doctorate in 2001 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Semya Hakim, colleague and professor of Human Relations and Multicultural Education, said Casanova came to SCSU as a result of the 1995 hunger strike to start a Chicano Studies program. She said, "Steve's commitment and passion to the education of all students was well respected, especially his work with Chicano/a and Latino/a students." She said he was dedicated and committed to the students of color at this campus. "If you needed something he was there; if you were sick he would give anything to make you feel better."

Casanova developed the Chicano Studies program at SCSU; he also served as advisor to M.E.Ch.A. (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán), a Chicano student organization on campus. In a blog dedicated to the memory of his father, his son said Casanova was dedicated to his community, "As an activist, he was involved in 'El Movimiento,' he was also a Sundancer, a spiritual guide and mentor for many."

Former student Daniel Martinez says he met Casanova when he joined M.E.Ch.A during his freshman year. He said Steve was a major reason he pursued further education after leaving SCSU. Martinez said, "I would like people to be aware of the sacrifices Steve made in his personal life for his students. Steve was always there for us; no matter what we needed we could always go to Steve. I am so saddened by his passing; however, I am grateful for the time I got to spend with him," a sentiment echoed not only by the office of MSS, but also the entire SCSU community. Dr. Casanova will be missed.

Alumni

SCSU graduate lands ESPN job



Less than six months after receiving a Masters degree in Mass Communications from SCSU, Kahar Canion landed a job working at the worldwide leader in sports television, ESPN (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network). Canion said his education at SCSU was instrumental in a Production Assistant position at ESPN because it allowed him to receive hands-on experience

with the very things he does right now. "By being associated with UTVS and working on Husky Productions, I am very comfortable in the fast-paced setting at ESPN," he said.

Canion said he has loved sports since childhood, and has always wanted a career in sports. "To be able to graduate and my first job out of the gate is at the top of my profession is incredible." In his position, he works closely with the on-air anchors and personalities. He said, "I have to explain to the talent the theme or major story line that has happened in the game." He also admitted some of the on-air personalities "can test your patience, but for the most part they are very professional to work with." He said the people he enjoys working with the most are Chris Ber- man, Jay Harris, Bob Ley, Mike Hill, Jalen Rose and Josh Elliot.

The most enjoyable aspect of his position, he says, is being able to interact with athletes who are now working at ESPN as analysts and producing the highlights that are shown on television. Canion also said he has been fortunate to work on some of ESPN's most highly rated shows, including Sports Center, Outside the Lines, NFL Countdown, NFL Live, NBA Fastbreak and NBA Shootaround. He admits one of the downsides to working in a venue such as ESPN is that there is a lot of politics involved. But he says he tries not to get involved with that aspect of the business.

Canion says students should aim high because all goals are achievable if one is persistent and focused. He said, "Start preparing yourself now by developing the skills you need to be successful at the position you desire." He also encouraged students to become involved in programs and extracurricular activities that are beneficial and which add to their resumes.

The biggest difference between being a college student and working at ESPN, he says, are the deadlines. "At ESPN there are some days where you may have multiple deadlines every 15 to 20 minutes, and if you miss them, it could have a negative effect on you at work." He said ESPN is located in a small town, similar to the size of St. Cloud, but the company is built like a mini-university. He says he doesn't miss college but misses all the friends he had while at SCSU. "I miss hanging out with them. It's hard to hang out with them when everyone is so far away from each other," he said. He also says that he knows SCSU can be difficult for students of color especially, but he encourages all the students to take advantage of their time in St. Cloud. "You'll never have as much freedom to do as you please once you hit the real world. There are a lot of opportunities at SCSU that can be very beneficial to you, so take advantage of them and enjoy being young," he said.

Former student aims for Ph.D.



SCSU graduate Daniel Martinez is pursuing a Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Arizona. Martinez said he was encouraged to pursue graduate school and a Ph.D. by his mentor, the late SCSU professor Dr. Steve Casanova. He said Casanova convinced him to pursue a master's degree in Mexican American Studies rather than in Business Administration or Economics. He also said several

other faculty members of color, including Dr. Robert Johnson, Dr. Jeanne La- court and Semya Hakim were instrumental in his desire to pursue a doctorate.

After leaving SCSU, Martinez completed a master's degree in Mexican American Studies. He said his desire to continue on became evident when he realized he was more interested in becoming a researcher and professor. He then applied for the Sociology Ph.D.-track program at the University of Arizona.

Martinez said although he will be receiving a Ph.D. in Sociology, the area of his research will be immigration, specifically the undocumented crossing experience of migrants along the Arizona-Sonora border.

Martinez also acknowledges the difficulty of pursuing a doctorate. "Working on a Ph.D. is like having a full-time job," he said. In addition to taking classes, studying for comprehensive exams or conducting research, most doctoral students, in order to have their tuition waived, teach undergraduate classes or work as research associates. He says he remembers fondly during his undergraduate years when he went to school full time, had a part time job and was active in many different student organizations. These days he says his time is spent focusing on his Ph.D. One of the best things, though, he says about pursuing a Ph.D. is that he is able to focus on an area that he is passionate about and interested in that could lead to changes within his community. "It's nice to know that someday I will be able to give back to my community and impact the lives of students in ways that the late Dr. Steve Casanova impacted mine. That, in itself, is very rewarding."

Martinez suggests anyone thinking about applying to Ph.D. programs should study hard for the standardized tests (GRE/GMAT/LSAT/MCAT). He says, "even though the tests are not an accurate measure of intelligence and are cultur- ally bias, they are still institutionalized and are given a great deal of consid- eration." He also suggests students consider taking a standardized test preparation course. He says he understands these courses are often expensive but they are shown to work. He goes on to say the reason many of the students in graduate school come from privileged backgrounds is not because they are smarter than other students of color, but rather they are able to afford to take preparation courses or attend schools where these tools are taught to them. He also urges students to have a good working relationship with professors because these are individuals who will be able to write letters of recommendation. Also familiarize yourself with the current staff members of the institution that you are applying to and express your desire to work with them in your personal statement and make an effort to contact them personally. He says having a faculty member in one of the departments to advocate for you gives you a leg up.

After completing his Ph.D., Martinez says he plans to teach at a university and do research.

MSS Students Studying Abroad

Germany

Each year hundreds of SCSU students take part in what some call a rite of passage—they study abroad in a country far from the campus of St. Cloud State. The Center for International Studies offers a variety of different programs. Third-year finance major Mai Her Lee took the opportunity to study in Ingolstadt, Germany, in fall 2008.

Ingolstadt is a city of roughly 115,000 located about 50 miles north of Munich on the shores of the Danube River. While studying abroad, students live in a villa, a home-like setting. The villa is able to accommodate 20 students and is within walking distance of the downtown area.



Lee says she studied abroad because it offered her a chance to take college level credits in a foreign country that would also apply to her major. She indicated wanting to visit Europe was also another reason she chose Germany over the many other locations offered.

Lee said the best thing about the program is that while Germany was her home base, she was also able to visit eight other countries, including the Netherlands, France, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, Greece and Italy. Her most memorable experience was “paragliding 5,000 feet in the air near the Alps.”

She did admit that the trip was a bit expensive but said it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and that made the trip worthwhile. “Studying abroad is the one thing in your life that you should do when you’re young. After college, you are working and have no time to travel,” she said.

“Everyone in the house became my family. I know I’ll be friends with the people from the trip for the rest of my life.”

When asked if she would study abroad again, she paused and smiled broadly before saying, “In a heart beat, I would do it all over again....every second of it.”

England



While many students arrived on the SCSU campus to begin the 2008 fall semester, Munira Hassan, 24, rolled out of bed in a luxurious European castle where she, too, would begin her studies. Hassan said she was thrilled to study abroad in England. “It was an amazing feeling being in another country; excitement was buzzing through me.”

She lived and attended classes in Alnwick Castle, a famous castle located 90 miles south of Edinburgh, Scotland. Hassan said the castle, which is owned by the Duke of Northumberland, is famous for appearing in a Harry Potter movie. She said staying in the castle was very convenient. “I would roll out of bed and run downstairs to class.” She also said the castle’s personal chef prepared meals for the group.

Each Friday, the group went on field trips, visiting historical places including Hadrian’s Wall. “I really took to it because I love history,” she said. Hassan also got the chance to visit France. “My all-time favorite place is Paris. I couldn’t get enough of the Eiffel Tower,” she said. She also visited Italy, where she enjoyed sightseeing in Venice and Milan. “I saw the sun set at the Ponte de Rialto Bridge, which was amazing.”

Since the students were required to do 10 hours of community service, Hassan decided to volunteer at the Alnwick Playhouse, where she watched plays and movies for free. She said the experience taught her a lot about herself. “I feel like I’ve changed. I grew up so much.”

Hassan said she enjoyed studying abroad. “It was an excellent trip. I got my money’s worth.” She recommends that students take advantage of study abroad programs. “You will take with you experiences that you will hold with you forever.” -*Belene Zeleke*



South Africa

St. Cloud State University offers a variety of different study abroad opportunities for its students. The opportunities range from two weeks to an entire semester. Juniors Faisa Abdi-Omar and Tigist Antehun chose to study abroad in South Africa for an entire semester.

Antehun said her decision to study abroad in South Africa was due in part to great things she had heard from her older sister who had gone on a previous trip to South Africa. Abdi-Omar said hearing Shahzad Ahmad, Director of Multicultural Student Services, give a speech about Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), the location they would study at, played a vital role in her decision to go to South Africa.

They both admitted they expected South Africa to be similar to what they saw on the Discovery Channel—a safari. And while NMMU is located on a nature reserve, they said South Africa reminded them of being in another state in the US. Abdi-Omar said, “It is really pretty and we actually did have monkeys running around campus.” She added with a soft chuckle.

NMMU opened on Jan. 1, 2005 and is the result of a merger of the PE Technikon, the University of Port Elizabeth and the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University. This union of three very different institutions came about as a result of government’s countrywide restructuring of higher education intended to deliver a more equitable and efficient system

to meet the needs of South Africa in the 21st century.

All courses are taught in English and students are allowed to take between 12 and 18 credit hours. Course credits and grades (S/U) appear on SCSU transcripts. They were given one exam at the end of the semester that determined their final grade.

Antehun suggested students who are thinking about or have decided to study abroad should research the country ahead of time. Although they knew the struggles South Africa has had in the past with Apartheid and segregation, they were surprised to see that it continues. They noticed that the Afrikaans, Blacks and coloured ethnicities segregated themselves from each other. Seeing this made them appreciate how far America has come in our struggles with race.

Along with studying, the two got the chance to experience the countryside of South Africa. “We both went skydiving and cliff jumping.” Antehun said.

“It was a great experience and I would definitely do it again.” - Abdi-Omar

“It is a real learning experience and you grow so much in such a short amount of time.” - Antehun

Athletic Spotlight



Name: Talisha "T" Barlow
 High School: Roseville
 Major: Psychology
 Biggest Role Model: Tony Barlow (T's brother)

You can tell a lot about a basketball player by the way she acts on the court, but it is how she carries herself off the court that really tells who she is. Talisha is a great example of an athlete who demonstrates how a star athlete should act off the court. With her modest and kind approach, Talisha shows that being a first-class person and student is equally- if not more - important as being a great athlete.

Talisha says her biggest adjustment from high school to college was becoming more organized and working on her time-management skills, both of which are areas where Talisha feels she has improved immensely. It shows not only on the court, but also in the classroom, where in high school she graduated with a 2.8 GPA but now holds a 3.3 GPA.

Attributing most of her success on and off the field to her teammates and specifically to her mentor/teammate, Katie Tacheny, Talisha also says the Richard R. Green House has made a huge impact on her academic success. "Being able to tutor students not only helps them, it also helps me when I am able to teach myself," says Talisha. Talisha has worked at the Green House for a little over a year and has been a great help in the areas of Psychology, English, and Ethnic Studies.

On the court, Talisha was named 2nd team All-NSIC while starting in all 28 games for the Huskies, leading the team in field goal percentage (50.4%), and was fifth in the conference in scoring (15.2 ppg). As a second year sophomore, Talisha recorded a game high of 28 points in the final game of the season in a tough loss against Fort Lewis.

Planning to graduate within four years, Talisha is determined to continue her academics and go to graduate school, possibly at St. Cloud State. As far as her basketball career goes, she has considered the possibility of pursuing post-collegiate options overseas, and feels that if such an opportunity would arise, the experience and traveling that go along with it would be something she could not pass up. *-Zachary Stover*

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Student Spotlight



It's not always easy, but first year psychology and theater major James Kabba manages to balance his studies and his interest in theater.

This year Kabba participated in *The Bacchae*, the first play of the SCSU theater season, in which he played a blind prophet. He says preparing for the role took a lot of time and effort. "I had to memorize all my parts and spend two to three hours a day in rehearsals to fine tune an accent for the character I was playing." Kabba said his participation in the play has allowed him to form friends and build trusting relationships with other actors in the department, who he may not have met otherwise.

"It allows me to see myself in other people's shoes and it is a lot of fun."

Kabba has also appeared in two independent films which have been sent to local film festivals. He is optimistic that his experience in films and work with the SCSU Theater Department will lead to more opportunities to pursue an acting career after graduation.

The MSS Reunion

MSS and the SCSU Alumni Association will be sponsoring a reunion for former and current students in Minneapolis, MN. The purpose of the reunion is to allow everyone to come together for a fun-filled weekend of relaxation, reminiscing and networking.

The reunion will run from Friday - Sunday, July 24-26, 2009. It will include a fish fry and spaghetti dinner on Friday evening, followed by a fun day on Saturday with many outside games and an eating contest. Sunday will begin with a church service, followed by a bowling party.

All students current and past and their families, are encouraged to attend. For more information please contact:

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