

Student Engagement in International Development: International Development Week 2010

During the week of **February 8th-12th** the Vanier College WUSC Committee, in collaboration with the International Education Office and the Vanier Social Justice Committee organized a series of events and activities at the college as part of “**International Development Week 2010**”. World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a pan-Canadian organization that deals with issues of social justice. Their goal is to raise awareness on various issues of social justice and to take informed action.

The theme for International Development Week was “**Development Alternatives in a Fragile World**” and the focus was to encourage students to support sustainable development in their daily lives. The week’s events aimed at giving students the tools they need to make informed decisions about consumption patterns and the environment. Activities included the kick off for a “Better World Books” book drive, a banner making event a “Marry Fair Trade” UB event at which students served wedding cake made entirely from fair trade products, and a presentation creating awareness about the excessive and harmful use of water bottles.



On February 9th 2010, a day-long symposium was held in the auditorium, bringing several engaging guest speakers and interesting presentations to the college. This symposium was the main event of International Development Week.

Given the week’s theme of “Development Alternatives in a Fragile World”, presentations were largely focused on how students can make responsible choices as consumers, and aimed at helping them to think critically about the ways their consumption patterns affect our global community, most specifically people living in the developing world. Presentations included a screening of the movie FLOW: For Love of Water, a presentation on Fair Trade given by Tanya Rowell Katzemba, volunteer coordinator at Dix Milles Villages, a “Sweat Shop Fashion Show” educating students about ethically produced clothing, as

well as a sustainable business panel with three guest speakers sharing with students how they became involved with corporate social responsibility, and how they implement sustainable and responsible business practices in their endeavors.

The International Education Office targeted Humanities classes to attend the symposium as well as the Business Administration, Commerce, and Economics departments. In attendance throughout the day were over 6 classes from the Business Administration, Commerce and Economics programs. Most impressive was a class of Business Administration students from Stefan Kuch's Entrepreneurship course. Students listened attentively to a presentation on Fair Trade and following the talk, they asked several questions, demonstrating their ability to think critically about the topic, and an eagerness to become well informed.



The day was an incredible success, largely due to the many hours of efficient and organized work that the students from the WUSC committee put in with the support of the International Education Office. Additionally, the event was successful because it reached a very large audience, with over 150-200 students in attendance for each session; in total, over 850 Vanier students, staff and faculty participated in the day's events.

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