

Returning students: Better late than never



JOHN FOUNTAIN, WESTERN HERALD, WESTERN MICHIGAN U.

By Steve Weisman
 ■ The UCSD Guardian
 U. of California, San Diego

In 1971, Debbie Kelso attended her first class at U. of California, San Diego. However, her dream of an education was a dream deferred — she wound up working for 15 years as a bus driver for San Diego Transit.

During the fall of 1988, Kelso returned to UCSD. She was 38.

"I remember my first day back," Kelso said. "I drove up — I thought I could park anywhere. I got lost. The first term I got overwhelmed by the shock."

Rebecca Cobb, another non-traditional student, understands these feelings and runs a group called Students Returning After Time Away, which offers support to non-traditional students. Cobb said many non-traditional students are interested only in the schoolwork aspect of UCSD, but that there are others who seek more involvement in campus activities.

STRATA has 12-15 members, who meet weekly to discuss what is going on in their lives, she said.

"I think some people need a little assurance," Cobb said. "It's there if they need it. It's a support that needs to be there. Many students do not contact us simply because they haven't heard about it, or else expect it to be some sort of committee."

Kelso said she finds more time to spend on campus than many non-traditional students because she does not have a husband or children. She spends

six to eight hours a day at school.

Through organizations such as STRATA and contacts with professors and classmates, Kelso said she has built her own support system, something she said she didn't do when she attended UCSD in the early '70s.

One of the main problems mature students face that Cobb hopes to deal with through STRATA is communication with the faculty. She said professors do not know how to deal with older students and either treat them as if they were 18 or treat them as if they should know everything and should not be struggling with class material.

"We hope to bring in some professors to open the lines of communication," Cobb said.

Competing against and dealing with "traditional" students also may pose problems for older students.

"My biggest fear was how younger students would perceive me, and how I would deal with the classes," Kelso admits.

Despite her early apprehension, however, Kelso now finds that most of her friends are traditional students, and she said they keep her from becoming stagnant.

Jayn Patron, a 29-year-old computer science and engineering major, said she experienced problems when she lived in an on-campus apartment.

"It's a whole lifestyle. You feel detached. You feel really different," she said, adding that she moved off campus after one month.

See RETURNING, Page 12

Food variety one of the surprises for Soviet exchange students

By Corinna Gilfillan
 ■ The Chronicle
 Duke U.

Three students at Duke U. this year are amazed at the variety of choices offered them in class scheduling, extracurricular activities — and food.

There is a wider variety of foods at Duke than at Soviet universities, says Roman Lola, one of three Soviet seniors participating in an exchange program sponsored by the Institute of International Education.

"It is very unusual for me to go to the salad bar and combine a salad according to taste. At Moscow there are already prepared salads and you can't be a composer with your food," he said.

Lola, a student from Moscow State U., is pursuing an economics major. He took a full load of courses first semester and began researching anti-inflation policy this spring.

"I think the economics department at Duke has much more to do with real economics than at the department in Moscow State U.," Lola said. "At Moscow it is differently directed and oriented more on the political economy."

Students at Duke have more freedom to choose courses they want to take than Soviet students do, he said. In the Soviet Union, students must declare their majors when they enter college and also fulfill a rigid set of requirements, he said.

Vitaliy Chernetsty, another student from MSU, said he has enjoyed his first month at Duke studying English. One difference he has noticed between the

two schools is the role of student activities, he said. In the Soviet Union, students are not as involved in activities as they are at Duke, Chernetsty said.

"In the Soviet Union, student activities are formalized. People became apathetic and not willing to get involved. People are becoming more active now due to the economical and political changes in the country. We are trying to make it less formalized but we don't know what we want," he said.

Chernetsty is studying the problems of translation between Russian and English, and the impacts of one culture on another at Duke, he said.

The Duke/MSU exchange is one of 250 such programs administered through IIE. The other programs involve more than 150 countries.

IIE was created by a cultural agreement made in 1985 between former President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, said Carlisle Harvard, director of the Duke program.

The Institute organizes the exchange and chooses universities in the United States to host the Soviet students, she said. This year, 12 Soviet students attend Duke, Harvard U., Indiana U. and Rice U.

The 3-year-old program is funded by the United States Information Agency, the MacArthur Foundation and private donors. The universities hosting the Soviet students also share some of the costs.

Students may contact IIE's New York office at (212) 883-8200.

Struggle

Continued from page 1

ulating ideas for the book during his senior year in high school.

After returning from summer vacation, he learned that a classmate, Ieng Seng, had died. Farmbry was outraged by the lack of attention Ieng's death received in comparison to another student who also died over the summer.

Farmbry said it was then that he realized how American society overlooks immigrants from Southeast Asia, and he began to research this group of children.

"String Bracelet" was a one-man project.

In April of his senior year, Farmbry began contacting programs for refugee youths asking for essays, poems or brief compositions written

by Southeast Asians. He compiled these works — written by children whose ages range from 11 to 18 — and contacted a photographer, Marcus Halevi, who donated the photos that document the frightful images the children describe.

After typesetting the book on his Macintosh computer, Farmbry talked with various publishers about his work. Intercultural Productions decided to print it, and the books were ready to sell last September.

Farmbry spent all summer fund raising for the project. The Philadelphia School District agreed to use 500 copies of the project in its "English for Speakers of Other Languages" program, but did not have the money to buy them.

Farmbry found a way to fund the school district's efforts by soliciting a Philadelphia bank that agreed to sponsor the purchase.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCUS HALEVI