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## ELI students celebrate summer

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11:09 a.m., Aug. 11, 2005--It was like a cookout at the United Nations. The English Language Institute (ELI) held its summer picnic, Friday, Aug. 5, hosting approximately 100 international students on the lawn of the institute.



*Students join forces in a tug-of-war at the ELI picnic.*

Students from Africa, Japan, Taiwan, Russia, France, Italy, Libya, Syria, Korea--altogether 40 countries across the globe--munched on watermelon and Chinese noodles while negotiating an international tug-of-war and flinging balls at the dunk tank.

"This is our middle of the session 'We love you a lot' picnic," Deborah Detzel, ELI assistant director, said. Communal activities like the picnic give students a chance to meet those who don't speak their native language and get to know each other in a more relaxed setting, she said.

There are 400 foreign students from 40 nations on campus for ELI's eight-week summer session. "Our program is at its fullest in the summer," Detzel said. "During the spring and fall sessions, there are about 200 participating students."

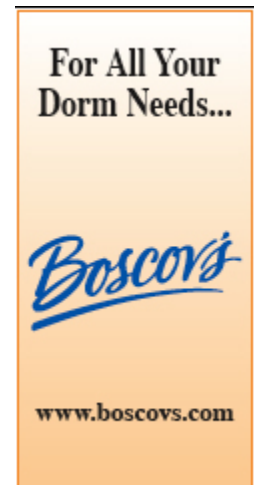


Detzel was one of the first ELI staffers to fall from the hot seat into the dunk tank. The on-target pitch came from the right arm of Dario Saraceni, a student from Italy studying business English.

"I feel like a citizen of the world now. Everyone here is from other countries," Saraceni said. "I didn't even know where Korea was when I arrived at UD, and now my best friend is Korean."

Syrian student Mohsen Harfoush has been on campus for a month. "It's good to see the world from a perspective other than the media," he said. "It's all amazing." It's Harfoush's first time in the U.S., and he's already made the decision to change his major from English to international relations. He'll be studying at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, for the next two years.

"Before, learning about new places was just words," Tunisian



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student Dorra bent Abdessatar Zairi said. "Now, I have faces for each new place." Zairi is studying the use of English in academic settings. Activities such as the picnic "enable newcomers to feel at home and make friends," she said. Her roommate, Monica Calle from Colombia, agreed. The two women say they have become close friends, and Calle said the mix of people is a learning experience far beyond the classroom.

Chien-Heng Peng from Taiwan, who is studying business English, said he was impressed by UD's campus. "It's a beautiful campus and grounds," he said.



*Dorra Zairi (left) from Tunisia and her roommate, Monica Calle from Colombia, relax under a tree at the ELI picnic.*

Enrolled in ELI's legal language program, Madoka Suda of Japan said her time at UD has helped her find herself. "When I first came here, I didn't know the culture. I didn't know how to act. But, as time went on, I found I didn't need to act, just be myself. My friends say, 'You're always happy.' It's not an act," she said.

Article by Barbara Garrison  
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