Breaking down cultural barriers to get people with different backgrounds and lifestyles to be comfortable in a new place isn’t easy.

One program at Chico State that incorporates this into its service is the American Language and Culture Institute, or ALCI. For more than 30 years, this program has been teaching international students intensive English instruction while providing support in integrating them into American culture.

“I was scared when coming here; I thought people wouldn’t accept me,” said Mohammed Asiri, a student in ALCI from Saudi Arabia. Asiri’s fear turned out to be unnecessary, he said. Thanks in part to ALCI’s assistance, he is no longer worried about being accepted.

ALCI is located in the heart of Chico State’s campus at the Center for Regional and Continuing Education. The program offers five sessions per year to students of all proficiency levels with courses that include speaking, listening, reading, writing, and grammar.

“One of our goals is to provide purposeful engagements across cultures,” said William Dantona, ALCI’s program director.

ALCI also contributes to the Diversity Action Plan created for Chico State, which has the goal of forming a more inclusive learning community.

There are a number of benefits in learning the English language for international students, as it is the most common language used in the world.

“It is the second language in my country,” said Jehad Almitib, an ALCI student from Saudi Arabia. “When you work, you have to be able to speak English.”

Another way ALCI enriches students’ experiences is by having mixers with other groups on campus, including the Cross-Cultural Leadership Center (CCLC), the English department, and Study Abroad.

When teaching U.S. history to students in ALCI, instructor Karen Duffy found her students asking questions about African-American historical figures, such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., that often reflected stereotypes.

To clear up the misconceptions, ALCI partnered with the CCLC to organize a mixer and invited four African-American students to act as a panel. They answered questions related to their race in a very safe and organized environment. After the first session was done, they switched places, and the CCLC students asked the ALCI students some questions. The mixer ended with some time for the students to hang out and get to know each other more.

“I had never had a conversation with a black person before,” Asiri said.

Students take the core English instruction courses at ALCI, but they can also enroll in elective classes. The most popular class is “American Idiom and Slang” where students learn slang terms such as “‘sup” and “chillin’.”

Many of the students just want to be included and fit in, so understanding what the slang is can help.

I had never had a conversation with a black person before.

ALCI has been in existence since 1979 and has overcome some difficult challenges to get where it is today. Depending on current global issues, enrollment in ALCI can fluctuate – in numbers as well as with where the students come from.


ALCI is now at its highest enrollment ever with 203 students from 13 countries, including Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Russia, China, and Japan.

For more information, visit ALCI’s website at rce.csuchico.edu/alci or call its office at 530-898-6821.
The California Indian Conference is held annually at one of the 23 California State University campuses and provides an opportunity for Native American tribes to share their perspective and experience as the first people on California land. In October 2011, Chico State was honored to host the 26th annual conference for the first time.

Amy Huberland, assistant coordinator of the Northeast Information Center, helped organize the conference. Huberland previously attended the 25th annual conference in Irvine, Calif., and was eager to get Chico’s local tribes involved.

“I knew that most of the tribes northeast of Chico had never been involved in the conference,” Huberland said. “So, to me, one of the most important aspects was to get them involved and aware of the conference.”

The 2011 conference had many events throughout the four-day meeting, including traditional ceremonies, dances, workshops, and discussions. Also included were a workshop about traditional basket weaving, a reception of California Indian art, documentary films, and discussions of defining native identity.

The event was widely attended by about 700 people, including Native Americans, non-Native Americans, students, and scholars.

Huberland thinks that by attending the conference, community members were better able to understand the perspectives that Native Americans take on various issues.

“You got a real feeling for what issues were important to tribal members,” Huberland said. “A lot of it focused on education, youth, culture, and health, which seemed to be the four issues that were most important.”

At the event, Huberland was not only introduced to Native Americans’ different perspectives on life, but also the different ways they live.

“I learned how different their lives are compared to how we assume everyone grows up in this country,” Huberland said. “Most people are not aware that there are still a lot of California Indians that are very involved in their culture and religion.”

The local Mechoopa Maidu tribe was one of the sponsors of the event. The tribe found the event to be of great value as it gave them the opportunity to be recognized while the conference took place on their ancestors’ land.

During the event, Chico Mayor Ann Schwab made a proclamation thanking the Mechoopa Maidu tribe for helping host the conference and recognizing them for their presence and history in Chico.

The conference can serve many purposes for the variety of people who attend. Dennis Ramirez, the Mechoopa Maidu tribal chairman, sees it as a healing process.

“The event allows us to have a voice to share the good and the bad for the better,” Ramirez said.

The conference not only allowed for the Mechoopa Maidu tribe to share its history and culture, but included many tribes located in Northern California, such as the Tyme Maidu, Pit River, Yocha Dehe Wintun, and Konkow Valley Band of Maidu.

The event allows us to have a voice to share the good and the bad for the better.

Overall, the goal of the conference is to educate people about the challenges Native Americans have overcome, their cultural practices, and their historical perspective from past to present.

“You can’t say you walked away with nothing from the conference, whether it made your mind think or your heart was touched,” Ramirez said.

For information visit www.csusm.edu/air/cicscconference.html.
If there were a person to represent passion in its utmost form, Chris Trudell would be the most qualified representative.

During his time spent in Chico, Trudell was a resident adviser at Craig Hall, commissioner for the Environmental Affairs Council, Summer Orientation leader, brother of Phi Delta Theta, recruiter for Up ‘til Dawn, an ally for Safe Zone, and a co-founder of ‘Cats in the Community.

Up until his last semester, Trudell held three campus jobs—as an academic advising intern, a student intern for the English department, and he ran a writing workshop every Friday with 10 students.

As someone who has had an exceptional college experience, he wants to support others just as he was supported in finding a direction and passion in life.

Before he came to college to pursue his career, Trudell had to overcome a tragic incident that became the catalyst in developing his passion for helping others.

“When I was in high school, my best friend and his mom were murdered,” he said. “After that I knew I wanted to help people.”

His community and family were devastated, and he developed into a resource to help people get through their struggle. Trudell discovered he wanted to understand and ease hardship for others while helping them travel through the world a little bit easier.

Since coming to Chico State, he’s found others to help him navigate his college career.

“I wouldn’t be anywhere if it wasn’t for my fellow students, professors, and staff,” Trudell said.

Trudell will graduate in May with a bachelor’s degree in English education and a minor in psychology. He said he started off wanting to double major in psychology and philosophy, but then “became fascinated with how language governed the experience.” Because of this, he then decided to pursue an English degree.

“English embodies almost every discipline,” he said.

After Trudell graduates, he will be attending Clemson University in South Carolina to obtain his master’s in student affairs.

“No matter what, I want to continue working with students,” he said.

Kasey Wall

By: Kayla Noriega

Kasey Wall doesn’t settle. While her peers attended colleges based on sports alone, she looked for the whole package. When she couldn’t find an internship that suited both her major’s requirements and her interests, she created one. Instead of letting the prospect of playing sports, while earning a major and two minors intimidate her, she used her time-management skills to balance it all.

Wall, 23, has spent her entire educational experience being a dedicated student-athlete and creating her own opportunities.

When she began applying to different universities, she focused on colleges themselves instead of sports.

“I’ve known so many athletes who go to school for sports,” she said. “It’s just not what they expected and they quit, and I just didn’t want that.”
Feeling stressed? Now, imagine you were a full-time student running a business with a part-time job and freelance work on the side.

Meet graduating senior Michael Ryan Eman who says he doesn’t really know how he could do it all without a lot of coffee and plenty of determination.

Eman, 23, will be graduating this spring with a degree in communication design, an option in mass communication and a minor in instructional design. Chico State was the only state school that had the specialized design program he was looking for.

While earning his degree the past few years, Eman and two other students, Braden Ankeney and Max Nelson, came together and established their company, Common Culture Clothing. They have made it into a story of growing success.

“We were personally tired of the negative imagery associated with street wear and decided to start adding our input to this niche fashion industry,” Eman said. “We try to capture and embody the image of youth, inspiration and positivity – characteristics that I’ve come to be familiar with here at Chico State.”

Eman’s role in the company involves maintaining and creating shirt designs and designing any other promotional graphics for the company. The company has also become Eman’s outlet for personal creative expression.

“To boil it down to its simplest form, I love designing,” Eman said. “Through this company, I have gained knowledge and experience on the inner workings of a small business, but overall I have been able to create and design with complete freedom.”

Last summer, Eman was solely responsible for completely redesigning the Chico State Wildcat Store’s new website. On top of this, he maintains countless other websites.

“At the end of the day, I would not change my experience here for anything,” Eman said. “If I could go back and do it all over again, I would – multiple times.”
For alumnus Ernesto De La Torre, Chico State was where he found himself. He discovered that he wanted to help people, and today, as the global public health coordinator for Chevron, he spends his time on the president’s National HIV/AIDS Strategy and much, much more.

The psychology program was where he learned what he was capable of with his ability to improve the lives of others. Not only did he find his education to be personalized and well-rounded, but joining the Psychology Association of Chico State was a great experience while also opening many avenues.

“It really helped me understand and build myself,” De La Torre said. “It helped me understand who I was, what I was good at, and how I could use my skills to help people.”

As the global public health coordinator for Chevron, De La Torre is responsible for implementing programs, trainings, and other activities that are shared internally with the company’s employees to promote their health and well-being. He is proud of how often he uses knowledge obtained from his experience at Chico State.

“I get to use my skills that I learned at Chico State nearly every day,” De La Torre said. “How you take that knowledge and apply it to your growth is what’s really important.”

Today, De La Torre represents Chevron all over the world and has even sat on the floor of the United Nations during one of its rare private sector delegations. It’s not exactly where he would have predicted he would be 10 years after graduation, he said laughing.

“Having that opportunity to sit at a meeting of U.N. aides and be a voice for the private sector has been absolutely amazing,” De La Torre said. “When you compare it to all these Ivy Leagues, I’ve been able to work and stand right beside those grads and have no fear about the quality of my education and still be able to say, ‘Hey!’”

De La Torre has worked on the president’s National HIV/AIDS Strategy, representing Chevron and helping Obama’s team develop business aspects to the strategy that was released last year. De La Torre was inspired by Obama’s genuine concern for everyone around him.

When meeting Michelle Obama, De La Torre tried to subdue his nervousness and say something intelligent, but all he could come up with was a genuine, “Thank you.”

Knowing the contributions of De La Torre and his efforts with the HIV/AIDS Strategy, she reminded him why his line of work meant so much to him. “No, thank you for everything you have done,” she said.

Aside from rare experiences such as meeting the president and first lady, De La Torre loves his job because he impacts the lives of a significant sized population every day. He has used his love of aiding others to inspire even our nation’s greatest leaders to recognize his efforts.

Did you know: 2012 marks Chico State’s 125 anniversary?
People are different. They have different interests, values and preferences on just about anything and everything, especially when it comes to general education. This is why Chico State offers a diverse list of courses for general education in the new GE Pathways program.

Chico State has revamped the old general education program and implemented a new program called GE Pathways. This program allows students to take a deeper look into a variety of subjects while continuing to learn traditional critical and logical skills.

The GE Pathways program began its design process in 2008 and will be implemented fall 2012. According to the Chico State GE Web page, the new program “offers students an integrated learning experience across the University’s academic disciplines and the opportunity to earn an interdisciplinary minor.”

The program was designed with the help of 10 dedicated faculty members titled “pathway coordinators.” Diversity Studies Pathway Coordinator Kate McCarthy thinks the new GE Pathway will help students find value in GE courses.

Unlike a “theme,” which was only a three-course component of the university’s previous method of organizing general education, the new GE Pathway will help students find value in GE courses.

“Students need to feel connected to the curriculum and the GE Pathways program is a good way to do so,” McCarthy said.

“If I’m a person of color or diversity, where am I in this world of study?” McCarthy said. “We’re hoping the Diversity Studies Pathway is a place where people can find themselves in the curriculum.”

If I’m a person of color or diversity, where am I in this world of study?

The Diversity Studies Pathway also teaches students that diversity is more than just race, but physical ability, age, and the physical environment a person grows up in.

“All kinds of diversity are going to be featured in this Pathway, which I think is one of its most appealing features,” McCarthy said.

McCarthy also thinks that teaching students about diversity will lend to making Chico a more inclusive learning community.

“We will not attract and keep diverse populations until we are a university community that welcomes and takes different lives and morals seriously,” McCarthy said. “I think the curriculum can help attract and retain those populations.”

Students might not only be happier with their curriculum but also more prepared to enter the diverse world we live in today.

For more information about the new GE Pathways program, or for a list of the Pathway coordinators, please visit the website at www.csuchico.edu/ge/pathways.
Thor Maydole began his Chico experience in 1962 in a way that many of the campus’s current students couldn’t imagine. Despite the fact that he had a room downtown, he came with only $200 in his pocket. He ran out of his funds quickly and had to utilize a program through the Chico State job office that provided him a $25 loan to make it through the month. Though $25 may not seem like much, it was a generous loan at the time, with the minimum wage being about $1.25.

Maydole greatly appreciated how the people in the community took him in. This appreciation, along with his upbringing and work experience, caused him and his partner, Connie Barr, to want to make a difference at Chico State. Not only did they decide to establish a donor-advised fund, they also created the Joo Maydole and Barr Scholarship, which is a new diversity scholarship.

The scholarship was established in October 2011 and the first recipient will be selected this spring for the 2012-2013 academic year. Maydole knows that change comes slowly, but hopes that the fund and scholarship will cause people to think in different terms.

“I was just taught to respect people who were supposedly from a different background or group or color than myself.”

The first thing that Maydole and Barr set up was a donor-advised fund, which will allow them to have a choice in where the funds will be directed year after year. They can communicate with people like Tray Robinson, Chico State’s director of diversity programs and inclusion, to see what the school has been doing in relation to diversity and support what they think is valuable.

Along with the donor-advised fund, Maydole and Barr also set up a scholarship because they want to celebrate and acknowledge students who reflect their values. Such students would exemplify values of providing support, encouragement, and assistance to under-served populations and to building diversity in the classroom and in the world.

“They are extremely idealistic folks who are so full of energy and enthusiasm for this; you can’t help but catch it,” Booth said. “They are just fantastic people and they really believe in what they say and do.”

Did you know: Epsilon Sigma Rho Multicultural Fraternity, Inc. was the first multicultural fraternity on campus?
Left.
Right.
Left.

Directions are all Bobby McMullen hears as his guide directs him down the mountain. Unlike most downhill mountain bike racers, he does not see the trees that pass him by or the ditches in the dirt.

McMullen is blind, but that doesn’t stop him from participating in races that drop more than 10,000 feet in 19 miles.

“The Way Bobby Sees It” is just one of the films that has been featured at the FOCUS Film Festival that highlights the amazing things people with disabilities can do. The festival is a two-day event that “focuses” on the complexity of the human experience, whether it’s a story about fighting cancer or living with autism.

The FOCUS Film Festival first debuted in 2005 and was established by Mary Ann Weston of the Far Northern Regional Center, a non-profit organization that provides services and support to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. This year, the festival’s kickoff will be held Oct. 11 at the Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. and Oct. 12 at Chico State. The festival serves as a great way to inspire people with disabilities while providing education to the community.

“The films we screen provide positive role models for people with disabilities, but they also offer the community insight into the lives of those individuals,” Weston said. “Don’t underestimate the power of a good entertaining film to open minds to new ideas.”

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, one in five people of the U.S. population is faced with some sort of disability, and this number continues to grow. The director of “Imaginary Circumstances,” Anthony Weeks, thinks this statistic proves that disabilities can be relevant to everyone.

“At one point or another we are all going to know or love someone with a disability,” Weeks said.

At one point or another we are all going to know or love someone with a disability.

A disability is something that varies in severity and takes many different forms, including cognitive, physical, and psychiatric, Weeks said. It can sometimes be difficult to recognize a disability, or people can feel uncomfortable when they are around a person with one.

People with disabilities, whether the disability is visible or not, are also prevalent on the Chico State campus and college campuses across the U.S.

“One in 10 college students has a disability,” said Lauri Evans, outreach and education coordinator of the Chico State Accessibility Resource Center.

For some people, the festival has successfully helped increase their knowledge of the disability public.

“I certainly went away from the event thinking more about how people with disabilities are very mainstream,” said Daran Goodsell, Chico State lecturer and Chico Performances marketing coordinator. “They are everywhere and they live life just like we do.”

Students and community members cannot only benefit from the films but also the different speeches, displays, and workshops offered at the festival, such as an advanced sign language interpretation class. The festival often invites directors whose films are being shown to speak to the audience and provide a deeper perspective.

“The festival provides a very engaged setting for people to come and see films, but also learn from the filmmakers about how the films were made and the intention behind them,” Weeks said. “In my opinion, sparking conversation is what film is supposed to do.”

For more information about the festival, please visit the FOCUS Film Festival website at www.farnorthernrc.org/focusfilmfestival.

Did you know: Chico State’s first African-American student body president was elected in 1991?
Conversations on Diversity Award, 2012

Behind the Scenes Award
- Vikki Bass

After Chico
- Clay Canady

Walk the Line Award
- Susan Green

Promising Newcomer Award
- Deanna Pierro

Taking it to the Classroom Award
- Paula Selvester

Pulling Us Together Award
- Jillian Ruddell

Taking it to the Streets
- Blitz Build

Lifetime Achievement Award
- Dave Waddell

Enhancement of Multicultural Understanding Award, 2012

Nu Alpha Kappa Fraternity Inc.

For comments or questions contact Tray Robinson at TRobinson@csuchico.edu