

WORLD CLASS

DAVIS UNITED WORLD COLLEGE SCHOLARS PROGRAM BOLSTERS EARLHAM'S INTERNATIONAL RECRUITING

by Jonathan Graham

photos by Kevin Burke

Musa Khalidi's phone has been ringing a lot lately. Colleagues at other colleges keep calling Earlham's senior associate dean of admissions and director of international student admissions to learn the secret of Earlham's success in global recruiting.

"They want to know how we tripled our number of entering students in three years," he says. "They come to us for advice because a lot of schools are really struggling."

International student enrollments at U.S. colleges and universities have fallen significantly since September 11, 2001. At Earlham, on the other hand, students from other countries now comprise 11 percent of the student body. Khalidi, who cuts an elegant figure on campus with his dark suits and bright-colored shirts and ties, is not in the habit of sharing his favorite recruiting techniques with the competition. But when he talks with his colleagues at other institutions, he is reminded that any praise for Earlham's success at bringing international students to campus must be shared by other teaching faculty and administrators who have made international recruiting a top priority for the College.



Davis United World Scholars Class of '09 from left: Notokozo Magadi, Ali Abdalla, Victor Anciano, Lucie Kalousova, Aida Mboré, Degen Mehari Tckble, Yuliya Daniels, Harriet Rollitt, Earlham President Doug Bennett, Meryana, Martin Gachoro, Yazdan Hogue, Carly Smith, Darut Prasertsri, Carlos Parades, Austin Harris, Senior Associate Dean of Admissions Musa Khalidi and Motseoa Seutloali

“International students feel welcomed by the Earlham community and challenged in the classroom,” says Khalidi. “They love the supportive environment here and they like that the College promotes leadership and truly celebrates diversity. And, most importantly, they appreciate the quality of the Earlham academic experience.”

In other words, what attracts and keeps international students is the very nature of the College: a place that combines a welcoming spirit with high standards. It helps that Earlham has earned a reputation for global engagement. The College will celebrate its 50th anniversary of overseas study in 2006-07 and received the Simon Internationalization Award for its efforts to connect with the changing world. All these factors surely make Earlham an attractive place for students from other countries. Khalidi is quick to acknowledge, however, that Earlham’s numbers have been bolstered by an extraordinary philanthropic effort that is helping hundreds of students from other countries attend college in the United States.

THE DAVIS FACTOR

The Davis United World College Scholars Program provides college scholarships for talented graduates of United World Colleges, a group of ten secondary schools worldwide where students spend their final two years of high school studying with classmates from all over the world. The scholarships are administered by some of the nation’s best colleges, including Earlham.

“Earlham invests significantly in financial aid for international students,” says Khalidi. He notes that while Earlham has had success attracting international students who are able to help fund their own educations, some students with extremely limited financial resources get a full-ride at the College. While the Davis United World College Scholars Program is a boon for participating students, Earlham itself also provides generous funding for international students.

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—Victor Anciano '09

Created as pilot project at five colleges in 2001, the program expanded two years ago to provide scholarships at 52 institutions nationwide including Harvard, Yale, University of Virginia, Middlebury, Oberlin and Earlham. The Davis United World College Scholars Program is funded privately by investment fund manager Shelby M.C. Davis and his wife Gale. They expect to contribute \$20-25 million per year on an ongoing basis.

There are currently 30 Davis Scholars at Earlham. In total, there are 123 international students from 51 countries at the College. In a sign of good things to come, Earlham’s application numbers for students outside the United States are on the rise.

Davis scholarships provide \$10,000 per student, per year, so the program has certainly helped Earlham attract talented international students. Khalidi points out, however, that Earlham was doing well before the program began. Earlham hopes that funding from the Davis program and other outside funding sources will enhance the College’s own investment in international recruitment.

“The best thing about this program from Earlham’s point-of-view is that it allows me to concentrate some of my efforts on the United World Colleges,” says Khalidi, noting that Earlham has long had strong ties to some of those institutions. He makes regular visits to the American campus in Montezuma, New Mexico, as well as the schools in Canada, Hong Kong, Wales, and Italy. He plans to expand his recruiting at the UWC campuses in Singapore, India and Norway.

The United World Colleges provide students with a rigorous preparation for college, following the International Baccalaureate program which stresses multicultural awareness in the context of a rigorous liberal arts education. The schools also require community service projects and encourage students to learn from one another in social situations as well as in the classroom. Graduates are not only well prepared for college’s scholastic demands but are also prepped for the challenges of living and

learning with others from vastly different backgrounds.

“When you visit one of the United World Colleges, it’s as if you have an entire United Nations in front of you. It’s really amazing,” says Khalidi. “The schools also have a very high academic caliber and close-knit communities that are very similar to Earlham in their focus on internationalism and celebration of diversity. I never have to question whether those students will find a good fit at Earlham.”

BIG QUESTIONS

Indeed, some students are surprised by just how good a fit Earlham turns out to be. Kamila Quijano '08, an Economics and Human Development and Social Relations major from the Philippines, had never heard of Earlham before perusing a list of the schools participating in the Davis UWC Scholars program. Her advisor at Canada’s Lester B. Pearson UWC of the Pacific recommended that she might increase her chances for admission by considering colleges that were not receiving lots of applications from her classmates.

“I had no idea that Earlham was as good as it is until I got here,” she admits, noting that the College’s generous financial aid offer, bolstered by a Davis scholarship, was extremely important in her decision to attend Earlham. “That money [\$132,000 for four years at Earlham] is the equivalent of 1.5 million pesos. You could send three students through the top university in the Phillipines with that money. I never could have afforded to come without this funding.”

Quijano has shoulder length black hair, soft features, a high voice, and shifts easily between earnestness and goofiness.

What comes through in conversation, however, is a thoughtfulness and a focus on big ideas and difficult questions. It is clear that she’s not the kind of student who let things pass without careful examination.

At Earlham, Quijano is intent on getting the most she can out of the experience, even — or perhaps especially — when she is forced out of her comfort zone. During an interview in the Runyan Center coffee shop, Quijano looked stylish in a cropped corduroy jacket and jeans and displayed disarming directness. She briefly switched roles with this interviewer, asking why American students tend to avoid answering questions of faith and religion beyond the surface level. Quijano admits that she finds it easier to talk with other international students about serious things.

“I think [American students] are afraid to offend,” she offers. “But I like to go deeper in those conversations.”

To that end, she is co-convenor of Questing Catholics and active in Earlham Christian Fellowship. Both groups offer her chances to socialize and explore issues of faith with other Christians. She even hosts a Bible study group in her dorm room which she calls “Tea with God.” She credits such faculty members as her academic advisor, Stephen Butler, and Questing Catholics advisors, Assistant Professor of Chemistry Lori Watson and Associate Professor of Psychology Vince Punzo, for helping her find answers to big questions.

Quijano would eventually like to pursue graduate work in both social work and theology, and her possible career choices include running an orphanage, working with a non-governmental organization, or serving as a lay leader in the Catholic Church. Whatever she

does, she feels a responsibility to make sure her education benefits others.

“I think Earlham wants me to not only better myself but also the world,” she says.

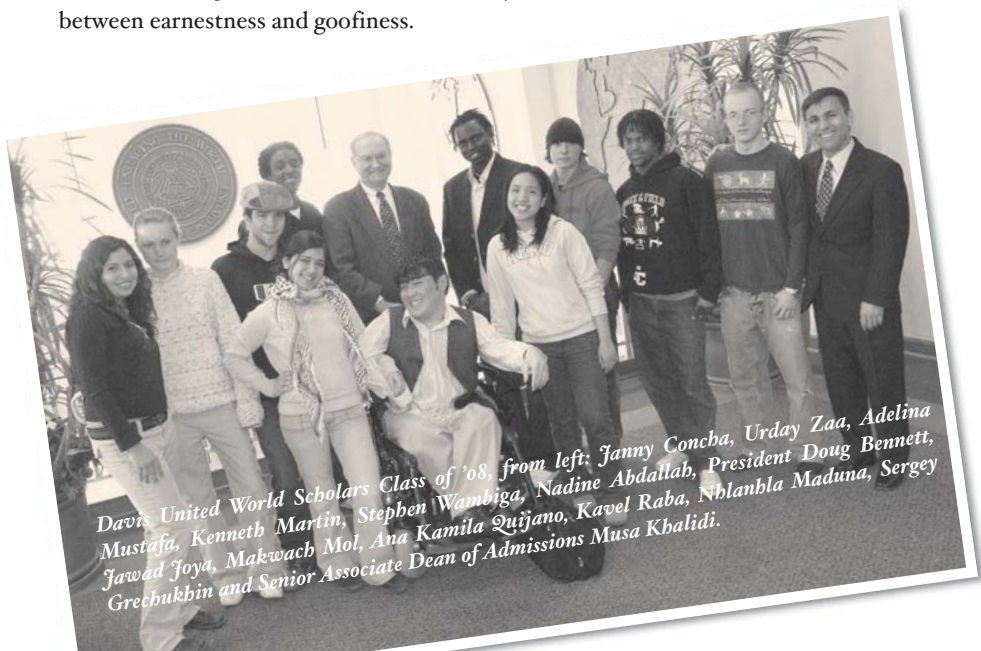
FOOD, WATER AND EDUCATION

For Jawad Joya '08, just getting to Earlham was an epic journey. A polio survivor who uses a wheelchair, he received no formal education in his native Afghanistan due to civil wars and other problems. What he did have was an abundance of curiosity and determination that drew the attention of those who were able to help him. As he shares the stories of his life, he grins gleefully at the memory of experiences that, as he puts it, “religious people might call miracles, but I call them beautiful yet rare co-incidents.”

A Red Cross doctor helped him find a tutor when most teachers had fled the country and those who remained feared the wrath of the Taliban if they taught most subjects. His tutor helped him learn Persian, English and computer sciences in a period of months, and he was hired to work for the Red Cross in Kabul. After the Taliban fell in 2001, Afghanistan’s education minister allowed a 16-year-old Joya to take tests for grades 1-11 in order to prove he was prepared for formal education. Italian military officials helped him get a travel visa so that he could attend the UWC of the Adriatic at a time when travel between Afghanistan and western countries was practically impossible. Once in Rome, he even met Pope John-Paul II.

“The civil wars destroyed or severely damaged the very foundations of nearly all the economic and educational institutions in Afghanistan. When I started learning, there was little hope for the future. A lot of people were negative about what I was trying to do,” Joya recalls. “They would say, ‘why are you wasting your time and your brain with that? You see people with Ph.D.s selling carrots and potatoes in the street.’” Joya, however, believed that a bright future was possible.

Many journalists visiting Afghanistan who met Joya at the Red Cross offices in Kabul offered him help and encouragement. But it was Joya himself who envisioned a future of education and travel for himself, and it was Joya who did the work to gain admission to educational institutions and thrive there. He admits that he had a hard time adapting to the



Davis United World Scholars Class of '08. From left: Janny Concha, Urday Zaa, Adelina Mustafaj, Kenneth Martin, Stephen Wambiga, Nadine Abdallah, President Doug Bennett, Jawad Joya, Makwach Mol, Ana Kamila Quijano, Kavel Raba, Nblanbla Maduna, Sergey Grebukhin and Senior Associate Dean of Admissions Musa Khalidi.

cultural differences he found at UWC of the Adriatic in Italy and to the academic rigors of a program geared to top students from all over the world.

When it came to choosing a college, Joya focused on schools in the United States. He wanted to use his English skills and he knew colleges here offered much better wheelchair access than do institutions in Europe. Most of all, he knew he wanted a liberal arts education.

In an interview in the Runyan Center coffee shop, Joya was turned-out in black pants, an open-collared white dress shirt, and a black and silver vest. He sports long side burns and a shock of black hair. In a husky voice and lightly accented English, he says Earlham appeals to him because of its tendency towards open-mindedness, caring, and progressiveness while maintaining an international focus. He also likes the fact that the college seems willing to evolve and change when it needs to, and that international students can have a role in setting the course.

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— *Jawad Joya '08*

“Earlham is open to challenge, and international students do have a powerful voice here,” he says. “It is dangerous [for a college] to live in a day dream that is more attached to some ‘useless ideal’ than to what is happening in the real world. Earlham is well connected to the world. Students bring the world to Earlham and take a little bit of Earlham abroad. The balance between what is imported and exported is good.”

For his part, Joya is hoping to keep his many interests, concerns and passions in balance as he contemplates life after Earlham. The sociology/anthropology major plans to pursue graduate studies and study social development. He is interested in how people come together and interact in the United States and how this country might be a model for other countries. Eventually he hopes to be active in global education, sustainable development and international affairs.

“As I have traveled to different countries, I have learned that almost all of them share the

common feature of being a mess, so that’s not unique to Afghanistan,” he says with a smile. “We do have huge challenges though. The destruction is similar to what you would have found in Germany or Japan following World War II, with two key differences. Germany and Japan had highly educated populations and well established industry. Afghanistan has neither. After food and water (and maybe shelter), education is what Afghans need the most.”

BLESSED WITH OPPORTUNITY

Victor Anciano '09, of Venezuela, did not have to look far to find role models for academic achievement. Two of his older brothers are medical doctors and the other is an engineering student, so finding himself at a top U.S. college is not a big surprise. Anciano takes nothing for granted, however, particularly the generosity of the Davis UWC Scholars Program.

“When I see all the people Mr. Davis is helping, it’s truly amazing,” says Anciano who attended the UWC-USA in Montezuma, N.M. “So many of these students wouldn’t be able to attend school at all, myself included. We owe him so much.”

Anciano, a biochemistry major, intends to pay back that generosity by joining his siblings in medicine. Growing up, he witnessed firsthand the effects that poor living conditions can have on people’s health. While he recognizes that medicine cannot alleviate poverty, he hopes to help people as much as he can.

“I don’t like the stereotype in the U.S. that people become doctors in order to make a lot of money,” he says. “In my country, doctors are not wealthy, so getting rich is definitely not my goal.”

Sitting in the science library where he works several hours a week, Anciano dresses in U.S. student casual: collar-length hair pulled back into a ponytail, a few days growth of beard, a zippered sweatshirt and jeans flared and frayed at the ankles. A second team all-conference selection in soccer last fall, he is a lean and athletic figure. Anciano says that in addition to being a lot of fun, soccer helped him assimilate into the Earlham community and makes friends from a variety of backgrounds. He adds, however, that the College’s growing population of students from outside the U.S. does make it easier for such students to adjust to life at Earlham.

“Because Earlham is such a diverse environment, international students have the opportunity to socialize with one another. We can relate to people who are having similar experiences. That helps a lot,” he says.

GREAT AMBASSADORS

As the College continues its efforts to recruit great students from all over the world, Musa Khalidi says that Earlham’s Davis UWC Scholars are helping him spread the word to qualified prospective students.

“They are my ambassadors,” he says. “Students at the UWC schools tend to be highly motivated and ambitious, and they are extremely conscious of name and rank when it comes to picking a college. We have to prove to these students that Earlham is of equal academic caliber to schools that are much better known. When current students e-mail their friends that they are happy and challenged at Earlham, it makes a big difference.”

While academic quality is the primary reason that students come to Earlham and stay through to graduation, Khalidi notes that the sense of community that international students find at Earlham is a huge positive. These students also get key support from the International Programs Office where International Student Liaison Kelley Lawson-Khalidi helps students adapt to life in the United States and at Earlham. Like all students, those from outside the U.S. can also seek counsel from teaching faculty, student development professionals and residence life staff.

“International students come to us in admissions and ask us what classes to take or get information about the resources the College offers, and we can point them in the right direction,” he reports, allowing himself a wry smile. “It’s not really our job to answer those questions, but we do. Students love that. They’ll tell their friends at other schools, ‘at Earlham, I have five advisors!’”

“International students want to be acknowledged for their different backgrounds. They want people to ask about their home countries, what languages they speak and what religion they practice,” he says. “Earlham has been truly celebrating diversity for a very long time, and that makes it a great place for all sorts of students.”