

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact –Danielle Rush

December 5, 2012

Communications Specialist
2300 S. Washington Street
Kokomo, IN 46904-9003
(765) 455-9414
darush@iuk.edu

Korean student enrolls at IU Kokomo

KOKOMO, Ind. — Seung Yeon Oh wanted to spend a year studying in the United States, at a university where she could experience real American culture and improve her English language skills.

She's found that and much, much, more, as an exchange student at Indiana University Kokomo.

"Some of my friends envy me," she said. "They are on big campuses in big cities, and they don't receive a lot of attention from faculty. At IU Kokomo, I am getting lots of attention."

Oh, also known as Stella, began her education at Sungshin Women's University, in Seoul, South Korea. Her major is French language and literature, but she is focusing on her second major in business while at IU Kokomo.

"This is pushing me to focus on improving my English," she said. "All Korean students are required to study English when you start school, but the problem is, English is taught in reading and writing. Lots of Korean students can read and write in English, but they have a problem with listening and speaking. This year, I am using and learning those skills, which will help me in my career when I return to Korea."

IU Kokomo also benefits from having an exchange student on campus.

Suzanne Jones, coordinator of international student services, said it is important for a college campus to have a diverse student population, so all students grow in their understanding and appreciation of others who are different.

"This helps cultivate character qualities that make us better human beings, like empathy, open-mindedness, tolerance, and a delightful curiosity about the world,"

Jones said. She encourages students to make foreign travel part of their education, but realizes that isn't possible for everyone.

"Even if they can't, they can encounter other cultures of the world right here at home, with our exchange students and international faculty. We hope those encounters will impact our students for the rest of their lives," she said.

Dianne Roden, professor of finance, said Oh works hard and is a positive role model. She also reminds other students that what they are learning affects people outside their own country.

"One of the topics we cover is the world wide movement towards one set of international financial reporting standards, which is more meaningful when we have Stella and other international students in our class," Roden said

Oh originally considered studying at a university in New York City, but thought the big city environment would be distracting. She also did not want to be someplace where it would be easy to find people who speak her native Korean, which would keep her from practicing her English.

IU Kokomo has a long-standing partnership with Sungshin University, particularly its School of Nursing, and Oh heard from faculty there that there was great interest in hosting foreign exchange students on campus.

She's found that to be true, as friends, faculty, and staff have made sure she enjoys real American cultural experiences, like tailgate parties, dances, sporting events, shopping in Indianapolis, and holiday celebrations, including Thanksgiving in Chicago with Catherine Barnes, an academic advisor.

Oh appreciates Indiana's weather after her time in Chicago, where "the strong wind drove me crazy," she said. "I am glad I am in Indiana, where it is much warmer."

A family in Kokomo takes her grocery shopping each week and has her participate in family activities.

She also has her own apartment, which she has enjoyed, after previously living at home with her parents.

"I like to live alone because I have freedom," she said, but added. "As the time passes, sometimes I miss my parents."

She said, though, that Interim Chancellor Susan Sciamé-Giesecke, Interim Vice Chancellor Kathy Parkison, Jones, and Roden have all looked out for her and tried to keep her from being lonely.

After her year at IU Kokomo, Oh plans to finish her degree in Korea, and then work

for a year to earn money to pay for graduate school in the United States.

Oh said leaders of Korean businesses perceive students who have studied in the United States to be extra intelligent, so her exchange student experience will help her in the future. She sees other positives, though.

“I think the biggest benefit for me is that I’ve experienced normal American culture.”

Jones focuses on helping Oh academically, tutoring her in English both in the library and in coffee shops and restaurants, so she can learn colloquial English.

“These educational and recreational activities create an overall experience for her, so she can return home not only with another year of college complete, but with new friends and life-enriching experiences she can share with her friends in Korea.”

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

-END-