

International students arrive at Alfred University

8/18/08

All but a few of the anticipated 37 international students arrived in Alfred over the weekend for this morning's start of their new-student orientation. One of the missing students, a graduate student enrolled in the master's program in counseling, is still trying to make her way to the United States, Petra Visscher, director of International Programs, confirmed. The student is from Georgia, which has been under attack by Russia. "She has been unable to get a flight," said Visscher. "We are in contact with her, and hope to have her here by next week." Fall semester classes start Monday, Aug. 25. First year and transfer students are scheduled to arrive Wednesday, and returning students will come in over the weekend. The new international students, who heard from President Charles M. Edmondson and others at breakfast this morning, are a mix of graduate, undergraduate and non-degree program students. Some are here for a semester or an academic year as exchange students. They come from Korea, the United Kingdom, China, Bulgaria, Spain, Japan, France, India, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Their majors vary from art to materials science, from biology and business to psychology. Among them are five students from Chengdu in the Sichuan Province of China, badly damaged by earthquakes last May. The students are coming to Alfred as part of a State University of New York initiative that will allow them to continue their education and return to their country to help rebuild the local economy and infrastructure. Four women and one man, all of whom are enrolled in materials science curricula in their home institutions, will be enrolled in materials science classes, which are offered through Alfred University's statutory unit, the New York State College of Ceramics. The state-supported engineering curricula also include biomedical materials engineering science; ceramic engineering, and glass science engineering. The SUNY initiative is bringing a total of 150 Chinese students to 22 campuses around the state. Alfred University's Office of International Programs assists AU students who travel to other countries as exchange students, as well as those who come to Alfred. "It is beneficial for our students to participate in exchange programs, but it is equally valuable to bring students from other countries to study at our campus," said Visscher. "Both are important ways to broaden our global awareness."