

SUNY Oswego program offers students rare opportunity in Cuba

When a dozen students start a study abroad experience in Cuba this Thursday, SUNY Oswego will have established one of only three comprehensive college-run semester-long programs in that country.

Participants in Oswego's first-ever Cuban semester exchange program from Feb. 12 to June 12 at the Universidad de la Habana had to be academic achievers fluent in Spanish because of the rigorous demands of the university there, said Walter Opello, director of Oswego's international education.

Students will take mainly social science courses and will learn more about the culture from out-of-classroom experiences. "There will be an educational tour of the island of Cuba in the first two weeks of the program," said Lizette Alvarado, the college's coordinator for programs in Latin America.

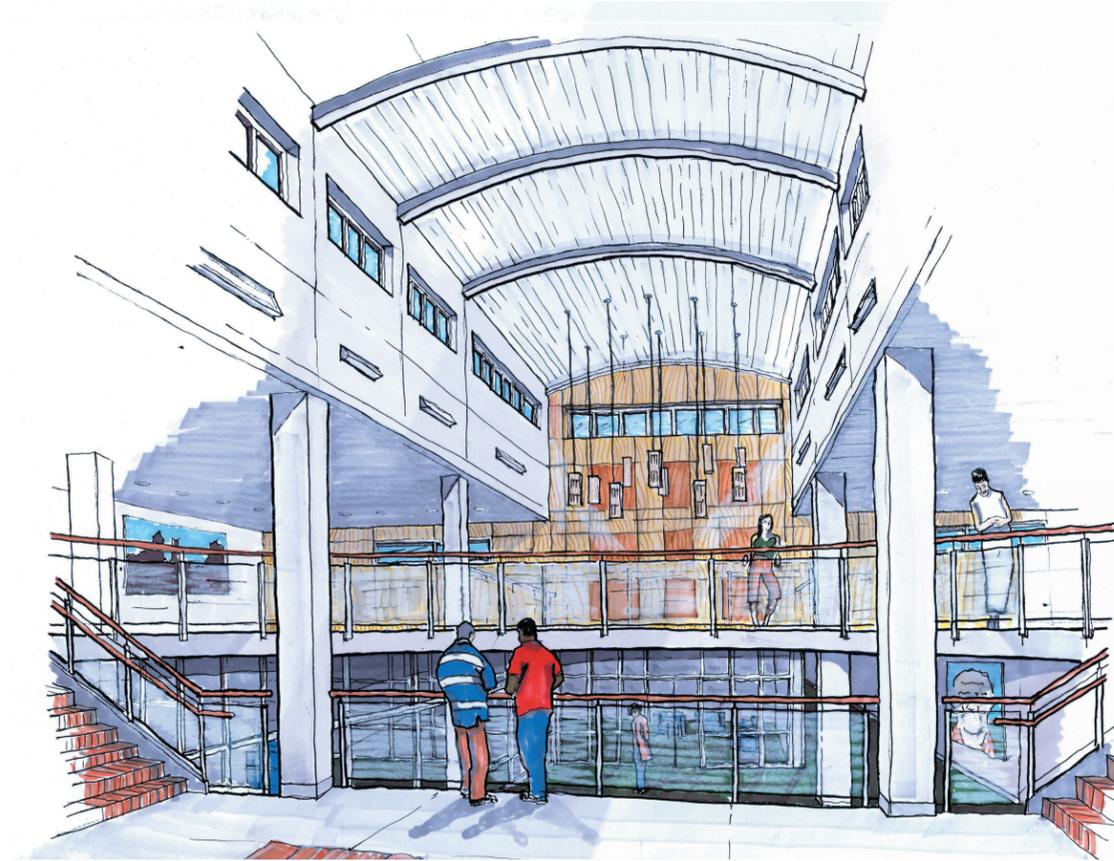
Plans are to pair a Cuban student with each incoming student to serve as a guide and cultural mentor throughout the semester.

The program's seeds were planted when Eugenio Basualdo, an associate professor of vocational teacher preparation, asked to bring two Cuban professors to speak on campus, Opello said. After speaking and meeting with members of the college community, "they proposed that we establish an exchange program at their university," Opello said.

Creating the program in a country where the United States has an embargo meant the Office of International Education had to do "probably 10 times more than we had to do for other countries," explained Josh McKeown, the college's associate director for overseas academic programs. "A lot of footwork and a lot of infrastructure went into this program. Plus there's this hurdle we had to get over to convince students" to go to a place many consider off-limits.

To create one of the few such programs in Cuba,

See 'Cuban program,' page 4



Academic commons — Swetman Hall will become a hub of academic services as a result of renovations college officials hope will begin a year from now. The project is the biggest of many included in Oswego's next five-year capital plan, which is outlined in the governor's recent budget proposal and awaits approval by the State Legislature.

Governor proposes \$52 million more for renewal

Gov. George Pataki's recent budget proposal contains some particularly good news for SUNY Oswego: more than \$52 million in capital funds to continue the next five-year plan for campus renovations. Funding is not certain until approved by the State Legislature.

The proposed total is about \$9 million more than the college had counted on last year, when budget

negotiations failed to produce a renewed capital commitment, noted Jerry DeSantis, associate vice president for facilities.

"We're in a position to get much closer to having a fully renovated campus," he said.

The largest piece of the new allocation would complete the central campus construction that began last fall with the start on the new Campus Center. The

See 'Capital plan continues,' page 2

'Once in 50 years' snowstorm socks campus, cancels two days of classes

Something happened in January that apparently hasn't occurred at SUNY Oswego in at least two generations. The snow blitz that canceled classes on Thursday and Friday, Jan. 29 and 30, represented the first time in memory the college scrubbed all classes on back-to-back days.

Oswego County was hit with what Professor Robert Ballentine of the earth sciences department termed a "once-in-a-50-year event" from late Wednesday through early Saturday. Thousands of campus community members who called the SUNY Oswego information line (312-3333), caught local TV or radio updates or surfed to the college's Web site learned the storm wiped out classes from Wednesday evening through the end of the week.

When the storm virtually stopped moving, and the low-pressure system set up over eastern Quebec and northern Maine to draw moisture from the Atlantic Ocean counterclockwise over the Great Lakes, the storm grew to historic proportions, said Ballentine, a recognized expert on winter storms. All told, about 54 inches of snow, coupled with harsh winds and bitter cold, battered Oswego.

"Normally when we have a lake-effect event, a cold dry air mass from Canada draws in air from over the lake," Ballentine noted. "We didn't have dry air from Canada, we had moist air coming from the Atlantic Ocean," which greatly enhanced the amount

See 'Students bide time,' page 3



After the storm — Students chat among the mounds of snow surrounding the academic quad. The piles served as a reminder of the snow blitz that besieged campus, canceling back-to-back class days for the first time in memory. Historic record snowfalls occurred during breaks — the blizzard of '93 during spring break and the blizzard of '66 before the start of spring classes.

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College trends

Campus visit paramount

"In the course of innumerable recruitment studies conducted for colleges and universities of every size, affiliation, and mission over the years, one finding has remained constant: *the campus visit is the single most influential source of information for students in college choice.* While web sites now surpass publications as a source of influence over the college decisions of prospective students, the campus visit stands in a category all its own. . . . What we learned is that nearly all students — of every academic ability and income level — are visiting college campuses (and most reported visiting their first and second-choice schools). The findings reveal that the hospitable nature of the community and the friendliness of the people students encountered during these visits had a significant positive impact on their interest in a school. Moreover, seeing facilities of interest to them, talking to professors, and attending classes made students more interested in the institution that ultimately became their first-choice school. While it's apparent that colleges can't do much about their size (too large or small) or location (in a rural area, in or near a city), they can take steps to ensure that the campus visit and tour consistently provide the information, insights, and experiences that engage visiting students and parents and compellingly communicate the true distinctions and character of each institution."

— *StudentPoll*, Art & Science Group, Jan. 29, 2004

Family income, college choice

"Median estimated parental income of college freshmen at public universities: \$74,711

"At private universities: \$97,007

"At Catholic four-year colleges: \$67,411 . . .

"Sources: . . . *Postsecondary Education Opportunity* analysis of UCLA survey of American college freshmen"

— *Connection*, New England Board of Higher Education, winter 2004

Squeezed from college

"A study by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education suggests that 250,000 students nationwide were barred from college because of state budget cuts resulting in sharp tuition hikes. While these conclusions should surprise few, it suggests an ominous outcome when short-sighted lawmakers slash education budgets. And it begs the question: What is the long-term state impact when significant numbers of students are barred from higher education?"

— *StratCommNet Newsletter*, Newwise and Simpson Communications, Feb. 4, 2004

Candidates talk college costs

"As tuition continues to climb at public colleges and universities, college costs are surfacing as a notable issue among the Democratic contenders for the presidency. John Edwards says that he will offer a free year of college if elected president, while Wesley Clark would offer two. Howard Dean would guarantee \$10,000 in loans and John Kerry would offer a free four-year education in return for two years in public service. While any of these proposals would be welcome by students and parents, no one has yet explained how these programs would be funded."

— *EdLines*, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Feb. 6, 2004

Legacy programs under fire

"Many institutions are ending their 'legacy programs,' age-old traditions where sons and daughters of alumni get preferential admissions treatment. Ending or retaining these programs is sure to trigger a firestorm of criticism from the political left and right."

— *StratCommNet Newsletter*, Newwise and Simpson Communications, Feb. 4, 2004

People in action



Warming up — Brad DuPont stretches against a snow bank while George Young tries to stay warm before the Bridge Street Run/Walk/Slide 5K on Sunday, part of the first-ever Laker Days festival. They are both SUNY Oswego seniors and track team members. Well over 100 participants conquered frigid conditions as they made their way from the Oswego YMCA to Laker Hall.

Josh McKeown, associate director for overseas academic programs, gave a presentation on "Measuring Learner Outcomes from Study Abroad" at the NAFSA: Association of International Educators regional conference Nov. 10 in Bolton Landing.

K. Brad Wray, assistant professor in philosophy, has been invited to give a talk at the 30th annual philosophy of science conference at the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in April. □

Science Today series schedules full semester

Science Today, a lecture series launched last semester to explore the interdisciplinary nature of science, continues through the spring with talks touching on such subjects as digital images, weather disasters and the environment.

All lectures are admission-free and open to the college and community. They begin with a pre-presentation reception at 3:45 p.m. Wednesdays in Room 306 of Park Hall, followed by 4:15 p.m. lectures in Room 305 of Park Hall.

Today's session, co-sponsored by the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, features Charles Hadlock, dean of Bentley College, discussing "Mathematics, the Environment, and John Travolta: Lessons from 'A Civil Action.'"

Michel Helfgott of SUNY Oswego's math department will probe the "Interplay of Math and Science" Feb. 18. On Feb. 25, José-L. Giner of the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry will explain "The Chemistry of Euphorbia and the Joy of Natural Products."

March lectures will include Maheesh Bhandari of Oswego's math department, "Finite Fields and Their Application to Error-Correcting Codes," March 3; John Hamilton Jr. of Eastman Kodak Research

Labs, "Color Interpolation for Digital Images," co-sponsored by the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, March 10; Leigh Bacher of Oswego's psychology department, "Attention and Action in Human Infants," March 24; and Nicholas Bigelow, from the University of Rochester's physics and optics department, "Bose-Einstein Condensation of Atomic Vapors," March 31.

April sessions will include Peter Ducey of SUNY Cortland's biological sciences department, "Invasive Worms Clashing in North American Soils: Everyone's Problem," co-sponsored by Sigma Xi, the scientific research society, April 7; Robert Ballentine of Oswego's earth sciences department, "Weather Disasters," April 14; and Alexei Orlov of Notre Dame University's electrical engineering department, "Nanoelectronics," April 28.

The series is an interdisciplinary effort geared to provide biology, chemistry, computer science, earth sciences, mathematics and biology majors a broad view of fields related to their area of study. The program also shows students potential careers and paths of research in the natural sciences.

For information, call 312-3044. □

— **Tim Nekritz**

Capital plan continues

Continued from page 1

\$3.1 million transformation of Poucher Hall into a humanities center will begin shortly, DeSantis said. The first phase of the \$15.3 million renovation of Swetman Hall should be under way by this time next year, he added.

Swetman, the core of the pedestrian spine of the campus, will connect the Campus Center and Poucher Hall and will be home to clusters of academic services in an academic commons and education planning center.

Before the Swetman work can begin, the west wing of Sheldon Hall must be renovated. Nearly \$4.6 million is earmarked in the governor's budget proposal for that project. Sheldon and Poucher will accommodate the offices and functions that must move from Swetman to make way for construction there.

Another significant piece of the capital proposal allows the consolidation of the School of Education,

including work in Park, Wilber and Sheldon halls and related projects in Lanigan Hall and Penfield Library totaling about \$12 million.

The proposal also accommodates planning and program studies for the sciences in Snygg and Piez halls as well as classroom renovations in buildings that are not scheduled for full rehabilitation, DeSantis said.

Exterior rehabilitation of Snygg Hall as well as of buildings in the academic quad area, in a continuation of the exterior work that has been done on Mahar and Culkin halls, is included for about \$8.5 million.

Other projects line-itemed in the proposal are window replacement in Mahar Hall (scheduled for the summer of 2005), campus-wide building signage for disability access and upgrades of mechanical systems in several buildings.

"This continues the capital investment in the campus at the level that we have seen for the last five years over the next five years," DeSantis said. "If the plan is approved, it will result in significant progress in campus renewal." □ — **Julie Harrison Blissert**

Students bide time studying, watching movies, shoveling snow

Continued from page 1

of snow that fell. A similar storm, although not as severe, set up in 1992, while Ballentine said he thinks the nearest equivalent storm would be Oswego's famed Blizzard of '66.

Bernie Henderson, a former vice president, agreed that nothing like this has hit Oswego since 1966. Canceling classes two days in a row "hasn't happened at least since 1969," recalled Henderson, who started at the college then and whose job it was for many years to make the decision.

The two snow days provided extra free time for students who lived on campus. "It was kind of nice to have a break so early in classes," Jennifer Senez, a sophomore public justice major from Clifton Park said. "I'd never seen so much snow so fast at once." She spent her unplanned downtime hanging out with other people who live on the same floor in Hart Hall.

Students cope

"Thank God" was Dennis Hahn's reaction when he learned classes were canceled Thursday and he wouldn't have to trudge through the storm. The sophomore adolescence education major from Utica caught up on schoolwork until he had none left to do. So the Hart Hall resident helped dig cars out of the adjacent parking lot, watched movies and hung out with friends.

While she appreciated the days off, she "didn't enjoy the cabin fever people developed very quickly," said Ashley Brown, a junior public relations major from New York City. "I spent a lot of time in Onondaga Hall and watched a lot of movies."

Watching movies was one way Amy O'Brien passed her time in Mackin Hall. "By Sunday, I was wondering if claustrophobia was setting in," the senior human resource management major from Fairport said. She also spent two hours shoveling out her car.

Listeners across Central and Northern New York learned how some students coped with being cooped up through a story by WRVO reporter Skye Rohde.

As intense as this weather was, it fell short of record totals. The legendary 1966 storm dumped 102 inches of snow on the Port City from Jan. 27 to 31, including an estimated 50 inches its last day alone. It hit before the classes began, as spring semester

registration "was postponed twice this week," read a Palladium-Times article from Feb. 3, 1966. The college loaned bulldozers to the city, where they tackled a downtown with drifts towering 12 to 15 feet. National media, including Life magazine, came to town to cover the amazing snowfall.

Another legendary storm, which deposited 40 inches of snow on Oswego in 24 hours in December 1958, inspired a music professor, Maurice O. Boyd, to pen a popular song called "Oswego Is Famous for Its Snow." □

— Tim Nekritz



Clearing out — Scott Stuart, a construction equipment operator, clears snow from the entrance to a parking lot on Takamine Drive near Sheldon Hall. The snow-removal staff of 20 people from the college's building and grounds department has been hard at work this winter.

Crews battle snow blitz to keep campus open

It's a tall order. Twenty people. Four miles of roads. Twenty-five miles of sidewalks. Nearly 26 acres of parking lots. Throw in the occasional storm dumping nearly 54 inches of snow within a few days and it seems like a mismatch.

But the snow-removal staff from the college's buildings and grounds department quietly do their job, working through blinding blizzards, pulling long hours on short sleep.

"Our cleanup crews have worked incredibly hard to clear roads and walkways for our students and staff, especially given the size and duration of the storms they have faced this year," President Deborah F. Stanley said. "All the people who work so hard to make the college accessible deserve our thanks and praise for succeeding in a task many people may take for granted."

A 20-member team tackles the Herculean task of making roads, sidewalks and parking lots as passable as possible. "I think the staff does an amazing job for the size of the campus to keep open and accessible and for people to park once they get on campus," said Mark Cornell, head grounds supervisor.

Three shifts battle the elements and mounting snow during the winter. The day shift is the most visible, working from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. "Their main purpose is to keep the campus open and operational," Cornell explained.

The afternoon shift reports from 3 to 11 p.m. "Their main purpose is to get all of our students and employees an easy, accessible route off campus," Cornell said.

The night shift — 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. — spends much of its time clearing parking lots, particularly the employee and commuter areas. Cornell said his department works with University Police and the Residence Life and Housing Office to coordinate the best schedules for residential lots.

Overtime mounts

The storm that socked the campus at the end of January offered its share of difficulties and long days. From Wednesday, Jan. 28, the onset of the snow, through Sunday, Feb. 1, the department put in around 320 hours of overtime, much of that spent on constant maintenance.

"About half of that was battling with the storm to keep the campus open," Cornell said. "About half of that was cleanup and dealing with the aftermath."

In addition, the academic and housing custodial staff pitches in to clean out the building entrances to the main sidewalks. "It's a lot of hand-shoveling, snow-blowing, exposure to the elements," said Mary DePentu, assistant director of operations. "We're very fortunate to have dedicated staff throughout the campus." □

— Tim Nekritz

Spotlight

Pointon enjoys college's diversity, friendliness

The Campus Update Spotlight shines on Cheryl Pointon this week. A half-time secretary in the biology department in Piez Hall, Pointon has worked on campus for eight months since spending the last eight years as a stay-at-home mother.

Q. How would you describe your job and responsibilities?

Basic secretarial. Typing. We make a lot of copies for handouts. Pretty much anything to support the faculty. We guide students who have questions to where they can find the answers.

Q. What is your favorite part of working at Oswego?

The diversity of the people you come into contact with — people from all over who are interested in a lot of different things. I like the subject matter, too. The biology department is very interesting.

Q. What is your impression of Oswego's students?

They have been very well-mannered, very respectful and courteous. Considering what's handed to them, in terms of responsibilities, at that young age, I'm very impressed.

Q. What achievement are you most proud of?

Probably getting this job. After being away from the work environment, the business environment for so long, it was a big step. Since I need to be able to help the family, working half-time is great. It was a goal I had. I worked for the state before (at the New York Power Authority), so it's good to be back under the retirement system.

Q. Do you have any hobbies?



Bowling. I like to travel. I've recently taken up Rollerblading. It's something I can do with my family, and it's really fun.

Q. What can you tell us about your family?

My husband Scott works at Entergy Nuclear Northeast. I have two sons. Zachary is 13. Zane is 8. We live in Sterling. □

Announcements

Firewall acquired to safeguard computer network

If all goes well the weekend of Feb. 21-22, SUNY Oswego will join the vast majority of colleges and universities in securing its campus computer network with a firewall.

"A firewall is a 'best practice' security procedure to maintain a highly reliable network," said Mary Schoeler, Oswego's chief technology officer.

The firewall is a piece of equipment that sits at the point where the campus network connects to the external Internet. It checks traffic coming into the network to make sure it meets certain safety criteria.

A 2002 Educause survey of 635 colleges and universities showed that only 4.7 percent had no firewall on their campuses (www.educause.edu/coredata/reports/2002/).

Without a firewall, every computer on the campus network and the network itself are vulnerable to attack from outside — "which has been the cause of some of our past network problems," Schoeler noted.

The equipment was installed on campus in January, she said, and technology services staff at Oswego, together with a consultant, have been phasing in zones.

Two campus departments with special communications needs — University Police and the computer

science department — came under firewall protection last week. The main academic and residential zones of the campus are scheduled to be brought in by Feb. 22.

"At that point, the firewall is expected to be fully operational," Schoeler said.

Most users of the campus network, whether from on campus or off campus, should not notice a difference in its function, she noted. That's because the e-mail system and the main campus Web server are defined as public resources in the firewall plan.

To remotely access private resources on the network — such as a particular desktop computer — users will now need "virtual private network" software, which is available by contacting the Help Desk (312-3456). The Help Desk Web site (www.oswego.edu/help) has more information about Internet security.

"Campus Technology Services has met with departments who maintain their own servers and customized the firewall plan to meet their needs," Schoeler said. Anyone with lingering concerns about special circumstances should get in touch with Nicole Decker (312-6083), she added. □

— Julie Harrison Blissert



Leaving prints — "Swamp," a 1979 drypoint and etching by local artist Jo Hyse, is one of 44 pieces appearing in "Six Women Printmakers" at Tyler Art Gallery through Feb. 21.

Callers to connect with students

Members of the campus community can influence the makeup of Oswego's class of 2008 by volunteering for a few hours of the annual Oswego Calling phonathon, set for March 8 to 11.

"What we need are people to tell students who have been admitted, but have not yet enrolled, why they should choose Oswego," said Liz Bridges of the Admissions Office, who coordinates the annual project. "Past feedback from students and parents shows that they genuinely appreciate the time, caring and the information they received from our volunteer callers."

In addition to faculty and staff initiating calls to next year's likely freshmen, the Admissions Office is selecting current students to join the four-day phonathon effort this year as well, Bridges said.

The drive will run 5 to 9 p.m. March 8 to 11. Participants will receive dinner in the Swetman Hall cafeteria at 5 p.m. before taking up calling duties from 6 to 9 p.m. in Room 2 of Poucher Hall.

Questions can be sent to bridges@oswego.edu. □

Eating disorders focus of program

Helping people examine their attitudes toward eating and body image is the motivation for Body

Acceptance and Eating Awareness Day, set for Feb. 18 on campus.

The college will offer free, anonymous education and screenings for eating disorders from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Hewitt Union main lounge. A highlight of the day will be a panel presentation from 12:45 to 1:45 p.m. sharing personal stories of recovery from an eating disorder.

Referrals to treatment and support services will be made as needed. □

Training on elder abuse on Feb. 26

The SUNY Oswego Personal Safety Task Force subcommittee on sexual assault, in conjunction with Services to Aid Families of Oswego County, is sponsoring a workshop on elder abuse Thursday, Feb. 26, from noon to 4 p.m. in the Hewitt Union formal lounge.

Facilitated by the Pace University Women's Justice Center, the workshop will be taught by attorneys Victoria Lutz and Cindy Kanusher. CLE credit is available for attorneys attending.

There is no charge for the workshop, which is open to all campus community members. Space is limited to 50 people. Refreshments will be provided.

Call Capt. Cindy Adam at 312-5403 or e-mail adam@oswego.edu to register for the workshop. □



Mush! — The Dog Soldiers are off and running in the Human Dogsled Race at the first-ever Laker Days festival. In the sled is Lacey Kimpland, a freshman on the women's basketball team. Acting as sled dogs are, from left, Travis Thornton, Rob Burke and Dave Johnson, all juniors on the baseball team; and Sally Shuster, a junior on the women's basketball team.

Cuba program

Continued from page 1

organizers had to navigate a maze of red tape, including getting a special license from the U.S. Treasury Department. Cuba also required the college to furnish an American professor to serve as a special director for Oswego's students — an additional logistical challenge and expense — but Basualdo was available to fill this role, Opello said.

"The kind of student this would appeal to is the mature, politically aware student who wants to really know Cuba beyond the superficial treatment in the U.S. news media," Opello noted.

As a result, Alvarado believes the students bound for Cuba aren't too anxious or worried. "The interview process I did with students helped them prepare for Cuba, not only linguistically but for what they will actually find in Cuba," she said.

Despite all the political rhetoric between the countries and the challenges in establishing the program, organizers believe the experience will prove invaluable. "It's a really exciting time to be there," McKelown said. □

— Tim Nekritz

Police report

Since Jan. 23, University Police investigated several cases of theft, vandalism and harassment. They made one arrest. Officers charged a 19-year-old Oneida Hall resident with unlawful possession of marijuana at the violation level. □

Calendar highlights

- Provost candidate open session, Feb. 11
- Blood drive, Feb. 17 and 18
- "The Vagina Monologues," Feb. 19, 21 and 22
- Rice Creek Ramble, Feb. 21
- College Council meeting, Feb. 25
- Reception for the Display-to-Archives Program, Feb. 25
- "The Traveler" and "The April Witch" opening, Feb. 26
- "Trav'lin: A Musical Journey in Blues and Jazz," Feb. 28

For a more complete calendar, see the Events Calendar link at <http://www.oswego.edu/news.html> — the News button on the college home page. □