

New student body arrives at St. Michael's

By **PHYL NEWBECK**
For *The Essex Reporter*

Last week, Route 15 got a little more crowded as students returned to St. Michael's College. There are 548 new students and 37 transfer students making up a student body of roughly 1,900. St. Mike's students all live on campus so they can take part in what Director of Marketing and Communications Buff Lindau calls a "24/7 educational experience," which includes weekend and evening programming.

The St. Mike's student body has become more diverse over the years. Twelve percent of the incoming class is either African-American, Latino/Latina, Asian or Native American. Seventy-three percent of first-year students are from New England, and 17 percent are Vermonters. All in all, 25 states and six countries are represented in the new student body. More than 20 percent of the incoming students ranked in the top 10 percent of their high school classes.

It is hoped that the new students will continue the Edmundite culture of service that traditionally has involved volunteer work in the greater community. Over the years, students have volunteered in area schools, helped out at the Boys and Girls Club, and played volleyball at the Juvenile Justice Center. In addition, students work one on one with adults with developmental challenges. A vibrant program that has been taking place for at least a decade is the students' work with senior citizens, which generally culminates in a "Senior

academic program include a new interdisciplinary Environmental Science program led by newly hired professor, Dr. Laura Stroup. Other new professors include a visiting instructor in biology, an assistant professor of chemistry, a visiting humanities scholar-in-residence, two assistant professors of fine arts, two assistant professors of modern languages, a visiting assistant professor of sociology and an assistant professor of history.

Stroup met her husband while doing her undergraduate work at Franklin and Marshall and is happy to be coming back to the northeast, as well as returning to a college with a strong liberal arts tradition. She arrived in July and has been helping out at the college's half-acre organic garden.

Stroup has been conducting research on hydrologic fracturing. She is also interested in non-point pollution and sees Lake Champlain as a laboratory to study that. She is pleased to be living in a state where environmentalism is an important value.

"It's green squared," she said, referring to both the mountains and the ethic.

Stroud was also impressed that St. Michael's seems to have good relations with the outlying community, rather than the town/gown conflicts she has seen in other locations.

"I got a really positive impression from the community," she said.

In addition, Stroud has been impressed with the students she has met



St. Michael's international students Miyuki Sugita of Japan, back, and Lucie-Maude Giuère of Quebec work in one of the school's gardens for an English development class called Lessons From the Garden on Tuesday afternoon.

Photo by Oliver Parini

into what is being referred to as the "4/4 template." Students are required to take four four-credit courses each semester. An additional course may be approved for students who have shown great academic skill, but this option will not be available for first year students.

St. Mike's is also trying to increase the opportunity for students to do individual research projects. Many such projects begin in the summer with grant funding and continue through the school year.

St. Michael's College will start the new year with an array of multi-cultural

been learned since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The panel will include Maryann Cusimano, the editor of "Beyond Sovereignty: Issues for a Global Agenda" and Anas Malik, author of "Political Survival in Pakistan: Beyond Ideology."

The students received their official welcome last week at the New Student Convocation. The principal address was given by geography professor Dr. Richard Kujawa and followed by a welcome from President John J. Neuhauser.

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There are no physical changes on campus but plans are in the works for a new student center, which will be built in the central area of campus between the four dormitories and link to the Alliot Student Center. Changes in the

academic program include a new interdisciplinary Environmental Science program led by newly hired professor, Dr. Laura Stroup. Other new professors including a visiting instructor in biology, an assistant professor of chemistry, a visiting humanities scholar-in-residence, two assistant professors of fine arts, two assistant professors of modern languages, a visiting assistant professor of sociology and an assistant professor of history.

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In addition, Stroud has been impressed with the students she has met.

"The students were enthusiastic at convocation," she said. "The returning students came and the senior class president spoke. It is a welcoming place."

Lindau said that a major academic change is the new liberal studies curriculum, which has been revamped



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St. Michael's College will start the new year with an array of multi-cultural programs, and Lindau said the campus is particularly excited about the "9/11 Plus Ten" event which will take place on Sept. 12 at the McCarthy Arts Center. Pulitzer Prize winning former New York Times reporter Chris Hedges will moderate a panel discussion on what has

been learned since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The panel will include Maryann Cusimano, the editor of "Beyond Sovereignty: Issues for a Global Agenda" and Anas Malik, author of "Political Survival in Pakistan: Beyond Ideology."

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"Students returning to campus is always one of the bright spots of the year for me," said Neuhauser. "They bring life and joy, and admittedly a bit of noise back and return us to what we are — a place of learning and possibility. In these uncertain economic times they make us all enthusiastic, optimistic and young again."