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And also, want to give a shout-out to our very cool interns who showed up to Gala. Thanks a lot guys, you definitely knew how to shake it up there! Now, on to the agenda for this week. The theme is HOPE & HOPE High School Conference. So, in here, you will hopefully find out some more info about both, as well as some relevant political issues and cultural tidbits. I highly advise everyone read the news article that our Political Advocacy Coordinator, Van, so kindly found for us. It’ll really open your eyes to the human rights situation in Vietnam. And, as always, learn some stuff and have fun while doing it! Also, if you look at our upcoming events, we have a LOT of fun events coming up so don’t hesitate to come out to them. You’ll have a LOT of fun! So enjoy and have fun at our meeting today!

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**HOPE High School Conference: What YOU Should Know**

By Jimmy Dao, HOPE HS Conference Coordinator

**What is the name of the event?**
VSU HOPE High School Conference

**When is it?**
November 10, 2007. 9-6pm

**Where is it?**
Here at the UCLA campus.

**What’s the purpose of the event?**
This event is to promote access to higher education. Our goal is to help at-risk, disadvantaged high school students prepare for the college application process, to provide access to the college environment and to show the benefits and opportunities that higher education can provide. We want also to raise awareness about Vietnamese American issues pertaining to education.

It is also to inform the disadvantaged high school students of higher education opportunities and provide them a vision and access of the goals they are trying to achieve as well as raise awareness of their personal cultural issues. The educational issues will be addressed in workshops such as planning high school careers, pros and cons of different types of colleges, college application process, financial aid and scholarships. The cultural aspect of the conference includes discussions about diversity and discrimination, specific Vietnamese/Asian American issues in education, and a student-life panel providing the attending students insights into college life from UCLA students.

**Why YOU Should Get Involved:**
Because high school students need your help!

Benefits of being a team leader and/or a volunteer:
- get to lead students in discussions, ice breakers and in a campus tour
- get a chance to meet and work with other student groups on campus.
- share your first-hand college experience (even if this is your first quarter at UCLA) and provide valuable information about the college application process, making higher education more attainable for the attending high students.
- gain organizational and interpersonal skills that will develop confidence and leadership
- it’s a fun and very rewarding experience

If you can’t go to the event, you can help out with the planning the event. Meetings are every Wednesday from 4:30 to 5:30 in the Student Activities Center, Conference Room 2.

Random facts, I guess….
- The HOPE High School Conference has been an annual event since 1983.
- This year we estimated 200 attending high school students
- Thomas’ Apartment is performing

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**Ways to Say Hi!**

**General:** Chào (phonetically – chow)

To a friend: Chào bạn

To a man older than your dad: Chào ông

To a man younger than your dad: Chào chú

To a woman older than your mom: Chào bà.

To a woman younger than your mom: Chào cô.

To a man you know: Chào anh.

To a woman you know (older): Chào chị.

To a younger person: Chào em.

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**Cultural Corner**

**Some phrases**

**Introduction:** Chào anh/em, tôi tên là ___ (Hello, my name is...)

**Your parents:** Thưa bà/má con về. (Yo! Mom/Dad, I’m home!)

**Bunch of people:** Xinh kính chào quí vị (Hello everyone!).

**Now go and wow people with your Vietnamese!**

"Sadly, in recent months, the human rights situation in Vietnam has deteriorated and become substantially worse-and over the last couple months a new, ugly wave of brutal repression has been launched by Hanoi. Some of the bravest champions of democracy have been dragged into court and sent to the Gulag for promoting human rights, including trade unions," Smith said during House debate of the bill (Access Smith's entire Floor statement here).

Smith's bill, the "Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007" (H.R. 3096), prohibits increased U.S. non-humanitarian assistance to the Government of Vietnam unless there is verifiable evidence that the Vietnamese Government has made substantial progress towards the release of its political and religious prisoners, respecting the right to freedom of religion, returning properties, allowing free and open access to refugee programs, respecting the human rights of members of all ethnic minority groups, and taking appropriate steps to end trafficking in persons.

Additionally, Smith's bill authorizes $4 million over two years for organizations and individuals that promote human rights in Vietnam, authorizes over $10 million to help stop the Vietnamese Government's jamming of Radio Free Asia, and requires the State Department to issue an annual report on the progress of human rights reform in Vietnam. The "Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007" does not restrict any humanitarian assistance to the people of Vietnam-including assistance to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS in any way.

"Massive human rights violations perpetrated by the Government of Vietnam cannot be overlooked. They cannot be trivialized. These human rights violations-which are ongoing and they occur as we meet here today-cannot continue without equally serious consequences," Smith told his colleagues.

Earlier this year, the parish house of Father Ly-a former prisoner of conscience who spent 14 years in prison-was raided. Father Ly was moved to a remote location and placed under house arrest. Father Ly is an advisor to "Block 8406"-a democracy movement which started on April 8, 2006, hence the name 8406-and a new political party, the Vietnam Progression Party. On March 30th, Father Ly was sentenced to 8 years in prison for distributing "anti-government" materials. Father Ly was among a number of dissidents swept up in a recent crackdown in Vietnam. Vietnamese police arrested another member of "Block 8406," principal spokesperson for the Vietnam Progression Party and the founder of the Vietnamese Labor Movement, Le Thi Cong Nhan. On the same day-March 6, 2007-Vietnamese police arrested one of Vietnam's few practicing human rights lawyers, Nguyen Van Dai. Smith noted that the court proceedings for Nguyen Van Dai and Le Thi Cong Nhan read like "a chapter out of George Orwell's chilling book 1984. I want to tell the persecuted-you are not forgotten. Republican and Democrat alike want you to know that you are not forgotten. We care deeply about you and about your right to exercise your fundamental human rights and we will not forget you-not now, not ever. And we will do all that is humanly possible, God willing, to effectuate your release and hopefully, some day, welcome a free and democratic Vietnam," said Smith, who authored a resolution, which passed the House earlier this year, that insists the Vietnamese Government immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience who have been arrested in a recent wave of government oppression. Smith's bill has garnered the support of powerful allies, including the American Legion. In a letter of support distributed to Members of Congress,
American Legion National Commander Martin "Marty" Conatser wrote, "This legislation makes clear the position of the Congress and the people of the United States to have the government of Vietnam take steps to ensure that voices of political opposition, and those expressing religious views, are not arbitrarily silenced." Smith introduced bills similar to the "Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007" in the 107th Congress (H.R. 2833) and 108th Congress (H.R. 1587) and both times they passed the House, but were never taken up in Senate. Smith called on his colleagues in the Senate not to let the "Vietnam Human Rights Act of 2007" meet the same fate.

"On behalf of those who are risking their freedom and their lives in Vietnam to obtain democracy for their fellow citizens and their country, I would plead with my distinguished colleagues in the Senate not to allow economic or other interests to obstruct these measures that will assist them in their efforts," Smith said.

Are you concerned about the situation and want to know how to help? Contact Political Advocacy Coordinator Van Duong at livanxpress@ucla.edu for more info on what we, as students, can do to make a difference.

-An iconic picture of Father Nguyen Van Ly being held silent during his trial this past March, an example of the lack of free speech in Vietnam.

Acronym of the Week

HOPE

HOPE = Higher Opportunity Program for Education

HOPE is a student-initiated project founded by the Vietnamese Student Union (VSU) in 1999. It is an outreach program which serves to encourage high school students to enter college by offering academic development, peer counseling, mentoring, workshops, and the annual High School Conferences at UCLA (see Jimmy’s article on pg. 2 for more details). HOPE provides a safe learning and enriching environment to encourage high school students from the Westminster and Chinatown area to continue their path to higher education and build leadership skills to assist their communities.

The services HOPE offers include:
- Peer Advising (counseling & mentoring)
- Academic Development (tutoring, writing & test preparation)
- Collective Development (workshops, field trips, community service, art activities, leadership development)
- Parental Engagement (dinners & meetings)

HOPE site times (includes transportation time) are:
- Tuesdays 1:30 PM - 6:30 PM (Westminster High School, OC)
- Thursdays 2:30 PM - 7:30 PM (Chinatown Branch Library, LA)
- Fridays 1:00 PM - 7:00 PM (Westminster High School, OC)

Meet at Student Activities Center, Room 106

If you would like to get involved, contact: Tina Ngo, Outreach Coordinator tinakngo@yahoo.com. HOPE Applications are due Monday, Oct 22nd.
VCN Auditions! Round II!

For those who couldn’t come last week, don’t fear! We’re holding another round of auditions.

Date: Thursday, October 15th!
Where: Kerkhoff 412 @ 6PM

Come out and show us your acting/singing skills! You know you want to!
For more info, contact Karen Tran at vsuvcn2008@yahoo.com