

"Let your light shine
before men so that
they may see your
good works and
glorify your Father in
Heaven."

- Matthew 5:16

the **DWC** *World*

Educating Tomorrow's Missionaries

Fall 2019



Did You Know

DWC's Fall 2019 student body is made up of 118 students

- 46 are SVD candidates
- 43 are religious sisters
- The remaining 29 are diocesan and religious priests, seminarians for other orders and laypeople
- Students represent 21 different nations
- 58 percent are men and 42 percent are women
- 45 students are enrolled in the English as a Second Language Program



Divine Word College

Lifelong learners

Oldest DWC student more than three times the age of the youngest

Omar Gonzalez is accustomed to getting an early start at things in life. When he was five, the native Spanish speaker started learning English as a second language in his Mississippi kindergarten class. Then, when he was just seven, he recognized that he was feeling called to priesthood at a time when his peers were waiting for their moms to call them to dinner. This year, Omar is the youngest student at Divine Word College, starting the academic year at just 17 years of age. While he admits that seeing facial hair on many of his classmates was a big change from his high school experience just a few months ago, he says the inter-generational environment at DWC is another opportunity to learn something new.

"They've lived longer than me and I think I can learn a lot from them," he said of his older classmates. "Whether it's life skills or just simply academically, they've been here a lot longer than me." The oldest student at DWC this year is 56 years old. In fact, there are two students who have already experienced half a century of living and learning. One of Omar's classmates in his Interpersonal Communications class is 49-year-old Fr. Antonius Waget, SVD, who was ordained three years before Omar was born. Fr. Antonius said his experience studying

alongside a teenager is unusual because he's spent most of his career teaching English to teens at a seminary in Indonesia. He came to DWC last year to further his understanding of American culture and to experience daily interaction with native English speakers. Now he finds himself in the role of student with some very young people as his educational peers.

"Sometimes it's challenging because of the age difference. I have to adapt myself to their way of thinking and working, since millennials are very advanced at using technology," he said. "I am learning how to be patient and to grow with them all the time." Fr. Antonius said he thinks DWC provides a great starting point for future missionaries because students are exposed to people from a variety of cultures, ages and viewpoints. He plans to complete two years of studies at DWC before returning to Indonesia and continuing his work as an English teacher. As for Omar, he may be at the beginning of his formation process with the Society of the Divine Word but he's surrounded by people who walked the same path not long ago. "I can ask them about their formation," he said. "I'm very lucky to have all of these examples around me. I'll be doing a lot of observing!"