Colliding cultures

MISSO banquet brings cultural awareness to attendees

Our traditions mix and match because we are neighboring countries,” Chan said.

Yun Shan Tee and Zoe Tan are the erstwhile president and vice president who helped form MISSO in 2014.

Clara Chong, vice president, said MISSO also hosts smaller events like culture night, and every spring they “collaborate with Chinese New Year.”

The banquet began with station games, where people were able to delve into the cultures with stations, such as clothes printing and a ballgame called Sepak Takraw.

Mikey Philayvanh, a junior chemistry major, was volunteering for MISSO at the Sepak Takraw station, though he is with the Vietnamese Student Organization (VSOUl).

“MISSO is good because it builds friendships and spreads awareness,” he said, adding that “anybody’s welcome.”

Philayvanh described Sepak Takraw as being like “volleyball but without using hands and having three-on-three teams.”

Kai Tan, secretary of MISSO, said MISSO is “like a second home in the states.” Kai added that while he enjoys going to UL Lafayette, “international students have to adopt, so it’s a good getaway from school.”

Wilmur Gomez, MISSO treasurer, was friends with Tee and he volunteered and became more involved with the group. Gomez added that “experiencing three different types of culture in one” makes it a positive experience.

This year, Gomez said they planned to “make events more engaging” and to provide a “hands on feel” with the station games.

Plenty more followed the games, too. In the banquet room, the remaining events kicked off with a speech from the president. There was a calligraphy presentation, dancing and trivia games about various people and cultures.

For instance, Indira Dutta and Bhaskar Ghosh gave a Hindi song performance. Pashana Shrestha and Aditya Kaveeshwar danced in a separate Hindi performance, and there was also a dance-off among anyone willing to volunteer.

Wai said that, this year, MISSO chose to collaborate and “help bring awareness to the National Alliance on Mental Illness” (NAMI), who were featured during the event afterward to support their cause.

The night’s festivities ended with a fashion show with traditional dress for males and females of Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. Afterward, attendees were invited to eat Malaysian dishes and commingle with each other.