



INTERNATIONAL *Accents* Connect with the World



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The Broader Influence of International Education by Elaine Hozdik

Most of us recognize that going abroad to study, research, teach or volunteer is a great way for individuals to engage in a unique learning journey through first-hand cultural immersion. For each person that travels abroad there is a network of support and a sphere of influence that expands the international experience exponentially beyond the individual.

Numerous university staff and faculty prepare to receive and send students and scholars to and from all parts of the world. They encourage interest, process applications, assist with program selection and course transfer, identify financial support, prepare travel and immigration documents, review and interpret differences in academic systems. They develop and conduct courses abroad, advise our development of international education programs and assist individuals throughout their cross-cultural experiences.

Family members participate in decisions and processes to support those who travel. Students and faculty mentor and host our international guests. Community members provide cultural opportunities and connections, diplomatic support, scholarship funds and a warm welcome.

This network of support makes each individual journey possible. In turn, each traveler's journey is an opportunity to influence others' sense of global connection. We all benefit as world knowledge expands, diverse cultures are better appreciated and enriching global friendships are created. Our gratitude is shared with all who make it happen!



Elaine Hozdik, Director of International Services

New Faces In the International Services Office

Brent Spencer *Study Abroad Coordinator*

Brent Spencer has worked full time for nearly five years in the Study Abroad and Service Learning Offices at the University of Utah, in the Study Abroad Office at the University of Missouri, and now as the Study Abroad Coordinator at Florida Gulf Coast University.



Additionally he has studied, volunteered, worked, traveled, and otherwise lived abroad for nearly five years (mostly in Brazil, Bolivia, Mexico, and Europe) including two years as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer. He often travels to Bolivia where he has family connections and is engaged in ongoing volunteer projects. Brent holds a BA degree in Geography with a minor in Latin American Studies and a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree, both from the University of Utah.

Brent Spencer, Study Abroad Coordinator
Email: brspencer@fgcu.edu

Danielle Alvarez *Program Assistant*

Danielle Alvarez graduated from Florida Gulf Coast University in May 2011 with a degree in Political Science and a minor in Spanish. Her experience at FGCU has opened many doors for her and provided her with multiple years of challenging yet rewarding undertakings and opportunities. In July, she began serving as the new Program Assistant in the International Services Office.



Additionally, Danielle has friends and family from all over the world and she has spent a great deal of time traveling overseas. Danielle is excited to have the opportunity to work at FGCU and be able to assist international students and assure that they have a fulfilling learning, cultural, and social experience during their tenure at FGCU. Go Eagles!

Danielle Alvarez, Program Assistant
Email: dalvarez@fgcu.edu

Study Abroad—The Experience of a Lifetime

Viva Firenze! By Michele Persante

Traveling is my passion. I have been fortunate to be able to go to Europe almost every summer since my freshmen year of high school. Everywhere I went I always wished I could stay longer and learn the culture, so studying abroad seemed like the next logical step. Florence, Italy, became my place of residence for four (4) months of my life. My goal was to learn everything I possibly could about the Italian culture; completely and utterly immerse myself into the culture to make it feel like a part of me. Still, I struggled before I appreciated the way things were done so differently. Although it is difficult to change your way of thinking, the minute you let go you open yourself to another philosophy. Then, you truly learn to appreciate it and it becomes a part of you the same way that you become a part of the culture.

Italy is known for its cuisine, romantic language, and open outlook on personal relationships. Living in Florence was nothing short of those expectations. I lived with six (6) female roommates from different U.S. states and we were in a great location – literally in the heart of the city! From my back porch I could see a beautiful Synagogue; from the second level was a view of the famous Catholic Duomo; and just a short walk away was the Piazza de Santa Croce. During my stay there was always something going on in the streets in front of our apartment, like the TRL Music Awards and festivals, the Chocolate Festival, a parade or, a protest.



Photo by Michele Persante

My experience at the University was also great! The teachers and staff were there to help. I used their knowledge and experience to guide me and take advantage of all Florence had to offer. My Italian classes taught me words and phrases

that helped me in my day to day life, and I was pleasantly surprised at how much easier it was to learn the language you have to depend on and use on a daily basis.

During an experience studying abroad, your emotions run the gambit. At times I was homesick, but I didn't want to leave Florence in the end. The city became my home and one article is not enough space to include everything. However, if I had to sum it up and impart one statement – living in Florence for a semester changed my life! It allowed me to be open to new experiences and taught me to appreciate every little thing in my life. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't miss it. I would not mind moving back there some day. Each and every one of you will have different experiences, but I can guarantee it will forever change you, as it did me. *Alas, I'll always have Florence in my heart!*

Tropical Biology by Dr. Randall Cross

Tropical Island Biology was offered this summer for the fourth consecutive year through the Department of Biological Sciences.



Photo by Katherine Broomfield

This course takes place on the Bahamian island of San Salvador – one of the most isolated islands in the Bahamas and provides students with an intense field immersion experience. This year professors Rob Erdman and Randy Cross led a great group of sixteen students who spent two weeks at

the Gerace Research Center studying the biology, ecology, history, and culture of the island.

A typical day involved a combination of field, lecture, and lab activities. Students were usually in the water each day exploring coral reef, sea grass, and mangrove ecosystems. An ecosystem approach is used to learn about the structure and function of these important systems. The students learn how to identify the most common corals, fishes, invertebrates, and plants, in addition to learning their importance and roles in the ecosystem. Interconnections between these ecosystems are studied and actually observed in the field. Human dependence and impacts on these ecosystems are explored along with implications for the sustainability of fisheries and the support of human populations and biodiversity.

This year students had the additional benefit of attending the 14th Symposium on the Natural History of the Bahamas. This international conference provided the students with the opportunity to learn about research being conducted throughout the Bahamas and to interact with professors and students from other universities. Several FGCU students participated in presenting posters of their research projects conducted on the island the previous year. Our goal is to expand research opportunities



Photo by Katherine Broomfield

for our undergraduate students in upcoming courses. For more information you can contact Dr. Erdman or Dr. Cross in the Department of Biological Sciences.

Sponsored International Students—Cultural Ambassadors

Global Ugrad—Eurasia *By Galina Khegay*



Studying in the US is a key which opens a lot of doors. Winning in the Global UGRAD program is my first key to the world full of opportunities. One year education offered by this program at FCGU is a great chance to perfect my knowledge of English, and get acquainted with American culture.

I am very lucky to have a chance to study at Florida Gulf Coast University. This university can offer me everything what I've been expecting: high-level education, comfortable accommodation, and what's more important, friendly surrounding. Moreover, the university offers me more than I could have imagined: enrolling to students' organization, attending language clubs, doing sports (for free!), and even observing wild-life. I am excited about community service, and internship, which I'll do very soon. I hope that through them I can get closer to American life, and fulfill my mission of culture ambassador from Uzbekistan.

World Learning *By Nasha Lee*

As an exchange student from Malaysia, I am proud to be able to represent my country under the Global UGRAD program to study environmental engineering here at FCGU. It has always been my dream to study abroad, and I'm happy to realize that dream here at FCGU, an up and coming university that places a special emphasis on environmental sustainability. The past three weeks here has opened up my eyes to so many possibilities and opportunities and I look forward to learning so much more from FCGU. In my one year here I hope to be able to learn more about the American culture, to expand my horizons and to see things from a different perspective. I look forward to participating in community service projects and being actively involved in campus life.

I also look forward to sharing about my country, Malaysia and I hope to contribute towards the cultural exchange between Malaysia and the US. Here's to a wonderful year ahead!

Global Ugrad Pakistan *By Hadiqa Baig*

My name is Hadiqa Baig and I am from Pakistan. My major is economics and I am in my senior year. I belong to the Multan city of Pakistan, which is known for its shrines and historical landmarks. I am very happy to avail this opportunity and look forward to experience the American life. It is an honor for me to be accepted by Florida Gulf Coast University, which is a modern university and has a competent faculty of economics. I think studying here would broaden my knowledge and give me an insight on American society. Well, my experience so far has been wonderful, exciting and amazing. I have learned about different activities and lifestyle of American students, in that process I got to know some new things for instance football is played differently here and international football is called "soccer." Back in Pakistan I turn on light in an opposite way and dogs bark like "bhow bhow" instead of "woof woof." I find these things really amusing.

The educational system of the United States is really impressive and interactive. The teaching methodology at Florida Gulf Coast University is very effective and, communication between teachers and students helps students in their academics. My teachers have been really cooperative and are guiding me in every way possible. I have also been bonding with American students and I find them really friendly and helpful. I have made friends with other international students and have joined clubs like international club, language club and rotaract club. So, my time so far in Florida Gulf Coast University has been great, adventurous and fun. I wish to make this visit a memorable one!

Having a Family Away From Home— International Siblings on Campus

After a Devastating Earthquake *by Linsey Etienne and*



My name is Linsey Etienne and my younger brother's name is Jeff Etienne. My sibling and I are both majoring in Biology and we want to launch into the medical field; however, I want to become a pediatrician and Jeff wants to be an anesthesiologist.

We are two international students originally from Haiti. We both came to the US after the devastating earthquake that happened in our home country in January 2010. Since we did not have many choices, we decided to pursue our education in this country. FGCU was offering lots of opportunities for students from Caribbean countries and so we received scholarships to study here.

It is good to know that the same way that I am receiving an education in this country, my brother is as well. We were trying to run away from the harsh situation in our country and I am really grateful that the two of us have such a wonderful opportunity to study in the US.

Moreover, having my brother at the same institution with me is a really good experience. Because I am away from my parents and my family, it feels great to have a person that I am related to close by. In my opinion it provides a lot of advantages because it really helps to maintain a sense of family when we are away from home.

Having a Family Away From Home *By Klaudia Balogh*

Do you have siblings? Do you fight a lot, get along, not have time for each other, or are you best friends? How would you describe your relationship?

For the most part, I would describe my relationship with my brother as a little bit of all of it. He is 19 and I am 22, so he is the little brother – although, if you saw us now you would not be able to tell that he is the little one. We were told so many times, that our relationship was unique because we would get along most of the time. Of course, we have had those fights over who plays with a toy, uses the computer, or, as we got older, who drove the car. Eventually, however, we would agree on something that worked for us both. Our unique relationship has probably developed because we have spent a lot of time together, as we went to the same kindergarten, schools and now we are attending the same university.



His name is Roland and my name is Klaudia. We are international students from Hungary, a little country in Middle Europe. We grew up in a tightknit family where we stood close to one another and our parents. We were given a great opportunity to study in the US. I am a junior while my brother is a freshman and growing up in a small country taught us to have a goal and, if given an opportunity, to reach it. Both of us have been given this chance and we took it. My brother is majoring in Business Marketing, while I am doing Communication PR. Our futures would not be colorful if we stayed at home.

Is it worth the change to move thousands of miles away from your home and from where you lived a very valuable part of your life? It certainly is. When I started it 3 years ago I did not have anyone I knew here with me. I just had my family on Skype. I was homesick but as I made friends and got around, things have changed. Now when I go home for summer, I just cannot wait to come back again. For my brother it will be even easier since I am going to be here with him when he needs help. He will not have to count those 6 hours, which is the time difference between Hungary and Florida, to tell something to someone in the family. How do our parents feel about it? Just imagine: the only two children they have live on another continent. Needless to say, they miss us every second, but they are so proud of us. They know that we appreciate their support and will do our best to show them that they have made the right decision by letting us go. Since we are living together, they will not have to worry as much. Roland and I are there for each other like a family, even if it is just the two of us.



I am happy that we are going to the same college and I know he is too. We are expecting to have a great time here, filled with work and fun. We will still have our fights and maybe sometimes we just will not have enough time for each other, since we

Programs

Eagle "I" Ambassador Program *By Cody Lo and Victoria Rugen*

International Services announces the Eagle I Program building bridges between new international students and current FGCU students. The program provides the opportunity for international students to experience American culture through friendship with an American student and an American student to expand their cultural awareness and create lifelong global friendships.



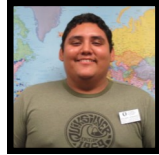
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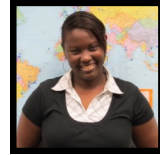
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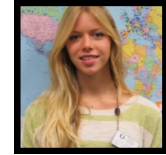
Ben



Hadiza



Jessica



Julia

I would say that the Eagle "I" program is the most helpful resource for incoming international students because the students are immediately introduced to people who support them. I expected to gain close relationships with students from different cultures and the program has already met my expectations. Cultural understanding is sometimes hard for a young adult to really grasp; and this Eagle "I" program has taught me that learning about other cultures broadens our perception. Something might be one way here in the US but something different in another country- and that is very cool to find out!



Victoria Rugen

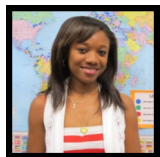
The Eagle I Program welcomes international students with open arms and a delightful hug. As an Eagle Ambassador, I strive to create friendships and show why FGCU is a wonderful place to grow. I am given the satisfaction of assisting a newborn eagle take flight! My match and I have a solid relationship that is growing. My relationships with many other international students are also strengthening. It's always a pleasure saying "What's up?" to them in the halls and giving them a high 5! My best advice to all is to always have an open mind and appreciate and respect everything. Understanding cultures and traditions that are not our own is key in developing as a person.



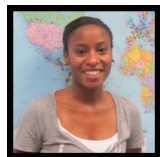
Cody Lo



Sebastian



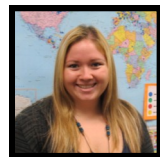
Linsey



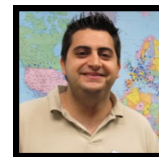
Jocelyn



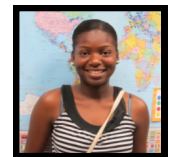
Richard



Stephanie



Teodor



Yvette

The Eagle I Program begins with welcoming and supporting new international students but will continue throughout the year with training, group activities, family gatherings, social functions, campus events and community engagements. We anticipate new friendships, peer relationships, deeper cultural understanding, and greater appreciation and interest in the world at large while also assisting a unique population of FGCU students have a successful experience in their new host country.



Eagle "I"s attending Eagle "I" Orientation



Eagle "I"s assisting with International Orientation

For more details and application, please visit:
<http://www.fgcu.edu/International/eagleIProgram.html>.

Clubs, Organizations, and Events

Important Events, Announcements & Deadlines

- **Study Abroad Fair**
 - * October 13th, 10:00am – 3:00pm in Breezeway
- **Faculty-Led Study Abroad Information Sessions**
 - * October 6th, 10:00am in Reed Hall 122
 - * October 19th, 11:00am in Reed Hall 122
 - * October 25th, 9:00am in Reed Hall 122
- **Hosting an International Scholar Information Sessions**
 - * October 3rd, 3:30pm in Reed Hall 122
 - * October 5th, 4:00pm in Reed Hall 122
 - * October 20th, 3:30 pm in Reed Hall 122
 - * October 24th, 4:00 pm in Reed Hall 122
 - * November 4th, 4:00pm in Reed Hall 122

**FGCU FACULTY AND STAFF WANTING
TO HOST INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
Please contact us at 590-7925 if interested!**



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 Elaine Hozdik, Director
 Tim Gjini, Assistant Director
 Penny Pugh, Office Manager

Visit www.fgcu.edu/international for more information!
