



# 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 Eagle "I" Ambassador Program Launched*** by Frank Franze

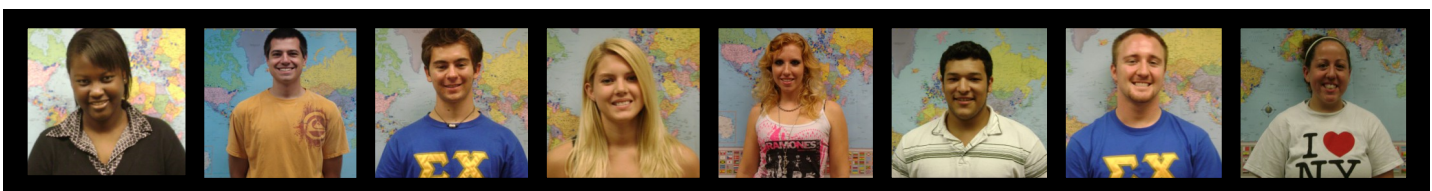
Going to a new school can always be a scary experience and even scarier when that school is in a different country. Trying to settle in and make friends with people who don't necessarily speak your native language can be frustrating to say the least. We at FGCU understand this, and in Spring 2010 created the Eagle "I" ambassador program. The ambassador program was created to help new international students adjust to life here at FGCU and living in the United States. I am one such ambassador.

I am a senior here at FGCU studying political science with a minor in global studies. I have always had an interest in international relations and foreign culture, so I applied in April and was selected to become an Eagle "I" ambassador. My hope is to learn about cultures different than my own and make friends with students who come from other countries. Already I have had a few eye opening experiences where things that I thought normal here in the United States is strange and new to some international students. I am looking forward to making friends that I can keep in touch with once this year is over and maybe even going to visit some of them sometime in their home country.

Ambassadors from all different kinds of degree fields are welcome and any FGCU student may apply to become an ambassador. I would encourage any FGCU student who wants to travel overseas after college to apply; this is a great way to learn about new cultures other than your own.

For international students I would recommend this program as a great way to learn about American culture, make new friends, and help you in your first days here in the United States. Visit <http://www.fgcu.edu/International/eagleIProgram.html> and learn more!

### ***FGCU Eagle "I" Ambassadors 2010-2011***



Hadiza

Frank

Scott

Amber

Silvia

Cameron

Jeff

Jamie

## Mayan Loom Weavers Teach FGCU Students Their Way of Life *by Sasha Benson & Devin Rachles*

From July 18-28<sup>th</sup>, seven FGCU students from the Anthropology Club traveled to Guatemala for a service-learning trip. They volunteered their time and assistance at TRAMA Textiles, a weaving cooperative with over 400 indigenous Mayan women from nearby villages.

We spent the spring semester fundraising and planning the financing for the trip. The FGCU Student Government and Anthropology Club gave donations to help fund the majority of the trip's costs. We were fortunate to only have to pay a small percentage of what the trip would normally cost out of pocket. Accompanied by two FGCU professors, Noemi Creagan and Mike McDonald, our group earned service-learning hours along with a cultural immersion credit during the 10-day trip.

After a three-hour flight and a four-hour bus ride through winding mountain roads, we arrived in Xela, as the locals call it, or Quetzaltenango on the map. Tucked away roughly 7,600 feet above sea level, Xela is the second most populous city in Guatemala. We paired off to live with local families all around the city to enjoy the true feeling of being somewhere outside of our comfort zone. Facing the struggles of culture shock and communicating in a foreign language, we also took weaving classes at TRAMA's weaving school. The Mayan women were excited to pass on the ancient Mayan tradition of back strap loom weaving. Each of us made a handmade scarf and walked away with an incredible experience.

Our host families welcomed us in with classic home-cooked meals such as tortillas, eggs, beans, and fried plantains. We took a traditional cooking class and learned how to make some of these favorites we grew to love. A few of the group members traveled to visit a village outside Lake Atitlan, the highest elevated lake in the world. The village of San Juan la Laguna, only accessible by boat, is nestled between tall mountains and volcanoes. The villagers shared a unique tradition with us. The indigenous women in this area practice the ancient methods of spinning yarn from locally

grown cotton. The women also demonstrated the ancient dying method of silks and cotton using natural plants and herbs.

The other group members traveled to the small village of San Martín, the hometown of TRAMA's President, Amparo. She welcomed us into her home as we listened to stories the women told about the symbolic meanings behind their beautiful weaving patterns and designs. Others spoke of how they began to work for TRAMA and the importance of weaving in their life. They told us they need things like pots to dye fabrics, and eye glasses to help them weave.

Before we departed from Xela our group collected school supplies and other necessities to donate to the weavers and their families. It was a way for us to show our gratitude for sharing such an amazing talent and ancient knowledge with us. For the

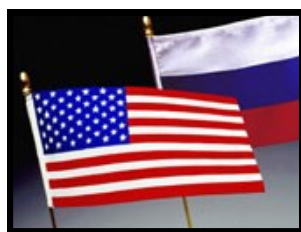


Mayan women in Guatemala, weaving is a means of life, the way they clothe and feed their families. Learning the art of weaving was an incredible experience that would not have been possible without the generous contributions of many independent donors, SGA, and the FGCU Anthropology club.

We have already started planning for a return trip next summer. Our group has decided to organize a collection and fundraiser towards the cause to send supplies to TRAMA in the near future. This semester, there will be individual on-campus presentations from each group member on October 6<sup>th</sup>. Also, a research day will be occurring soon showcasing pictures, artifacts, and culture acquired abroad.

## Extending Your Home, Extending Your Family *by Karyn and Win Everham*

One of the most memorable features of life as a Peace Corps Volunteer is being hosted by a local family. My husband and I were treated as sister and brother to the Malawians who graciously opened their homes and huts to us. Many years have gone by since we sat around the table, or fire, eating nsima ndi nkukhu (maize and chicken), but we've never forgotten our village families' generosity and welcome.



We finally returned the favor when Russian exchange student Polina Silvander arrived in Fort Myers last month. Her new address for the coming school year would be North Lake Village, but she needed a place to stay for a few days, until student housing opened.

How lucky we were that Elaine Hozdik asked us to provide the stop-gap home. What a kick to introduce Polina to the Southwest Florida scene, which we knew had to include beachcombing and key lime pie.

"Where are the high rises?" Polina asked. We learned that apartment living in multi-story buildings is the norm in Russia; our single-family suburban neighborhoods are foreign. Win and Polina went downtown to see our few skyscrapers.

We couldn't let Polina go without a big picnic barbeque. Although the sizzling gas grill didn't hearken to sweet African wood smoke, hosting added a new dimension to our kinship with our African families. And now Polina is in the family too.

## Kristine Cosgrove and Her Experience of a Lifetime by Kristine Cosgrove



*Kristine's resident's hall at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland*

The most difficult thing about taking a semester to study abroad is not leaving all your friends and family, or stepping into someplace completely new, but deciding where it is you want to go. Every semester I would take a trip to the International Services office, pick up a bunch of brochures and flip

through every one, looking at every picture and imagining myself in every place. There are an overwhelming number of programs and places to go, each one a potential new adventure. I wanted to go everywhere and experience everything. My biggest fear was that I would choose the wrong program and pass up one that would have provided a better experience. I ended up choosing to spend the spring semester of 2010 studying in Scotland at the University of St. Andrews, sponsored by a scholarship from the Saint Andrews Society of Southwest Florida.

Attempting to figure out all of the logistics can be very overwhelming and leave you wondering whether or not such a trip is even possible. The moment I stepped on the plane to leave for my trip, I realized that all the hard work was going to be worth it. I have realized that it's not the program or the location, but how willing you are to make the experience your own. No one can plan a flawless trip, but if you prepare yourself to expect the unexpected, you can travel knowing for certain it will be the trip of a lifetime.

I expected the classes to be different, but I couldn't have possibly predicted the ways that the everyday academic structure was going to differ. I did plenty of research about which classes I was going to take and how the degree programs were set up, but I was not prepared for what awaited me. I cannot speak to the classes at all of the schools in the UK, or even in Scotland, but the classes at St. Andrews were far different from those I was used to. Between my four classes, two lower level along with two upper level courses in my major, I only had two graded assignments over the course of the entire semester, both in my lower level classes. As students, we were expected to set our own study goals. We were given suggested reading and suggested topics to study but were expected to use our own judgment to do further research on topics that interested us, utilizing the library and other resources that were provided. To many students, such academic freedom would translate to a lack of studying over the course of the semester, but I did not find this to be the case at St. Andrews. I was inspired by my classmates to engage in researching new topics independently and focus on the ones that interested me the most.

Expect that the classes may be significantly different than what you are used to, with a different teaching style, with topics which you lack equivalent background knowledge or, in general, with

different expectations from your professors. The last thing you want is to be overwhelmed with classes. Take the opportunity to take a class outside your major that you would never be able to take at your home university on something you enjoy. Most universities offer classes covering topics directly related to the region. Whether it's history or science, they provide an unparalleled opportunity to learn about the place you have temporarily adopted as your home and the people who have temporarily adopted you. I took European Art and Architecture, totally unrelated to Chemistry, but it allowed me to learn about the very place I was living. I was able to see the paintings and architecture we were studying in person, all around me.

The best advice I can give to anyone going abroad is to get involved at your host university. Over the four months I spent in St. Andrews, I met many fellow study abroad students who seemed so busy trying to see every inch of Europe that they forgot to visit the very town in which they were living. Don't feel the need to stick to what you know. While it can be comforting to hangout with other Americans and do things that you would normally do at home, you are going abroad to try something new.

Expect that there will be many unknowns and many uncertainties. The best thing you can learn is how to go along with the uncertainties and adapt to new situations. Not everything is going to be 100 percent in your control, but you can control how you react to it. There is only so much preparation you can do, at some point you just have to realize that not everything will go as planned, but that does not mean you will have any less of an experience.

I strongly encourage everyone to take the opportunity to study abroad, and if you are already planning your trip, or even are already on your trip, I encourage you to make the most of every opportunity that comes your way.

### Study Abroad Fair and Information Sessions

Mon, Oct 4th	3.30-4.30pm	Reed Hall 122
Wed, Oct 6th	4.00-5.00pm	Reed Hall 122
<b>STAGE II</b>		
<b>STUDY ABROAD FAIR</b> Wednesday, OCTOBER 13th, 10am-3pm, Breezeway		
Thurs, Oct 21st	3.30-4.30pm	Reed Hall 122
Mon, Oct 25th	4.00-5.00pm	Reed Hall 122
<b>STAGE II</b>		
Thurs, Nov 4th	4.00-5.00pm	Reed Hall 122
Mon, Nov 15th	4.00-5.00pm	Reed Hall 122
<b>STAGE II</b>		

## One Student's Bright Idea—Let's Talk Languages by Yan Bohyn

One night in December I was laying in bed when the fabled light-bulb when on right above my head. I had always thought it to be a myth, but it actually does exist and happen. The idea that had forced itself into my thoughts was to create a language club. How I wanted to go about doing this was a mystery to me. Months before my friend Jared Ashcraft and I were meeting after class to learn Dutch. I taught him for about three lessons, but we gave up after those, mainly because I was not able to expand my lesson plans beyond greetings and phrases you find in a Dutch English Dictionary. In any case, the idea seemed good enough when I had presented it to Jared at 1:00am at night and subsequently the next morning to our art history professor, that we went forward with creating the Language Club.

The model we intended to use was: international students acting as teachers of their language, they would teach for one hour in the week, and the focus would be on speaking rather than writing. Now, it just happens to be that the worst teachers of a language are the native speakers themselves. The native speakers never learn why they say something the way it's said, they have always just known. I contacted the German teacher here at FGCU, Professor Fulton, about the prospective club. She came to play an essential role in our success as her husband was a professional language teacher. Sometime in February, Warren Fulton offered his time to the club to teach us students, how to teach.

This semester we are trying out a new model in which we utilize more teachers which allows for smaller class sizes and more accountability. Also, through the help of Student Government, we received funds which we will use for buying textbooks, teaching material and many other aids for our students and teachers. We are also working on a 2 or 3 lesson session at the end of October on a brief history of Indo-European languages taught by Dr. Busbee and Dr. Bouché.

The future of the club is definitely looking up. This semester we are offering German, French, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hungarian, Creole, Italian, and Latin. Classes will start in the beginning of October. If you are interested in learning or teaching, please contact us at [fgculanguageclub@gmail.com](mailto:fgculanguageclub@gmail.com)



## Important Events, Announcements & Deadlines

- **Study Abroad Fair**
  - \* October 13<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am – 3:00pm in Breezeway
- **Faculty-Led Study Abroad Information Sessions**
  - \* October 20<sup>st</sup>, 11:00am in Reed Hall 122
  - \* October 26<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am in Reed Hall 122
- **Hosting an International Scholar Information Sessions**
  - \* October 19<sup>th</sup>, 3:00pm in Reed Hall 122
  - \* October 28<sup>th</sup>, 9:30am in Reed Hall 122
  - \* November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 11:00am in Reed Hall 122
- **IEW (International Education Week)**
  - \* Events planned for Tues & Wed, Nov 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>

**FGCU FACULTY AND STAFF WANTED TO HOST AMERICAN STUDENTS. Please contact us at 590-7925 if interested!**



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