

STUDY ABROAD

with Northwestern, IA

ENGAGE your world

EXPAND your mind

EMBRACE your future

Global Education Center, Semester and Summer Study Abroad Programs and Off-Campus Opportunities
Suite 102, Franken Center for Faith, Learning, and Living

The GEC study abroad programs help students:

- ◇ gain informed understanding of the host culture and its value systems
- ◇ reflect critically on their own culture and values
- ◇ acquire a global perspective on contemporary issues
- ◇ develop beginning or advanced skills in the target language (where appropriate)
- ◇ connect cross-cultural learning to their vocation and calling
- ◇ build self-confidence and cross-cultural competencies through interactions with the constituencies of the host country

In this issue:

Message from Dr. Doug Carlson	1
Interview with Prof. Paul Bartlett, SSA Czech Republic 2013	1-2
Kayla Vetter: Building Cross-Cultural Bridges	3
Leslie Stover: Walking in Ein Gedi	3
Holly Stewart: The Dining Room Table	3
Of Note: Dr. John Vonder Bruegge Receives Exploratory Grant	4
Interview with Romania Semester Director, Dana Bates	4

Message from Dr. Doug Carlson, Associate Dean of Global Education



After 23 years at Northwestern, the last 14 of which involved working with off-campus study, it is time for me to pass the baton, which I do cheerfully to Dr. Dobrev. It all began for me with a month-long study abroad program to Mexico City during summer 1999. A Spanish professor colleague and I hardly knew what we were doing; there was no SSA Coordinator or office and we made it up as we went along. Fortunately, an on-site contact helped us plan and conduct a very successful program.

The awarding of a Lilly Grant to NWC provided funds for a Summer Study Abroad Office and

Coordinator, and with them, program policies and procedures, a budget template, promotional materials, and assistance to faculty leaders.

Funds were also set aside for faculty exploratory trips. These developments greatly enhanced the summer program, and Professors Bartlett and Post's program to the Czech Republic during summer of 2013 will mark 51 faculty leaders leading 515 students on 22 programs

At the same time the summer program was developing, the administration increased the budget for semester off-campus study. In 2001 a campus task force on international priorities proposed doubling the off-campus study budget in 5 years and the administration responded. Over two dozen semester programs are now available to NWC students with full financial aid.

In fall semester 2007 we inaugurated NWC's first of three semester programs. The Romania semester combines knowledge with experience as students study theory of sustainable social development and work with Romanian teenagers to overcome the devastation of 45 years of Communism. The Oman semester began spring semester of 2011, and provides intercultural experience and relationships along with Muslim-Christian inter-faith dialog. And spring semester 2013 began the new Denver Urban Semester providing internships to serve the marginalized populations of Denver. All three semester programs fit well with the college mission.

Study abroad is now clearly part of the landscape of NWC, for which I am grateful; I am confident it will continue to develop under Boryana's leadership.

Interview with Prof. Paul Bartlett, SSA Czech Republic 2013

1. Prof. Bartlett, this will be your third time directing the Czech summer study abroad program. What influenced your decision to choose the Czech Republic as a study abroad destination?

My interest in leading study abroad trips to the Czech Republic started as a result of my desire to provide a mission trip experience for the wrestling team (back when I was still coaching). As I was planning this trip, Dr. James Bultman (President of NWC at that time)



SSA Czech Republic 2013:

Left to right, bottom to top: Francesca Eszes, Megan Knutson, Erin Heine, Prof. Vonda Post (Faculty leader), Jordan Whitsell, Caiti Shaw, Lindsey Remien

Other participants: Beth Kahanic

suggested that I offer Sport in Societies (KIN 360) as a companion component. Thus, my first summer study abroad experience. When Sport in Societies was enlarged to a 4-credit class, it was no longer appropriate to use a two-week mission trip as the framework for a study abroad experience. Thus, I began developing a 4 credit Summer Study Abroad program (GEN 350) to the Czech Republic, broadening the focus to examine physical culture.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

2. What is the focus of your program? What would you like your students to learn about the Czech cultural other and themselves?

The focus of our program is Czech physical culture. Because physical culture is part of the broader culture, we will be able to gain insights into the Czech culture through our observations and participation in Czech physical culture. Consequently, our students will be exposed to both similarities and differences in the role of physical culture between their previous experiences and what they experience in the Czech Republic. The similarities point to our common humanity—thus to God as the creator of all humankind. However, I believe it is in the differences where the greatest learning occurs. Hopefully students will wrestle with big questions such as: What does it mean to be American (or Czech)? Is there a better way to do sport (or physical education or leisure)? In what ways can I participate in God's redemptive work in relation to physical culture? In essence, I want my students to gain cross-cultural understanding, grow in their appreciation of cultural diversity, and be transformed by this summer study abroad experience.

3. What are some of the challenges and rewards associated with summer study abroad programming?

There is no question that planning a SSA takes a lot of time and effort. It is the equivalent of teaching an overload for an entire year. Coping with this "overload" is just one of many challenges. Picking a culture and a topic is the easy part. It is more challenging to find an in-country coordinator who you trust and who understands your limitations and programming goals. Clear communication can be a challenge with the in-country coordinator—your in-country coordinator might be fluent in English, but that doesn't mean you speak the same language! Developing a budget can be tricky. Exchange

rates, hidden costs, and unexpected programming adjustments can create budgeting uncertainties. Don't forget: no students-no trip. Thus, recruiting students is another challenge, especially since this educational expense falls outside of their normal financial package.

Despite these challenges, the rewards are huge, both on a personal level and for the students. I have several learning goals for our students which, if achieved, are rewarding enough to justify the trip. However, the memories created by these trips are so powerful, I believe, that they continue to teach for a lifetime. In addition, the relationships developed or strengthened among students, the cultural other, and the faculty leaders are rich by-products of SSA trips. I also find it very rewarding to see students confront and positively respond to their culturally-induced sensation of discomfort. Many students have felt empowered, gaining confidence to tackle the unknown, and have developed a desire to continue to seek out cross-cultural encounters.

4. Do you have a favorite memory to share about being and teaching abroad?

I will share a favorite memory from the 2009 SSA. As part of our service learning component we had the opportunity to visit a nursing home. We delivered flowers to many of the residents and greeted them (in Czech). But a

We have also asked our students about their goals and expectations for their SSA experience:

"I chose the Czech SSA program because it is one that is more focused around my major. I will get to experience the physical culture of the Czech Republic based on the sports and daily activities that occur there.

I hope to gain a better understanding of life outside the United States. I know how the sporting world is viewed from an American perspective but it'd be great to see what it's like in another culture and to compare the two."

Erin Heine, SSA Czech Republic 2013

92-year old man wanted more than a greeting—he wanted a conversation. He wanted to share his story of his interactions with American soldiers during the liberation of Plzeň near the end of WWII and to express his deep gratefulness to America. No translator was needed for he spoke near-perfect English (I was told that he had not spoken much English since WWII). Our lives became connected at that place and time, in kind of a mystical way, that transcended culture, history, and the generations.

5. Do you have any advice for future study abroad participants or faculty considering leading an SSA program?

For faculty: If you are married, get permission before you start planning a SSA trip. :)

Pick a topic and culture that matches your passions.

Make sure you have established trustworthy contacts in that culture—preferably several. Your in-

country coordinator and contacts are key!

Model cultural inquisitiveness.

Spend quality time with each student—before the trip, during the first part of the trip, during the middle of the trip, during last week of the trip!

It is a good idea to have a second faculty leader, especially someone

who is also passionate about the trip. It is a double blessing if your colleague compliments your leadership gift set and is able to bring a new perspective to the SSA experience.

Recruit students via personal invitation, and recruit early. Student excitement for a SSA is contagious.

Build a sense of community before departure.

For students: Remember, SSAs are investments rather than expenses.

Say yes to a SSA rather than have regrets later.

Have high expectations for the richness of your experiences but avoid operating from a personal agenda (there is only one agenda and it is not yours :)).

Make a commitment to engage with the culture, her people, and your classmates (e.g., avoid forming cliques).

Try to learn as much as you can about the culture in which you will be engaging.

Start early selling your parents on the idea of a SSA—it may take some time for your parents to say "yes."

Your study abroad experiences begin the day you say yes and it ends the day you quit thinking about it.



2011 SSA Czech Republic: Volleyball tournament in Prague

Left to right, bottom to top: Kay Heiberger, Amanda Verdoorn, Sadie Mennen, Breanne Schoby, Kayla Johnson, Ashley Trail, Leslie Stover, Amy VanSkiike, and their Czech companions.

Building Cross-Cultural Bridges

Kayla Vetter (Art and Education major) attended the Great Britain Summer Study Abroad Program in 2012. She reminisces about the valuable relationships she made during her homestay in Gloucester.

My first week in England I stayed with a host family, Pam and Gerald Knowlden and their three dogs, Tom, Renée, and Alfie, and Pam's best friend Irene in Gloucester. My host family was awesome! I loved how they were so personable and trusting with



us. Rachel Van Gorp (my roommate) and I were complete

strangers and the Knowldens welcomed us into their home. Instead of just letting us stay in their home they connected with us and opened up to us.

My favorite memory of Pam and Irene was taking Rachel, Dr. Bob, and me on weekend outings of the countryside. They showed us the towns, churches, and villages around Gloucester that Pam's husband grew-up in and where her children were christened. At one point we stood secretly on Princess Anne's estate and drove by Prince Charles' estate.

But, the coolest memory I have was having tea at Pam's sister-in-law's house in Bourton-on-the-

water, where we met Jan and Bob. We talked about our trip and how excited we were about seeing *War Horse* in London. It was a cute little house that had a massive garden around the house. What I loved about the Knowldens was how caring and compassionate they were and how they made us feel like part of their family.



Walking in Ein Gedi

Study abroad means creating indescribable experiences and memories. Leslie Stover (Public relations and Graphic Design double major) attended our Winter Study Abroad program to Israel this year (2012/13). Leslie has transformed a memorable event from a snapshot into a work of art.

From City lights to green hills to vast desert, traveling in Israel meant seeing all of these extremes in only one day. We saw awe-inspiring, beautiful land full of history. It was almost too much to take in and wrap my head around. I snapped picture after picture hoping to keep these sights and memories from slipping away. Pictured right is a



print I made from one of those quick photos of our group

walking toward the Dead Sea in EinGedi. We tried to visualize David hiding in this place, and taking refuge in the 'rocky caves and refreshing oasis'. This study abroad trip to the Holy Land was a journey that fourteen of us walked together. We each took away something that will stay with us forever.

The Dining Room Table

Together, warmth, and closeness are just some of the things that made Holly Stewart (Sociology major) feel at home while on a semester abroad (2012) in Grenada, Spain.

It sounds silly, but my favorite thing in Spain was our dining room table. The table was a symbol of family and a place that we all gathered together several times a day. Whether it was to warm ourselves (the only heater in the house was under the table) or to eat a meal together (we ate all meals together), or to sip coffee and watch



and discuss the news together, that table was the most wonderful place in all of Grenada. We had fresh bread with every single meal. My host mom used a picnic blanket over the table because "it makes it feel like summer all year-long."

NWC Global Education Center Mission

To foster cross-cultural appreciation and competence through semester and summer study abroad programs. We advise and assist students and faculty who seek opportunities for growth and reflection that integrate faith, learning and living in the context of cultural diversity and a global community.

We're on the web: www.nwciowa.edu/study-abroad

or like us on

Facebook: NWC Study Abroad

Of Note



Religion Professor Dr. John Vonder Bruegge has received a \$2,300 grant from the Center of Global Education to conduct a 10-day exploratory trip to Greece this summer. The exploratory trip will enable Dr. Vonder Bruegge to develop a new inter-disciplinary faculty-led SSA program focused on

the interplay of space and identity and its expression in ancient and modern Greek thought. The program will complement NWC Honors Program courses and fulfill the general education cross-cultural requirement. We wish Dr. Vonder Bruegge a productive and successful trip abroad! Congratulations!

Interview with NWC Romania Semester Director, Dana Bates



1. *The Romania Semester Abroad program was first launched in 2007. This past fall term, our sixth group of students from Northwestern, Gordon, Calvin, and Gustavus Adolphus completed a semester in Lupeni. Could you outline briefly the focus and the structure of the program?*

The focus of the semester program in Romania is to explore what it means to do Christian community development in the Romanian context. The Romanian context is an incredible laboratory given its post-communist background, its Eastern Orthodox religion, and the immense cultural riches surrounding us such as castles and Roman four ruins. We immerse the students both in Romanian culture via homestays, studying Eastern Orthodox theology, but also explore theoretically and practically grassroots and sustainable community development. The courses offered are: sustainable development, Eastern Orthodoxy, Romanian culture, language and history, as well as experiential education-theory and practice.

2. *What makes this study abroad program different from study abroad programs in other post-communist countries?*

One of the great strengths of this semester abroad is that it is closely intertwined with a thriving community development organization, the New Horizons Foundation. We have worked on the ground for 15 years, developed local relationships, and developed models for youth empowerment that are sweeping Romania, and growing globally. Students get to not only study community development, but work in solidarity with Romanian youth trying to better themselves and their communities.

3. *Which components of your program would you say are most important and/or attractive for students, who are considering various study abroad programs in Eastern European countries?*

One attractive feature is the experiential education class, that is both academically rigorous, but also hands on and involves a wilderness expedition in one of the most beautiful hiking regions in the world. Also, there is a growing concern for international development and this program explores this both from a grassroots community development approach, as well as the larger international development theories such as Nobel economists Capability Approach that supports the work of the UN.

4. *What do you hope students take away from this experience?*

So many of the students that come here want to see their Christian faith put into action,

they want to see avenues for that, and combining faith-in-action with vigorous academics. My foundational commitment is that Christ called us to take both commandments with equal weight, and there is much we can learn from the social sciences and “development studies” that can help us know how to truly care for our global neighbors in different cultures and contexts.

5. *What are the plans for the future? Where/how would you like to see the semester in two or three years from now?*

We would love to grow into a Spring semester as well. Right now it is only in the Fall. We also plan to offer more courses such as non-profit leadership and management that can diversify the offerings.

In terms of our youth work, we are growing internationally, which is

exciting, and we hope to do more! We are in the Republic of Moldova, soon Albania (via World Vision), Honduras (30 clubs there!), the US, Dominican Republic, and I was just in Zambia to begin a process of launching IMPACT there. So this is very exciting to share with the students—as a lot of these openings happen when the students are with us!

One thing that is really exciting is that on Latin American fields the Christian Reformed World Missions and World Renew (formerly CRWRC) staff work jointly for planning and strategy with their partners. That combined group is hosting a conference this August to explore IMPACT as a broad-based way to put faith into action within that region and with their partners.



2012 Group in front of Hunedoara Castle! — with Lyric Morris, Jenny Hyde, Becky Soyster, Leah Wielenga, Sabriya Dillard, Charlotte Richards, Matt Jass, Ranell Rowenhorst, Vallen Cook, and others.