

Davis Research Project

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A Message From Su Yeong Kim, Chief Researcher

We are very pleased to have you continue with the Davis Research Project. In this issue, we highlight information on studying abroad.

Please note that the project is now housed at the University of Texas at Austin. We look forward to your continued support and participation in the project. We can be reached by e-mail at projectfamily@gmail.com, by phone at (415) 271-0390, 1-(866)7-FAMILY (toll-free), and on the internet at <http://webpace.utexas.edu/syk343/>. When you move or when your contact information changes, please update your contact information.

Studying Abroad in College

Due to the myriad of exciting opportunities available to college students, only a few take advantage of the option to study abroad. Students who study abroad typically travel to a foreign country and engage in the country's academic programs. Venice, Hong Kong, Moscow, and Melbourne are just a few of the many destinations students select to study abroad. As you continue to learn the advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad, you will discover the various programs available to you and how to choose the right one.

Types of Programs

Whether you are looking for a volunteer opportunity, an internship, or a few extra college credits, study abroad programs offer all of these options. The majority of students take part in language programs, where they become immersed into the country's society and cultural richness. These students focus on learning and practicing a specific language, ranging from Spanish to Portuguese to

Thai. Some students live with host families, who reinforce the learning of their native language. Others live in dorms provided by the university.

Study abroad programs are available to, and often made specifically for, students of all majors. Depending on the program you choose, you may be able to receive college credit for the courses you take in another country, while also gaining knowledge in your specific field. When choosing a program, be sure to verify with your university to see if you will receive college credit.

There are also several programs that provide internships and volunteer work to students who prefer learning through a hands-on experience. Interning with companies that specialize in your field of study will train you for success in the global job market. You will become better acquainted with foreign enterprises as you develop the knowledge and skills for your future career path. Or, you can vol-

unteer by helping to conserve a rainforest in South America or to meet the basic needs of the poor in India. Your experience will expand your views on the issues of the world as you work to improve the lives of others.

Advantages of Studying Abroad

Regardless of the type of program you choose, you will experience the many benefits of studying abroad. While you exchange your culture with those in the foreign country, you will learn about the country's history and traditions through eating the local food, sightseeing with classmates, and taking part in the society's lifestyle. The friendships formed from studying abroad are one of the most rewarding aspects of this experience. You will develop lifelong friends with those from other countries, from all across the United States, and from your own university, all of whom you would have most likely never met otherwise.

Also, when applying for jobs or graduate schools, recruiters will make note of your study abroad experiences. They will be impressed with your openness to new challenges and your appreciation for different cultures. Studying abroad is also a good indicator that you may be open to going abroad as a professional. Because of your experience, it will be easier for you to adapt to foreign places, to communicate with diverse cultures, and to build a professional network overseas.

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unable to forgo an entire year of education at their university. However, study abroad programs are available not only for a year's time, but also for a summer, a quarter, or simply one or two weeks. You can choose the length of time that you prefer and at your own convenience.

Another challenging issue is the financial costs that are involved. Paying for transportation, housing, food, and tuition are all reasons that may discourage you from studying in another country. First, it is important to find out the exchange rate in the country of your choice. An American dollar in Malaysia can go much farther than one in England. Secondly, study abroad programs are aware of your concerns and provide numerous scholarships, loans, and financial aid to make studying abroad even more affordable. For example, for students attending UC Davis, the David L. Boren (NSEP) Undergraduate Scholarship awards students for studying abroad in select countries. The maximum award is \$8,000 for a summer, \$10,000 for a semester, or \$20,000 for a full academic year.

Costs and Benefits

Even with all of these great benefits of studying abroad, most students do not take advantage of the opportunity because they are

Start the Process Early

If you are interested in studying abroad, you need to begin the process of planning and

preparing for your study abroad experience as early as possible.

- **Inquire.** Students can go to their university's academic advisors and study abroad office to collect more information and/or to get their questions answered. If you are enrolled at UC Davis, for example, you can stop by the Education Abroad Center to attend a First Steps Workshop or to meet with an advisor. The advisors at your university will help you plan your course of action as you meet various deadlines for applications and financial aid. Your advisor will also help you in choosing the right courses



to take abroad. Meet with your advisor before and after your trip to verify that credit for these classes transfers to your college records.

- **Aspire.** Determine your goals for studying abroad. It may vary from learning a language to living in a specific country. You may also wish to gain international experience in your field of study, either through classes or an internship. Consider if you want to live in a country that speaks a language other than English, has different values than America, or has a drastically different lifestyle than what you are used to. As you establish your goals, you will gain direction in your planning process.

- **Research.** You need to begin searching for the right program that fits your needs by deciding on when and where you want to go. Use the Internet and other available resources to find a



program that will help you achieve your study abroad goals. Because applications are typically due six months to a year in advance of the program's start date, you are encouraged to begin making plans early. Although studying abroad is available to students in every year of college, it is recommended that you apply as early as a freshman or a sophomore. Grades from your study abroad courses will need time to transfer to your university. If you go during your last semester prior to graduating, it is possible that your grades will not be processed in time for your graduation.

- **Explore.** Most universities hold a study abroad fair once or twice during an academic year. These fairs are a great opportunity for you to speak directly with the study abroad programs that spark your interests. Each program at the fair sends a knowledgeable representative to give advice, to answer questions, and to provide information through flyers and brochures. For students at UC Davis, this year's Study and Internship Abroad Fair was on September 29, 2008 at the West Quad. By contacting your school's study abroad office or your academic advisor, you can find out the time and date of your school's fair and plan to stop by for a visit.

As studying abroad becomes more popular, the options and opportunities for all majors, interests, and languages are increasing. You should talk to those who have taken part in study abroad programs previously in order to gain valuable insight and advice. Nearly all students

who have already gone do not have any regrets for studying abroad. However, most graduates who did not study abroad regret not taking part in this life-changing experience. If you are interested in studying abroad, you should begin seeking information early and take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.



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Are you moving?



Please update your address and phone number with us! We would like to keep in touch with you for a follow-up project in the future.

Updating your information is easy:

By Phone: (415)271-0390

By Phone: (866)7-FAMILY (toll-free)

By E-mail: projectfamily@gmail.com

By Web:

<http://webspace.utexas.edu/syk343/>