

SAINT FRANCIS UNIVERSITY



Meeting Our Brothers and Sisters Around the Globe

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2009

STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

Australia*

www.francis.edu/CCSAHome.htm

France

www.francis.edu/France.htm

Honduras

www.francis.edu/Honduras.aspx

Ireland*

www.francis.edu/CCSAHome.htm

Italy

www.francis.edu/SpringtimeInItaly.htm

London

www.francis.edu/London.htm

Mexico

www.francis.edu/SpanishInMexico.htm

*the Ireland and Australia programs, taught by SFU professors, are offered through the Cooperative Center for Study Abroad. Additional offerings through this program may be found at www.ccsa.cc

Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness. - Mark Twain

The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page. - St. Augustine

There are no foreign lands. It is the traveler only who is foreign. - Robert Louis Stevenson

STUDY ABROAD REUNION

Thursday, September 10,
5 to 7 p.m. on JFK's front patio
Join us for reminiscing, talks of
future travel and a BBQ.

THE GROWING POPULARITY OF STUDY ABROAD

According to the 2008 Open Doors Report, published by the Institute of International Education, students are studying abroad in record numbers. [The increase] "marks a decade of unprecedented growth in the number of American students receiving academic credit for their overseas academic experience, with an increase of close to 150%, from under 100,000 in 1996/97 to nearly a quarter of a million in 2006/07."

Over 40% of incoming students have indicated interest in international education here at Saint Francis University. This past year the percentage of SFU student body registered for study abroad has increased from 9% to 11%.

ALUMNI & FRIENDS TOUR: *SOUTHWEST FRANCE*

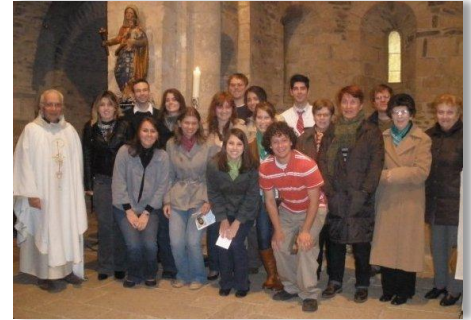
Alumni and Friends of Saint Francis University participated in an once-in-a-lifetime tour of southwest France. From the University's site in Ambialet, the group explored the wonders of the region – castles, ruins, quaint medieval hilltop villages, stunning views, and awe-inspiring cathedrals. One of the participants, Tom Kennedy, said, "On a scale from one to ten the trip was a 20!" You may visit: <http://journeythroughfrance.blogspot.com/> to read the blogs of another participant, Joann Cantrell. Photos of the tour below:



GOLDMINE OF OPPORTUNITIES!

Within my first year as the Director of the Center for International Education and Outreach, I had the pleasure of participating in three of Saint Francis University's study abroad programs in France, Mexico, and Italy. There is no comparison with the programs – they each have distinct, high-quality characteristics. Our students are very fortunate indeed to have these opportunities available to them.

- The Semester in France program is unique in so many ways. The site, located in Ambialet, is much like having an extended campus. One of the most unique things about the France program, I think, is the medieval monastery where the students live. If I were a potential student that would certainly get my attention! Our students live in Ambialet for the semester with Saint Francis University staff. I clearly sensed a strong connection with the people in the village to our students. The students are part of the village – they are invited to family functions such as BBQs and Christenings; they participate in the Church choir (see photo on the right); visit the local bakery daily for fresh bread; and have lunch at the local café. Our students are often highlighted in the local newspapers. I enjoyed the many trips down the hill to the village and the interaction with the people. The experience with the people of the village, in and of itself, was priceless.



The classes in France involve hands-on, active, reflective, experiential learning. Tim Perkins, the director of the Semester in France program, says, “The staff does its best *not* to do what could be done in the classroom.” For example, in their French class, students participate in “Tour-de-Table,” and prepare menus in French. Their Culture class takes them to an evaluation of a vineyard with the students from the *Brens Wine Tasting School* and visits with artists in their studios. The History class takes them to castles, churches, and medieval hilltop villages. The students, three times weekly, interact with the students from the University of Albi, participating in university activities. They also spend twenty days in Paris, where they continue their studies while visiting legendary sites. “As an integrated package of activities, the program focuses primarily on learning opportunities or teaching moments” (T. Perkins). The packed schedule makes for exhausted yet very happy students. My husband accompanied me on this trip, and together we learned so much as we participated in some of the student trips. We also enjoyed our time in Paris. Although we were without any SFU staff or students while in Paris, we were able to get around reasonably well with our limited knowledge of the French language.

Several times throughout the two weeks we were in Ambialet, we all worked together, students and staff, preparing meals for various gatherings. The students did quite well, hosting events for their new international friends. It was clearly visible to me that the students were transforming right before my very eyes! They were reaching out, embracing their new relationships and forming an everlasting global bond. The entire Semester in France package is such an amazing experience in such an enchanting place!

- The four-week Mexico program, a language-based program, places students in homes of wonderful host families. This rewarding experience allows students to participate in the Mexican way of family life. Most days, they eat three meals with their families, and their families communicate to them in only Spanish. You can imagine my struggle since I last had Spanish in high school, years ago. However, the family I lived with made sure I was comfortable and taught me so much about the everyday life in Mexico.



Students take classes from Mexican instructors, in Spanish, at the *Universidad Internacional* - a beautiful campus (see photo on the left) with an outstanding staff. Students are tested for their language proficiency upon arrival and then placed in the appropriate level. The instructors in my classes were all exceptionally supportive. The students may also take general education classes from SFU instructors at the *Universidad*.

The tour team at the *Universidad* also arranges many excursions for the students, including trips to the *Great Pyramids of Teotihuacan*, in Acapulco, Taxco, “The Silver City”; the *Ballet*

Folklorico De Mexico, Mexico City; the *Basilica of Guadalupe*; and the *Floating Gardens of Xochimilco*. Students also enjoy the night life of the discos or go to the movies with their new friends. In addition, students pay a visit to two orphanages, where they have the opportunity to spend time playing with the children and to pass out the goods they've collected throughout the year.

At the conclusion of my two and a half weeks in Mexico, I was able to communicate fairly well with my host family and my instructors. I was even able to get a taxi and do some shopping without the help of a translator. The parting words to me from the mother of my host family were: "*Aunque el idioma puede haber sido un obstáculo al principio, nuestro amor nunca fue un obstáculo.*" ("Even though language may have been a barrier at first, our love was never a barrier.")

- The Springtime in Italy program is set in Parma, and its focus is Fine Arts. How fitting, since the charming city of Parma is packed full of artists, musicians, beautiful architecture, and lovers of the arts. Our students live in student housing and are right in the heart of the city, where they can bike (or walk) around and truly take in the magic of their surroundings. Parma becomes the new home of our students for four weeks.

Students take classes from SFU instructors and integrate their course work with their surroundings. For instance, Fine Arts students will visit the local museums and churches; drumming and guitar students will play in concert either with students from Parma or for the residents of Parma; photography students use the entire city and its people as their subjects; the Italian language class takes students on adventures to some of the various castles in the area, to the Parmesan cheese factory, vineyards, libraries and even cooking classes at the local cooking school (see photo on the right). In fact, Parma is not a tourist spot. Very little English is spoken there, so students learn quickly how to shop at their favorite



markets or order their favorite meals in Italian. Students are free to travel around on weekends, which always make for an exciting adventure. During my stay (I arrived two weeks after the students), I traveled to Cinque Terre and to Venice. Both times I was with students who were happy to show off their newly-acquired language skills and their knowledge of the European rail system. A couple of students even hiked the Swiss Alps!

The support staff that has developed over the years for our students in Parma is very impressive. One of the local bistro owners hangs a Saint Francis University sign in his establishment (*The Bistro*) and welcomes our students with open arms. *The Bistro* has become a sort of student union for SFU folks. During my two and a half week stay in Parma I could, at any given time on any given day, stop by *The Bistro* and find some of our students there. The owner of *The Bistro* (who speaks very little English) spent over an hour one evening trying to teach me the Italian card game, *Briscola*--a great example of outpouring willingness for global bonding.

It is no secret that studying abroad is a defining moment in a student's life. Not only does it increase self-confidence and maturity level, but it also enhances one's interest in academic study and makes a student more marketable in the workforce. The world is getting smaller and smaller, and our students have a goldmine of opportunities. I am pleased to have seen, first-hand, three of Saint Francis University's exceptional international programs—in France, Mexico and Italy. As a result of the growing global awareness in our society today, a student's response can no longer be, "In which study abroad program should I participate?" Rather, it should be, "How many study abroad programs can I fit into my college career?"

- Juliana Horvath, Director of the Center for International Education and Outreach

Parma was a perfect location and was not "Americanized". I learned a lot about a new culture. What I learned will truly be carried with me throughout my life and applied to many, many situations.

- Rikki Myers, Springtime in Italy

The trip as a whole has been unbelievably fun and educational. I learned some Spanish, I learned about Mexican culture, and most importantly, I learned a few things about myself.

- Michael Gomes, Spanish in Mexico

This semester has been absolutely amazing. I have met so many inspirational people over here who have taught me so much about different things as well as a lot about myself.

- John Roche, Semester in France

SAINT FRANCIS UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS



REACH HIGHER. GO FAR. GO INTERNATIONAL.

Below, top left: PA students in Cape Town, South Africa. Below, top right: student in Ireland.
Below, bottom left: Semester in France students in Ambialet. Below, bottom right: Greek students in Parma, Italy.



CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH
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