



CPE Briefing

A World of Learning

In studying abroad, students discover new cultures and develop their own goals and values.

To learn more about programs, providers and locations for Elmhurst's study-abroad program, visit <http://elmhurst.studioabroad.com>.

Jacob Hug's year in Morocco helped him land a full-time job at a Chinese logistics company in the United States. Elmhurst business students Morrison Stewart and Susan Yang studied in China to position themselves for jobs in international business. Ally Vertigan's Spring Term in Ecuador gave her an exhilarating sense of independence.

Elmhurst students study abroad to help build their career plans, learn new languages and immerse themselves in different cultures. They learn a lot about themselves. "Studying abroad has helped me become more independent and open to meeting new people," said Yang, who spent the 2010 Fall Term in Shanghai.

About 200 Elmhurst students study abroad each year. Many start with a January Term class or a summer program, and then get an appetite for spending a full term abroad or even a year, said Alice Niziolek, assistant director of international education. A number of Elmhurst faculty members lead January and summer excursions.

For example, Professor Judy Grimes heads a popular music education program in Jamaica every January. Elmhurst professors lead trips to India, Israel and South Africa. Other January courses are offered through the Upper Midwest Association for Intercultural Education (UMAIE), a consortium of seven Midwest colleges that includes Elmhurst.

For programs of a term or longer, students select from a menu of hundreds of opportunities offered by about 10

affiliated providers of study-abroad programs, such as Alliance for Global Education, Institute for Study Abroad (IFSA) and The Institute for the International Education of Students (IES Abroad). To learn more, go to Elmhurst's study-abroad web site, <http://elmhurst.studioabroad.com>. Under the programs tab, you can view a list of providers and programs, or search by location.

Many students prefer to take courses in English, so Great Britain and Australia are popular destinations. Spanish-language programs also are in demand, so Spain and nations in Central and South America are draws. But many students are attracted to more exotic locations—stories in this issue of CPE Briefing describe student experiences in Morocco, Finland, Japan, China and Ecuador.

Study abroad programs are not for everyone. Elmhurst requires a 3.0 GPA because most programs require independence and discipline. "Even good students sometimes struggle to adapt to different teaching methods at foreign universities," Niziolek said.

It's a good idea to begin researching study-abroad opportunities early. Students in the First-Year Seminar attend a class on international opportunities as part of the curriculum. Then they should attend an information session and the Study Away Fair, explore options on the web site and schedule an appointment with the study abroad office (see Getting Started on p. 5 of this newsletter). Before going abroad for a term or more, students are required to take CPP250, an eight-week course that covers everything they need to know.



**TRUE
PROFESSIONALS**

Established in 1997, the Center for Professional Excellence (CPE) helps deliver the Elmhurst Experience, a framing of liberal learning that helps students determine who they will be and what professional field they will pursue. Students who take advantage of the many services and rich experiences offered by the CPE will be better prepared for their future careers—as well as being effective contributors to society. The CPE is proud to connect mentors and organizations with students from one of the top tier master's universities in the Midwest, as ranked, repeatedly, by *U.S. News & World Report*. It is one of the many ways that Elmhurst College demonstrates its synergy between liberal-arts learning and professional preparation.

In This Issue

- Jacob Hug in Morocco** page 2
- Morrison Stewart & Susan Yang in China** page 3
- Kendra Vincent in Japan** page 4
- Ally Vertigan in Ecuador** page 5
- Margaret Zieke in Finland** page 6

A Hug for Morocco

Student's year in Rabat helps him land a job in international business.

Jacob Hug's study-abroad experience in Morocco enhanced his résumé and helped him land a job in his field of international business before he graduated in May 2011.

A native of Bloomington, Illinois, Hug chose to study in Morocco for a year to help him fulfill a language requirement for his international business major. He'd previously studied Arabic in a January Term class, his first exposure to the language.

Hug spent his junior year in a new program offered through the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES Abroad) in Rabat. He took Arabic language courses through IES, but for his business courses, he enrolled directly in the International Institute for Higher Education, Morocco, where classes are taught in English. He was the only foreigner.

Most of Hug's Moroccan classmates spoke a mixture of Arabic and French, which made learning an already difficult language even more tricky. "The dialect that Moroccans use is very different than the Arabic you learn in school," Hug said.

Before his IES program began, Hug lived with three Moroccan roommates in a small apartment in Marrakech. "I have seen closets here in America bigger than our apartment. We had no door and one rug to sleep on. The whole apartment complex shared one toilet—a hole in the ground. This was also our shower. We used the water spout next to the hole to fill small buckets," Hug recalled.

Hug landed in Marrakech two days after the start of Ramadan, a month-long Islamic observance during which Muslims fast from sun up until sundown. Because Hug's roommates were Muslim, he also followed Ramadan rules. "During the nights we would go out to the large market, where we would eat, drink and meet with locals," he recalled. "This living situation was the biggest adjustment I went through during my travels."

Hug braced himself for a tough transition because he knew living in an Arab country and an Islamic culture would be different from what he was used to. "Because I was expecting it to be so much different, finding similarities stopped me from having culture shock," he said. "I adjusted very easily."

One striking difference, though, was the lack of upward social and economic mobility for many Moroccans. "You begin to appreciate the ability we have to move up in social classes and also to travel around the world. Many Moroccans aren't able to leave. It's difficult for them to get visas," he said.

During his year abroad, Hug used his freedom to travel as much as possible, not only in accessible Western European countries, but in Middle Eastern nations such as Egypt and Jordan, and in Eastern European destinations such as Hungary, Serbia and Slovakia. Hug's foreign travel—and speeches he gave upon his return to entering freshmen, to potential College donors and on behalf of IES Abroad—also added to his résumé. That caught the eye of the hiring manager for U-Freight America, a Chinese logistics company with offices in Wood Dale, Illinois.

"It definitely helped me land the job," says Hug, who now works as an account executive for U-Freight. "They said that once they read that I lived in Morocco, they wanted to interview me."

Hug said the year in Morocco clarified his career goals. "I realized I wanted a job where I could travel internationally, where I could deal with people in different countries," he says. So far, most of Hug's business travels have been in the United States. Next year he expects to head to China for his first international business trip.

By Rita Colorito

Morocco

I realized I wanted a job where I could travel internationally, where I could deal with people in different countries.

Jacob Hug



Like Starting My Life Over Again

Studying in Ecuador helped Ally Vertigan change her view of the world—and of herself.

Looking back on it now, Ally Vertigan says that spending the first few months of 2011 studying and working in Ecuador was one of the best decisions of her life. But at the time, she wasn't so sure.

Vertigan, a senior with a double major in Spanish and religion and service, went to Ecuador with the help of the International Partnership for Service Learning and Leadership. The organization arranged for her to live with a host family in Quito, Ecuador's capital, and to study at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito.

During her four and a half months in Ecuador, she got the kind of practical education in everyday Spanish that no classroom experience could provide. At the university, she took classes in photography and volunteerism. And in her free time, she traveled with a group of students from the University of North Carolina, enjoying the natural beauty of Ecuador on rafting and bird-watching trips.

It was enough to make Vertigan wonder why she had been reluctant to go to Ecuador in the first place.

"It turned out to be a great experience, but I'll admit it, I did some crying on the plane [on her way to Ecuador]," said Vertigan, who grew up in a suburb of Rochester, New York, and now lives in Oak Park. "I was leaving my school, my family, my job, and I wasn't sure what to expect."

What made Vertigan feel most at home in Ecuador was her volunteer work in the kitchen of a group home for impoverished senior citizens. She was part of a crew that produced breakfasts and lunches for 200, using (often unsellable) food donated by local supermarkets. Vertigan

was new to the country, and not entirely confident in her Spanish. But she pitched in, learning to make bread and finding other ways to help out. One day, when some new volunteers showed up at the kitchen, the cook sent them to see Vertigan for instructions.

"That's when I felt like I belonged," she said. "To have people put their trust in me in that way, I felt like I had earned some credibility there."

The best part of her trip to Ecuador, Vertigan said, was the sense of independence she found there.

"There was no one checking in on me. It was like I was starting my life over again, and it was completely up to me how I would choose to live," she recalled. "That made me reevaluate my life. I realized I could live that way back in the United States, too. I could make my life what I wanted it to be."

Vertigan has taken that lesson to heart. She has made the most of her time at Elmhurst, working as a student ambassador for the admission office and establishing herself as a campus leader. She helps organize Elmhurst's annual Big Gay Gathering, an event for high school students who identify

with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Her work earned her the recognition of the Chicago branch of the Human Rights Campaign, which named Vertigan its college student of the year for 2011.

Vertigan said her time in Ecuador helped motivate her. "I definitely recommend studying abroad. It changed the way I understand myself and the world," she said. "It was a little scary, but it was worth it."

By Andrew Santella

Ecuador

Studying abroad changed the way I understand myself and the world. It was a little scary but it was worth it.

Ally Vertigan



Q&A

GETTING STARTED

What are the first steps?

Each First-Year Seminar course includes a session on international study. You also should attend the Study Away Fair offered at the start of each term and information sessions offered each month in the CPE.

How do I get complete information?

Go to Elmhurst's study abroad site, <http://elmhurst.studioabroad.com>. Click on the programs tab. You can browse all the offerings, or search by location.

What is the deadline for applications?

For long-term programs, applications are due September 1 for Spring Term and February 1 for Fall Term.

Is financial help available?

Elmhurst offers scholarships and grants for short-term study away courses. Students participating in long-term experiences receive scholarships, loans and grants similar to their on-campus financial aid package. Providers of full-term and year-

long programs also offer scholarships. Our web site has extensive information on financing study abroad.

Are there opportunities for off-campus domestic study?

Yes, the Chicago Semester includes an internship and a service project, in addition to a seminar course. The Washington Semester Program provides opportunities for internships in a wide variety of locations including Congress, federal offices and non-governmental organizations.

A Crash Course in China

Two business students get a close-up view of one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

Elmhurst business students Morrison Stewart '13 and Susan Yang '13 wanted to get a firsthand view of China's explosive economy and position themselves for jobs in international business. Yang got that opportunity when she studied abroad at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics' International Business in China program, organized by Alliance for Global Education in 2010. Stewart participated in the same program a year later.

Shanghai's towering skyscrapers and high-speed transportation impressed both students. "It's much more advanced than I thought it would be," said Stewart, noting that many Fortune 500 companies such as General Electric and ExxonMobil have locations in the city. It is also increasingly diverse. "You see people from many different countries coming to Shanghai to develop their careers," Yang said.

Stewart grew up in Taiwan and Hawaii, and already was fluent in Chinese before the program. After spending Fall Term 2011 in Shanghai, he will stay in Asia for Spring Term 2012, studying international business at the Chinese University of Hong Kong through the International Student Exchange Program.

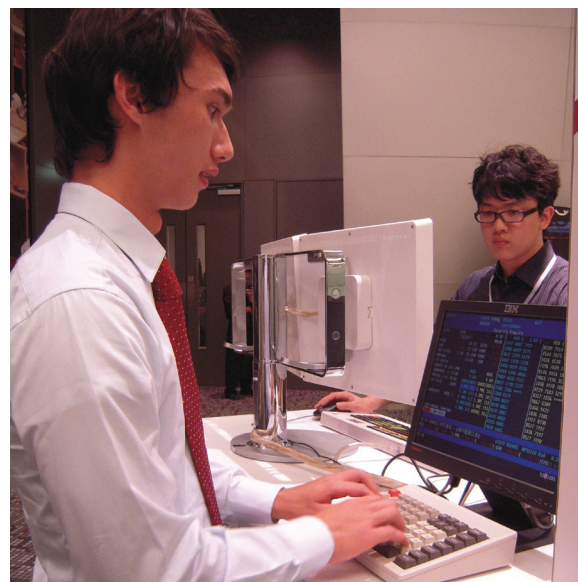
Yang, an international business and accounting major who was born in China but raised in Montego Bay, Jamaica, attended the program during Fall Term 2010 to learn about the international marketplace and reconnect with her native country.

"Being Chinese, I wanted to become more immersed in the culture that I didn't get to experience growing up," she said. Before going to Shanghai, she spoke Chinese but could not read or write the language.

Both considered the program's required 12 hours a week of reading, writing and speaking Mandarin Chinese intense but helpful. "It prepared me to work for an international company," Yang said.

China

Before China, I was extremely shy and never wanted to get out of my comfort zone. Studying abroad has helped me become more independent and open to meeting new people.
Susan Yang



In addition to language courses, students in the Shanghai program must take at least two China-focused business courses. They also have the chance to put that knowledge to work through an internship at a multinational or Chinese company. Stewart had an internship at Shanghai-based IT outsourcing firm VanceInfo Technologies.

Living on campus with a Chinese roommate also was enlightening. "You learn a lot living with someone from another culture," Yang said, who observed that compared to Americans, many of the Chinese students were reserved and often stayed in their rooms.

Students had plenty of opportunities to explore beyond the Shanghai campus. The program included guided field trips to destinations such as Hong Kong's stock exchange and a top manufacturing facility in the Guangdong province. Seeing the country made Stewart aware of the "breathtaking difference" between the booming parts of Shanghai and the more impoverished areas. "You're in a district that's literally walled in marble, and then only a 15-minute walk takes you into rural areas where people lack many amenities," he said.

Studying in China helped Yang's personal growth. "Before China, I was extremely shy and never wanted to get out of my comfort zone," she said. "Studying abroad has helped me become more independent and open to meeting new people."

It also increased her desire to seek an international position after graduation. "I would like to work in any area in my field of study," she said. "But I also want a job that enables me to travel to other countries."

By Shelby Sheehan-Bernard



Outside Her Comfort Zone

A year in Japan sets Kendra Vincent on course to be a translator.

En route to Japan in August 2010, Kendra Vincent began to panic about her decision to spend junior year as an exchange student in Kansai Gaidai University's Asian Studies program in Hirakata, Japan, near Osaka.

"I thought, 'What am I doing?' I was going to a country that was a complete mystery to me. Besides the words *arigatou* (thank you) and *konnichiwa* (hello), I didn't know the language," she said.

The sense of mystery faded as Vincent '12, of Grand Park, Illinois, learned the language, traveled the country and became enamored of the cherry blossoms that mark the coming of spring. Although her adventure was cut short by the March earthquake and tsunami that devastated the east coast of Honshu, the experience set her on a career path of becoming an English-Japanese translator.

Vincent didn't choose Japan to fulfill requirements for her major, which is English. Rather, her inquisitive nature drove her to find a place outside her comfort zone. "I was intensely interested in the exotic aspect of it, thinking nothing could be more different," she said.

Vincent lived with a host family during the Fall Term, then on campus for the Spring Term. She maintained a full-time schedule with four classes each semester, one for speaking Japanese, one for learning to write the language, and two elective courses on Japanese culture and media. Learning the language proved to be the most exciting part. "I became absolutely fascinated by the patterns in the language, along with the sound of it," she said.

Her education didn't end in the classroom. Vincent traveled throughout the country, visiting sites such as Lake Biwa, Japan's largest freshwater lake. She and a friend also arranged a week-long trip to Tokyo, which Vincent deemed "one of the best weeks of my life," even though she forgot to pack her toothbrush.

Although Vincent was not near the site of the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, she felt the aftershocks and watched live news coverage of the devastation, as well as the meltdowns at the Fukushima nuclear plant.

Alice Niziolek, assistant director of international education, immediately reached out to Vincent and her family in the U.S. Elmhurst administrators, concerned about the threat of radiation, which had not yet been quantified, asked Vincent to return home. She completed her coursework via email with her professors at Kansai Gaidai and with the help of Elmhurst language professor Federica Bando.

Leaving quickly meant little time for goodbyes, but Vincent was able to snap a last-minute photo of the sakura tree she passed every day on her walk to school. Spring had arrived, and the tree—whose cherry blossoms are symbolic



of the beautiful yet impermanent nature of life—had just bloomed.

It's an appropriately powerful image to represent her study-abroad experience, which has widened Vincent's perspective and changed her life course. While she previously was interested in a publishing career, she now hopes to become an English-Japanese translator. And with help from the Center for Professional Excellence, she already has connected with a mentor in the field. She is also applying for the Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) program, to teach English in Japan after graduation.

By Shelby Sheehan-Bernard

Japan

I was intensely interested in the exotic aspect of it, thinking nothing could be more different.

Kendra Vincent

History Major Doesn't Mind a Chilly Reception

Spring Term in Finland spurs Margaret Zieke to shift her academic focus.

Finland

Everyone is extremely polite. People are punctual, things move according to a certain way. That was something I loved and appreciated.

Margaret Zieke

For Minnesotan Margaret Zieke, Finland felt like home. The frosty temperatures were familiar and people were almost always right on time—just like in the Midwest.

Zieke, a senior, chose to study at the University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, through the International Student Exchange Program for Spring Term 2011. Joensuu offers a history program that few American universities do—in Baltic, Finnish, Russian and Karelian studies, the latter a region of eastern Finland and western Russia.

The region so fascinated Zieke that she changed her focus as a history major. Previously, she was interested primarily in early modern European history, primarily Western Europe. She hopes to teach history at the college level someday.

Learning Finnish provided another rare opportunity for Zieke, who had no prior exposure to the language and lived with a Finnish roommate who barely spoke English. While all classes in the international program are conducted in English, the program offers a basic Finnish language class for international students. Zieke's U.S. classmates were from New York, North Carolina, Indiana and her home state of Minnesota.

Finnish is tricky to learn because it is not Indo-European, so it has little relation to other European languages, said Zieke, who found grocery shopping and maneuvering other aspects of daily life difficult at first. "You learn the phrase, 'I don't speak Finnish, do you speak English?' I can say that perfectly."

Other aspects of Finnish life were more familiar, Zieke said. The Finnish culture, she says, is similar to that of the Upper Midwest. "Everyone is extremely polite. People are punctual, things move according to a certain way. That was something I loved and appreciated," she says.



Friends and family asked often about the cold weather. Located at 62 degrees north latitude, Joensuu has five hours of daylight each day in late December. The average temperature in January is 11 degrees Fahrenheit. Still, Zieke found it tolerable, much like her native Minnesota. When she arrived in January, the ground was covered with two feet of snow, and about six inches lasted until April. But at least, she quipped, "It doesn't get below 30 degrees below zero."

Zieke recommends the Joensuu program for other history majors. "You learn so much about a different culture and a different history," she said. "It was one of the best experiences of my life, and if I could've stayed there, I would have."

After graduating from Elmhurst, Zieke plans to return to Finland. She's already researching graduate schools there.

By Rita Colorito

WHO TO CALL

Internships

Holly Coffin 617-6457

Career Education

Peggy Killian '94 617-3625

Mentoring and Shadowing

Julie Nearing '01 617-3188

Service-Learning

Dr. Mick Savage 617-6488

International Education

Dr. Wally Lagerwey 617-3604

Professional Bridges

Julie Nosal '03 617-3440

Intercultural Education

Dr. Russell Ford 617-3104

Employer Relations

Annette Coduto 617-3190

International Student Services

Alice Niziolek '99 617-3296

Honors Program

Dr. Mary Kay Mulvaney 617-6479

Executive Director

Dr. Larry Carroll 617-3114

All phone numbers are 630 area code.