

Study Abroad Connections

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Spotlight On... Koa Webster,
Shanghai, China, Fall 2014 2

Guinea Pigs wear Green!
Prof. John Casken, Resident
Director, Dublin Summer 2015 4

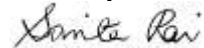
Message from the Director

In this issue of the Study Abroad Connections newsletter, a native Hawaiian student shares what it was like for him to step outside of his comfort zone, leaving his home for the first time ever, halfway around the globe to London, England. Another student shares his experience of studying and living in Shanghai, China. Both students agree that studying abroad was a life-changing experience.

Our newest undertaking is an undergraduate research project at University College Dublin. We hope that many undergraduate students will take this opportunity to learn how to conduct research.

Finally, then, our congratulations to all who graduated this past Spring 2015 semester, particularly to Study Abroad alumni! Best wishes and have a great Summer!

Sincerely,



Sarita Rai

And To London We Go!

Kenika Lorenzo
Management & Marketing
London, England: Fall 2013

Prior to studying abroad, I was a very close-minded person. I wasn't someone who stepped out of my comfort zone because I was afraid of change. Hawai'i was all I ever knew, all I was familiar with. I never intended to study abroad; it wasn't something I was comfortable with. However, the "push" to study abroad that my friends gave me was definitely something I needed. This experience has impacted me academically, personally, and professionally.

Being the closed-minded person I was, it was hard to adjust at first. But as time went on, I soon began to be more open to trying new things. Living in London for three months changed my view on things drastically. From being a closed-minded individual to now searching for new opportunities to try, I was completely in awe upon realizing how much I changed during those three months. I learned how to be a mature adult while in London, from cooking meals for myself, to learning about public transportation, and even managing my budget. Before going to London, several adults told me how jealous they were of the opportunity I was given and how my life will change forever when it is over. Today, as I sit at UH-Mānoa missing my London adventures, I can admit that my life most definitely changed because of this amazing experience.

Studying abroad gave me the opportunity to learn more about Europe and the countries I have visited. Not only was I able to learn about where I was; I was able to learn more about who I am as a person. Being a young adult, I am still trying to figure out who I am and what I want to do with my future, and this experience gave me a little more insight towards these goals. It's crazy to think you have yourself all figured out, until you move away from your comfort zone, far away from your family and friends. Only then are you forced to stand on your own two feet to figure things out for yourself. Being "millions" of miles away from home, where I wasn't able to call my grandparents for help with anything I did (my grandparents raised me from birth, and I was quite spoiled throughout my life). I was able to grow as a person, both mentally and physically. This experience is probably one of the best things that has ever happened to me.

"Leaving Hawai'i was something I have never experienced. Hawai'i has always been home to me; it has always been my comfort zone. It was all I ever knew and from what I thought, it was the only place I ever wanted to know. Studying abroad was never in my agenda, and I thought I would have bated it and regretted going on this adventure... but it was the complete opposite. Studying abroad was most definitely the best thing that has happened to me during my college education."

Spotlight On...

Koa Webster

**Marketing & International Business, Minor in Chinese
Shanghai, China, Fall 2014**

I studied in Shanghai, China at Tongji University. I have been interested in studying abroad in China for quite a long time now. Majoring in Marketing and International Business major and minoring in Chinese, this was a great opportunity to spend a semester in China to really strengthen my grasp of the Mandarin language, and also to understand Chinese culture—specifically Chinese business culture. I love being around people who are smarter than I, and who have different perspectives on the world, so this seemed like a great opportunity to expand my personal views on business from a different standpoint.

During the semester I took four Chinese classes and two business classes. The four Chinese classes included reading, writing, listening and speaking, and integrated Chinese. The two business classes included Chinese Socio-Economic Development and China's Foreign Affairs and International Relations. The Chinese classes were very intensive; they were longer period classes everyday with a lot of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The Chinese classes tested my knowledge of Mandarin everyday and demanded that students improved or quickly fall behind. Also, the teachers usually had fairly poor English skills and would only converse with us in Chinese, which meant days on end of only using Mandarin to communicate. I greatly enjoyed my Mandarin classes and saw a considerable improvement in my language level.

I was the only American in my Chinese class; everyone else was from all over the world, including Indonesia, France, Russia, Venezuela, India, Korea, and Japan. Being around so many international students, I really felt that being a good and friendly person is one of the best ways to represent your country. In the international dorms, there were people from almost every country on earth, even North Korea, and I think it changed many people's perceptions of North Korea a little, realizing that not all North Koreans are like their leader and that the people living there are not so different from people of other countries.

Although I made many Chinese friends before, in Shanghai many students are almost desperate to learn English, so I had no problem making friends. About one month into the program, Tongji arranged a "Buddy Program," where Tongji students are paired with international students, to encourage friendship and practicing each other's languages. I made a great Chinese friend, and we hung out throughout my stay in Shanghai. It was great way for me to get to know the Shanghaiese culture and improve my language skills. Also, just enjoying Shanghai, being so different from America, was a great experience everyday. One of the things I enjoy most is speaking in another language everyday to do normal things like ordering breakfast and making small conversation. Just those simple things were exciting and never got old, because I was always learning new words and new situations came up where I wanted to learn more. I felt myself getting better in Mandarin when I became more confident and more eager to speak up in and outside of the classroom. In addition, many of the other foreign students relied on me to communicate with the Chinese people in Mandarin for important matters.

One thing that I realized during my stay in China is how little I really know about the world. Halfway through the program I promised myself I would start focusing more on geography, history, politics, business, etc. to really obtain a better understanding of what is really going on in the world. I believe that gaining this knowledge while in college will be very helpful for my future. Also one of the lessons that I already knew, but was reminded of while in China, was when I met a Russian student. Unfortunately my first impressions of him were not favorable. When we first met, I got the feeling that he was only using me to practice his English. About a month later I overheard him playing piano, and I was amazed at how well he played. It reminded me to not be so quick to judge people; you never know what kind of hidden talents some people may have.

I believe my worldview has changed significantly, especially towards China and the U.S.; specifically with economy and how we've achieved our current status, what we're doing now, and future plans for both countries. I do believe China's future economy will continue to rise and prosper in the long-term, if they continue on their current path. I've also become a little more aware of how much politics plays a role in the U.S. economy. For example when it comes to the U.S.'s current currency dispute with China, it seems to point more towards politics, rather than actually solving any problems. The U.S. government blames the Chinese for artificially lowering the value of the *yuan*, taking away business from America and causing China to be a greater competitor in the trade market. In China's defense, many American consumers

"I remember realizing early on that I will have to change my American way of thinking quickly, because as Americans we have so many rights, which is one of the reasons America is such a great country. However, with this way of thinking comes the sense of entitlement and that we deserve certain privileges, but in other parts of the world this is definitely not the case, especially in a communist country like China."

have benefited from lower-priced goods, and have been appreciating the *yuan* by 23% since 1994. And possibly the main reason for the *yuan* to be at a lower value is America's own debt. China has become the largest holder of U.S. treasuries, as owning U.S. treasuries allows the *yuan* to remain at a lower value. China also accuses the U.S. of sluggish growth, high debts, and an easy monetary policy that has flooded the market with newly printed dollars, weakening the U.S. currency and putting pressure on emerging countries to keep their currencies low. In conclusion, if our U.S. government really wanted to settle this currency dispute, we would first have to fix our own economic problems and stop using the *yuan* as a scapegoat. Many of these topics were brought up in our business classes at Tongji and provided for great discussion from Chinese professors, and students from all over the world.

I believe that with studying abroad there are so many lessons to be learned. Most of all, I think being on your own, more so in another country, really makes you grow up and learn how to become more of an adult, particularly when figuring out problems for yourself and sometimes needing to get creative. When everything is in another language, sometimes you have to think outside the box when communicating. This study abroad experience has been one of the most amazing and memorable experiences in my entire life. I only wish it had never ended and I could have stayed longer. I have a year to decide what I will do after graduation, and this experience has really forced me to deeply consider my subsequent plans. In many ways this past semester has made my focus much clearer, and I'm looking forward to what lies ahead in my future.





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Dare to Discover,
 Dare to Learn, and
 Dare to Understand

Guinea Pigs wear Green!

John Casken
Resident Director, Dublin, Summer 2015
School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene

This summer, three UHM Department of Nursing students will participate in the first formal Study Abroad Program offered through the Department of Nursing. The three students, will be spending a month at the University College, Dublin (UCD) taking six credits in Nursing Research. The program will be offered in a hybrid mode with regular classes, on line classes and special mentorship in research.

The Program is offered by the UCD School of Nursing , Midwifery and Health Systems and will allow the three students to carry out special research in midwifery and obstetrics or approaches to elder care. The UHM students will be joining students from schools of nursing at the University of Connecticut and Catholic University of America among others.

The UHM Study Abroad Center and Department of Nursing are very excited by this new venture. It has been difficult to find a study abroad program that did not interfere with the nursing students' graduation date. Accrediting agencies also presented some difficulties as nursing programs in other countries do not necessarily cover the same materials as are covered in the US.

Dean Mary Boland of the UHM School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene expressed great pleasure that the director of UHM Study Abroad Center, Dr. Sarita Rai, had been able to find a program that allowed UHM nursing students to apply for a Study Abroad Program - giving them the same opportunity to study and learn overseas as other students.

Like any new program there were a variety of hiccups along the way and the three students decided that it was worth being "guinea pigs" in order to be able to take advantage of the opportunity to study, live and play in Dublin, Ireland, which is a very youth-oriented city with vibrant activities everywhere. Will they wear green while in Ireland? Probably not... but stay tuned for more information!