

Study Abroad Connections

Message from the Director

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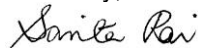
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Dear UHM faculty and students,

The Study Abroad Center is seeing an increasing number of students who study abroad more than once. In this edition of Study Abroad Connections, Aja Guzik, who spent the Spring 2017 semester in Paris, France, tells us of her study abroad experience in the City of Lights – the sights! the people! – and why she chose to stay for another semester. In the words of Ernest Hemingway, *“If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young [person], then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.”*

We also catch up with Study Abroad alumnus Ryan Yamato, who successfully completed a Summer in Kobe program before he went on to complete an Academic Year-in-Kobe. Ryan graduated with a B.A. in Marketing and a minor in Japanese, and is currently a Branch Manager for Bank of Hawaii.

Sincerely,



Sarita Rai

Director, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Study Abroad Center

Paris

Aja Guzik
French Major
Paris, France, Spring & Fall 2017

I first applied to study in Paris, France during the Spring 2017 semester. A French major, I hoped the experience would help me discover what I want to pursue with the French language. In addition, the program would help me gain responsibility, growth and independence, as well as finally being able to travel and see the country for the first time. For as long as I can remember, I've always had a fascination with the French language. The way it sounded as I tried to speak it gave me chills. Language amazes me; it is very intricate and complex, yet we need and use it every day to communicate and express culture and emotion. I thought immersing myself in a French-speaking environment would definitely improve my fluency.

Upon arrival in Paris, I experienced culture shock and apprehension about using French in a real context and navigating the different culture. However, the pre-departure cross-cultural training sessions conducted by the UHM Study Abroad Center helped me a lot with noticing the differences between the two countries and preparing me for the changes I was about to encounter. Although I took several French language courses at UHM, while studying at *Université de Paris Sorbonne*, I felt like I was finally improving my language skills. I was living in Paris, immersed in the language and outside of my comfort zone. My host mother was amazing. Since she only knew a bit of English, she helped me feel comfortable with speaking French and corrected my grammar and pronunciation. It was a wonderful feeling, knowing that I was able to understand and respond to her. I have made so many amazing new friends and met people from all over the world, who have all shown me different perspectives, as well as a different type of respect and culture to which I normally wouldn't be exposed, as opposed to just staying on an island. I always thought I was a very open-minded individual, but with the help



from all the people I met in Paris, I opened myself up even more.

With the great progress in myself I have seen in myself, I am hungry for more. My goal is to improve my French and use my language skills as a translator, either in France or in the U.S. Communication has always been a big struggle and importance in my life, so I want to help others, without the struggle of a language barrier. I have truly realized that all people are the same, beyond beliefs or skin color; we all act, feel and think the same. I want to come back to UHM completely confident with myself and my French. This Spring 2017 semester motivated me in a way so much that, rather than simply getting by, I want to strive to higher goals.

I whole-heartedly recommend that students take the opportunity to study abroad. Traveling while studying can teach you so much more than what you're able to learn in the classroom. They are real-life experiences that you will remember and cherish for the rest of your life.



Alumni Spotlight: A One-on-One Interview

Ryan Yamato

Kōbe, Japan, Summer 2010 & Academic Year-in-Japan 2011-12

Graduated 2013 with a BA in Marketing and a minor in Japanese

1. How did you choose your program location?

Funny story, my brother was the one who wanted to go to Japan first, to Tokyo. I wanted to do something different, so I chose the opposite of him, opting to attend the summer program at Konan university in Kobe and it was the most fun, interesting, and best environment for me to learn another language I have ever had. It was so much fun, I felt the need to go back for the year program.

2. What was your goal/objective for studying abroad in general, and in Japan?

My goal for studying abroad was to prove that I would be able to live on my own (without the help of my family) and to really immerse myself in Japanese culture so it would force me to learn Japanese.

3. Did you experience culture shock? How did the SAC pre-departure Orientation sessions help prepare you for your semester abroad in Japan?

Coming from Hawaii where it is a melting pot of all cultures in one place, I did not really experience much culture shock. The orientation sessions were a valuable asset, as they did give us pointers on the little things that would not have bothered me but would have bothered Japanese people.

4. What was the most memorable experience you had in Japan?

Becoming good friends with students from all over the world and being able to travel all over Japan with them. Even to this day, we still talk and even see each other in Japan again to hang out.

5. What did you appreciate most about this study abroad experience? (earning UHM credits, learning host country culture/language through homestay, eating authentic host country cuisine, etc.)

There are many things that I appreciate about this program: a) Being able to actually learn Japanese and have a conversation with Japanese people in Japanese, b) Being able to earn UHM credits is a huge plus, as I didn't have to go through any of the headaches of having to apply to have the credits count. Also I am especially happy that although I studied

...Alumni Spotlight

Abroad for a summer and a year, that I was able to graduate on time. c) Being able to partake in the delicious food and drink of Japan. d.) Having a host family to help you with anything e) Extremely supportive staff in Japan for the foreign students. Missing even one of these things would have made it a lot harder for me during the programs.

6. Name your top 5 favorite sights to see/things to do in Japan. Why?

- a.) Shinsaibashi - great night life and shopping
- b.) Port Harbor - lots of different food and shopping, and beautiful at night
- c.) Universal Studios Japan - fun rides and good food
- d.) Kobe Luminarie - lots of delicious food vendors and beautiful lights
- e.) Nagano - being in a snowy environment is fun for anyone in Hawaii and being able to snowboard

7. How has this semester abroad in Japan changed you, your career choice, etc.?

It made me a lot more independent and for some reason it made it easier for me to learn whatever I needed to learn.

8. What advice would you give to prospective students interested in studying abroad, and particularly in Japan?

Do it! It is a once in a lifetime chance that you will have to go to a different country and really learn about who you are as a person and it makes you more independent. Also, you will meet new friends who you will have for the rest of your life! As for studying in Japan, all you need to do is go outside of your comfort zone by meeting people and not being afraid to strike up a conversation with someone.

9. How has the study abroad experience prepared you for your job?

It has made me more responsible and independent. It has really helped me get to the place I really wanted to be after I graduated.

10. Do you think your study abroad experience played a role in landing you a job? How so?

I don't really know about this one. However, I know that when I look for potential people to hire, if I see they have the experience of studying abroad, I know they are independent and have the life experience to go outside of their comfort zone. It makes it easier to hire them!

11. What advice would you give to students who wish to have the same career as you?

Work hard and play hard. Working hard and then "playing hard" (socializing) with others is very important in Hawaii. Hawaii is a very small place!

12. What advice would you tell to others about your study abroad experience?

Don't be afraid to mess up when speaking Japanese to others. It is a learning experience. If you never try, you will never improve.



(Ryan is at the top row, third from the right)




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Meet the next Resident Directors

... and the exciting courses they are teaching abroad!

Fall 2017

London, England

Jonna Eagle jonnae@hawaii.edu

AMST 310 (W): War & Media

AMST 490D (O): Cinema & the City

Paris, France

Kara Miller karamill@hawaii.edu

DNCE 244 (W): Dance in World Cultures

DNCE 459 (O): Topics: Business for the Arts

Florence, Italy

Eirik Saethre saethre@hawaii.edu

ANTH 370 (O): Ethnographic Field Techniques

ANTH 300 (E,W): Study of Contemporary Problems: Gypsies & Roma in Europe

Machida, Japan

Miriam Sharma sharma@hawaii.edu

ASAN 463 (W): Gender Issues in Asia: Focus on Japan

ASAN 491J (W): Topics in Asian Studies: Multicultural in Japan

Seville, Spain

Paul Deering deering@hawaii.edu

EDCS 431 (W,O): Collaborative Language and Learning

EDCS 440 (W): Curriculum Implications of Multicultural Education

Dare to Discover,

Dare to Learn, and

Dare to Understand

