

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Odyssey. Odyssey will be published electronically twice a year, with a limited run of hard copies also available. Each issue will bring updates of the work we are doing in SAO, special events, scholarship information, and new program development, and articles by and about students, faculty, and staff who have a story to share.

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Message from the Director

Responding to the vision of academic excellence for those who come to learn, teach and do research, urban universities have an increasingly important role in U.S. higher education as non-traditional students now constitute a majority of undergraduates in the United States.

With the mix of cost, opportunity, personal history, family, and community in a highly diverse student population, and public commitments beyond the confines of our campus, we face unique challenges for integrating international education, especially a study abroad experience, into the undergraduate curriculum.

We live in a rapidly changing environment of technology and economy. National borders have blurred as local and international migration has created or enlarged Diaspora communities worldwide. And the nature of the relationship between kinship and place; ethnicity and territory, is being redefined. In this context, how do our students understand the contemporary (globalized) world where the largest 100 economies are not countries but multinational corporations? What are the critical literacies students will need to navigate safely, equitably, and productively for the future?

The goals of a study abroad experience include helping students become intentional learners. Their competition now is the global marketplace and it is just as likely that they will be competing for jobs not with the person sitting next to them in class, but with their contemporaries in Brazil, Russia, India, or China.

Studying abroad creates an opportunity for students to engage the context of their learning. Our hopes include that students will apply their study abroad learning and experience to better define the world they live in. We also hope they develop a different relationship to the product of their work... work which includes learning about difference.

Depending on the calculation, the percentage of U.S. postsecondary students who go abroad to study for any length of time remains in the single digit range. So, too, it is at UIC. But each year our direct student support through scholarships and cost offset funding increases (\$147,000 for AY 2008-09), curricular choices have widened to over 200 programs on six continents, and more students discover that they are bound not by their local experience but by their curiosity and determination to discover what else is 'out there'.

We continue to be a national leader in the diversity of the student cohort we send abroad. Consistently over the past eight years, the racial/ethnic/economic diversity of those going abroad has been impressive: over 40% have been traditionally under-represented in international education; and over 30% have been Pell grant recipients. This is more than a reflection of our diverse student population. It indicates a strong desire by students to engage with the world beyond UIC, Chicago, and the US.

Chris Deegan



LaTrease with students in South Africa

Scholarship success story

LaTrease Davenport reached several milestones in her undergraduate career, but two will shine above the rest. Davenport will become the first in her family to graduate from college. She also made history in the [Study Abroad](#) program as the first UIC student to participate in a program in Namibia, Africa. Davenport's semester abroad last fall was funded by a Gilman International Scholarship she received as a Pell Grant recipient and a Nation Building Scholarship specific to the Namibia program. "I was elated when I found out about receiving the two scholarships," she said. "I would have gotten loans out to go to Africa, but knowing that the entire thing was paid for and I would have extra money to use for other things was great." Davenport said her instructors in the program at Augsburg College based in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, connected courses with the students' interests. "The instructor tried to incorporate public health and policy into my history, political science, religion and development courses," she said. Davenport also worked at the local Planned Parenthood in Namibia twice a week, where she helped write grants, attended seminars and worked with a local youth group.

Davenport and her classmates spent the last week in Cape Town before returning home. "The most important thing that I got out of this program is that they (people of Namibia) are no different than us and do the same things that we do," she said. "I learned that we are all equal, but a little different, and that I could learn from them just as much as they can from me." Davenport plans to earn a master's degree in public health. Because of her experience in Namibia, she is considering work overseas. "I am interested in behavioral sciences and health care education," she said. "I want to educate underprivileged communities on different diseases that are prevalent in that specific area."

Article originally appeared in UICNEWS 2/25/09

Scholarship awards

Part of the growth in enrollments we have seen recently has been because of a dramatic increase in supplemental funding. In the past three years, we have been able to increase the level of cost reduction with program sponsors by almost 25%. In the 2008/09 academic year, a total of \$68,224 was credited to students' program invoices. For the same year, thirty-eight students were awarded \$78,800 in scholarship funding: \$43,100 of it was won through national competition, including six students who won the prestigious Gilman International Scholarship. Visit the Study Abroad website [Scholarship Alert](#) page for complete list of awards.

[Gilman International Scholarship](#) Awards of up to \$8,000.

Deadline for Spring 2010 programs is October 6, 2009

SAO will hold Gilman information sessions in 502 UH:

August 25 : 2:00 - 3:00

Walk through the application process

September 8: 2:00 - 3:00

Gilman Program Overview

September 22: 2:00 - 3:00

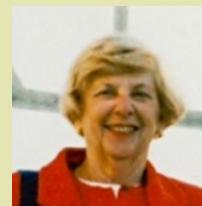
Composing a Successful Statement of Purpose

September 29: 2:00 - 3:00

Walk through the application process

[Nina T. Shepherd](#) Awards \$1,000 for Spring 2010

Deadline for Spring 2010 is October 16, 2009



The timing of this first issue also marks the 15th anniversary of the start of the Study Abroad Office by former University of Illinois trustee Nina Shepherd. As the founding director, Nina created an office that has now sent over 2,500 UIC undergraduates abroad

for academic credit. Nina was a dynamic leader and avid supporter of UIC who sat for eighteen years on the UI Board of Trustees; two of them as the first and only woman to Chair that group (1985-86). In her career of service to the state and the university, she was an Illinois delegate to three national conventions, co-founded the Illinois Democratic Woman's Caucus, chaired the Women's Talent Bank of Illinois, and was appointed by the governor to the Illinois Humanities Council. In 1997, the University Alumni Association recognized Nina's contributions with their Distinguished Service Award. Nina passed away in 2003. A scholarship award was then established in her name to support under-represented students studying abroad. The Fall 2009 award competition deadline for Spring programs is October 16th. To celebrate the 15th anniversary, there will be two \$1,000 awards.

We invite you to make a commitment today and help to support UIC students by giving to the [Nina T. Shepherd](#) or [Accessible Frontiers Funds](#)

PLEASE GIVE TODAY.

IT'S EASY. IT'S FAST. IT'S SAFE.

IT'S ONLINE.



THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

Engineering students DO study abroad!

Who said engineering students do not have time to study abroad? As a bioengineering student, I still look back on the summer of 2008 spent in Chile as the most memorable and academically influential time of my undergraduate career, often outweighing my traditional engineering classes or labs. And having participated in the engineering internship/job search this past year, I sincerely believe that having abroad experience really makes one stand out among the sea of prospective job applicant resumé. With the world becoming ever increasingly globalized, highlighting an ability to assimilate and integrate into another country and embrace a completely new culture are qualities that cannot be taught in a domestic internship experience. I cannot think of a single person close to me to whom I have not mentioned some part of my Chilean experience because of the intricate way it has shaped my future career plans and more importantly, me as a person.

As an Honors College student, I applied for the Flaherty Study Abroad Scholarship and received \$1000 towards my program expenses. The program exposes students via first-hand experience to Chile's health care system. Students enroll in a Clinical Observation Internship course with public health seminar and a Medical Spanish course, both conducted in Spanish. I would have never learned the cultural and socioeconomic dimensions of engineering in medicine in a classroom at UIC.

Overall, I highly recommend study abroad experience to any undergraduate student as it is such a unique opportunity that one may not ever get back in life. It is not often that you get to travel, learn unique lessons, and do a little self-discovery by broadening one's horizons literally across the globe.

Vikrant Jagadeesan
Major: Bioengineering



Vikrant at a local market in Chile

Life changing experience

Ciao! Coming into college, I knew studying abroad was on my list of things to do. I spoke with people that have studied abroad and claimed it was life changing, but I never thought they were absolutely right. I decided to study abroad in Italy for one summer session. I thought that was the perfect amount of time. However, when it was time to leave I wish I would have done a semester because everyday brought new experiences that helped me grow as a person and showed me there is so much more out there than the environment I live in. In order to get the most out of your experience, you have to immerse yourself in the culture. That is exactly what I did. I would try to learn new words and use them anywhere I went. I took an Intercultural Communication class in Florence, which was really provoking and interesting. Deciding to study abroad was one of the best decisions I ever made. The staff in the study abroad office at UIC has been there, ready to help, every step of the way. There is no justifiable excuse for any college student to pass up on this incredible opportunity. It changed me in more ways than I ever expected and I am so happy for making this choice.

Sylvia Pawloska
Major: Biological Science



Sylvia in Rome

First Step Schedule Fall 2009

August 24—October 13

Mondays at 2:00

Tuesdays at 12:30

Thursdays at 2:00

Fridays at 1:30

**All sessions take place at the
Study Abroad Office, 502 UH.**

**Students are required to attend
a session to start the process.**

Deadlines for Spring 2010 programs

Priority: September 18

Final: October 16

College of Business goes abroad

UIC SAO occasionally has an opportunity to send UIC faculty and staff on familiarization trips to visit various study abroad programs. Most recently, Donna Nowacki, Director of Academic Services in CBA was nominated to participate on the IES Familiarization trip to Freiburg, Germany and Paris, France.

While on the familiarization trip, participants have an opportunity to go on various field trips, examine the facility, visit classes, talk to the faculty and students. As Donna pointed out, "It is fascinating to hear about students' experiences fending for themselves in Warsaw, Prague, Berlin and Brussels, without knowing the native languages. They visited Auschwitz and the EU Parliament in Strasbourg, France when it was in session, and met with government representatives and leaders of multi-national corporations."

"All I can say, is that if you ever thought about studying abroad while you are in college, find a way to do it! It is a wonderful way to broaden your horizons, learn about other cultures and earn credit toward your UIC degree."

If you are interested in participating in one of the familiarization trips sponsored by the Study Abroad Office, please contact Irina Krymova at krymova@uic.edu

Faculty opportunities to teach abroad

Faculty are key to the sustainable success of study abroad. Perhaps more than any other constituency on campus, they have tremendous influence on students' learning and development of worldview. In addition to their interaction with students in the classroom where we encourage them to promote study abroad as an integrated part of the undergraduate curriculum, faculty also have the opportunity to work with SAO and plan, create, and teach on a study abroad program. Planning should be complete by November 30 for the following summer. The proposal process is outlined on our [website](#). Possibilities for summer 2010 include specific sites in: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Chile, China, England, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Morocco, Netherlands, Russia, South Africa, Spain, and Thailand. For more information contact Irina Krymova krymova@uic.edu

Classroom presentations

The Study Abroad Office is available to make classroom presentations throughout the year. Presentations can be shaped to meet faculty and student needs. If you are interested in having UIC Study Abroad visit your classroom, please contact Albert Miliauskas at amialia1@uic.edu to schedule a presentation or call (312) 413-7662.

Who we are...

UIC Study Abroad Office staff have spent considerable time living and working abroad, in addition to participation on study abroad programs. Collectively, our formal work experience in international education exceeds forty years and we have fluency in six languages (English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Lithuanian, and Hindi.) Our academic degree experience includes: Doctoral research in History and Geography in central India; Oriental Studies and Chinese Linguistics in Russia; Economics and Baltic Studies in Lithuania; Sociology and Linguistics in Singapore; Anthropology; Higher Ed Administration; and Psychology.



Chris Deegan
Director



Irina Krymova
Assist. Director



Albert Miliauskas
Senior Advisor



Krystal Williams
Advisor



Lauren Yurman
Advisor

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- September 3:
SAO Fair
9:00-2:00
Student Center East
- September 9:
Customized programs
Faculty brown bag lunch
12:00-1:00
502 UH
- September 9:
LGBT Info session
12:00-1:00
183 BSB
- September 14:
Scholarship/Fin Aid
12:00-1:00
502 UH
- September 15:
Student Panel
1:00 –2:00
308 Grant Hall, LCLC
- September 16:
Student Panel
12:00 –1:00
308 Grant Hall, LCLC
- November 16-20
International Ed Week

Visit SAO [Upcoming Event Calendar](#) for more information

DEADLINES for SPRING'10

September 18:
Priority Deadline

October 16:
Final Deadline

Study Abroad



Connects You with the World