

Exploring the World

International educational opportunities abound for students from Cal State Fullerton and abroad

By PAMELA McLAREN pmclaren@fullerton.edu

ALUMNA BETHANY O'CONNOR, a legal processing specialist for Orange County Superior Court, describes her time studying in Europe five years ago as "one of the most significant experiences of my life."

"At the time it was such an adventure, being out on my own, exploring a new culture and new lands," she said. "It opened my eyes to how different societies function and what their views are regarding life, the world and the United States. I visited so many places, from metropolitan Barcelona to historic Florence to rural Morocco to the French countryside. I think that everyone I met left at least a little impression on me. That has helped me become more aware and enhanced my desire to keep learning more about the world."

Thanks to partnerships created between Cal State Fullerton and other institutions of higher education, partnerships through the California State University system and other study abroad programs, students are exploring horizons around the globe and considering careers that will take them thousands of miles from their alma mater. Now more than ever, campus administrators and faculty members emphasize, it is important to stress the value of a global education.

From Australia to Vietnam

Today, CSUF has agreements with 68 institutions of higher education from Australia and Brazil to Lithuania, Russia and Vietnam. Such agreements allow for student and faculty exchanges, collaborations and research opportunities.

"International study often is a life-transforming experience for students," said Ray Young, associate vice president for graduate students and research, whose office is responsible for development of partnership and collaborative agreements. "Faculty members find these collaborative opportunities to be an excellent



Rosalina Camacho, left, and Melanie McCook, plan to study in South Africa in the summer.

means for broadening their research expertise and cross-cultural sensitivity that can be applied directly to teaching and various other forms of collaboration."

The Academic Programs office also extends formal invitations to visiting scholars and works with academic departments and programs on potential international ventures and with the International Education Committee on policy matters.

China Connection

One of the oldest of the university agreements — established in 1984 — is with Fudan University in Shanghai, China. Each June, CSUF faculty and staff members travel to several cities and universities in China, where they attend seminars and can share exchange experiences, knowledge and skills in higher education, foreign policy, urban growth and population management, economics and cultural arts with their Chinese counterparts. It is one of 13 agreements with universities and colleges in China.

Students are recognizing the need for a global perspective and signing up for study-abroad programs in record numbers, and most programs have expanded due to their popularity.

Human services major Melanie McCook, plans to go to South Africa this summer as part of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences study abroad program.

"Travel enables you to see outside of your own life and your own world and experience how other people live their lives," she said. "I know that this experience will not only enhance my education but also have a profound impact on who I am as a person."

Rosalina Camacho, a graduate student and coordinator of the women's cultural resource center on campus, also plans to go to South Africa.

"I want to get a better understanding of the people, to interact with the community members and learn about their customs, way of speaking, what they find important



Cal State Fullerton faculty and staff toured Fudan University in Shanghai during a summer, 2002 visit.

in life and be engrossed in the everyday culture," she said.

In addition to exchanges through formal agreements with the university, CSUF students have opportunities to study abroad through a number of programs, including the California State University International Programs in 19 countries; specialized college and department programs offered in Europe and South America; and external programs, including the Fulbright Scholars. To find out more about the full gamut of study abroad opportunities, visit www.fullerton.edu/studyabroad.

Foreign Ties

The broadening of experience, of learning how business, education and politics are done in other countries is why many international students come to Cal State Fullerton. Last fall, there were nearly 1,200 matriculating students on campus, representing 79 different nations.

"It's been a very nice experience," said Grecia Pardave, an international student from Peru and president of the campus International Students Association. The senior is in her second year on campus.

Foreign students also can take part in programs offered by CSUF in their own countries. For example, students in Hong Kong are earning a master's degree in communications, thanks to a partnership agreement with the College of Communications and the University of Hong Kong.

"This has been a really good program, a benefit for both China and Cal State Fullerton," said Rick Pullen, dean of the College of Communications. "The value has been not only in providing Chinese students the opportunity to earn a master's degree from Cal State Fullerton, but providing an opportunity for our faculty to experience teaching in a foreign country, being immersed in that country's culture and being able to bring what

they learn and experience back to their classrooms here."

Established in 2003, the master's degree program focuses on public relations and advertising and is geared toward working professionals, with courses offered on evenings and weekends. Fullerton faculty members travel to Hong Kong during intersession and summer to teach two of the courses.

Extended Education Outreach

Other foreign students and working professionals take part in special training and certificate programs offered on campus through University Extended Education that can range from a week to several months.

At any given time, University Extended Education personnel are involved in the development and execution of special training and certificate programs for groups from around the world, but most commonly from Asia. Such programs, often in partnership with campus departments, can span from a week to several months for public administrators, educators and business officials. Since 2003, nearly 100 delegations have visited the university. Last month, a group from a Beijing building materials company spent a week on campus receiving business administration training. Next month, 25 sales managers from the Singapore office of E-World Holding USA will attend a three-week business training session.

The programs provide a greater perspective of how American education, business and government operate, said Lisa Xue, director of Extended Education's International Programs, Asia. "We all learn more about each other's cultures and gain a greater understanding of how we can work better together."

For more information about Extended Education's International Programs, Asia, go to <http://www.csufextension.org/International/Asia.asp>.