

Hello Parents!

January was a month of rest for some students and for others, a time for winter studies or earning a few extra dollars for the spring. Some vacationed for pleasure and some made trips to serve others across the country or around the world through volunteer work. Traveling and studying abroad are also activities that have seen a growth in interest and in participation. As we find ourselves wrapped up in the tasks of February, and for students that means buckling down on their studies and continuing to learn the balancing act needed for the major components of their busy lives—academics, social functions and extracurricular activities—we take this opportunity to address the ever-growing topic of studying abroad and just how it can affect the lives of those that choose to experience it.

The impact of study abroad programs on both students and College Park Scholars is significant. Studying abroad affects the personal and academic growth of the individual student. When an individual travels to a place with a culture different from his or her own and becomes acquainted with new customs, that person has the chance to become closer to humanity. Any student can tell you that homework can be miserable at times, whether you are in the United States or Egypt. This initial academic opportunity can bring individuals closer to a sense of understanding the universality of human tradition while embracing the diversity of different cultures. The way that students diversify and inspire their communities when they return with new perspectives and life experiences works to further the popularity of “study abroad.”

Notes taken from the University Senate meeting on September 22, 2005 said, “President Mote stressed the importance of encouraging students to study abroad. Last year, about 1,200 students studied outside the United States, a 50% increase over the last five years. The goal is to facilitate an international experience for every student.”

As we can see, the trend is growing and continues to be an attractive and desirable activity for college students around the nation. According to the August 21-28, 2006 issue of *Newsweek*, “Over the past three decades the number of students leaving home each year to study abroad has grown at an annual rate of 3.9 percent, from 800,000 in 1975 to 2.5 million in 2004.” Richard Levin, president of Yale University and author of the article wrote, “The bottom line: the flow of students across national borders – students who are disproportionately likely to become leaders in their home countries – enable deeper mutual understanding, tolerance and global integration.”

As the spring semester of 2007 progresses, please continue to encourage your scholars to pursue what interests them and be mindful of the events geared toward studying abroad. From fairs at the Student Union to informational websites and listservs, there are myriad possibilities to become active with and informed regarding this topic.

Enjoy this month's newsletter, and please be in touch with any questions or concerns.

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

“Every student should have an international experience before graduation.” So stated President Dan Mote in his [Fall, 2006 campus welcome](#). Beyond the brick walls and white columns that originally attracted your sons and daughters to the College Park campus, are a multitude of opportunities -- not just down the road in the nation's Capitol, but across borders. Some of you bid ‘bon voyage’ to your son or daughter at the end of December as [American Cultures](#) escorted 35 students to Puebla, Mexico during this past Winter-term. Life Sciences also was on the [road to Belize](#). And every other year, Earth, Life and Time hosts a [trip to the Galapagos](#). Traditional [outcomes of study abroad](#) include acquisition of a foreign language, enhancing one's knowledge of the host culture, even transforming students' worldviews. For the next generation to be effective in tomorrow's workplace, these are essential outcomes to foster and promote.

You can imagine how frustrating it is for those of us in the Scholars office to travel vicariously semester after semester. I understand that for many parents -- primarily those of students who study abroad for an entire semester -- they find a way to share in their sons' and daughters' study-abroad experiences for a week or so. For them, those journeys have also been transformative as they experienced new cultures through the eyes of their children.

I encourage you to discuss with your son or daughter the possibility of studying abroad. Remind them that there is a [Study Abroad office](#) on campus. Advisors are there to assist them in identifying opportunities that fit the rhythm and demands of their academic curriculum. (Who knows, it might result in a shared memory for the entire family!)

[Dr. Greig Stewart](#)

Executive Director
College Park Scholars

American Cultures Trip to Mexico

College Park Scholars in American Cultures got a glimpse at a different country and at a different way of life as they explored various parts of Mexico over this winter break. As a way to fulfill their practicum requirement for the College Park Scholars program, a group of freshmen and sophomores visited Puebla, Mexico—a city approximately 50 miles southeast of Mexico City— from January 17 to 22, 2007, with an objective of examining things of cultural significance, according to Assistant Director of American Cultures Kevin Davis.

“I think everyone had a good experience and I think everyone was impressed with Puebla,” he said.

From the friendly nightlife to the abject poverty, visions of cultural behavior and social conditions ran the gamut. Days were spent exploring landmarks of the city, from a small art district to the Puebla Cathedral, completed in 1649, which lays claim to the tallest bell tower in all of Mexico (www.sacred-destinations.com). Students and faculty were given the chance to taste a delicacy of the region which was a candy treat made of sweet potato. The group spent its final day in Mexico City to wrap up their trip abroad.

Although the trip was not technically a formal “study abroad” experience, it still functioned as a means to learn, personally and globally. Students were asked to keep journals throughout the trip, which will be submitted at the end of the spring semester as work toward their three-credit practicum.

“I think that people had a very solid vision of where we would be staying...I think that was really turned upside down,” Davis said. According to Joe Duffy, sophomore American Cultures Scholar, besides exploring a different culture and seeing a place different from the U.S., there was a definite element of cohesion among the group, which formed during the trip. Together, they were able to learn together and come together not just as students, but as people. The note-worthy night life and the historical sites made for a journey that ended up serving more than a requirement. “It ended up being a lot of fun,” Duffy said.

Terrapin Pride Day

College Park Scholars was pleased to once again support the University's Terrapin Pride Day. This year's Terrapin Pride Day was held on Tuesday, February 20, 2007 in Annapolis, Maryland, where all kinds of Maryland supporters came out to show their pride for this great University. Highlights of the day included hearing from exciting speakers such as: Master of Ceremonies, Danita Nias, University of Maryland President Mote, Senate President Mike Miller, House Speaker Mike Busch,

women's basketball coach Brenda Frese, and SGA president, Emma Simson. The most important topic of the day was showing support for Governor O'Malley's proposed tuition freeze, which President Mote felt very confident about. Brenda Frese certainly had a lot to cheer about with her National Championship Women's Basketball Team, and her speech seemed to be a crowd favorite. All of the speakers had great things to say about the University of Maryland, and the speeches followed with an enthusiastic "Go Terps!" from the crowd. Legislators, alumni, faculty, parents, students, and friends of the University of Maryland were all there to "Cheer the Turtle" and it was once again a successful day for Maryland Terrapins!

Scholars Newsdesk (<http://www.scholars.umd.edu/news/>)

Catch up on students, faculty, and administrators connected with College Park Scholars, as their most recent press clippings can be found at our newsdesk online.

From all of us at College Park Scholars, thank you for your continued support of the program, and please [be in touch](#) with our faculty and staff if we can be supportive or respond to any questions or concerns.