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PAY IT FORWARD

Make a life-changing experience possible!

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ALUMNI & FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2016

UC Irvine receives UC Grant support for Underrepresented Students in Study Abroad

In an effort to make study abroad a more accessible part of every undergraduate's academic experience, the [University of California Education Abroad Program \(UCEAP\)](#) invited student support offices and academic departments across all UC campuses to submit grant proposals that would support underrepresented student cohorts to study abroad and address the various barriers they face in this endeavor. In August of 2015, 10 grants in the amount of \$5,000 each were awarded. Two of the proposals awarded came from UC Irvine: *Advance Parole Partnership for Anteaters* and *Black Internationalists*.

The *Advance Parole Partnership for Anteaters*, spearheaded by UC Irvine's Dreamers Coordinator Ana M. Barragan, will assist undocumented students who wish to study abroad. In the recent past it was impossible for undocumented students to study abroad, but now they can if they complete certain administrative processes required by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (including applying for Advance Parole). However, due to fear, financial limitations, and the lack of formal information, many undocumented students do not even seek out study abroad opportunities. The *Advance Parole Partnership for Anteaters* hopes to change this by establishing a collaborative partnership that includes information plus legal and financial support for undocumented students to study abroad. This partnership includes the UCI Study Abroad Center, the UCI School of Law, the Immigrant Rights Clinic, and the Law Firm of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, LLP.

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UC Irvine receives UC Grant support for Underrepresented Students in Study Abroad

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One important aspect of this partnership is that it includes scholarships to cover the administrative costs associated with completing the necessary processes for up ten undocumented students to study abroad. After this cohort of supported students successfully studies abroad, it is hoped that a snowball effect will result in which more undocumented students will feel confident about studying abroad in the future. We are pleased to see that already 11 undocumented students have initiated study abroad applications for 2016-17!

The Black Internationalists grant proposal, submitted by a cross-campus team including faculty, staff, and a graduate student, aims to support the enrollment and successful study abroad experience of African American and Black students in study abroad. The grant applicants point out that according to the Institute of International Education (IIE), Black or African American students made up only 5.3% of study abroad participants during the 2012-13 academic year, making them vastly underrepresented in study abroad. Important obstacles include the four ‘F’ barriers that keep them from participating in study abroad—finance, family, faculty (resistance), and fear. The grant team plans to develop a student organization that specifically addresses the need for African American and Black students to engage as global citizens. They hope to remove perceived and real barriers to studying abroad by offering workshops and seminars led by African American and Black UCI faculty/staff members who have international experience and also include Black and African-American students who have already studied abroad. The workshops will cover a variety of topics, including how best to discuss study abroad with family members in a way that invites support rather than resistance.

The cross-campus collaboration initiated between study abroad offices and other units on campus through these grants is truly inspiring. Furthermore, by investing in diverse communities to study abroad UC campuses and UCEAP are truly fostering a culture in which study abroad is expected and achievable for all students while simultaneously creating a “pay it forward” community of student leaders who seek to give back the same support they received. ■

Challenge Accepted: Studying abroad as an Engineering Major

By Emanuel Reyes, UCEAP Brazil Fall 2014 participant



Emanuel Reyes in Brazil

My name is Emanuel Reyes and I studied in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during the fall semester of my junior year. When I started thinking about studying abroad I was discussing it with my now roommate. We were both sophomore Engineering majors at the time, waiting for an engineering class to start. He said “Wow, a whole half a year without Emanuel?” The feeling of

being abroad that long felt as daunting as the question, but then he followed up with “but hey, you are going to go to the World Cup, right?!!” In the end, the excitement of traveling on my own and having the opportunity to experience things I wouldn’t be able to experience here in the United States overcame any kind of fear.

I went to Brazil without knowing any Portuguese, not even simple words like “hello” or “food,” which made the language barrier the greatest challenge. On top of this, I decided to take all my courses, even the Engineering ones, in Portuguese in order to really be fluent and challenge myself as much as possible. That being said, taking an engineering class at UCI is difficult enough as it is, so trying to understand it in a different language took it to a whole new level.

Now that I have returned, I work as a Peer Advisor at the Study Abroad Center in order to share my experiences with students who believe it is impossible to have a study abroad experience and to encourage them to study abroad in less popular destinations, such as [Brazil](#). Most students do not study abroad because they are convinced they will not be able to receive financial aid or fulfill degree requirements while abroad. I personally am proof that both are possible. I tell students that I was able to afford study abroad not only because I chose a more affordable location, but because of the scholarships I received, such as the [Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship](#) and the [UCI School of Engineering Travel Scholarship](#), which value diversity in study abroad, specifically sending first-generation college students and STEM majors, respectively.

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Challenge Accepted: Studying abroad as an Engineering Major

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I share with students that I was able to fulfill degree requirements abroad by finding a program that offered the engineering courses I needed like Fluid Mechanics. More importantly, however, I express that I was able to experience the benefits of studying my major in a different country with a different academic system and style. My classes at Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC) for instance had only 30-40 students in each class versus UCI's 200-300 lectures, making professors and TA's easily accessible and the opportunity for more "one-on-one" teaching possible. Here at UCI some classes offer labs, but for the most part PUC had labs for every core class being taught. For example, Fluid Mechanics at PUC included a lab, while I know UCI's equivalent only had a lecture.



As an engineering major coming back from studying abroad, I can now say I have allowed myself to become more independent and more competitive for the job market after graduation. Companies always look for potential graduates that can show that they have the ability to adapt to new environments and are able to work with people from different backgrounds, systems and views of the world. Having gone abroad and showing that on a resume makes an engineering major stand out from the crowd, since STEM majors are still underrepresented in study abroad. Whenever I go to interviews now, the person interviewing me begins the interview with asking me about the program and how I managed to take classes in a different language and I am able to explain to them how I did not know a word of Portuguese in the beginning—that I experienced school and daily life in Rio as a complete foreigner—but I overcame these challenges and in the end I returned to UCI with a stronger personality and professional view for what is to come in my engineering goals. ■

Alumni Spotlight on the Web - *You could be next!*

Each one shares fears and challenges as well as inspiring personal growth and career successes. We would love to have your story!

eee.uci.edu/survey/alumnispotlight

Not Afraid to Study Abroad

UC students reflect on study abroad after the attacks in Paris

"Going home was never an option for me. I had fallen in love with Paris —and I didn't want to flee it at the first sign of danger. If I did, it would feel like I'd missed the whole point of coming here in the first place."

- Kacey Mayeda,
Même Pas Peur



Shortly after the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, Parisians came to declare "*même pas peur!*" which translates in English to "not afraid." UC students who happened to be studying abroad in Paris during this time have shared a similar sentiment in their personalized accounts of the events that occurred. Many students shared that while it was tempting to get on a plane and return to the U.S. they felt it was just as important to stay in their new "home" and remain committed to experiencing the Paris they signed up for. Their adaptability, courage, and wisdom speaks for itself and is a testament to the importance of study abroad:

["Life in Paris, the Aftermath"](#) by Nicole Block, UC Irvine

["Même Pas Peur"](#) by Kacey Mayeda, UC Berkeley

["Paris Attacks Provide Opportunity to Focus on Global Community"](#) by Julia Raven, UCLA

["13 November 2015: Paris Attacks"](#) by Ani Chivchyan, UC Berkeley



Friends of Study Abroad Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to the following Friends of Study Abroad Scholarship recipients:



Taysheona Brodie, an Education and Psychology and Social Behavior double-major, is headed to the UK and France on the Global Cities/Urban Realities program this coming spring quarter 2016. As a first generation college student, Taysheona is thankful to have received this scholarship, as it has made her study abroad dreams possible. While on the program, Taysheona also intends to complete an internship in her intended field of Education. She hopes to tutor or assist low-income students.

Tamara Oueini, an International Studies major whose emphasis is Global Issues and Institutions in Africa, will benefit immensely by studying abroad in South Africa through UCEAP this spring. While attending the University of Cape Town, she hopes to take courses that cover topics such as community development, poverty and globalization, and the role that international organizations play in combating these issues. After graduating UCI she hopes to work for an NGO and implement what she's learned from her experiences abroad. ■



To date, all donations help support the Friends of Study Abroad Scholarship fund. Scholarships to individual students range from \$800 to \$1,500. As our scholarship resources increase we will be able to increase both the number of awards and the amount of individual awards.

Make a difference!
Give the world!

Support us in our mission to send 20% of a graduating class abroad by 2020!

Make your gift today at:

<http://www.studyabroad.uci.edu/contacts/support.shtml>