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# ALUMNI & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2015



## Study Abroad STEAMs Ahead at UCI!

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Globalization demands that today's workforce have cross-cultural competence and cutting-edge technical skills, which can easily be acquired abroad. However, according to the Open Doors survey, the U.S. sent less than 10% of its undergraduates abroad before they graduated in 2013. Recognizing the need to better prepare our students for the global economy, the Institute of International Education (IIE) created [Generation Study Abroad](#), a five-year initiative aimed at not only doubling the number of U.S. students studying abroad, but at increasing the diversity amongst those electing to participate. The hope is that study abroad will no longer be seen as extracurricular or for the elite, but as expected and achievable for everyone. To date, over 400 U.S. Colleges & Universities have joined the initiative, including UC Irvine.

UC Irvine's pledge to the Generation Study Abroad initiative is to have 20% of UCI students studying abroad prior to graduation by 2020. Currently, we send approximately 14% of a graduating class. So how will we reach our goal? For starters, we want to show that study abroad is not just for Humanities or Social Sciences majors, but for every major on campus.

*20% by 2020*

As such, with the partnership and financial support of six of our schools (*Claire Trevor School of the Arts, the Francisco J. Ayala School of Biological Sciences, the Donald Bren School of Information & Computer Sciences, the Henry Samueli School of Engineering, the School of Physical Sciences and the program in Public Health*) we applied for and received a Generation Study Abroad Grant that awards six students in the fields of STEM and the Arts study abroad scholarships in the amount of \$2,500 each.

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### PAY IT FORWARD

**Make a  
 life-changing  
 experience possible!**

See details on page 5...

## Study Abroad STEAMs Ahead at UCI

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Congratulations to the following Generation Study Abroad STEAM Scholarship recipients:



**ARTS:** **Keira Whitaker** (*Ireland: Irish Universities, Fall 2015*), a senior in dance performance, will spend this fall studying abroad at University College Cork. She intends to take coursework in both dance and English (*her minor*) and is eager to network and make connections in the dance world. She has already been in contact with the Cork City Ballet Company, and is planning on joining them for classes while abroad, which will better prepare her for a career in dance. Another career goal of Keira's is to open a non-profit organization that works with foster children, and she hopes to become involved with an orphanage project while there, providing her with service-learning experience. Upon return to UCI, Keira will hold meetings for fellow dance majors to show them that study abroad as a dance major is possible! Follow her story at: [kwsonshine.wordpress.com](http://kwsonshine.wordpress.com)

**BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES:** **Charlene Tran** (*Japan: Summer Lab Research, Engineering & Science Osaka University, Summer 2015*), a senior biological sciences major, has already been highly involved in research on-campus. Participating in a summer lab research program in Japan will allow her to expand on those skills in an international way. In addition, she hopes to build connections with Japanese faculty that will further her career. Charlene will share her experience with other biological science majors by creating a blog and attending orientations upon return that will highlight her experience and show biology majors that they can study abroad and graduate on time. Follow her story at:

[konnichiwarcharlene.wordpress.com/](http://konnichiwarcharlene.wordpress.com/)



**ENGINEERING:** **Vicki Au** (*Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, Fall 2015*), a sophomore currently undeclared in the School of Engineering, hopes her time abroad will help expose her to different aspects and avenues of the wide field of her major, and help her narrow down which area to focus on. As Hong Kong University is one of the top 3 universities in Asia, Vicki will have the benefit of truly receiving a top tier education. Through the wide array of courses provided, she will be able to not only take courses in her major, but fulfill many GE requirements as well. Vicki also plans to utilize this time to strengthen her Mandarin & Cantonese language skills, and hopes to be able to learn more about her heritage.

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## Study Abroad STEAMs Ahead at UCI

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**INFORMATION & COMPUTER SCIENCE:** **Nerissa Del Rosario** (*UK: English Univ. Fall 2015*), a junior in informatics, hopes to strengthen her academic and professional development while abroad in England by taking courses at the University of Manchester in her area of specialization - Organizations and Information Technology. More specifically, this program is a great fit for her because she will be able to take courses abroad in her major that are not offered here at UCI. As a student working towards becoming an IT Manager, this program and its courses complement her future goals perfectly.

**PHYSICAL SCIENCES:** **Adam Hanania** (*New Zealand Univ. Fall 2015*), a Physics major about to enter his junior year, will take courses at the University of Auckland related to his intended career in Astrophysics. This will benefit him professionally as he will have the opportunity to network with professors and researchers who can guide him on his professional path. Upon returning to UCI, Adam will promote study abroad by conducting presentations not only to his peers in the School of Physical Sciences but to organizations which share his passions, such as the "Society of Physics Students" club, in which he is currently an active member.



**PUBLIC HEALTH:** **Donna Lu** (*Thailand: Public Health in Bali Summer 2015*) is a 3rd year Public Health Policy major interested in community improvement through health development. She chose Thammasat University's Public Health program because of the opportunity to learn about health care challenges in a different community through hands-on experience. She plans to apply what she learns to her career goal of preventing health disparities at a community and global level. She hopes to capture the hands-on fieldwork she will be doing at the Thai-Myanmar border & then showcase it on her blog, so viewers can witness and understand the health care challenges of a border population.

Be on the look out in January 2016 for the next edition of our alumni newsletter as we hope to update you on these six students and their academic, cultural, and professional experiences abroad. Until then...Zot! Zot! Zot!



## Friends of Study Abroad Scholarship Acknowledgments



*"Scholarships definitely enabled me to study abroad. Without them studying abroad would have simply been an idea. As a low income, first-generation, minority college student money was my greatest concern and these scholarships definitely helped me see that anything is possible if one seeks help."*

**- Rosa Nunez,**

UCEAP Argentina Summer  
2014 participant &  
scholarship recipient

Each year UCI students are awarded more than \$250,000 dollars in scholarships!

**Friends of Study Abroad** is your contribution to our scholarship efforts. This year we proudly recognize the following recipients:

- **Perla Arevalo**, Korean Literature & Culture, UCEAP South Korea for the 2015-16 year
- **Vicki Au**, Engineering, UCEAP Hong Kong for fall 2015
- **Crystal Polard**, Psychology & Social Behavior, UCEAP Ghana for spring 2015
- **Efrain Vasquez**, Sociology, UCEAP Spain for the 2015-16 year

We are very grateful for the generous support of alumni and friends who donated during 2014-15:

### Individual Donors (alphabetically listed)

Patricia Ann Butler	Connie Ho	Megan Ostovarpour
Karen Ann Cagulada	John Horn	Neepa Parikh
Michelle Farisato	Stacy Huan	Melissa Sakamoto
Richard George Gall III	Michael Huynh	Arianne Schultheis

### Organizational Donors (alphabetically listed)

Academic Programs International (API)	Institute for the International Education of Students (IES)
ALBA Study Abroad	International Service Learning (ISL)
American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS)	International Studies Abroad (ISA)
Ben-Gurion University	KCP International
GMEO	UCEAP
Hellenic Society Paideia	

*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>

## Generation Study Abroad Ambassadors: A Pilot Year

Some study abroad participants return home, unpack, and file their study abroad memories away just like they would their photos. Others are eager to share their experiences, not just with family and friends, but with their peers. The latter often become volunteer ambassadors and play a vital role in our study abroad outreach. In alignment with the mission of [Generation Study Abroad](#), specifically to increase participation and diversity in study abroad (*see page 1*) UC Irvine established UCI's Generation Study Abroad Ambassador (GSAA) program. In particular the GSAA program aims to reach students early (such as freshman, high school students, & community college students) and to reach populations traditionally underrepresented in study abroad (i.e. first generation students, STEAM majors, etc.).

The role of GSA Ambassadors is to tell their own story—how they overcame obstacles in order to study abroad, what they did abroad, what they learned, how they grew and what they are doing now because of it—in order to paint a picture so that other students can imagine themselves in such an experience. In its pilot year, 2014-15, UCI recruited 14 ambassadors, who conducted a total of 84 presentations reaching just over 1,700 students. At the end of the year, all 14 ambassadors reported that they would recommend the opportunity to other study abroad returnees as they felt it improved their public speaking skills and helped them develop greater clarity on what they learned from studying abroad and how they can apply it to the future.



*Generation Study Abroad Ambassadors (from left: Christine Nguyen, Eleni Haloftis, Albert Chao, Linny Tran, Serena Porter & Justin Lui) pose for a photo at end of the year banquet, where they receive country stoles for graduation.*

One of our inaugural ambassadors, Antonio Esparza, shares why he chose to be a Generation Study Abroad Ambassador and what he gained from the experience on page 6.

## Paying it Forward: Encouraging Study Abroad Early

By Antonio Esparza



As someone who has loved the German language and the sights of Germany from a very young age, I decided I had to study abroad in Berlin, Germany during my time at UCI. I initially applied for the Pre-ILP + fall 2013 semester at Free University in Berlin, but I enjoyed the city and its people so much that I decided to extend to the full academic year. My time in Berlin, almost 14 months in total, was probably the most inspiring, exciting, adventurous, thought-provoking, and rewarding time of my life to date. Getting there, although not too challenging, had its tasks. For one, I did not take my courses in English with other Americans, but rather in German with other German and international students. Even with two years of university-level German under my belt, this was a huge step for me. However, what was most difficult, was moving to a different country by myself. Up until the time I studied abroad, I lived at home and commuted to UCI. It was, therefore, definitely a huge jump for me to go from living at home with my family to living by myself in Germany. I, however, mustered up the courage, which coupled with support from the Study Abroad Center and confidence in my German

language skills, was enough to gather the valor to help assuage the concerns of my parents and take the leap! It truly was a life-changing decision that I made and one that I am forever grateful that I did.

Once I returned, I was definitely trying to find my role again at home, but I knew that I also wanted to help the Study Abroad Center on campus so that more students could see how accessible and manageable studying abroad can be. So I decided to become a Generation Study Abroad Ambassador. Talking to fellow college students on campus and dispelling some of the myths that surround studying abroad was incredibly rewarding.

The most rewarding part, however, was speaking to the junior high students at the school where I studied ten years ago and speaking to the students there. Hearing their gasps and murmurs of excitement as I showed them my pictures and shared my stories with them just filled me with joy. They had so many questions and were so interested in studying abroad that I knew I had done my job. My job was to assuage the fears and correct the misconceptions surrounding studying abroad and to help increase the number of students who take the jump and decide to go.

*...story continues on page 7*

## Paying it Forward: Encouraging Study Abroad Early

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I tried to stress to them that studying abroad was not something that only a select few people can do, but rather that it is something everyone can do with careful and early planning. As they were exiting the room where I presented my story, many stopped in front of me, thanked me, and exclaimed that they too would study abroad one day. It truly warmed my heart at such display of eagerness and determination from such young people. My hope is that those great dreams of studying abroad will not fade and die, but rather drive them through high school and college and be fulfilled one day wherever they choose to attend and whatever foreign country they decide to study in.



*Antonio Esparza (pictured center) smiles for the camera with two of his fellow Generation Study Abroad Ambassadors, Rosa Nunez & Eleni Haloftis, during the GSA kick-off event held in fall quarter 2015 on UCI's Ring Road.*

### 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! Fill out the questionnaire at:

[eee.uci.edu/survey/alumnispotlight](http://eee.uci.edu/survey/alumnispotlight)

### Follow @uciabroad on Instagram!

Share your old study abroad photos on Thursday with #TBT  
(throwback Thursday) #UCIAbroad

