Jamaica Field Service Abroad Program Earns Service Learning (SL) Designation

The study abroad course, Jamaica Field Service Abroad (OVS 465), has been granted service learning designation at SUNY Potsdam. The course offers students an incredible opportunity to gain valuable and meaningful overseas service learning experiences.

Through this service learning program, Potsdam students volunteer across Jamaica, working in the local schools and communities in locations rarely visited by tourists. The program offers tutoring, music education, music therapy and community health services to the people of Jamaica, many of whom live well below the poverty line. Students who participate in this 3-credit hour course spend 10 days living and working in Jamaica, exploring the rich culture while serving the local community.

Potsdam music education student Jaclyn Lieto describes her experience in Jamaica as, “a life changing experience for me. I learned so much about teaching and how so little can change the lives of those less fortunate. This trip has inspired me to want to travel to more places and to help make the world a better place through teaching.”

The students who participate in the JAFS Program also carry donations of health supplies, school supplies, musical instruments, and other items which are used for their volunteer work in Jamaica then donated to the schools and local care centers.

This study abroad course offering is taught by JAFS Program Director, Eric Wills, who travels to Jamaica five times yearly to offer this course, not only to Potsdam...
students but other SUNY students as well. Says Wills, “It’s impossible to predict the impact that doing service abroad will have on a student. It can literally be a life changing experience…it’s a real win-win for everyone involved.”

Crane Music Education faculty member, Tracy Wanamaker, has joined the program in Jamaica and has this to say about the experience: “While in Jamaica, the students have the unique opportunity to learn about and experience the vibrant Jamaican culture while doing volunteer work that has a visible positive impact on the people.”

This international education course offering has become so popular with Potsdam students that a second, advanced section was recently added for those students wanting to continue their efforts in Jamaica. The advanced students pursuing OVS 466 Jamaica Field Service Internship serve as program interns assisting with the program’s work in the US and with the recruitment of future SUNY students to participate in the program.

Darlene Halstead, a recent SUNY Potsdam graduate, describes her time with the JAFS Program as, “one of the best experiences of my college education. I would highly recommend this course for anyone. They were so welcoming and appreciative of our work. It was such a motivating experience to share the culture with other people and make a positive difference in the lives of the Jamaican children.”

More than 100 SUNY students have successfully completed the course since the Memorandum of Understanding Agreement was signed between SUNY Potsdam and the Jamaica Field Service Abroad Program in late 2009 – 37 students participated in the 2011-2012 academic year alone!

This course offering is open to all qualifying students, will count for upper-division, liberal arts credit, and will now include the SL designator. Interested students should contact the Office of International Education & Programs to set up an appointment – 131 Sisson Hall or email: international@potsdam.edu

International Education Week – Upcoming Events

International Education Week
Week of November 12 – 16
The worldwide celebration of IEW offers a unique opportunity to develop a broader understanding of world cultures and language. The schedule of events is posted at our web site:
http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/international

Much of this year’s focus will be on assisting students with planning for a study abroad experience.

For faculty, we have planned an LTEC session on the application process for the Chancellor’s Award for Internationalization (CAFI). The competition consists of five (5) grants of $4,000 (contingent upon funding availability) each for the development and implementation of an innovative study abroad project to a less commonly traveled region of the world. The CAFI provides Please join us on Wed 11/14 at 12pm in the LTEC/Library Classroom.
Visiting Delegation from Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo

In late September, SUNY Potsdam welcomed a visiting delegation from our partner institution, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo – UAEH (Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo). Rector Humberto Veras Godoy, his spouse Mtra. Rolanda Hernández and Mtro. Rafael Cravioto Torres, Director of International Relations, spent three days in Potsdam meeting with various faculty and key administrators.

SUNY Potsdam signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Agreement for Student Exchange with UAEH during President Schwaller’s visit to Pachuca, Mexico, in March 2010. Since that time, Potsdam has received nine (9) exchange students from UAEH.

A highlight of their visit to Potsdam was the signing of an addendum to the current agreement that will allow us to explore ways to exchange at least one faculty member and one student per year in the areas of Biology, Chemistry, Education, the Fine Arts, Geology, Mathematics and Music. The signing ceremony took place at the Family Weekend Breakfast for Potsdam students and their family members. It was a vivid way to confirm our commitment to international activities.

While the formal exchange agreement with UAEH is still in its infancy, the activities of international cooperation and friendship between UAEH and SUNY Potsdam span much longer than that. As is the case with many international agreements in higher education, our formal relationship grew from the personal friendships and research collaborations between two faculty colleagues. Dr. Blair Madore of SUNY Potsdam and Dr. Ruben Martínez of UAEH were graduate students together at the University of Toronto, and after completion of their PhD programs, both gentlemen maintained their friendship and continually sought ways to ensure that a formal international collaboration could grow and flourish.

This is evidenced in the many collaborative activities that have taken place over the years between SUNY Potsdam and UAEH – everything from research between faculty in the area of mathematics, to informational and cultural visits of university administrators and faculty, to currently, the exchange of students and faculty.

Ultimately, we see this agreement as part of SUNY Potsdam’s larger commitment to the globalization of our curriculum and an extraordinary means to broaden the international experiences for our faculty, staff and students.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Yingying Xu graduated from Potsdam in May 2011 with an M.S.Ed. degree with a major in Information & Communication Technology and a concentration in OLP&T. Yingying says, “I believe my two years at Potsdam is perhaps the most important time in my life. This is the place where I first watched hockey games, attended classical music concerts, and explored the beauty of Adirondack mountains. It’s the place where I experienced the most intensive studies under the guidance of super-supportive professors. It’s the place where my knowledge of the world was tremendously enhanced by talking and working with people from all around the globe. It’s the place where I equipped myself for a better life and a greater future.” Yingying is currently employed with Thornton Tomasetti, a global engineering and architectural firm located in New York City.
Scholarships for International Students

**International Student Scholarship** – Graduate or undergraduate international students are eligible to apply for this award. The amount(s) awarded will depend on the number of qualified applications received. Deadline – March 1.

**Tonkin Edwards Scholarship** – Graduate or undergraduate international students are eligible to apply for this award as partial reimbursement for travel to the U.S. Applicants must be in their first year of study at SUNY Potsdam. Amount(s) awarded will vary from year to year and will depend on the number of qualified applications received. Deadline – March 1.

**The Fortunato M. Portugal Memorial Scholarship for International Students** – This award is in memory of Fortunato M. Portugal who immigrated to the United States in the 1970’s with his family to find a better life. Recipients must meet one of the following criteria (in priority order): Incoming, first year (undergraduate) international student; Business Administration major; Business Administration minor; Non-major, non-minor in Business. Deadline – Oct 15

Scholarships for Study Abroad

**Teacher Education Study Abroad Scholarship** – The recipient must be a SUNY Potsdam Education major, and first preference will be granted to an Education major who will complete student teaching abroad. Second preference will be given to an Education major studying abroad for at least a semester and third preference, to an Education major who is planning to study abroad for a Winterim or Summer Session. Financial need is not a requirement, but in the event that applicants carry similar GPA’s, the award will be granted to the student with higher financial need. There is one $1000 award per year. Deadline – April 1

**French & Spanish Majors** - The Department of Modern Languages offers scholarships for outstanding French and Spanish majors (3.5 GPA with financial need) to use for a semester in France or a Spanish speaking country. Contact the Department of Modern Languages.

**Music Majors: The Robert Washburn Fund** – The award shall be applied as support for a Crane student desiring to travel abroad for an international experience in music. The recipient will be chosen each spring for travel the following academic year. Contact the Crane School of Music.

**All Majors: John F. and Anne C. Schwaller Scholarship for Study Abroad** – The scholarship, $1,200 per fall & spring semesters, will be awarded to a student planning to study abroad (excluding Canada). Students must have attained sophomore or junior status at the time of the award. GPA of 3.00 and demonstrated financial need as determined by the Financial Aid Office are required. The scholarship may only be used within a recognized semester or yearlong academic program of study abroad or for independent research for academic credit within an academic program. Deadlines: April 1 for fall; November 15 for spring programs.

**All Majors: Judy Weise Scholarship for Study Abroad** – To be awarded to an eligible student planning to study abroad, excluding any country where the native spoken language is English (Canada - except for study in Quebec at a college or university where the primary language of instruction is French). Student must have a minimum GPA of 2.5 and demonstrated financial need. Scholarship must be used within a recognized academic program of study abroad or independent research for academic credit within an academic program. One $1000 award per academic year. Deadline – April 1.

**Jerry & Carolyn Zwaga Award for Study Abroad** – The scholarship will be awarded to a SUNY Potsdam student planning to study abroad as part of a short-term, faculty-led overseas program occurring during one of the following periods: Winterim, college break periods or the summer term. Students must have completed a minimum of two academic semesters at SUNY Potsdam and be in good academic standing (e.g. 2.0 GPA and above). Deadline – November 1.

**Additional external awards can be viewed at:** [http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/international/studyabroad/scholarships.cfm](http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/international/studyabroad/scholarships.cfm)