The Role and Function of the International Education & Programs Office – All Things International

I am often asked by faculty and staff to clarify the role of our office. The easiest answer is to simply reply: we are responsible for all things international. Well, almost all things international – the only area for which we do not have direct responsibility is the recruitment and admission of international students but we do work very closely with the staff of the undergraduate and graduate Admissions Offices. Think of our office as having responsibility or being involved (either directly or indirectly) in practically everything else on campus that has an international dimension. The International Education & Programs (IEP) Office is responsible for the administration of study abroad programs for Potsdam students wishing to spend part of their academic career abroad, serves as host to international students who come to study at SUNY Potsdam, and provides advice and assistance to students, faculty, and staff who are interested in an international dimension to their study, teaching, or research. We also assist departments with hosting international scholars or visitors who come to Potsdam for extended research stays, teaching or artistic performances. Our approaches to our work vary for the task at hand but one thing we do pride ourselves in is the individual attention that we give. This is evidenced in our one-to-one student advisement sessions and our regular meetings with faculty who are looking to internationalize their career through exchange periods overseas, Fulbright Scholar programs or by coordinating a short-term, faculty-led overseas course with students. So when you think ‘international’, think of the assistance that can be provided through our office. With that, I hope that you will enjoy reading this issue of our departmental newsletter and do not hesitate to contact us if we can assist with helping you internationalize your SUNY Potsdam experience.

- Krista LaVack, Director
Fulbright Scholar Information Session
Tuesday March 6
4:00 – 6:00 PM – Satterlee

The Fulbright Scholar Program for 2013-2014 is open. The program is offering teaching, research or a combination teaching/research awards in over 125 countries for the 2013-2014 academic year. There are awards in 45 specific academic disciplines as well as 167 awards open to all disciplines. Recent Fulbright participants, Kimberley Bouchard (Theatre & Dance), Derek Maus (English & Communication), Bill Herman (Psychology) and Eileen Raymond (Emeritus faculty, School of Education) will lead an informational session for interested faculty and staff. Light refreshments will be provided.

Advising Students for a Study Away Experience

We all know how beneficial a study abroad experience can be for a student – increased self-confidence and maturity, a more global view, more academic focus, an appreciation of one’s own culture and that of others, more certainty of career direction, acquisition of skill sets for a future career – and how such an individualized experience helps to fulfill the commitment of the hand-crafted education that SUNY Potsdam promises to deliver.

However, planning for such an adventure can be daunting and overwhelming for many students and their families. Other students cannot comprehend or will even consider studying in another country (or state). Here are some advising tips we hope you find useful:

➔ Ask the student as early as their first year if s/he has ever thought about studying in another city/state/country. It takes a great deal (12-18 months, ideal minimum) of academic and financial planning to ensure a successful study away experience.

➔ If a semester or year away will not work, always remind the student of summer, Winterim, and faculty-led short-term options.

➔ If the student balks at the idea of the traditional academic study away program, suggest s/he consider an overseas internship or service learning opportunity. If the thought of studying overseas is out of the question then perhaps your advisee is a perfect candidate for the National Student Exchange Program.

➔ Assist in narrowing down their options – where are the hubs (colleges and universities, cities, countries) of their academic interest? Where are your renowned colleagues teaching and/or conducting research?

➔ Support the student while s/he is away by responding to emails or phone calls as soon as they are received. Best laid plans can go awry quickly once the student arrives at the host institution, and often the student needs your academic advice immediately. In this day and age communication can still be difficult when trying to email/call across 3, 7 or 11 time zones.

➔ Upon return, some students struggle with processing what just happened to them over the last 2 weeks to 9 months and/or they may be struggling with re-entry (reverse culture shock). Serve as a catalyst by discussing what the student learned in and outside of the classroom while away and suggest ways to apply that newfound knowledge in his/her academic and personal life.

Please encourage your students to make an appointment with Bethany Parker-Goeke, Student Study Abroad Programs Coordinator, to discuss the planning process and their study away options. Bethany would also be very happy to be invited to your classroom to give a brief presentation, so please do not hesitate to contact her [goekeba@potsdam.edu, (315) 267-3150, Sisson 130] to make arrangements. Or visit our web site: http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/international/studyabroad/index.cfm
There are certain requirements international students must fulfill in order to maintain their F-1 student status. The main requirements include:

1. Maintaining full-time student status (12 credits for undergraduate, 9 for graduate) and making satisfactory progress toward his/her degree.

2. Keeping the Form I-20 valid by ensuring accurate program information and recent travel signatures.

3. Securing appropriate authorization before engaging in ANY SORT of off-campus employment, including unpaid internships and student teaching placements.

All of this must be documented, and for that, we look to you, as academic advisors, for verification that the information is true and accurate.

Here is an overview of the forms you might be asked to sign:

**Reduced Course Load (RCL):** If a student wants to take less than a full time course load due to medical or academic reasons or because the student is in his or her final semester and requires less than full-time enrollment to complete the degree.

**Extension of Study:** If a student will not complete the degree in the time allotted on his or her I-20, they must apply for an extension (and new I-20).

**Curricular Practical Training (CPT):** If there is an internship component to the degree or program, international students are required to obtain work authorization.

**Optional Practical Training (OPT):** F-1 students are eligible to apply for 12 months of work authorization after completion of a degree. For this, we ask advisors for verification the student will graduate and seek employment in their field of study.

If you ever have a question regarding any form an international student brings to you, please don’t hesitate to contact us: international@potsdam.edu

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**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

**SUPRABHA BANIYA**

Suprabha came to SUNY Potsdam from Nepal in the fall of 2008. As a combined B.A./M.A. student with a double major in Mathematics and Economics, and a minor in Physics, Suprabha will complete her degree requirements in just 4 years.

In addition to her studies, she is involved in Omicron Delta Epsilon, *The Raquette*, Potsdam International Organization, and Potsdam Institute for Applied Research. She is a Resident Assistant and served as an Orientation Leader last summer. Ms. Baniya is a member of Association for Women in Mathematics and the American Mathematical Society.

She has received multiple awards, including the M.A.A.E.M. award, Clarence F. Stephens Mathematics Scholar, International Student Scholarship, Thomas Jones-Travano Memorial award for Economics, and the John Rezelman Economics Award. She has also presented research and co-authored publications.

When asked why she chose SUNY Potsdam, she replied “mainly because of its excellent BA/MA Math program. First, the program itself is very rare in the U.S., and secondly, Potsdam’s method of teaching Mathematics is widely recognized.”

After graduation, she plans to attend graduate school to pursue a PhD in Economics.
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

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 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 – Nov 1.

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 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 applicants who 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), 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 year-long 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). 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 and 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 our web site: http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/international/studyabroad/scholarships.cfm

The 2011-2012 recipients of the Fortunato M. Portugal Memorial Scholarship for International Students took the opportunity to meet and thank their benefactor in person this February when they joined him for lunch on campus at Becky’s Place. Dr. Ed Portugal, along with his wife, Susan, established the scholarship in memory of his father. Pictured with Dr. Portugal are Veronica Lavia (Italy), Maya Mitsuyasu (Japan) and Shekinael Ngole (Ivory Coast).