A Journey through Jordan and Thailand
By Anna Killmeier

After singing with Bedouin in the deserts of Jordan as they play their magical oud or making a bamboo raft to travel down rivers in northern Thailand, no words can adequately express the impact my two study abroad programs had on me.

I have always had a desire to learn about people and cultures around the world, which is why I chose to study anthropology at UWG. I knew that anthropology majors were required to complete a field school in the U.S. or abroad in order to graduate. Therefore, I decided to participate in bioarchaeology field school in Petra, Jordan in the summer of 2012 through another university.

During this six-week program, we excavated Nabataean shaft tombs and domestic structures from as early as the first century C.E. However, living among modern Bedouin in Jordan, eating their food, learning their customs, and developing lifelong friendships caused my passion to shift from the lives of ancient civilizations to the people and cultures of today. I immediately started looking for more study abroad opportunities when I came back to the States.

This past summer, I completed ethnographic field school in Thailand, a program that taught us how to travel independently, study culture, and write about it—a task easier said than done. Between riding elephants, eating scorpions, attending political protests, and experiencing nightlife in Bangkok, one could say I had my fair share of adventures. Did I mention hearing a Thai band cover Sweet Home Alabama? However, this field school was about so much more than just having fun and exploring the country. What we were really doing was engaging in participant observation, a field method used to understand culture.

Study Abroad Photo Contest Winners Named

The Office of International Services and Programs (ISP) hosted its first annual Study Abroad Photo Contest awards ceremony September 10, on the first floor of Ingram library.

Students were awarded in four categories: Selfies Abroad, Postcard, Everyday Life, and Off the Beaten Path. The photos shown are the top winners in each category.

For a complete listing of this year’s winners, see page 4.
Learning how to temporarily put my own customs and worldview aside in order to understand Thai culture was incredibly challenging, but what I gained from that exercise was the expansion of my own worldview, a greater appreciation for cultural diversity, and a sense of responsibility to the world as a global citizen. What’s more, my studies in anthropology became real to me for the first time as I was able to apply what I had learned at UWG over the past four years.

I can assure you, no matter what you have chosen as your major, studying abroad will give so much more meaning to the degree you are pursuing at UWG. You will find that what you learn here can make a global impact. Studying abroad was the best decision I made during my undergraduate career, and I encourage you all to do the same. No matter where you go, no matter what you are studying, just do it!

Many of you think that studying abroad is out of your budget. Check with your major department and other funding sources. I would especially like to thank the Anthropology Department and the International Services & Programs Department for providing funding that made studying abroad possible for me.

UWG REPS VISIT CHINA
Select West Georgia faculty travel to China to further educational partnerships

UWG has two new partners in China, a development that gives the university the ability to expand international operations in several new academic areas. On a two week visit that started in the Three Gorges region in central China and finished in the northern lake area of Hebei province, UWG representatives met with faculty, administrators and students to forge institutional relationships and establish the basis for academic cooperation. Led by Dr. Maria Doyle of the International Services and Programs Office, the UWG team formalized relationships with Southwest University in the Beibei district of Chongqing and Hengshui University in Hengshui. According to Dr. Doyle, “these partnerships not only open up new opportunities to bring international students to our campus, but they also provide us with strong prospects for developing collaborative research and enabling faculty exchange.”

The partnership with Southwest University promises to increase understanding of educational practices and theories from a cross-cultural perspective: according to Dr. Dianne Hoff, Dean of the College of Education, “As our world becomes more connected, it is essential that educators gain a better understanding of the complex cultural and economic links between people and the impact these are having on education and on the children they are preparing for the future.” To further that end Dr. Doyle and College of Education professor Dr. Li Cao met with representatives from SWU’s Faculty of Education to discuss a program of student exchange that would bring Chinese students to the UWG campus to study U.S. educational practices. It would also create the opportunity for UWG students to spend time in China learning about this different educational system. The visit to Southwest also included discussions about research with faculty in both education and psychology.

At Hengshui University, Dr. Doyle and Dr. Fengrong Wei of the College of Science and Math met with representatives from the International Office and the Department of Mathematics to
discuss ways to recruit talented Hengshui students for UWG’s master’s program in Mathematics. Dr. Farooq Khan, Dean of the COSM, asserts that developing such international projects is very important for “a new college in a growing university” and the Department of Mathematics, “which is home to outstanding teacher-scholars, is well poised to initiate and promote such endeavors.” Adds Dr. Bruce Landman, Chair of the Math Department, “The department has already built international connections in terms of its scholarly activities, and we see this new program as a significant first step toward building such alliances in our teaching activities.” Hengshui also offers the opportunity for research partnerships and the exchange of language faculty. Memoranda of Understanding with both institutions were signed by UWG President Dr. Kyle Marrero and Dean Mike Hester of the Honors College, which oversees International Services and Programs. These memoranda establish the basis for discussion of specific projects that are now in development. With the addition of these partnerships, UWG now has four partner universities in China. The other two are Zhongnan University of Economics and Law in Wuhan and Shanghai University of International Business and Economics.

Global Fun Fact #1
With a mere four people per square mile, Mongolia is the least densely populated country on Earth.

WELCOME WEEK 2013
Campus and community events welcome International Students in a big way

This fall, the University of West Georgia welcomed nearly one hundred new international students onto campus. From Sri Lanka to Sweden, these students have journeyed across the globe to embark on their educational adventure at UWG. Their arrival boosts the number of countries represented on our campus to over sixty-five. In addition to enriching their own lives with the experience of studying abroad, international students also bring a diversity and perspective to our campus that is integral to helping fellow students understand the culture and dynamics of a broader world.

As part of welcome week, The Office of International Services and Programs (ISP) hosted several events to help acquaint these students with campus, the city of Carrollton, and with one another. A catered luncheon was held in the Z6 building and the international students were given a warm welcome from former UWG President Emeritus Dr. Sethna. Dr. Sethna emphasized the importance of each student immersing themselves into their new surroundings and connecting with their classmates, while still preserving that which makes them unique. Throw yourself into the mix, Dr. Sethna’s message urged, but do so without becoming homogenous, because it is our differences which add texture and interest to our campus. Other speakers applauded the group’s collective bravery in choosing to venture overseas to pursue their degrees. Dr. Hester, Dean of the Honor’s College, wrapped up the luncheon with an open invitation to Thanksgiving dinner with his family for any international students lacking in holiday plans.

The Carrollton Civic Women’s Club also welcomed the international students into our community with their annual International Student Dinner and Free Yard Sale at the Ag Center. A tradition for the past 35 years, the women prepare an amazing spread of summer picnic
food, including southern staples such as watermelon, potato salad, and fried chicken. The new UWG President, Dr. Marrero, stopped by to introduce himself to the students, and a few members of the women’s group were able to greet the crowd in Mandarin, Spanish, and French.

Gallery Row provided beverages and presented each student with a gift card, encouraging them to stop by their shop on the square for a latte or cup of tea. After dessert, the students were given a chance to “shop” for living essentials (towels, kitchen utensils, school supplies, small appliances, etc.) which had been generously donated by members of the Women’s Club. This gave students the opportunity to stock up on all sorts of necessities for the upcoming semester without having to spend a dime.

For many of the students, coming to UWG is also the first time they have traveled to the states. No doubt this makes the experience all the more overwhelming, and adjusting to life on campus will take time. But having an incredibly supportive collection of faculty, staff, student groups, and community organizations to help greet and guide the group through their first week here helps tremendously. Thank you to everyone who makes our university an inviting and exciting new place for these students to call home. – J.C.

PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS
Participants in last year’s study abroad programs receive photography awards

“Off the Beaten Path”
Winner: Wei-Chu Hsiao
Runner Up: Kristin Cone
Honorable Mention: Akila Roberts

“Everyday Life”
Winner: Amanda Dennis
Runner Up: Victoria Williams
Honorable Mention: Madison DeFilippis

“Postcard”
Winner: Amanda Dennis
Runner Up: Victoria Williams
Honorable Mention: Kristin Cone

“Selfies Abroad”
Winner: Savannah Hash
Runner Up: Ekeoma Susan Nwakanma
Honorable Mention: Jenna Jeffryes

“Wolves Around the World” Special Recognition:
Shaunna Chamlee

Best in Show: Savannah Hash
ISC SPOTLIGHT

Words of Welcome from this year’s International Student Club President

Hello Everyone,

My name is Carlos Harry and I am the president of the International Student Club of the University of West Georgia. I am originally from St. Thomas, Jamaica and at the age of ten my parents and I relocated to the United States. Even at a young age, I have always had a fascination with cultures and people from different cultures. As the president of this organization I have the honor of meeting and forming bonds with people from all over the world.

The amazing thing about our club is that it gives you a chance to travel around the world without ever leaving Carrollton. During this mental exploration you will have a chance to see a connection you may have never noticed before; a connection that links us as human beings, and exposes the flaws and strengths, personalities and passion we share. This connection goes beyond languages, countries, politics, religion or race. The members of our club also form bonds and friendships that can be stretched across the world which gives them the amazing opportunity to open minds and experience something truly incredible. Come and join our club; this is a life changing experience you cannot afford to miss.

FALL STUDY ABROAD FAIR

Students learn more about International Program Opportunities

UWG’s annual Study Abroad Fair was held on Wednesday, October 9, in the TLC atrium. Faculty and student representatives from various university departments were available to discuss the many different program possibilities. Hundreds of curious students stopped by between classes, eager to find out more information on all aspects of study abroad.

Staff members from the Office of International Service and Programs (ISP) fielded general study abroad questions regarding available destinations, scholarship opportunities, semester-exchange programs, and details of the application process. For program specific inquiries, students were directed to individual program booths, where faculty coordinators could respond to questions about course offerings, accommodations, and program excursions. Representatives from the Financial Aid office were also on hand to explain the ways in which student grants and refunds can be used to help defray tuition and other out-of-pocket costs associated with study abroad.

Students seemed most surprised to learn of the many study abroad options were available to students who were not interested in studying a specific language as part of their overseas experience. While UWG does offer several popular summer programs through the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures—including trips to Heredia, Costa Rica; Oldenburg, Germany; and

Global Fun Fact #2

Papua New Guinea leads the world as the country with the highest number of spoken languages—over 820!
Tours France -- there are also plenty of programs with options geared at other areas of study. Nursing students might travel to Budapest for a full month of hands-on experience in Hungarian hospitals. English majors can cultivate their creative writing skills in the ancient city of Spoleto, Italy. Students interested in art have the option of traveling throughout France with a stop-over in London while earning course credit in a variety of disciplines. And for students who have yet to declare a major, or for those pursuing degrees in other departments, West Georgia’s partnership with the European Council enables students to select from an assortment of both lower and upper division courses in a range of academic areas while studying in one of several splendid cities sprinkled throughout Europe.

Studying abroad through UWG is made possible by the collaborative efforts of faculty and staff across many departments. Student interest is also a driving force in the implementation of new program locations and course options. In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, experiencing life abroad has become an integral part of higher education. Study Abroad opportunities abound at West Georgia, and ISP is happy to help students pick a program that both excites and educates, without blowing the budget. –J.C.

**MARK YOUR CALENDERS!**

February 6 is *International Night!*

Don’t miss West Georgia’s biggest cultural celebration. This is your chance to enjoy all kinds of entertainment and culinary delights from around the world without ever leaving campus. Tickets will be available for purchase at the International Programs Office, Row Hall 229 beginning in January.

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**UWG’S INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT A GLANCE**

- This fall, the University of West Georgia welcomed 83 new international students onto campus
- Currently UWG’s student body has representatives from more than 65 countries
- UWG has international students from China, Vietnam, Kenya, India, Colombia, Sri Lanka, The Ivory Coast, Pakistan, Nigeria, Australia, Azerbaijan, France, Iran, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Ecuador, Syria, Finland, Nepal, Norway, and Spain...just to name a few.

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Find out more about study abroad at our new website: 
http://studyabroad.westga.edu

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International Services and Programs
Row Hall 229, West Wing  678-839-4780  
http://www.westga.edu/isp

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Newsletter Design: Jessie Crews