

Global Initiatives

International Education Center Newsletter



January 2012

2011 Summer Study Abroad was a huge success!

This last summer, Savannah State University sent more than 20 students abroad to China, Trinidad and Tobago and Costa Rica. The students had opportunities to study in a foreign university, experience new cultures, and made friendships that will last a lifetime. We tried something new this year which was a blog that sought to chronicle the experiences of each of the groups. You can still see their pictures and commentary on the web at www.ssuabroad.tumblr.com.

Study Abroad in China

Rose M. Metts, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of English



2011 garnered more students—thus more travel—than China 2010. The advantage of the second trip came in the form of renewing relations with the professors met in the former visit to Shanghai and knowledge of the best place to stay in Beijing. New friends were also established as the nine SSU students, the “China Delegation,” as the group from Savannah strolled around the campus and met friendly Chinese citizens. With SNU tour guides, the SSU students visited several places that demonstrated that region’s history--Shanghai Museum and Temple Market--as well as those which pointed to China’s modernity, the Bund, a spectacular skyline of uniquely shaped buildings. The Urban Planning Center tied the two themes together as it chronicled Shanghai’s development into an urban marvel with its many exhibits, including a model of the entire city which filled a large room. Besides eating the “real thing” in Chinese food, the SSU group enjoyed a cultural exchange with ten Chinese college students, led by Professor Xiaohong Lu. She was among the three Chinese professors who also presented lectures to the SSU students.

The group traveled by high-speed train to Beijing and visited famous historic sites: the Forbidden City, Summer Palace, and of course, the Great Wall! Alas, the time to depart arrived and the SSU group awaited their return to home. But they left a gift, the summer blog that expresses their new insights,

enjoyment and thoughtfulness. They look forward to encouraging more students to benefit from a global experience!

Study Abroad in Costa Rica

Professor Irena Tedrick



This study abroad trip was conducted from July 3-July 30 in the city of Grecia, near San Jose. The host school was Academia Centroamericana de Español. The students had an opportunity to earn up to six credit hours transferable to any school in the University System of Georgia. Instruction was organized in a small class setting with maximum of 4 students per class. There were many activities that students could participate in to enrich their knowledge of culture, language and history of Latin America. To mention some: a visit to the center of San Jose, visit to Doka Coffee Plantation, dance studio etc. Costa Rica is the land of outdoor activities such as horseback riding, parasailing, zip lining, white river rafting, hiking etc. The trip was an amazing experience for all.

Here's what some students had to say about their experiences abroad:

Rhecia Goodley of SSU

This experience is one that I will never forget because it was my first adventure out of the country and I learned so much about the culture, language, and myself. I enjoyed myself immensely throughout this trip and as I stated before, Costa Ricans are people, just like North Americans. The language is the main difference. As our last days approached, I set into the realization that this learning experience was coming to an end. Once this realization hit me, I had to take everything I learned to that point and apply it 100%. I had to completely submerge myself in the culture by becoming more interactive with Ticos and their night life because I found it easier to learn from them in a more comfortable situation that wasn't so structured. The language isn't so hard. I now realize that in Costa Rica, it is much easier because they primarily use yo, el/ella/usted, nosotros, y ellos/ellas/ustedes. For conjugation of verbs, that made it a little easier for me. Also, another good tip someone informed me of was the use of I need, I can, and I want (Necesito, puedo, y quiero). That tip helped me a lot in learning the language. I am now very excited about becoming bilingual and am now ready to enter into another Spanish class to continue practicing.

Jessica Weimerskirk (SSU)

I am finishing up my last few days in Costa Rica and getting ready to head back to the United States. It has been a long educational and eventful month. I feel as if I have learned a lot more Spanish since I have been here in Costa Rica. I have also learned a lot about the people and culture of Costa Rica.

Completing my classes in Costa Rica was not as easy as it seemed. We had to take four hours of Spanish from 8am-12am every day. However, those four hours each day were extremely beneficial for me. The ACCE School was a great choice. The classrooms there are set up with four students and a

professor for each class, four students being the maximum. I liked this form because it gave enough time for each student to speak with other students or the professor.

I have also become accustomed to the natives in Costa Rica and their morals. By living with a Costa Rican family, I feel as if I received the full experience. My family was really nice and caring. They talked to me every night about my day and what I learned in school. They would also tell me about their day. I also talked to people in the city. Grecia is a really safe city. I learned that the Costa Ricans call everybody Usted which is somewhat the equivalent to madam or sir in English. They even call babies usted. They are very polite and respectful people.

In addition to what I learned about Costa Ricans, I learned about the culture in Costa Rica. I basically learned the do's and the do not's of their culture. They are very family oriented. They always eat dinner at the table as a family and share stories about their day. Some of the families actually still live with their parents and grandparents. It is common for the family to live together even after they have formed their own families as opposed to the United States where their children move out when they are 18-23 years old. When visiting restaurants in Costa Rica, it is not proper to drink a soda or a beer straight from the can/bottle. It is always proper to pour it in a glass with ice, even the beer.

This trip was extremely beneficial and worth going on. I have already made plans to return to Costa Rica and visit my adoptive family. I would recommend this study abroad trip to everyone interested. It was the best money I think I ever spent. I have to say that once one travels to a foreign country for a month, their perspective on life alters slightly. One will not view the world as they did before traveling to another country.

GLOBAL TIGERS

By Nakia Stephens

A new organization has been approved by the office of Student Life and The Director of Student Affairs! **SSU Global Tigers** is on the Rise! This organization was created by 6 students who studied abroad through the Savannah State University Study Abroad Program in Beijing and Shanghai, China in the summer of 2011. The purpose of this organization is to encourage the students of Savannah State University to pursue an international education by way of shared experiences, seminars, presentations, events, etc. This organization will strive to assist in raising funds and grants for the students enrolled in Savannah State University's Study Abroad Program, who wish to experience international education. Our intent and purpose is to have a more successful International Program and one of our outcomes is to increase enrollment in study abroad programs. "We are Excited to get started!" says Nakia Stephens founding president of Global Tigers, "I just want everyone to have an equal opportunity to experience the world!"

Let's Make Every Tiger, A Global Tiger!

2012 Study Abroad Plans



Recruitment is underway for the upcoming summer study abroad trips. For 2012 we have trips planned for China, Costa Rica, Trinidad & Tobago, Canada, Brazil and Ghana. A Study Abroad and Passport Fair was held in October in the King Frazier Student Center and hundreds of students stopped by to learn more about each of these adventures. The professors selected to lead these trips have lists full of interested students. A study abroad fair was held in October and hundreds of students had an opportunity to meet the professors that will be hosting study abroad trips this summer. We tried something new this year and invited a representative from the US Post Office to set up a table to share information and answer questions about getting a passport. Hundreds of passport applications we given out that day and hopefully just as many students will fill them out and get a passport!

SSU Students Spend a Semester at Jiujiang University in China



August was an exciting time at Savannah State we were proud to be sending our first group of students to Jiujiang University to spend a semester abroad. Janine Dawkins, Chad Mignott and Stasheia Durham were selected to represent Savannah State at Jiujiang. When they arrived in China they were immediately placed in Chinese language classes where they learned enough of the language to use city transportation to get to and from area shops and were able interact with the store keepers to buy groceries. Luckily, their classes were taught in English so their major courses went fairly smoothly. They each said the experience was certainly memorable and life changing. They all came back a little skinnier too! Seems the food choices in China aren't as high calorie as we have become accustomed to in the U.S. Janine and Stasheia will be returning to China in February for one final semester of study. We will begin recruiting soon to send up to 5 more students to China in August.

Chinese Exchange Students



We were honored this fall to have 4 students from Jiujiang University travel to SSU to spend a semester on our campus. You probably saw them at the various campus activities or travelling to and from their classes. They jumped in to classroom and campus life without hesitation and were determined to experience all they could during their time with us.

Lina Du

It was really a wonderful experience to study in Savannah State University. My first impression of the campus was that it was clean and quite. I love the Spanish moss, the flat but beautiful buildings and the friendly people. I felt so lucky being an exchange student because people who work here and students on campus have been really nice to me. It was a wonderful experience that I had classes by some great professors with American students. I have had the chance get to know how the American education system works and I enjoyed myself the whole semester. Besides, as an English major I learned a lot about English and it will help me for my future study. It seems to me this semester was like a special vacation that allowed me to experience a different life and culture. Thanks to Savannah State University, and International Education Office you did a great job of taking care of me and all international students!

Gui Jia

After staying on campus for some days, I found a lot of differences between my college in China and here. The first difference is the food. In Jiujiang University, we do not have buffet like here in King Frazier. All of our dining rooms sell foods like the one in New Student Union. I really like the food in King Frazier, because it offers different varieties of foods every day, my favorite foods are desserts and pizzas! It's special to me, because we do not have these foods in my school; we usually have rice, noodles and some dishes which American people never have. The second difference is about studying. In my school, we usually have forty students in a class, but here it is smaller, and the students here are more active and talkative in class. I also appreciate the close relationship between professors and students, but the homework is not that easy, because most of my homework was response essays and research papers. It was a good way to improve my writing skill here, because in my school I seldom write this kind of essays and papers. The third difference is about the after-class activities. I found here there are many kinds of parties and special activities, and people usually dress special for these events. They play loud music and dance very crazy, but in my school we do not have parties, we have many activities, but they are usually not as crazy as here! I think this is because of different kinds of cultures.

I cannot believe I'm leaving here next week, because I just got used to everything here and really want to have more experiences here...if I get a chance one day in the future, I will come back and visit all the people who helped us before, because they are really kind and friendly to me. I will never forget all the beautiful faces and kind hearts, and I will miss you--Savannah State University, a precious memory in my mind.

Savannah State Hosts the 15th Annual Southeast Model African Union Conference



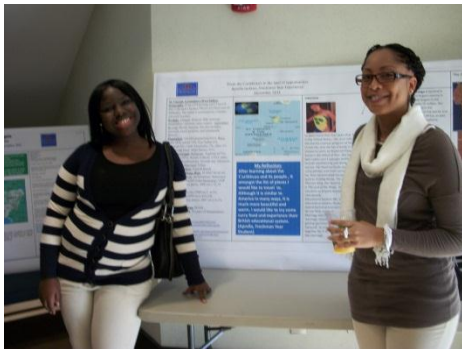
October was a busy month in the International Education Center as we frantically prepared to play host to SEMAU. We were thrilled to have brought more than 200 students and professors from colleges and universities across the state to our campus. Girma Birru the Ambassador of Ethiopia to the United States was our keynote speaker and his insights and wisdom into what is happening in Africa set the tone for several days of lively debate and discussions and students and advisors tackled issues and problems

facing Africa today. It was not all about business though, as evening fell the group was off to an evening of fun on the Riverboat Queen where everyone enjoyed the music of Cameroonian musician Goddy Shake.

The American Council on Education's Project

Savannah State University is one of the 7 HBCUs selected to participate in the American Council on Education's project. This project is about internationalizing the campus community in order to help students become global citizens. An international task committee was created last year to assess the current level of internationalization at SSU before making recommendations that would become part of the university's strategic plan. To date, the internationalization committee, co-chaired by Professor Irina Tedrick and Ms. Joline Keevy, has collected data from the various units of the university to review their current policies as they relate to international matters. The role of the committee is to assess the extent to which these various units promote or hinder an internationally friendly environment on campus. The assessment committee, co-chaired by Dr. Michael Crow and Dr. Irma Gibson, has conducted a survey on graduating students. In addition, Dr. Gibson made a trip to Trinidad and Tobago last summer to review the internationalization process at the University of West Indies. The purpose of the trip was to examine how we can learn from the University of West Indies. Dr. Naniuzeyi and Professor Clay, co-chairs of the international tasks force, will draft a preliminary report to be submitted to the University. A final report will be submitted by June 2012 with concrete recommendations to be included in the strategic plan of the university. The main objective is to make Savannah State University an internationalized institution of higher learning.

Freshman Year Experience Course explores the diversity of our campus.



Dr. Jindani's Freshman Year Experience course tried something new this semester. Each student in the class was matched with an international student. The assignment required the students to interview an international student and learn about the similarities and differences that exist between cultures and put together a display board that hi-lighted what they learned through interviews and research about their student and his or her home country. After all their hard work they set up a display in the Social Science building atrium and each student facilitated a discussion on their country and the student they interviewed. The students did an outstanding job and their efforts were reflected in their presentation and displays. What a fantastic way to learn about the many countries that are represented on our campus and these students will not likely ever be afraid to ask questions about and have a better appreciation for cultures that are different than their own.

National Model African Union

Seven Model United Nations students will represent Savannah State University in the National Model African Union to be held at Howard University in Washington, DC. from February 23 to February 26, 2012. These students will play the role of Ambassadors representing the country of Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. The Model African Union is an educational activity designed to simulate the proceedings of the African Union. Student-delegates debate issues affecting African countries and, through debates and negotiations, reach compromises in the form of resolutions. These resolutions will be sent to the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Fulbright Scholar In Residence



We welcomed Dr. Dze-Ngwa a Fulbright Scholar from Cameroon to our campus in August. Dr. Dze-Ngwa will be teaching classes, hosting lectures and playing an instrumental part in the internationalization of our campus. Dr. Dze-Ngwa hit the ground running teaching classes and getting to know his way around campus. He shared his thoughts with us about his experiences so far.

Dr. Willibroad Dze-Ngwa, Republic of Cameroon writes:

Permit me to take this golden opportunity to thank the great US Government for granting me the Fulbright Award. In March, 2011 I received a call from the US Embassy in my country Cameroon about the William Fulbright Award, I felt elated and began to wonder how will “Fulbright” empower me to achieve my most cherished desire: providing education for peace and for life? Savannah State University is my host university. I had a mission to, among other things, lecture in “African Government”, “African Politics” and “Global Issues” in the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs. I was also commissioned to develop a curriculum on International Studies, while learning about the culture of the US and talk about myself and my country to the community and hopefully establish some lasting relationships.

For the past four months my schedule has been very hectic and my experience has been very enriching. From the very first day I arrived Savannah, I was received with very warm consideration, and just everybody, from the students, the faculty and the entire community has been making me feel at home, although far from home! At the close of the first semester, I have successfully handled three courses. The students have been very interesting! Like students everywhere, some are very serious while others are just opposite. However, I set as my goal to measure my teaching strength and effectiveness by radically transforming and improving the position of the weakest students in class. The students took the discussions and debates on topical global and African issues very seriously and some would wish to have me as their teacher for a long time, or at least for the next semester.

As one of my missions, I have also developed a curriculum for a new Major in International Studies in Savannah State University. The rationale for such a program is to internationalize Savannah State University in order to provide her students with more practical, interdisciplinary and broad-based education experiences which will enable them to think and act better in facing global challenges.

Apart from the University, I have been sharing some experiences with the Savannah community. I am involved in the “Step-Up Savannah” program which trains community leaders. With other members of the community we are mapping out strategies that encourage quality education and reduce crime in the city of Savannah and this is being done through research, education and re-education. I attended the conference on education with the theme “Race, Gender, Discipline and Justice: Students Locked Out of a Quality Education.” I have been guest to Honorable Otis Johnson, outgoing Mayor of the City of Savannah and have also been guest to the Savannah State Radio where I was interviewed about my activities. I have presented two papers on campus entitled, “Superpower Influence and the Dynamics of Competitive Politics in Africa: the Case of Cameroon, 1990 – 2011” and “Quality Education for Life”, being a highly attended inspirational talk.

The Fulbright program gave me another award: the **Fulbright Occasional Lecture Award**, which took me to ITHACA University, New York. This was a wonderful opportunity to meet and share with the students, faculty and College authorities of another University. Initially programmed for two presentations, I ended up doing seven! I was glad to meet with students of ITHACA College and happily accepted their proposals to be one of the editors of their journal entitled, “Chalk Board”. The Department of Education at Ithaca University was glad to receive and share in my dreams of searching global citizenship through the introduction of peace education in schools and colleges; and introducing aspects of peace education in just all subject areas At Ithaca, I came face to face with snow for the first time, another wonderful experience.

Last but not least, were the great lessons I got from the “Model African Union Conference” hosted by Savannah State University, to simulate the African Union. It was attended by faculty and students from several universities from around the State of Georgia. I found students from all races, adopting, representing and speaking for the various African countries and their problems. What an original way to pass on responsibilities on African and global issues to these “leaders of tomorrow” This has to be replicated in African Universities!

Model UN Updates

Participation of 8 SSU students in the 22nd Southern Regional Model United Nations

By George Seaborough

In November of 2011, **Faith Douglass, Daron Moss, Kelsey Gore, Abridale Johnson, Maximillion Boykin, Audrey Davis, Aleshia Donald, George Seaborough and Jadon Forbes** participated in the 22nd Southern Regional Model United Nation (SRMUN) Conference that was held in Atlanta, Georgia. The 9 Model UN students were accompanied by Dr. Benn Bongang, the Interim Chair of the Department of Political science and Public Affairs who played the role of academic advisor of the SSU delegation. During the conference Savannah State students had the opportunity to play the role of Ambassadors representing the countries of Zimbabwe and Nigeria. As delegates, the students engaged in debates with over 700 other participants from various colleges and universities throughout the USA. Savannah State students had the opportunity to tackle complex issues in the Security Council, the United Nations Trade and Development Commission, and the General Assembly Plenary.

This educational activity allowed students to develop skills in research, debate, as well as communication and negotiation. The students also had the opportunity to expand their understanding of world geography

and the issues impacting the global community. To become familiar with the positions of the different countries on various issues, our students reviewed data from the FBI and CIA information databases. This collection of data was critical to students as they had to persuade other delegates to adopt their positions and recommendations.

As a result of this participation in SRMUN 2011 our students are better researchers, debaters, speakers, and more knowledgeable of the complex issues facing our global community.

SSU Senior, Ms. Faith Douglas had this to say about her experience:

Committee in SRMUN: General Assembly Plenary

Country: Nigeria

SRMUN Topics:

I: Examining the Economic and Environmental Effects of Agricultural Practices on Member States

II: Analyzing Member State Security Policies to Promote Economic Growth

III: Engaging the Youth of Member States Economically, Politically, and Socially (topic tabled)

Attending the Southern Regional Model United Nations Conference was a very rewarding experience. As a SRMUN attendee, I networked with other university students who were interested in international politics. The most excellent way to describe the SRMUN conference is an “out of the box” experience. As an attendee representing Nigeria, I had to step outside of my nation’s borders to be able to socially interact with other nations who did not necessarily agree with Nigeria’s policies and ideas for reform. In order to achieve this task, I had to think “outside the box” to find a method to be tolerant of other countries without conforming to policies that Nigeria would be totally opposed to. The SRMUN conference staff was very warm and friendly. They were willing to be teachers instead of critics. I recommend that all Political Science and related majors or those interested in international politics to participate in this conference that unquestionably prepares students for outstanding leadership.