

Seeing the World: The Drury Study Abroad Experience

More than half of May 2008 graduating class have studied abroad at Drury

By Kellie Ahern

This year, 51 percent of 2008 May graduates have studied abroad, compared to the 41 percent of last year's May class that studied abroad.

“These numbers are definitely above the national average,” says Michael Thomas, associate dean for International Programs.



“There is a growing interest in studying abroad, and these numbers confirm that interest,” says Thomas. Junior English and writing major Jason Loeffler is currently studying abroad at Regent's College in London, England. “The study abroad program at Drury was one of the biggest selling points about the school, because I've always wanted to go specifically to London to study for a term.”

Drury offers different types of study abroad programs, which can help students with busy schedules. There are year-long and semester terms that offer locations such as Greece, France, Germany, England, Spain, Slovenia and China. Summer and winter terms offer chances to study in Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Vietnam, Malaysia, Honduras, Prague and Krakow.

Beginning three years ago, all architecture and business majors and contemporary European studies minors are required to study abroad as a part of their curriculum. However, many Drury students decide to go for fun.

As an English major, getting to see Shakespeare's birthplace and some of the other spots important to British Literature was very important to Loeffler: “I loved going to see King Lear performed at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.”

Scholarships and grants do carry over for long-term study abroad and exchange programs. Drury does not generally cover costs for short-term study abroad programs, but they do offer student loans as well as the Steve Good Scholarship for study abroad.

Students have the chance to go to other countries on weekend and holidays. Loeffler chose to travel to several European countries, such as Italy, Ireland, Scotland, Netherlands, Spain, Greece and France.

“I'll never forget being in Vatican City for the mass on Easter Sunday,” says Loeffler. “It was so beautiful!”

These programs serve as a compliment to the Global Perspectives program offered at Drury, giving students a chance to experience different cultures firsthand.

“I don't think I would have been offered the same opportunities if I had decided to go somewhere else, so from that perspective I'm very glad I chose Drury,” Loeffler says. “The personal growth of studying in another country and coming into contact with other cultures with different values than my own has given me a unique perspective on myself, America, and the world at large.”

Study abroad programs not only give students a chance to travel outside of their hometowns and the country, but provide them with a number of other skills, such as learning how to travel and budget money.

“Knowing these things before I graduate will make the transition into the real world after college so much easier and so much more exciting,” Loeffler says.