



Academic Affairs Newsletter

Increased International Education Efforts at GHC!

Dr. Virginia Carson

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The international education efforts at Georgia Highlands College are flowering, thanks to the involvement of a number of people. **The eighteen students who participated in study abroad activities in 2005 were more than the sum of the previous three years combined.** The increasing level of student interest is due to many factors. Dr. Alberta Johnson provided excellent leadership in this area and certainly laid the groundwork for many of the developments we now see. Jeff Brown has proved to be a very good publicist and recruiter. Dr. Jim Cook, Dr. Dudley Salley, Jeff Brown, Mark Pergrem and Billy Morris have been instrumental in study abroad teaching and learning opportunities. Jeff Brown has prepared beautiful marketing videos for the European Council of the University System of Georgia. Ken Davis in the College Relations Office at Georgia Highlands has prepared marvelous study abroad marketing materials for Georgia Highlands and also been asked to do so for the European Council.

Financial support for study abroad has been broadened. For three years, the college has received a STARS (Study Abroad with Regents' Support) grant from the University System of Georgia. This matching grant allows students to work on campus in international education arenas and earn money for educational travel. In addition, Dr. Jim Cook and his wife Ida have generously created a scholarship fund to assist students who want to study abroad. The first Cook scholars took advantage of this in 2005.

Georgia Highlands is meeting institutional general education goals with the international education programs. The college is meeting Board of Regents' goals for study abroad participation from the state. And this is all to the great benefit of our students.



Some of the students who received Dr. Cook's Scholarship in 2005. Left to right: Elizabeth Hatcher, Dr. Cook, Ida Cook, Mercedes McRay and Gilbert Bailey.

A Visit to London

By Dr. Kristie Kemper

Professor of English

Dr. Kristie Kemper, professor of English, spent July 24-31 in London, England, also making day trips to Stratford-upon-Avon and Bath. The trip was paid for in part by funds she received in conjunction with the Regents Teaching Excellence Award (2003).

Dr. Kemper says she will be able to incorporate information and insights gained during the trip into the courses she teaches. In Stratford she toured Anne Hathaway's cottage and Shakespeare's birth home. The visit to Bath with its connection to the ancient Romans, Chaucer's wife of Bath and Jane Austin was also very relevant to the topics she covers in her classes.

While in London Dr. Kemper took a guided tour of Old London. She also visited St. Paul's Cathedral (John Donne's church), the Tower of London, and the British Museum (with exhibits including the Greek Elgin marbles and Egyptian artifacts). A tour of the state rooms inside Buckingham Palace was also a highlight of the trip.

Dr. Kemper had visited London briefly before, touring the new Globe Theatre, Westminster Abbey, etc. but had never spent this much time in the city. She arrived there less than three days after the second round of attempted bombings on the London subway.

While heightened security was evident and the search for terrorists dominated news coverage, Dr. Kemper says she did not feel in danger and was impressed with Londoners' determination not to give in to terrorism. World War II damage deliberately left on buildings such as St. Paul's Cathedral and Buckingham Palace as a reminder of London's steadfastness during the air bombing attacks at that time showed how much this city has endured.



Dr. Kemper in the garden at Shakespeare's birth home in Stratford

Dr. Kemper also saw the new musical "Mary Poppins" while in London. She says it may not have been a particularly academic choice but was "a lot of fun."

Maymester in the Bahamas

By Mark Pergrem

Instructor in Physics and Astronomy

Ship's Log Day 1

After being introduced to our accommodations for the upcoming week, a 65-foot sailboat doesn't seem as big as it did in the brochure. We'll certainly have a tight-knit group by the time we return to Miami. The crew seems especially friendly and helpful and there was plenty of good food at dinnertime. We're looking forward to being gently rocked to sleep by the rhythm of the ocean. Friday night in Miami was a bit too loud (or I'm a bit too old).

Ship's Log Day 2

Cleared customs and tried to get an early start scuba diving. As it's everyone's first time in the ocean first time outside of the pool for that matter it is slow going. So far the mandatory skills are going well and we've seen a lot of ocean life. The few folks that were already certified divers are looking forward to the night dive.

Ship's Log Day 3

The diving is still going well. Most folks will finish the certification dives today and can then go on tonight's dive. We've been plagued by cloudy skies, though, so not much naked eye astronomy thus far.

Ship's Log Day 4

Woke to wind and rough seas. Unfortunately, too rough for diving. However, we put in at South Bimini and toured a shark research facility maintained by University of Miami. Although everyone was disappointed that the seas were too rough for diving, the shark lab turned out to be one of the trip highlights. Everyone got to touch juvenile lemon sharks that were to be fitted with tracking devices. One student was interested in returning as a volunteer. (By the way, look no further. We now know what happened to the Partridge Family bus.)

Ship's Log Day 5

The ship's engineer gave a lecture on sailing. He included everything from metallurgy to mechanics and dynamics. Many seemed stunned to hear the term vector used outside the lecture hall. I feel vindicated. (See students, I told you all of the things we've been studying in the Physical Science portion of this course are extremely useful!) We finally got to dive the Bimini Road. Billy Morris had everyone measure and map the site and use observations from the dive to support or refute the claim by some that the feature is manmade.

Ship's Log Day 6

The crew had saved the best diving for last. The shark dive was probably the favorite of most of our voyagers, but all three dives today were impressive. We got some good video of a turtle and a moray eel as well as the sharks.

Ship's Log Day 7

Docked in Miami early this morning and cleared customs just after breakfast. Although Billy and I are already working on improving next May's trip, we had smooth sailing for our maiden voyage.

Mark's always in school



The gang waiting to board.



Say "chum" and smile!



Wyoming-Bound

By Billy Morris

Associate Professor of Geology

Editor's Note: While Wyoming is domestic travel and not international, the news of this study/travel venture is of interest.

Twelve students traveled to Wyoming with me during the first two weeks of June. We traveled a week earlier than usual this year and encountered several significant snowfalls as a result. The students took it in stride, and it only delayed us slightly. There is, after all, a certain excitement generated by snow in the mountains, and to experience it in June (when we know what it's like in Georgia) makes it all the more unique.

We studied minerals, rocks, and fossils during an extended stay in Casper and left with a base of knowledge that allowed us to work in more complex terrain. Moving through the basins and canyons to the northwest we passed oil rigs, coal mines, and other extractive industries that form the backbone of Wyoming's economy. Tourism contributes significantly to the state's economy as well, and Yellowstone National Park hosts many of those tourists including ourselves. Four days in the park allowed us to visit many sites and spend plenty of time hiking to several remote locations. Volcanic activity in the area spans millions of years and has left a record of very different conditions there in the past. A day hike to Specimen Ridge allowed us to see a 40 million year old fossil forest with species like magnolia and sycamore indicating a warmer and wetter climate during that time period. Of course, the hydrothermal features are spectacular and reminded us that the park is still restless with magma only a few thousand feet under the surface.

Leaving Yellowstone, we traveled south to the Grand Teton National Park for four days of beautiful weather and spectacular scenery. Two extended hikes in the park took us deep into the mountains through heavily glaciated terrain. Precambrian igneous and metamorphic rocks have been uplifted rapidly by faulting and then deeply sculpted by recent glaciation. The Snake River works hard to move all the sediment that glaciers have supplied it and a classic braided stream is the result. Students noted the evidence for these and other processes and cited their observations in field reports compiled throughout the trip. Several fine papers came out of this year's trip, and I was pleased with the academic work accomplished as well as the friendships made during the 2005 Wyoming Geology course.

What I Did on My Summer Trip to China

By Dr. Bruce Jones

A number of people have been so kind as to ask about my trip to China. In general I've not really answered their questions for two reasons. First, I'm still processing all the exotic sights, sounds, and people. Second, the trip takes a little explaining. Most of the places we went are unknown to most Chinese. This is my attempt to explain in part what we did.

China is a country roughly the size of the U.S. Unfortunately for the Chinese, most of it is uninhabitable. There are two huge deserts in China. There are also some very mountainous areas in the south. These are the foothills of the Himalayans. The result is that 80-85% of China's 1.3 billion people live within about 150 miles of the eastern coast. Fifteen percent of 1.3 billion is still a lot of people though. That 15% is scattered throughout the remainder of the country. One shouldn't think in terms of Montana-type population density. China has 130 cities of 1 million or more residents. We spent three days in Beijing and three days in Shanghai. The rest of the month we were in the hinterlands.

The result of this geography is that most of the economic development has taken place in the East. The average per capita income in Shanghai is \$6500 per year. In some of the areas we visited the average per capita income is \$259 per year. To the economist this is an interesting anomaly. To the ruling party it is a recipe for disaster. Sooner or later those poor country folks might get upset. The party decided several years ago to try to develop the rural areas as well. That effort is called The Great Western Development Program. That's what our group studied. Obviously my interest was the efficiency and effectiveness of the program, but there is another interesting aspect as well.

We think of China as one large monolithic group. Actually China is a league of nations. The Chinese refer to their 3000 year history. They fail to mention that its size and composition has varied through that period. Ninety-three percent of the Chinese population is Han Chinese. The remaining 7% are one of 55 recognized minorities. These minorities have certain protections and rights under "The Constitution of China." Each group has its own traditions, customs, music, dress, and religion. All of these are protected by the constitution. (Yes, that's correct. The communist party protects their religions.) They also have separate languages. These languages are not Chinese dialects. In the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region the language is Uygur. Uygur is a fifth century Turkish language written in Arabic script. The people are Muslim. We often found need of a new interpreter/tour guide when we traveled 50-60 kilometers. The languages are as different as English to Italian within a single province. This distinctiveness is protected by the government and adds to their trepidation about the potential for discontent. It did make the trip interesting. We saw parts of China that most Chinese never see. Many of them looked at us incredulously when we described our travels.

So what did I learn?

- Large scale development projects are incredibly wasteful.
- The Chinese people are not bent on taking over the world. The average Chinese is really uninterested in the outside world.
- Saying that cultures have different values understates the differences. Different cultures even perceive the world in different ways.
- They are interested in improving their standard of living, but they are not interested in crushing the West. Their market is so large that their gains are not necessarily our losses.
- They want to do it themselves. They want to design and build their own products not ours.
- Cleanliness is relative. Don't ask.
- Kids are beautiful everywhere. Since most Chinese families are only allowed one child they spoil them. They're called "little emperors."
- The cost of living in China is so incredibly low that it's embarrassing. Storekeepers get flustered when you give them 100 yuan notes - \$12.
- You could visit China on a family vacation for about what a beach vacation would cost - think \$40 hotel rooms and \$2 meals.
- The country is incredibly beautiful. The deserts are immense, and the mountains are high by world standards.
- The culture is incredibly deep and varied. When one ethnic group would describe their culture, the other Chinese would be as amazed as we were.
- The old ways are slipping away. Minority cultures are being assimilated into the mainstream same as the rest of the world.
- Cell phones work everywhere in China. Everyone has one even Buddhist monks.
- There are as many English speakers in China as in the United States. It is the foreign language of choice for the young - the American version not the English.
- All Chinese speak at least two languages Mandarin Chinese and a local language.

The trip was truly the trip of a lifetime. It was funded in part by a Fulbright-Hays Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. I need to thank Dr. Carson for helping to write that grant in cooperation with Reinhardt College and for assisting my interest. I also need to thank all my colleagues who were so good as to pull a little extra load and allow my month's absence. I would like to encourage all those interested in pursuing an international experience. I've waited years to do so myself. It never seemed to be the right time, but the experience was well worth the sacrifice.



Dr. Jones with a backdrop of Lijiang (city) and Leaping Tiger (gorge on the Yangtze River)

Picture St. Petersburg

By Jeff Brown

Saint Petersburg was the backdrop for the University System of Georgia's European Council summer program in Russia. Thirty-one students took part in the program that offered classes in art, business, history, literature, language, and culture. I had the opportunity to offer an introductory class in photography to eight American and six Russian students.

Saint Petersburg provides an incredible setting for photography. The photography students were exposed to topics that included the history of photography, composition, and the mechanics of the camera. Field trips allowed them to photograph monuments and bridges and provided an opportunity for an all night outing to experience the White Nights. The program gives students an opportunity to live and study in a foreign country, earn up to eight semester credit hours, and bring home a lifetime of memories.

In addition to the classes the program included tours of palaces, including Peterhof and Catherine's Palace, the Baltica Brewery, the Hermitage Museum, Peter and Paul Fortress, Pushkin, Staraya Lodoga, and a canal boat tour. To quote one of the students, "It was a pleasure to study in one of the most beautiful cities on earth." For me, it was not only an opportunity to grow as a person but also allowed me the opportunity for professional development by sharing my knowledge of photography and assisting with different aspects of coordinating the program.



Catherine's Palace



Kunstammer

The Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (the oldest museum in Russia) at night.

Gems of Italy

By Dr. James Cook

My fifteenth college tour was one of my best. Our group of forty-three included four students, many former students, and several former college employees (Barbara Walden, Glenda Brooks, and Sarah Burkhalter). Although the group ranged in age from eight to over seventy, all got along well. Indeed, it was a very compatible group. The tour extended June 3-12, 2005.

In Rome, our first stop, we saw the Roman ruins and toured St. Peter's Cathedral, but for many the highlight was seeing the new pope bless the people gathered in Vatican City.

Traveling south, we toured Pompeii, the city destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD. Only a portion of the city has been excavated, but it was fascinating to see how people lived in that era. The roads and houses were preserved by the volcanic ash, and even mosaics have now been restored. A scenic drive around the Bay of Naples brought us to Sorrento, where we spent two nights in a five-star hotel. The highlight there was a day on the Isle of Capri, including a boat ride around the island to the Blue Grotto. The Isle of Capri has been a popular resort since the time of the Romans.

Leaving the Mediterranean climate of Sorrento, we traveled northward through the hills of Umbria to Assisi, the home of St. Francis, where we toured the Basilica of St. Francis, which is decorated with a remarkable collection of frescoes by Giotto. We continued northward by bus to Florence, the "Cradle of the Renaissance," where four of the greatest names in Italian art, Botticelli, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci, lived and worked. Florence takes you back to the Renaissance, for everywhere you turn there is beauty. The Duomo di Santa Maria del Fiore, topped by Brunelleschi's dome, dominates the city. Adjacent to it is Giotto's Bell Tower. Nearby is the Church of Santa Croce, where Machiavelli and Galileo are buried. A short walk from there brings you to the Galleria dell'Accademia, which houses Michelangelo's "David." A tour of a leather factory turned out to be an expensive stop, as many of the group could not resist purchasing coats, belts, handbags, and other leather products made there. A day trip around Tuscany included stops in San Gimignano, a Medieval village, and Siena, a walled city, but a stop at the American cemetery near Florence was an emotional experience and a highlight for many travelers.

The last stop on our ten-day tour was Venice, where a local guide took us to the Bridge of Sighs, the Doges's Palace, and St. Mark's Square. After a visit to a Venetian glass factory, the afternoon was free. Naturally, most of the group had to have a ride in a gondola. Returning to our Holiday Inn Express, the next morning we were on our way back to Atlanta, tired but exhilarated by the beauty, history, and culture we had experienced.