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Making the Adjustment: Tips for Returning Students

By: Anna Pearl

Studying abroad was the single most fulfilling experience of my undergraduate college career. I lived in Paris for almost six months with a French family in a small apartment off of the Champs Elysees. In that time I formed bonds with my host family, my friends at university, many French locals, and professors. Because I was so apprehensive about studying abroad so far away from home, I never thought that coming back would be as difficult as it was (and believe me, it was hard). The friendships we make with natives from our host countries and other students who study abroad with us are often times more intense than the friendships we have in America. Because we meet these people during a unique period of intense growth that is unlike any other experience, we can feel alienated from our old friends and miss those people who shared in our time abroad. Here are a few things I did not expect on my return that are common to almost all returnees. And not to worry, there are many things that you can do to alleviate these issues.

1) What to do? After being on a whirlwind adventure in a foreign country life at home may seem a little boring. This is completely normal. Be forewarned: do not let boredom turn into depression. There are simple things you can do to alleviate boredom. My first recommendation is that you get a hobby, something completely new that you can do on a regular basis. I started swing dancing when I came back from Paris. I think that this hobby helped me in two ways: it kept me busy and it is something uniquely American that was created and thrives here, not in France.

2) You notice your dislikes about American culture. Just as when you moved abroad and you noticed certain things about your host culture, you will discover things about America. Here are a few observations that I found myself making after I came home. “Why is everyone so big?” “There IS a lot of fast food.” “People don’t know how to relax!” A simple suggestion we can give is to take more time with your meals and learn to enjoy it. Try not to just eat because you’re hungry, but use the time to catch up with friends.

3) They don’t understand me! There will be a lot of things you want to share with your friends and family. Unfortunately, not everyone will be willing to listen. And sometimes when you have a willing listener, you aren’t able to articulate what an amazing experience you had. My suggestion: try to use photographs, objects, and articles to explain yourself. This will allow you to be brief and to help capture the essence of your travel effectively.

4) You’re different. Let’s face it, after living in a foreign country for 3 months to an entire year, you’ve changed. There are things about you that are different that your friends will notice. Sometimes they will not like the changes they see in you. Sometimes you won’t like certain things about your friends that were unnoticed before. So how can you make sure that you effectively face these challenges upon your return? Learn to understand the changes you are experiencing. Talk it over with your friends and family; expressing to them how you feel different may be able to better your transition.

5) “Reverse Home Sickness.” Some days you are going to wake up and wish that you were back in your old bed in your host country. The best way to beat the blues is to stay involved with the international community. Stay in touch with your friends outside of the US. You can join the International Club on campus, become a mentor to a foreign student at UCI, or volunteer for any one (or more) of the events that CIE puts on. I cannot express how fulfilling it has been to work with the Center for International Education—helping spark other students’ desire to study abroad, meet
our exchange students from all over the world, and help send off the next batch of my peers who are starting their journeys.

Read more, including how to connect with others who have studied abroad and talk more in depth about staying involved in international affairs, at:
http://www.cie.uci.edu/returnees/index.shtml

What About Jobs?—Using Study Abroad in Professional Contexts

By: Anna Pearl
Adapted from: The AFS Student Study Guide by the AFS International/Intercultural Programs, Washington, D.C., 1979

You may think that the benefits of studying abroad are limited to getting credit here at UCI and working towards your degree. That assumption couldn’t be farther from the truth. When you reflect on your experiences abroad you will realize more and more things that you have learned outside of the classroom and foreign languages. Employers, graduate schools, law schools, and medical schools will all be interested in the time that you spent outside of the country. It is an interesting event in your life that will set you apart from the competition. But, you must be able to frame your experiences appropriately. Employers and the committees that will decide on your entrance to higher education programs are looking for skill sets. You would never say, for instance, that you can read a metro map and navigate around any city around the world. You must express the value derived from these lessons. The following are categories with a few of the possible skills for each.

Intercultural/Communication Skills:
- a greater capacity to accept differences in others and to tolerate other people’s actions and ideas that may be vastly different from my own
- more knowledgeable about other cultures and lifestyles

So, in an interview situation you can address how your experience abroad has expanded your knowledge on diversity and how you have learned to effectively communicate with a variety of different sorts of people.

Worldview:
- better understanding of other country’s roles in world affairs
- seeing the world as interconnected
- a greater awareness of political, economic, and social events occurring around the world

Another, useful point in an interview scenario is to express how your understanding on a global scale has expanded. Discuss how you seek out news and information from foreign media and how you are now more interested learning the story behind the story. Willing to go that extra step in understanding something that is unfamiliar demonstrates attention to detail.

Of these traits which seemed to speak most about what you learned? Think of stories or vignettes that show how you learned these lessons, so that you may share those with your interviewers.

If this article interested you and you would like more information of this kind, simply look for the signs and e-mail reminders
World News
Source: CNN.COM

European Commission fines computer chipmaker Intel $1.45B
(CNN) -- The European Commission found leading computer chipmaker Intel guilty Wednesday of violating European anti-trust rules and ordered that it pay a fine of 1.06 billion euros ($1.45 billion). The commission found Intel abused its dominant market position in the market for computer chips known as the x86 computer processing unit (CPU), Kroes said. The abuse lasted more than five years, she said. Otellini [Intel's CEO] added that the company had never sold products below cost but had invested in innovation, manufacturing and developing leadership technology with the result that it could "discount our products to compete in a highly competitive marketplace....." to read full article go to: http://www.cnn.com/2009/BUSINESS/05/13/europe.intel.anti.trust/index.html

Iraq War
BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) -- A U.S. soldier fired on his fellow troops at a counseling center at a base outside Baghdad, Iraq, on Monday, U.S. officials said, killing five people in the worst such attack of the six-year-old Iraq war. President Obama said that he was "shocked and deeply saddened" by the "horrible tragedy. My heart goes out to the families and friends of all the service members involved," he said in a written statement. "I will press to ensure that we fully understand what led to this tragedy, and that we are doing everything we can to ensure that our men and women in uniform are protected...” to read full article go to: http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/05/11/iraq.violence/index.html#cnnSTCText

Pope visits Jerusalem's holiest sites
JERUSALEM (CNN) -- Pope Benedict XVI visited Jerusalem's holiest sites Tuesday, touring areas sacred to Muslims, Jews and Christians and stressing the common threads of the three faiths. After visiting the Dome of the Rock, an Islamic shrine, the pontiff prayed at the Old City's Western Wall. Also known as the Wailing Wall, it was once part of Judaism's Second Temple, which was destroyed. The visit took place under extremely tight security. Security personnel with machine guns could be seen across the Temple Mount...to read full article go to: http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/05/12/pope.jerusalem/index.html
Deadliest pandemics of the 20th century

LONDON, England (CNN) -- -- The World Health Organization has called the swine flu outbreak spreading around the world a "public health emergency of international concern."

Swine flu is usually diagnosed only in pigs or people in regular contact with them. Health workers worldwide are racing to prevent what may potentially become a pandemic. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new virus appears against which the human population has no immunity, according to the WHO. Spanish flu was the worst pandemic of the 20th century. Up to 40 percent of the worldwide population became ill when it occurred in 1918-1919. "The mortality rate is lower with swine flu, but it seems to be cropping up in a lot more different places..." to read full article go to: http://www.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/04/27/pandemics.history/index.html#cnnSTCText
California News

Trump says Miss California USA can keep her crown despite uproar: Source: LA TIMES

Miss California USA, who became a controversial symbol of the anti-same-sex-marriage movement, can keep her bejeweled crown, Donald Trump, owner of the Miss Universe and USA pageant system and final arbiter of all such matters, decided Tuesday.

Title holder Carrie Prejean was thrust into a media firestorm last month at the Miss USA pageant when contest judge Perez Hilton, who runs a celebrity blog, asked her how she felt about same-sex marriage. She replied that she did not personally believe that two people of the same sex should marry, adding "no offense to anybody out there." To read full article go to: http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-miss-california13-2009may13,0,1541974.story

UCI NEWS: by Umar Hussain

UCI Wins, USC Loses. The Birth of A Great Volleyball Rivalry

UC Irvine and the University of Southern California faced off last weekend in Provo, UT for the national championship. No matter what the result, get used to seeing these two programs squaring off against each other for some time to come.

UCI and USC are the future of NCAA men’s volleyball, and the future is now. Moreover, this year gave birth to the UCI-USC rivalry. After defeating USC three times in the regular season, and eight more times consecutively before that, USC finally beat UCI in the MPSF Tournament semifinal two weeks ago. Not only did they beat UCI, but also crushed them at the Bren. Words were exchanged across the net, and even beef was cooked between the fans. A national title match between the two teams was the icing on the rivalry cake.

With UCI coming on top in one of the greatest college volleyball finals in history, we have the edge right now. However, the show has just begun. To read full article go to:
http://www.newuniversity.org/main/article?slug=uci_wins_usc_loses.189
“But I don't want to go home...”
By Steven Arjonilla

I am guessing that many of you all might be saying the same thing to yourself as your time abroad is coming to end. Trust me, we all felt the same. However, coming back to your pre-abroad experience does not have to be all that bad. Here are some tips that might help you adjust back into the UCI/Californian life:

1. Explore Orange County! You probably know your abroad city like the back of your hand now, but do you really know all there is to offer here in sunny Orange County??!!....probably not. Finding new and interesting things to do in your neighborhood will definitely help your transition. Pretend to be a traveler again, except this time you know the language, the currency is the same, and you don't have to look for a hostel to stay in.

2. Join the International Club! The International Club on campus has been gaining popularity over the last few years and is one of the top organizations on campus! Meet other UCI students who have studied abroad or just love anything international! Also, make friends with UCI's very own foreign exchange students! Pretend like you’re an international student again! Find out more here: [http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=18736772528&ref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=18736772528&ref=ts)

3. Become an International Peer Advisor @ the Center for International Education (CIE)!! Share your abroad stories and encourage other UCI students to go abroad and experience the wonderful things you did...and get paid doing it! Applications will be ready by late June and due by mid August 2009. Click here for more information: [http://www.cie.uci.edu/returnees/ipajob.shtml](http://www.cie.uci.edu/returnees/ipajob.shtml).

Thank you all!

We are so happy to have been your newsletter correspondents this year. We are sure that studying abroad has been an exciting, exhilarating, and most of all a life affirming experience. Just keep in mind that the Center for International Education isn’t just around to help you get out the door, but we can help you re-acclimate as well as deal with any loose ends from studying abroad. We hope you enjoyed our newsletters. Good luck in the upcoming year and have a wonderful summer.

Best to all,
Steven Arjonilla
& Anna Pearl