



*Cotopaxi Volcano, Province of Cotopaxi, Ecuador*

# BUFFS *abroad*

Office of Study Abroad  
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## SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program is a free service offered by the Department of State that allows U.S. citizens and nationals traveling abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By registering your trip with the Department of State on STEP, the U.S. embassies and consulates abroad will be able to assist you better in the event of an emergency, for example if an evacuation is necessary due to natural disasters or other situations that may put your life in danger. They can also assist you in other cases, for instance if you lose your passport or if it is stolen while you are abroad.

The U.S. Department of State will also send you travel alerts and



warnings, country-specific information, and emergency messages to provide you with timely and accurate travel information about every country where you may travel. Finally, STEP makes it easier for consular officers in U.S. embassies and consulates around the world to contact you and your family members, to notify them of important news.

Go to: [step.state.gov/step/](http://step.state.gov/step/) to register your trip. Then, create an account and fill out your information as requested!

*Source: U.S. Department of State website*

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### IMPORTANT DATES:

- **USAC Informational table:** Feb 24th
- **IEF Scholarship Application deadline:** March 1st
- **Gilman International Scholarship Deadline:** March 3rd
- **Midterms:** March 10th
- **Spring Break:** March 16th-20th
- **Finals:** May 8th-14th
- **Spring graduation/commencement:** May 16th

“Travel Far Enough You Meet Yourself”

-David Mitchell-

# SUMMER STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

What are you doing this summer? Have you considered the idea of studying abroad? If so, the Office of Study Abroad offers summer study abroad programs to numerous countries all over the world. Naturally, we cannot write about all the countries you can travel to—we would probably have to write a book! Instead, we have made a list with the most popular countries among WTAMU students to study abroad in during the summer.

### #4) Costa Rica

Costa Rica has been home to 8% of buffs who decided to complete some Spanish credit abroad. The Costa Rican Language Academy located in San Jose is the most popular institution attended by students who are seeking to complete some Spanish credits. Students who are not seeking Spanish credit have studied at different universities, for example Universidad Latina in Heredia.



*Costa Rican waterfalls. Photo courtesy of Kayla Leonard*

### #3) UK

The UK has seen 15% of our summer alumni, specifically England and Scotland. London is a very popular destination amongst theatre and communications majors, although, students across multiple disciplines including accounting and English have studied in London too. Meanwhile, Stirling and Edinburgh Scotland have hosted athletic training and nursing majors.



*London phone booth. Photo courtesy of Cera Sharp*

### #2) Italy

Italy comes in as our second most popular country amongst our summer alumni, with a 17%. Italy is a great destination for art and cultural studies. Students can study at the Firenze Arti Visive (Florence School of Fine Arts) and become submerged in the Italian way of life or go abroad with several of our providers who also have programs in Italy. These programs offer courses in multiple disciplines in cities such as Florence, Milan and Rome.

### #1) Spain

30% of summer study abroad alumni have studied in Spain. Most of the buffs that have traveled to



*Photography in Italy. Photo courtesy of Kassie Mullins*

Spain in the summer complete their minor in Spanish while visiting the beaches of Valencia and Barcelona or walking the streets of Granada and Seville. You don't have to be studying Spanish to study abroad in Spain, even though you might be learning Spanish unofficially while you're over there.

The remaining 30% of students studied abroad in various countries including Turkey, China, South Korea, South Africa, Germany, Peru and France.



*Toledo, Spain  
Photo courtesy of Mariela Mendoza*

So, does this sound like a good plan for summer? If the answer is yes, remember that most program and scholarship applications are due in March or April (some even earlier), so come see us soon and start your next adventure!

# FEATURED TRAVELER: DANIELA FIERRO

Daniela Fierro

I remember stepping into the Office of Study Abroad in the Spring of 2013 with the decision that I was going to go abroad. I didn't know where, but I knew I was going to go somewhere and it was going to be exciting. I often joke that I decided to travel to Ukraine by closing my eyes and pointing at the country on a large-scale map; however, it's not true. I had hardly ever heard of Ukraine at that point in my life, only hearing it in passing when mentioned in TV shows or movies.



*Hermitage Museum*  
Photo courtesy of Daniela Fierro

The program of my choosing had been selected through the government's website and it had caught my attention, as they went to several other countries for a really reasonable price.

I had been to a foreign country before but seeing as Mexico is my parent's homeland, it has never been foreign to me. I knew the culture, the people and most importantly, the language. Ukraine was not that type of situation for me. It was in another continent, a language I had no knowledge of, and a culture I was not familiar with. It was going to be fantastic!

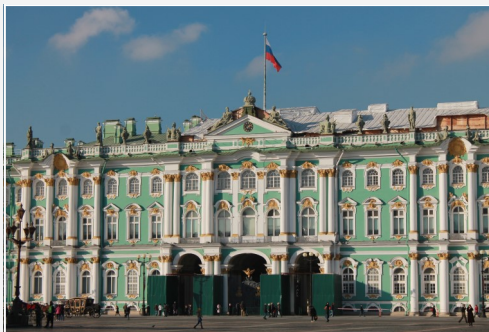
There was not one time I had doubts about going to Ukraine. I was doubtful about the plane, but not my time there. I was most excited about our excursion to St.

Petersburg, Russia, where I would be visiting the Hermitage museum; however, before I got there, the travel there was interesting.

*“All the knowledge I had accumulated over the years on the Romanovs Dynasty was put into use as one of*

It is not secret that America's main way to travel is cars, airplanes or busses and while we do have Amtrak, there aren't many people who actually use it. Traveling to Petersburg was by train, and it was not a private compartment. It was a 19-hour train ride with many stops, stinky feet and random strangers who wanted to practice English or stare at the Americans on the train. It was an experience that I think I would be okay doing again as long as the destination is appealing.

Petersburg was fabulous, and while it had much more of a European vibe than the rest of the Soviet countries, it's still a place that I would love to visit again.



*Hermitage Museum—a closer look*  
Photo courtesy of Daniela Fierro

And it was like a dream come true. My inner-nine-year-old-self who had watched Anastasia

religiously cried when I walked into the courtyard of the Winter Palace, now known as the Hermitage Museum. While many dreamed about going to London, France or Germany, I wanted to go to Petersburg just to go to *that* palace.

All the knowledge I had accumulated over the years on the



*Hermitage Museum—exhibition inside*  
Photo courtesy of Daniela Fierro

Romanovs Dynasty was put into use as one of my classmates and I walked around, looking at portraits, art, everything! I was almost like a tour guide about how the palace was constructed and what the influences were from.

I could imagine all four sisters and their brother Alexei walking down the same halls I was, joking and laughing before the February Revolution in 1917. I didn't leave until the museum closed at 6 PM, and even then my classmate had to drag me out because I knew that I couldn't return the next day... or ever. Moscow was next in our itinerary and we'd be leaving an hour before midnight that same night.

Even as I left the palace, I actually shed some tears. I had just crossed out the number one thing on my bucket list, and while there are still so many things I wish to do, I never once thought that the first thing on the list would ever be crossed out.

# Greetings from abroad...

**Sarah Marie Neely was born on March 31, 1993 in Ft. Polk., LA. and is a Senior, Vocal Performance major.**

**Q: Tell us about your professional goals as a Vocal Performance major.**

**A:** My plan is to continue my education by achieving a master's degree and Doctorate in performance and pedagogy. I am working towards singing Opera professionally as well as teaching voice lessons at the University level. I also have a love for voice science and pedagogy which I hope to use one day in a research setting, so that I can learn as much about the voice as possible.

**Q: Describe your study abroad program and tell us why you chose it.**

**A:** I am studying in Prague, Czech Republic, with AIFS. I chose Prague not only because it is a city known for its story book beauty, history and its affordability but because I am extremely excited about the opportunity to learn the Czech language. I hope to one day teach singers how to sing Czech music with proper pronunciation and maybe even to write my own Czech Diction book.

**Q: What expectations or fears do you have about your experience abroad?**

**A:** I expect that my Study Abroad experience will be quite challenging. I am trying to prepare myself for home sickness, and culture shock. But what I am mostly worried about is finding a group of friends that I can travel and be adventurous with in a safe and conscientious way.

**Q: What's your message for other WT students thinking about study abroad?**

**A:** To all my fellow WT students: Please don't give up a wonderful opportunity to study abroad because you are afraid to leave your comfort zone or because you are worried that it costs way too much money. Trust me I thought all the same things. I decided to take the plunge and try to figure out if I could make it happen and I cannot be any more astounded by the outcome. I really did not think I would be able to come up with the money to pay for the program but with hard work and perseverance everything worked out!



## Fun facts and images from around the world...



The "Big Ben" is the UK's most popular touristic attraction. The bell itself is officially called the "Great Bell", but gets its nickname from Sir Benjamin Hall; the "big" part comes from the fact that the bell weighs 16 tons and is about 7 ft tall.

Photo courtesy of Madison Heston.



The "Sultan Ahmed Mosque" is a historic mosque in Istanbul and is better known as "Blue Mosque", for the blue tiles adorning the walls of its interior. It was built from 1609 to 1616 and is the only mosque that was originally built with six minarets.

Photo courtesy of Victoria Tarkington.



"Mama Occllo" was the wife and sister of the first Inca, Manco Capac, and discovered Cusco with him. Mama Occllo was deified as a fertility goddess. In Peru, the folkloric festival of Puno Week celebrates the historic arrival of Manco Capac and Mama Occllo in Cusco.

Photo courtesy of Gabriel Pena.

Send us your stories and pictures from abroad for a chance to be featured in our next issue of **BUFFS**