



Anapji Pond, South Korea. Courtesy of Valeria Rodriguez

# BUFFS *abroad*

**Office of Study Abroad**  
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## GREETINGS FROM THE OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD!

Carolina Galloway

Welcome to the first issue of “Bufs Abroad”, a new and original publication by the Office of Study Abroad; I hope you find this newsletter not only fun, but also informative.

There are tons of topics related to “study abroad,” and the truth is I am still fascinated by all the things that come to my mind when I hear “study abroad”: cities, countries, scholarships, documents, health and safety, programs, professional goals, internships, world news, world disasters, world wonders... just to name a few. And I want you to know more about that too! This newsletter will hopefully help me introduce you to the amazing world of studying abroad.

Selecting the topics for this first issue was not easy, but finally, with some help from Valeria Rodriguez and Marissa Rivera, the content for the first edition of Bufs Abroad was decided and the articles written. Valeria, a senior Biochemistry student, is a study abroad alumni; she has been working with me in the Office of Study Abroad for over three months now and her contribution has been absolutely invaluable. Marissa is a Journalism student that I was lucky to meet last year when she was writing

stories for The Prairie, specifically about study abroad. Marissa has the potential to become a wonderful journalist one day. She has also been a great help in the making of the newsletter. Marissa agreed to help us interview Dr. O’Brien, while Valeria accepted to be the first “Featured Traveler” and share with us her experience studying in South Korea for a semester. Valeria also contributed with other sections, like “Where have Bufs studied abroad” and “How to apply for a passport.” Without their time and talents, this newsletter would probably not even be here today. Thank you both.

Now I would like to invite you to read the next three pages. Valeria, Marissa and I have tried to make it short and concise, and are open to suggestions to improve in the future. We also want to make it more of a team effort, and involve you in the process. WT students, faculty, staff, and even alumni are welcome to send us stories and pictures about their international experiences that we can use for future issues, so the entire WT community can become aware of how much internationalization is happening on our campus. We hope that you enjoy reading about study abroad and the stories of those who have participated.

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### IMPORTANT DATES:

#### October 1:

- International Education Fee Scholarship Application Deadline for Spring programs

#### October 4:

- HOMECOMING!

#### October 15:

- “Bufs Abroad” Photo Contest Application Deadline
- Site visit Grant Proposals Deadline (Faculty)

#### October 20:

- #buffsabroad Instagram Photo Contest

**“Travel and change of place impart new vigor to the mind”**

-Lucius Annaeus Seneca-

# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT O'BRIEN

Marissa Rivera

The Office of Study Abroad was fortunate enough to hear from President J. Patrick O'Brien on his views of studying abroad and all it has to offer to WT students.

Although Dr. O'Brien never studied abroad, he was given the opportunity to live in Rossbrunn, a small village in Germany, where he served on active duty in the U.S. Army.

Throughout the years, he has travelled to about 70 different countries, including France, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Crete and Greece.

Dr. O'Brien believes that utilizing the opportunity to study abroad adds another dimension to the learning process.

"The services offered by the Office of Study Abroad provide students with an opportunity to enrich their college experience and learning." In addition, the President believes students benefit from immersion in different cultures.

"By studying abroad, WT students are provided the opportunity to learn about and interact with cultures different from that in which they were raised," he said. "They observe and are immersed in practices and customs different than that in which they have previously participated, and they are exposed to perspectives and ideas previously unknown to them."

"I believe students learn how interconnected humankind is – we are connected through economic activity, technology and science, and, in many cases, religious beliefs," he said.



Brazil. Courtesy of President O'Brien

Students who study abroad may gain a broader perspective of the world around them and a deeper appreciation of other cultures, while embracing those here in the United States and local community.

Dr. O'Brien believes students learn that, in many ways, people from different countries or regions have similar aspirations as they do – and that foreigners are not that different from us.

In taking advantage of all that the Office of Study Abroad has to offer, the President hopes that students gain a greater awareness and appreciation for the diversity of humankind, its cultures, customs, and perspectives.



France. Courtesy of President O'Brien

## Where have Bufs studied abroad?

Since the Office of Study Abroad opened in 2005, there has been a Buff on every continent except for Antarctica! This map has all the of countries where Bufs have studied abroad painted in maroon.

Countries that Bufs visit frequently include Spain, England, Italy, and Costa Rica.



# FEATURED TRAVELER: VALERIA RODRIGUEZ

Valeria Rodriguez

## 안녕하세요! (Hello)

I was walking across campus the other day and I caught a peculiar scent. It triggered a flashback: it is dark, my friends and I are huddled next to the Namhan river (남한강) waiting for our ramen from the nearby convenience store to cool down. Illuminated by the beautiful Danyang Bridge, we eat our ramen in silence, lost in our tired thoughts brought on by an exhilarating day of backpacking the Korean countryside of Danyang County. As quickly as the flashback came, it was gone and left me with a sense of longing. Every day I come across some type of stimulus that triggers a flashback to my time in Korea and leaves me with an inclination to reflect.

I go back to a time when I never even considered studying abroad. Two years ago, if someone had told me that I would soon be a student in South Korea I would have probably thought they were crazy. Fast forward six months, some of my friends mention they are thinking about studying abroad during the summer. I never realized I could study in a different country until then. Next thing I knew the idea of studying abroad started creeping into my thoughts and then I would quickly bury it away. No matter how deep I buried away that thought, it would somehow find its way back. Until one December day, I finally decided I was going to study abroad.

Looking back I realize that choosing to study abroad is one of the best decisions I have made throughout my life so far. It led to a cascade of events that would soon lead me to the other side of the globe.

More decisions were made and

my paperwork was in progress; now I had to find some extra money, and I had to find it quick. I found out about a national scholarship, the Gilman. I figured I should take the chance and apply. If I was awarded the scholarship I would go abroad. If not, well it was fun while it lasted. After I applied, I waited two months to hear back from them. One day I finally got an email and the first word I read was “Congratulations.” That was the moment my heart stopped because I realized I was going abroad and nothing was going to stop me.

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, my parents dropped me off at the airport. With boarding passes in hand, I said my goodbyes and started going through security. I knew there was no going back now. Seventeen hours, two flights, a couple of customs forms, and long taxi ride later, I found myself at 건국대학요 (Konkuk University) in Seoul. At the university I met tons of new people and made friends from all over the world. Some were from Spain, Sweden, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, China, France, and of course Korea.

I loved the university because somehow they managed to make international students feel very involved and accepted. My classes

were fantastic and my professors were very helpful.

Seoul was also great! There was never a dull moment for me and my friends. We would interact with the locals and they would teach us their traditions along with the language.

*“Looking back I realize that choosing to study abroad is one of the*



*Making a commercial on our last night in Seoul!*

With classes going on, exploring the country, and making new friends, time flew by and soon it was December. Finals were coming up, and I realized I would have to come home soon. After a last night out in the city, that morning once again I was saying my goodbyes.

Now I find myself wishing I was in Seoul. Wishing I could ride the subway to Hongdae one more time and walk the streets full of performers, go to my Korean class one more time and have my Korean language teacher call me by the nickname she assigned me 나쁜학생 (Bad Student). All these are happy memories now, and hopefully one day soon I will find myself back in Seoul.



*천지연 폭포 (Cheonjiyeon Falls /God's Pond)*

# It's good to know... **HOW TO APPLY FOR A PASSPORT**

If you want to travel abroad you are going to need a passport book. Your passport will become a crucial item on any trip abroad, and figuring out how to get one can get a little confusing. First determine how you will have to apply for your passport; this depends on how soon you need your passport. If a passport is needed within **4 to 6 weeks**, a **standard application** is what you should fill out. If a passport is needed within **2 to 3 weeks**, an **expedited application** should be filled out.



To apply for a passport, you need to fill out the Form DSP-11, available in the U.S. Department of State website. Search their database of more than 4,500 locations nationwide to submit your application, or make an appointment with any post office in the Canyon/Amarillo area. **DO NOT** sign the form until you meet with the official at the post office - they must witness your signature.

Before you go to the post office, gather the documents you will need to submit along with your application. You will need:

- Proof of citizenship – Birth Certificate is the most common; will be returned.
- Proof of Identity – Usually driver’s license; will be presented to the post office agent.
- Passport photograph – Can be purchased at Wal-Mart or Walgreens.
- Fees – Passport book is \$110. Expedited application is \$60 + \$110 for passport book.

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

- France is the most visited country in the world.
- Monaco is smaller than Central Park in New York City.
- Mongolia is the least densely populated country in the world. There are four people per square mile.
- The Mong Kok district in Hong Kong has the highest population density with 340,000 people per square mile.
- Because there is no natural sand in Guam, the island nation makes its asphalt for its roads using ground coral mixed with oil.



*View of Toledo, Spain by Mariela Mendoza*



*Festivities in Taiwan by Dava Eilert*

**SEND US YOUR STORIES AND PICTURES FROM ABROAD  
FOR A CHANCE TO BE FEATURED IN OUR NEXT ISSUE OF  
BUFFS ABROAD!**