Ohio State ranked in top 20 nationally for international students and study abroad

The Ohio State University ranks as one of the nation’s top 20 universities for its international student enrollment and the number of students studying abroad, according to the Open Doors 2009 report, an annual survey published by the Institute of International Education.

Ohio State is ranked 14th among the nation’s colleges and universities for hosting 4,583* international students and 20th with 1,704 students studying abroad. Ohio State also ranks sixth in the nation with 1,449 students studying abroad on short-term programs. Short-term programs are defined as taking place during the summer, January term or for eight weeks or less during the academic year.
“As the importance of international and cultural exchange becomes an increasingly critical component of a student’s education, Ohio State is developing a plan that will give us a presence in key locations around the world,” said William I. Brustein, Ohio State’s vice provost for global strategies and international affairs. “Our national rankings provide us with a good foundation from which we can build.”

Brustein recently joined Ohio State and is responsible for integrating international and multicultural experiences to the academic units within the university and expanding and enhancing its global reach.

He is developing plans for Ohio State to open “Global Gateways” that will serve as a central location in another country or region of the world where the university will be able to engage alumni, recruit international students, foster partnerships for faculty with universities abroad, and enhance study abroad opportunities for students. Ohio State is exploring Global Gateway options in China, India and Brazil.

Also part of Ohio State’s strategy is to provide international learning experiences that will be based on global competency skills. “In today’s world students need to be globally aware and familiar with global change,” Brustein said. “They must be able to adapt to diverse cultures and be able to communicate across cultural boundaries. And students must be able to comprehend the international dimension of their field of study. “We are preparing a strategy that will ensure our students will succeed in this new and changing global marketplace.”

International students at Ohio State are from 119 different countries including, China (1,161); India (876); South Korea (820); Taiwan (272) and Indonesia (122). Nationally, the leading home countries for international students are India, China, South Korea, Japan and Canada.

The most popular destinations for Ohio State students to study abroad include: the United Kingdom, Italy, China, France, Germany and Spain. Nationally, the leading destinations for studying abroad are the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France and China.

* The IIE definition of international student expands on Ohio State’s and includes two categories of students who are not currently enrolled in classes for credit. They include “Optional Practical Training” students who not currently taking classes, but are continuing their education through practical training in their field of study; and exchange students who are pursuing continuing (non-credit) education.

Global Strategies – A Q&A with William Brustein
Currently, we are developing a business plan and a budget to phase-in the opening of Ohio State’s Global Gateway centers in Greater China, India and Brazil. Working in concert with our China and India Gateway Faculty Advisory Committees – soon we will appoint a faculty committee for Brazil – we hope to open the first office in Shanghai in the early part of 2010 as an exploratory presence for Ohio State. As a starting point, we have just signed a lease for office space in the central business district of Shanghai, and we have appointed an Acting Director for this location. In a subsequent phase we hope to expand this office to a full service center as envisioned with the Gateway initiative.

We want our Gateway office to be independent of any one particular university in China. It is important that we are able to work with all distinguished universities in the country, rather than just one.

Our faculty, our alumni and leaders in the business community are working with us to help shape the type of offerings that might be possible in these locations. For example, we are drawing on the expertise of our faculty to develop executive training programs in supply chain logistics and food safety, so that we can offer a certificate-earning program for Ohio-based business professionals working in Shanghai.

**What other opportunities arise as part of the Global Gateway project?**

Among the Offices Research, Undergraduate Education, and International Affairs, we are investing $100,000 in faculty grant opportunities to develop study abroad programs, research proposals and interactive course modules in the Gateway countries of China, India and Brazil. We
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want to provide faculty with a direct connection to the Gateway countries and a way to enhance our existing partnerships.

- The Gateway Study Abroad Seed Grant is a proposal for faculty to develop and implement three new study abroad programs in Greater China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan), India and Brazil. Three seed grants of $7,500 (one per country) will be awarded;
- In partnership with the Office of Research, we are offering the Gateway Research Grant, which promotes research collaborations between Ohio State faculty and partners in China, India and Brazil, and which are aligned with the themes related to the five Centers of Excellence. Five awards of $10,000 each will be given; and
- In partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Education, the Gateway Interactive Course Module Seed Grant will encourage faculty to adapt existing course content into collaborative activities for a shared time period between an Ohio State class and a class (or classes) in one or more international partner institutions. Five awards of $5,000 each will be distributed.

Three Ohio State faculty awarded Fulbright Scholar honor

Yuval Flicker, a Professor in the Department of Mathematics, Christine Keating, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Women's Studies, and Richard Gordon, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, have been selected as recipients of prestigious Fulbright fellowships. Recipients are selected by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, which administers the program for the U.S. Department of State. The Office of International Affairs serves as the campus representative for the Fulbright Scholars program.

In June 2010 Yuval Flicker will travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina for three months to present a series of lectures to graduate students and faculty, and run a research seminar on current topics in arithmetic geometry at the University of Buenos Aires. His lectures will be based on his current research work with Pierre Deligne, a Field Medalist (comparable to the Nobel Prize for mathematics) at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton.

“I will be describing arithmetic-geometric objects using analytic tools,” Flicker explained. “This work revitalizes a work of Vladimir Drinfeld of Chicago, also a Field Medalist, which has stayed dormant since 1981.
“The work we are doing is revolutionary and opens a new area of research at the crossroads of algebraic geometry, arithmetic and representation theory – of very current interest. It was thought before that the technical difficulties were insurmountable, but we figured out how to open the door to advance the area, making it accessible to graduate students and other researchers. In retrospect, the initial observations were rather straightforward but were never realized,” he said.

The Fulbright award provides Flicker a vehicle to share his research findings and disseminate information in Buenos Aires. He regularly travels to centers of mathematical research and study around the world, especially Germany, Israel, the United Kingdom and France, to lecture and engage in research and collaboration.

Teaching graduate level courses at Ohio State and having the ability to lecture during breaks, Flicker believes he has been fortunate so far. “I am honored to share what I have learned with others,” he said.

Working in Buenos Aires for three months will not only afford Flicker the possibility to enhance the mathematical environment there, but also give him the opportunity to deepen another of his passions: Argentine Tango. He currently serves as the lead educator for TangoOSU (tango.osu.edu), a student organization, and he teaches Argentine Tango on campus whenever the opportunity arises.

“There is a great affinity between mathematics and music,” Flicker explained. “It is well known that some mathematicians play an instrument and are involved with music and/or dance. Dance requires thinking, subtlety, precision; you have to be aware of the space – something geometers have on their minds all the time – not to step on your partner’s toes. Being totally attentive to your partner makes Tango unique.”
Tango is very similar to mathematics. If you don’t work very hard at it, you’ll get nowhere. But it is also lots of fun.”

Flicker earned his PhD from Cambridge University, UK, and conducted post doctoral work at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques located in Bures-Sur-Yvette, France, and at Princeton, Columbia and Harvard Universities. He has been at Ohio State for 20 years.

Melgar-Quinonez works worldwide to determine danger of hunger

Hunger is a reality for millions of families across the globe. And it seems that food insecurity is growing. But no one really knows how many people are in danger of being undernourished and even starved.

Nutritionist Hugo Melgar-Quinonez is working to develop a reliable measurement tool that will give government agencies worldwide exact numbers about how households experience food insecurity and hunger. With the data, countries can pinpoint the causes and consequences, and then establish policies to stave off food insecurity.

Melgar-Quinonez will travel to Rome in March 2010 on an invitation from the United Nations to discuss his research with the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization. FAO has awarded the associate professor of human nutrition $10,000 to review the use of the Spanish-language Latin America and Caribbean Household Food Security Scale and similar tools.

He has looked at its use in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua. In addition, he is interested in whether food security scales could be used in China, India, Kenya, and the Philippines.
“We will talk about the psychometric characteristics of the food insecurity scales. Are they reliable? Do they measure hunger well, and define it in the same way?” Melgar-Quinonez said.

The consequences can be enormous. If a measurement tool works in Brazil, where levels of food insecurity are at 35 percent of the population, will it work in Mexico, where 52 percent of families are confronting the same problem?

The FAO project will help Melgar-Quinonez develop a proposal to do a full study in Central America.

The project has implications for the United States, too. A U.S. Department of Agriculture survey using a similar Household Food Insecurity Scale in 2008 found that 14.6 percent of families are food insecure. That was an increase of 3.5 percent over 2007 levels.

“Food insecurity is sensitive to the economic burdens people face,” Melgar-Quinonez said.

In addition, he noted, “There are different levels of food insecurity. Not all families are starving. Severe food insecurity leads to undernourishment, but mild and moderate food insecurity can actually lead to being overweight.”

He explains that carbohydrates are cheaper and poor families often cannot buy fruit and vegetables necessary for a balanced diet. In addition, as fast food becomes available even in countries far from the U.S., families move away from healthier traditional diets.

In his work with Latino families in Ohio, Melgar-Quinonez has found this pattern follows as immigrants enter the U.S. Unlike past generations, families already are familiar with fast food or have moved to non-traditional diets. Preliminary research at Ohio State is looking at the association between food insecurity and obesity among food stamp recipients.

At a time when food insecurity is a major public health and nutrition issue in developing countries, Melgar-Quinonez’s scholarship is contributing to fight hunger worldwide.

**Research project: American musicians in Cold War cultural diplomacy**
During the Cold War, the U.S. State Department sent musicians to strategically important regions around the world to enhance the image of American culture. Hundreds of musicians performed a broad variety of styles including jazz, classical, folk, blues, country, musical theater, choral, and even avant-garde art music.

Despite the importance of these tours, no scholar has yet done a thorough analysis of the effects of the program. Danielle Fosler-Lussier, an assistant professor in the School of Music, is attempting to do just that, relying not only on material from the State Department and other key archives, but also on privately held materials and oral history research with musicians and diplomats.

One example is the 1965 tour of Latin America by the University of Michigan Jazz Band. The State Department saw the tour as a vehicle for spreading American ideas and instilling respect for American culture. But the way events played out on the ground was more complex. In Bolivia, the jazz band played on the university campus in La Paz because the student leaders used the performance to enhance their own reputations.

The tour gave also American Embassy officials an opportunity to build relationships with student leaders. After the musicians left, embassy officials built on those connections by arranging for the Bolivian student leaders to visit the United States.

Other tours had other effects. A performance of avant-garde compositions in Egypt by the Claremont String Quartet was meant to connect with elite intellectuals. But many audience members worried they could not understand the music, which they saw as an international standard for listening expertise. In this way, the performance fostered a sense of inferiority. Musical tours thus built complex worldwide social relationships.
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An internship in Cologne has historic backdrop

Playing in a lacrosse tournament in the Berlin Olympic Stadium and interning at the German Aerospace Center, opened up a whole new world for Tom Eckardt, a senior double-majoring in German and welding engineering. On his third academic-inspired trip to Germany, Eckardt experienced a piece of history and engaged in a different type of work environment.

He took advantage of playing in a lacrosse tournament with a local club in Cologne whose members he had befriended on his second visit to Germany and the University of Bonn. He was awed to be playing lacrosse in the Berlin Olympic Stadium – a location of such historic significance.

While his study abroad programs to Dresden and Bonn were focused on learning the German language and modern German history, respectively, the internship in Cologne found him having to make a series of adjustments. “It was a little different than any typical American work environment. The Germans are more formal in their day-to-day activities. (It was) a new dynamic I wasn’t used to,” he said.

His research at the aerospace center focused on examining the diffusion bonding in nickel-based superalloys, conducting literary research, preparing materials for experiments and writing a report that was the foundation for the research of the doctoral student who mentored him. While Eckardt was proficient in the German language, he found the most stressful part of his job was translating his report into technical German.

While it was an adjustment to life in Germany, for Eckardt the
experience was something he will never forget. “On my two study experiences and one work experience in Germany, I met people from all over Europe, Asia and North America. Through my interactions with them, I was not only able to see the differing philosophies on work, engineering practices and university studies, but I also discussed politics and social issues,” he said. “Having had these opportunities truly makes me believe that I can work anywhere in the world and in any industry.”

International Student Profile:

City and home country: Mtein, Lebanon

Year in school: Third year of PhD program

Major: Electrical Engineering

What are your career plans after college?
Possibly working for some tech company's R&D.

How long have you been in the United States/Columbus?
Since September 2007 to start my PhD.

Why did you choose Ohio State?
I had the privilege of working with an OSU professor and founder/director of a highly respected lab in the ECE department while doing my master's at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm, Sweden. He liked my work and offered me to pursue my project while assuming a position in his lab in Columbus. This gave me a chance to get a head-start with my research, instead of starting over due to a location/program/lab move.
What has most surprised you about your experience in Columbus and the United States?
How genuinely helpful and kind people are, especially in the Midwest. Oh, and how seriously they take their sports: My first day in Columbus was a game day so you would imagine my surprise seeing all that scarlet, white, and grey!

What has been the hardest thing to adapt to since you’ve come to Columbus?
Having experienced extremely efficient public transportation in Europe and being totally car-free for almost two years, I can say that Columbus slowly brought back the urge to drive a car everywhere I need to go, even to the down-the-street grocer!

What is the most fun/exciting thing you’ve done since you’ve arrived at Ohio State?
I became part of the Lebanese Student Organization, serving as VP during the first year, and then President since December 2008. With all the wonderful people at the organization, we have made a lot of strides in raising awareness and creating a strong and reputable presence on campus, despite the size of the group. I'm especially proud of the many achievements including a magnificent Taste of OSU participation in 2009, the first ever Cultural Cuisine Night at the dining commons, a successful photography exhibition about Lebanon, and more recently planting a Lebanese Cedar tree at the OSU Chadwick Arboretum and Learning Gardens here on the Columbus campus!

How has the Office of International Affairs helped you adapt to campus life?
I had the privilege of working with many of the staff members at OIA and especially on a number of their sponsored events. I really appreciate their hard work in involving students from all over the world in enriching campus life and creating a vibrant international OSU community.

Health and safety requirements in place for Ohio State community traveling abroad

As more students, faculty and staff travel around the world to study independently, conduct research and attend conferences, taking some precautionary steps before making airline reservations can help protect the university community.

When traveling abroad on university business, it is important to notify the Office of International Affairs, take advantage of Ohio State’s supplemental health insurance program and register with the
For faculty and staff who are accompanying a group of students to international locations for the purpose of research, internships, special projects, conferences, and/or service learning, they are required to comply with four Ohio State risk management policies:

- Notify the Office of International Affairs of their travel plans and complete the Faculty International Travel Form at least one quarter in advance of travel.
- Participate in a risk management, health and safety session conducted by the Office of International Affairs. Sessions are offered at least twice every quarter.
- Provide the Office of International Affairs with a list of students’ names and contact information at least one quarter in advance of travel.
- Be aware of any travel warnings that have been issued by the Department of State.

For faculty who are advising students who will be traveling abroad independently, they are required to refer students to the Office of International Affairs at least one quarter in advance of their travel plans, so that they can be advised of the supplemental health insurance program, U.S. embassy registration procedures, and any restrictions that may apply if a travel warning has been issued by the U.S. Department of State.

Faculty and staff who are enrolled in a university medical plan are automatically enrolled in GLOBALCARE, which provides health coverage outside the U.S. However, students are encouraged to apply for Ohio State’s supplemental health plan through the Office of International Affairs.
To register travel plans with the U.S. embassy, students, faculty and staff can visit the travel registration section web pages of the U.S. Department of State.

It is also recommended that students schedule an international travel appointment at the Ohio State Wilce Student Health Center (or a personal physician) at least one full quarter before departure to review any special health concerns and determine vaccinations needed. Faculty and staff may visit the OSU Rardin Family Practice for their international travel medical needs.

**Students across the globe**

Anurupa Roy, a graduate student majoring in geography, spent 10 weeks investigating the local politics of migrant workers in West Bengal, India. Her project, *The Political Economy of Migratory Labor in India*, explores the material and ideological conditions that reproduce the system of migrant labor in India. Mershon funding enabled Roy to complete pre-dissertation research in West Bengal. She spent time at local archives researching publications on migrant conflicts. Roy also was able to build a network of contacts in urban Kolkata as well as in the rural districts of Malda and Darjeeling. She met with political representatives, labor union leaders, migrant workers, and labor contractors to discuss current and historical issues faced by migrant workers in the brick industry. During meetings with local researchers and NGO representatives, she received valuable feedback about her interviewing methodology and future fieldwork.
Mui Choi is an undergraduate student majoring in human resources. “Over winter break, I found myself trekking to the Yucatan Peninsula on the All-Scholars Mexico study abroad program. I expected to be awed by the beaches and to be humbled by the Mayan ruins, but I found myself more drawn to the people and how they have been affected by the shrinkage of the world, in particular the global economy (as illustrated by the presence of American stores). And while many natives have thrived from it, many others are enduring its detrimental effects. When I finally did head home, I returned with more than just an experience—I gained a better understanding of the complex and expansive nature of the global economy.”

**Summer in Prishtina**

Last summer a group from Ohio State traveled to Prishtina, the capital and largest city in Kosovo, to test their newly acquired Albanian language skills, attend a two-week seminar on Albanian language, literature and culture at the University of Prishtina and explore the nuances of everyday life in another country.
University Professor of Linguistics and The Kenneth E. Naylor Professor of South Slavic Linguistics. The Mini-Institute consisted of two compressed three-week courses, Introduction to Albanian Linguistics and Basic Conversational Albanian. Joseph taught the linguistics class and Matthew Curtis, a PhD candidate, taught the conversational class. Funding for the conversation class was provided by Ohio State’s Center for Slavic and East European Studies.

The Albanian linguistics class gave students an overview of key issues in the history, structure, dialectology, and social setting of Albanian, while the conversation class – the first of its kind taught at Ohio State – covered basic sentence structures, greetings and conversing about essentials of daily life.

“In Kosovo, the students gained first-hand experience using their knowledge of the Albanian language and conversing everyday with the Albanian people,” Joseph said. “Their learning was reinforced through the seminar class work and lectures at the university. It was truly a unique experience.”

Outside of the classroom, the group explored Prishtina with its lively market area that is home to many cafes and shops selling byrek (Kosovo-style Balkan spinach, cheese and meat pies). There also were visits to mosques, museums and other sights within the city. As part of the seminar, students took a field trip to Prizren – a major city in Kosovo known for its Turkish-era architecture and a medieval fort – and Pejë, another large city that is located in the mountains near the well known Rugova Gorge. Visits also were made to the birthplace of the Kosovo Liberation Army and to a Classical and Byzantine-era archaeological site outside of Prishtina.

“All in all, the group had an experience they will always remember for a lifetime,” Joseph said. “We all came away from our Kosovo experience with fine memories and we all made good friends.”

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