

One last chance to study abroad in London

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COPY EDITOR

Students who wish to study abroad in London this summer but did not attend the two informational seminars in early February may still have a chance.

These students must make an appointment with the International Studies Office as soon as possible and hand in their \$250 deposit, especially if they are looking to obtain financial aid. Recruitment for the British Studies Program is finalized by Spring Break.

Larry Williams, director and professor of International Studies, said some students start preparing for trips abroad as early as a year in advance.

"They do that because of finances or because of curriculum, the way the course fits into their degree plan," he said. "Some of them have summer plans: They're gone on vacation or they're having their weddings or they're taking classes they can only take at a certain time."

According to Williams, the first matter brought up at the meetings was financial aid.

"Probably about 90 percent of all our students go on financial aid," he said. "And we're very, very fortunate in that the director of financial aid here comes to these seminars. She's a strong supporter of the program. What she does is answer the basic questions one time in front of a large audience, rather than trying to do that on an individual basis. It helps everyone."

The classes students can take in London were also discussed. "We talk about where they're going to be living, we talk about their personal spending, and give them as much basic background info as we can about what studying in London means," Williams said. "The first week in May, we have a formal orientation for all students who are going."

Williams stressed that students who attended one seminar were not expected to attend both. The meetings lasted for about an hour, and students were more than welcome to bring along a parent or friend. A question and answer session followed.

"We urge them to bring their questions, take notes, so they can be sure this is what they want to do," Williams said. "We don't ask them to do much, but of the things we do ask, we ask them to shoulder their part of the responsibility."

Part of this responsibility is making a serious commitment to the program.

"I think that they learn at the informational meetings this is first and foremost an academic program," Williams said. "Don't get me wrong, they're gonna have a great time, but we have some rather strict class attendance policies. We can't and won't be labeled as a tour. Students have to understand that they are expected to get up and go to class, to participate in all class discussions."



THE McCLATCHY TRIBUNE

Williams said classes are small, with about 10 students in each. He stressed that class attendance is mandatory for every session, which generally runs five to six hours a day.

"If they're on a field experience, that may run double that," he said. "I think they're also surprised that their professor, whomever that will be, will only lecture about one-third of the class time. Guest lecturers

will lecture for a third, and then site visits will count for that last third. Everything they talk about in class, they'll see, they'll experience."

Professors who will be teaching in London were also present at the meetings. They already had their syllabi posted on MSU's international Web site, but they took this opportunity to chat with students about what they will be doing in class.

Williams said the students who attend the meetings, and then actually go to London in the summer, are a diverse group.

"We've got some students that are married, some students that are non-traditional," he said. "And then, all majors across the spectrum are represented while studying abroad."

Several students will be taking their second trip abroad, he said.

"Students who went the first time and took a course in their major, then go a second time and take a course in their minor," Williams said.

Williams said the biggest concern for all students is financial aid.

"I think certainly finances have to be of major concern," he said. "One of the things most students are really not aware of is how much money they spend while they're in school."

He said many students think of college expenses as simply paying tuition, room and board. However, Williams said he's seen figures that show just how much an average MSU student spends in a semester.

"It's astounding," he said, "because they talk about gas for their car, or clothes, or going to a concert, or shopping at the mall, or going out to eat. They think that's not college, but the answer is yes, yes it is. Anything that you spend while you're in college is a college expense. What we've tried to do is come close to the overall expenses of a student."

According to Williams, it costs a student about \$3,000 more to attend summer school in London than it would remain in the States.

When students fill out an application for the program, they must make a \$250 deposit.

"That's what we base all of our logistics on: Our transportation, airfare, rooms—we have to pay for all these things up front, so that's why we require a deposit," Williams said.

The deposit enables organizers to reserve rooms, plane seats and buses in London a year in advance.

"What we've done is basically set up another university in London," he said. "If you're going to take a class and put it in your deposit, then that holds your seat on the plane and reserves your room for you."

But what happens if one student decides not to go and his or her class doesn't have enough students?

"People say one student can't make a difference, but in our program they can."

Williams said he realizes things happen to force a student to pull out of the program, but he said only one person had to cancel last summer.

"We took over 60 students from four universities, about 30 of whom were from MSU," he said. "What do we do with that plane reservation? What do we do with that room reservation? It costs us, so we have to be very, very certain that students are going to go and be committed."

Frats band together, tutor elementary students

MARVIN ARTS
FOR THE WICHITAN

Sam Houston Elementary in Wichita Falls has opened its doors to the students of MSU.

The NAACP, Kappa Alpha Psi, Omega Delta Phi, Sigma Lambda Alpha and Delta Sigma Theta are among the groups participating in the mentoring program.

The program was started last November by the NAACP as part of their community service.

NAACP President Dominique Calhoun extended the offer to the other organizations in hopes of getting every organization on campus involved.

"I wanted to let the community know we care about the younger kids because they are part of our future," Calhoun said.

Students from each organiza-

tion dedicate an hour of their time each week to attend the elementary school in which they are assigned a specific child to tutor in the subject they need the most help in. MSU students can either tutor or play with them.

Students from second to sixth grade who are desperately in need of help in reading, mathematics or science are assigned a student mentor.

Second grade students' primary focus is reading because they are still in the process of learning how to read.

There is an after-school reading program in which all second and third grade students participate.

The program lasts from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and the MSU students help the elementary students finish reading their library books.

Sam Houston is a lower-end el-

ementary school in which many of the children are underprivileged and need guidance in their lives.

The school is predominately a minority school with most of the population being Hispanic and African-American.

Many of these children come from single-parent households.

Many MSU students show up during the physical education period.

This is a time when they can sit down and get to know the child and what his or her needs are.

There is no gym at the school.

"We take the kids outside and play basketball with them or football, just to let them know we care," Calhoun said.

Calhoun said he feels college students should want to give back to younger kids so they can get to the point where we are.

He also feels MSU students and the elementary students will benefit from the program greatly.

"For college students I feel it gives them a sense of purpose knowing that through their efforts they have the ability to influence young kids in a positive manner," he said.

As for the children, he said he believes they have become very open to sharing their feelings and life experiences.

This is essential to what makes the program positive.

More than 25 MSU students from different student organizations participate in the program.

"I commend the members of Kappa Alpha Psi, Delta Sigma Theta, Sigma Lambda Alpha and ultimately the NAACP because without these individuals giving their time and commitment, this

program would not be as successful as it is," Calhoun said.

Junior art major Jonathon Thompson, a member of the NAACP, feels this is a great opportunity for him to help younger children grow into better people, and for him to mature into a better man.

"I'm excited that I actually get to help someone develop into a better student and person," he said.

Even though the students are required to mentor an hour a week, they are able to attend as many times as they want.

When a student is assigned to a child he or she is encouraged to attend one hour a week because the child depends on them.

Senior business major Myron Cooper feels mentoring kids helps build his leadership skills.

"This program will help me build my leadership skills because men-

toring a child is a huge responsibility and you have to be dedicated," he said.

At the end of the semester the NAACP plans on giving the kids a pizza party for their hard work once the program is over.

"I want us to treat the kids for a job well done once we are done with the program for the semester," Calhoun said.

The NAACP is also planning on giving the children a field day this month.

The field day is to help the students relax and take their minds off of the pressure of school. It will include events such as races, tug-of-war, basketball and soccer.

It will take place at the MSU soccer field.

Calhoun said he wants this whole program to be fun for every individual participating in it.

Absence

all classes, but in general students are graded according to intellectual performance as opposed to absences.

However, professors design their own attendance policy. They may lower your grade according

to absences or even drop you from the class with either a W or an F. The professor must inform students about the attendance policy in writing at the beginning of the semester.

A professor cannot drop a stu-

dent for excessive absences unless they keep attendance on a daily basis.

Sharon Arnoult, assistant history professor, has a favorite excuse for missing class comes from when she taught at Texas State-San Marcos.

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"Having missed a week of class, a young man informed me it was because his grandmother had been in the hospital with 'prostate trouble,'" Arnoult said. "A very good argument for paying attention in high school biology."



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