Dear Friends,

Things tend to settle down a bit in the summer at BOSP, though as I write we are beginning to send out our three-week seminars to various parts of the world. As you can imagine, the swine flu “epidemic” complicates our work. After broad consultation, we decided to go ahead with our seminar in Oaxaca on health-care-delivery issues. But one of our students heading to Beijing for a seminar on Chinese music was not sick, but this demonstrates again that swine flu when the plane arrived. Fortunately, she had to be quarantined in the hotel for a week because she was sitting too close to two people on the airplane who were diagnosed by Chinese authorities with swine flu when the plane arrived. Fortunately, she was not sick, but this demonstrates again the multiple challenges we face in keeping our programs going and our students studying abroad.

A major challenge these days, as I’m sure you have heard, is the serious financial situation at the university. Rest assured, BOSP will survive fine. The firm support of the university community and of our donors and friends insures that. But we have already engaged in a wide variety of serious belt-tightening measures. We may be faced with additional cutbacks in, and even the closing of, programs. Much depends on the performance of the endowment and the strength of the dollar abroad. Neither can be predicted with certainty. Leave it to say that we are doing everything we can to economize in the home office and abroad without jeopardizing the quality and vibrancy of the programs we run.

Even in this difficult financial environment, we have decided to go ahead with our planning for South Africa. We have chosen faculty and students for the inaugural quarter in Cape Town (winter 2010); we have leased a wonderful facility not far from the University of Cape Town, and we are sprucing up a couple of adjacent guest houses in the Observatory neighborhood where our students will stay. There is great excitement among students and faculty for the program. Through our work there, we intend to establish a dynamic Stanford presence in Africa. All indications are that the university community is fully behind the effort.

With the financial backing of the Provost and Dean’s Office in the School of Humanities and Sciences, and close cooperation with the Department of Iberian and Latin American Cultures (formerly Spanish and Portuguese), we have also joined a consortium in Barcelona. The idea is to diversify our offerings to Stanford students, without expanding the number of centers abroad. In the future, we might well join other consortia as a way to provide greater variety in potential destinations for students’ study abroad.

As our work continues in times of financial constraints, we remain well aware of the long history and distinguished accomplishments of the Bing Overseas Studies Program, not to mention the loyalty of our 25,000-plus alumni and alumnae. We are grateful as always to you for your support and interest.

Norman Naimark
The Burke Family Director of the Bing Overseas Studies Program

Director’s Letter

BOSP Offers Enthusiastic Thanks to Providers of Internships and Opportunities for Service-Learning!

In Volume 6, Number 1 (Summer 2007), Abroad presented several articles featuring the value of internships and service-learning experience for students and efforts to expand their availability to more BOSP centers (you may review any issue of Abroad by going to http://bosp.stanford.edu/publications.html).

From the 27-year-old Knupp Internship Program in Berlin, sponsored generously by the Alfred Knupp von Böhlen and Halbach-Stiftung, Essen, to nascent offerings elsewhere—including the brand-new Asia Internships (see Volume 7, Number 2, Feb. 2009) and service-learning in Cape Town—these pursuits provide students not only insight into the world of work, but also help to strengthen skills like communication and teamwork that are important in all work environments. Internships abroad provide additional development of even broader skills. For example, participating in an internship or volunteer opportunity abroad refines not only “on-the-job” skills students would enhance in a domestic internship, but increases most especially global and cultural awareness.

Recognizing the values of internships, the Bing Overseas Studies Program (BOSP) has long endeavored to include them among the offerings available to students who go overseas with Stanford. Now there is a variety of internships offered at almost all the centers. Over one thousand BOSP students have pursued an internship, and BOSP wants now to recognize, honor, and thank the many providers of these splendid internships for our students. Without these generous and dedicated providers, we could not offer internships, and thus Bing Overseas Studies proudly presents the following names of providers during the academic year 2008-09 for readers’ information and recognition as well:

Chile
Acción Emprendedora
Anthropological Museum of Santiago
China (the mainland)
Amboh Education Group
The Beijing Center for Policy Research
Cajing Magazine
Immersion Guides
Symbate Healthcare
United Nations Development Programme, China
France
Association Bellevue
American Chamber of Commerce CEVIPOF
Comptoirs du Multimédia
Hôpital Cochin
Hôpital Saint-Joseph
Institut Supérieur d’Electronique de Paris
L’Orsay
Orphérons Sida International
OFCE
Orange Telephone Company
Radio France International
Roxanne Fria
Théâtre du Chaos
Virtuozi SA

Germany
Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty AG, München
Bayerische Motoren Werke AG, München
Deutche Bank AG, Frankfurt a.M.
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik (DGAP e.V.), Berlin
Deutsches Institut für Ernährungsforschung (DIFE), Potsdam
Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW), Berlin
Ehren Fordyce/Cabula96, Berlin
Elba-Maschinenbau Liekmieki KG, Höfftern
Feuerwear, Köln
Fraunhofer-Institut für Fabrikbetrieb und Automatisierung (IFF), Magdeburg
Fraunhofer-Institut für Solare Energietechnik (ISE), Freiburg i.Br.
Freie Universität Berlin: Arbeitsstelle Transnationale Beziehungen, Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik (ATASp)
Galerie Aurel Scheibler/ScheiblerMitte, Berlin
Grüne Liga Berlin e.V., Berlin
Internationales Designzentrum Berlin (IDZ)
Institut für Technik und Entwicklungsbewerbung (ITZ), Berlin
Institut für Kultural Diplomacy, Berlin
ITM Sports GmbH, Bad Nauheim
Kostas Murkudis/Dal Canton, Berlin
L.E. Vision. Film- und Fernsehproduktion GmbH, Leipzig
MAJA-WERK Manfred Jarosch GmbH & Co. KG, Kasendorf
Meinert-Design GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin
Tiziano Manca, Berlin
Military Historisches Museum der Bundeswehr, Dresden
OLBRISH b. Ideen in Leder, Berlin
Robert-Koch-Institut, Berlin
Rolls-Royce Deutschland Ltd & Co KG, Berlin
Sartorius AG, Goettingen
Science House, Beijing Center for Policy Research
Simon & Schuster: The Work of Art: Design, Production, and Commerce in the Roman Empire
Sportjugend Berlin beim Landessportbund Berlin e.V.
Stiftung Essen, to nascent offerings abroad.

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New Advisory Council for Stanford in Oxford Seeks Volunteers

Are you an alum of Stanford in Oxford (now The Thomas and Janet Montag Center for Overseas Studies in Oxford)? Interested in helping shape the future of the program and deepening ties between two of the world’s great universities?

We are a group of alumni launching the first ever advisory council for a BOSP Center and seek 3-4 others to join us. The Council will meet once a quarter (location to depend on the composition of the council), consult closely with the Program’s Director, Geoffrey Tyack, proffer ideas on the long-term operational health of Stanford in Oxford; and serve as a wellbeing for new initiatives (internships, connecting students with academic mentors, fundraising). The only qualifications: you studied at Stanford in Oxford and have an active interest in the future of the program. As this is a new initiative, much of the direction of the Council will be defined by its membership. For further information and to register interest, please send e-mail to David P. Arulanantham at dp@stanfordalumni.org or write to him at Unit 6120, Box 1000, APO AE 96562-1000, USA.


Stanford Students and Florence: A 50-Year Love Affair

Stanford in Florence will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 2010. In late September, 1960, the first group of students and faculty arrived at the renowned Villa San Paolo. In 1973 Stanford in Florence moved to the Villa Il Salviatino and in 1988 to its present location. But Stanford in Florence is Stanford’s oldest program in the same city since its founding, and consequently it has put down very deep and extensive roots there. More students—a little over 3,000—have attended Stanford in Florence than any other center. In another sign of loyalty, Stanford in Florence has had only two directors in all those years: Professor Giuseppe Mammarella 1969-1992 and Professor Ermelinda Campiani since 1992.

What has inspired so many students to study Italian and go to Florence? There are famous and incomparable history, art, music, and a culture that reflects like no other the brilliance of the Renaissance, all of which minus Florence like no other place in the country. But, almost surprisingly, many students select Florence for other reasons. Here Professor Campiani shares her observations about why students go to Florence.

The fact that so many American students and particularly Stanford students keep coming to Italy, and to Florence in particular, puzzles me. Why do they study Italian? And why do they choose one of the oldest among the very old European cultures in some braver and newer world cultures? The simple answer might be that they want to experience Florence and its enormously rich culture. But there’s much more to it.

Might one even posit that the majority of American students choosing Florence is of Italian descent? That would not be accurate since Stanford in Florence usually counts a very small number of them and instead has consistently attracted cadres of many different ethnicities, a veritable microcosm of the campus. What about the cuisine? Almost everybody agrees that Italian food is delicious, always fresh and never processed; Italy is a country of lemons and basil still taste as they should and where a panino can represent a gourmet experience. But one can perfectly delicious Italian food at home in the U.S. Why then do American students, and most importantly Stanford students, keep coming to Florence? I believe a prime reason is to be found in the students’ written applications to the Florence Program and then in their actual experiences here.

Students in Engineering come to Stanford in Florence because they want to learn from and about the engineers of the Renaissance. That’s why they visit the Leonardo Museum in Vinci, re-build his machines and see for themselves how they work. They also climb in between the inner and outeragonal shells of stone and brick that make up the Cupola of Florence’s cathedral to see for themselves how Brunelleschi devised the large ribs that have been keeping the whole thing together for centuries. They come to Italy to study hydrology and water-resources systems (from the aqueducts of Ancient Rome, to the water supply system of Medieval Siena, to the 1966 flood in Florence). And they come to Italy to explore the foundations of what we now call environmental engineering. They analyze its history in ancient Rome focusing in particular on the ancient Roman drainage and wastewater disposal accomplished by the Cloaca Maxima.

Florence draws majors in English and Comparative Literature who want to focus on Dante and Boccaccio and learn the language and the culture that informed their works, in order to appreciate more thoroughly Chaucer’s Tales and his Travels in the Chaucer. They want to figure out why the two Florentine authors chose to write in the vernacular because only then will they be able to fully understand why Chaucer himself did the same. These students travel to Florence because they want to re-trace the literary itineraries of Shakespeare, Goethe, Stendhal, Addison, Henry James, and Twain and to look at the city through the eyes of these literary giants.

Computer Science students choose Florence because they want to put technology to task, as they did a few years ago under the guidance of Professor Marc Levoy, when they scanned Michelangelo’s David in the Accademia Museum. Florence attracts students interested in Art History because they are not content to study Renaissance masterpieces solely in books or on slides. They want to stand inside the Cappella Brancacci and the Badia di Santa Maria Novella and see for themselves how, from Brunelleschi’s “optical geometry,” Masaccio devised perspective. It is only by standing in front of Masaccio’s Trinità, they argue, that one can adequately measure its proportions and truly see how perspective works.

Many students taking Human Biology learn in Florence how human anatomy was first portrayed and conceived, as they did when taking Professor Scott Delp’s class devoted to “Anatomy and Biomechanics in Italian Renaissance Art.” Professor Delp, who was himself a student at Stanford in Florence, has come back twice to teach anatomy, physiology, and biomechanics as they are portrayed in Renaissance works of art. In Florence, students can also focus on the connections between medicine, illnesses, artists and art works as they did when taking a class with Professor Regina Casper. But students come to Florence also to study all about Galileo and the Birth of Modern scientific thought. Their do-to-list includes a visit to La Specola Museum as well as to the two oldest anatomical theaters in the world, in Bologna and Padua. They also want to focus on current Italian health-care policies and figure out, through field-work and internships (that...
In March, 1976, I was preparing to celebrate my 20th birthday. I thought I was quite handsome, intelligent and attractive as well – did I mention that? – and I was on a series of well focused steps (something that was too rare during my tenure on this continent). I had just written my application to spend Spring Quarter at the Stanford-at-Florence program. Really, I was rather anxious about it, I just another small step for a young man, I thought.

My step and pulse sped along as Winter Quarter drew to a close. The Bobblehead Howard's crew. (I can still see the sunlight beaming through warm, wool eucalyptus branches upon the balcony of our 2nd floor triple.) I had developed a rhythm to my school life manage the academic requirements with some degree of success. Yet I had as little idea of my ultimate professional ambitions as I had within a month of moving to the campus in autumn, 1974.

My roommates inadvertently inserted themselves into the whirl of my life, offering their own outlooks and adventures and misadventures: Joe Damassa, Bill Maze, Louis Johns, and Jeff Barrow. And now, I was onboard a eastbound jet, selected for a passage to an adventure which seemed unreal, yet inexhaustible. Jack Crammy, a buddy from Bobblehead, was to be my roomie in Florence. And other familiar faces drifted sleepily by me on the airplane—all crammed together like seeds in a pod, ready for germination in the fertile soil of the Old World. I really didn't feel like an ambassador, per se, just tired, really tired.

American travel to Europe in 1976, I believe, involved a semimodern experience mind-set so much different from my personal experiences. The old continent was and is real, but relatively limited and unobstructed. The Vietnam War had ended ingloriously in Spring, 1975, and President Nixon no longer darkened the friendly skies.

I had spent my first four quarters at Stanford as a resident of stately Roble Hall, pampered and well nourished by the hard working diligent staff of Mrs. Howard's crew. (I can still see the sunlight beaming through warm, wool eucalyptus branches upon the balcony of our 2nd floor triple.) I had developed a rhythm to my school life manage the academic requirements with some degree of success. Yet I had as little idea of my ultimate professional ambitions as I had within a month of moving to the campus in autumn, 1974.

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Chinese-American and American-Chinese: A Unique Background

Xiaodong Shen has been Director of Stanford's center in Beijing for the past two years. Here she tells us something of her own background and how it fits splendidly with her present work.

Despite the worldwide economic downturn and the all-harming crisis, the year 2009 marks an important time in my life and inspires me in hope for a better future. As a Chinese student who studied American history and ethnic cultures at Yale University in the 1980s, I take great satisfaction in seeing Sasha Williams at Stanford in Oxford is one of these dynamos, and I can share with my American and Chinese students my own study-abroad experience as well as my intercultural knowledge and insights and my reflections on this learning process. I have come to realize that my continuous learning and teaching not only help prepare the younger generation for more effective global leadership and service, but also help me build a more harmonious world and nourish in me an abiding faith and hope for a better future.

Somehow, the years are important, but what I get back is something different to my desk, not simply awe from its population and the competition. Thirty years have passed as we witnessed great expansion in economic, cultural, and educational exchanges between the two nations. In the field of education, American universities have long become the top choice for Chinese students to pursue their graduate studies abroad. At the same time, more and more American undergraduates, attracted by amazement at China's fast-growing economy and fascination with its long history and culture, or simply awe from its population and geographical size, have become interested in learning the Chinese language and choosing China as a destination for their study-abroad experiences. Stanford and Peking University students are not much different in this regard: they have much in common, and they want to learn more about each other. The Stanford Program in Beijing provides them with common ground on which to meet and a platform for facilitating dialogue and exchange of views.

30 years ago, in 1979, the United States and China ended a three-decade impasse and re-established diplomatic relations with each other. At the time I was a student majoring in English at Nanjing University in China. I vividly recall when my professors and classmates clandes- tinely listened to the Voice of America and learned the news of Deng Xiaoping’s visit to the United States. We knew something exciting was going to happen in our lives, and it would be a change for the better. Change came sooner than expected. In late 1979, the Chinese government was ready to send its first group of 50 top scientists to study and do research at American universities. At the same time a dozen undergraduates were selected from various Chinese universities to study hu- manities and social science in the United States. I was fortunate to be among them, and this was a big step forward after the end of the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s. As our flight took off—and global competition was then our goal and the competition intense. Some doors opened casually, but the fortitude needed to go through them is correspondingly greater.

So, am I sitting pretty, without demands being made upon my abilities or my low worth, lack of self-confidence, are as likely to arise with our very able and, some would say, advanced students as they are in any other body of young peo- ple finding their feet in the world, but may not be a problem. In return they make me feel happy, nevertheless, served a purpose—it made me realize that it is people that I can share with my American and Chinese students more than the job I am currently doing. I find nothing rewards me more than the job I am currently doing. I can share with my American and Chinese students my own study-abroad experience as well as my intercultural knowledge and insights and my reflections on this learning process. I have come to realize that my continuous learning and teaching not only help prepare the younger generation for more effective global leadership and service, but also help me build a more harmonious world and nourish in me an abiding faith and hope for a better future.

PROFILE: Stephanie Williams, Stanford in Oxford

There is a go-to person (sometimes more than one!) at every BOSP center. He or she knows virtually everything and everyone, answers obscure questions in a flash, and is central to helping the program run smoothly and well. Furthermore, this person seems almost to always be equipped with a welcoming smile and a ready willingness to be interrupted. Stephanie Williams at Stanford in Oxford is one of these dynamos, and Abroad is happy to present her observations about her work.

More than half my working life has been spent at the Stanford Program in Oxford. Why? Am I simply unadventur- ous? Am I not prepared to take myself out of this comfort zone? Am I reluctant to expose myself to new experiences? Having landed myself with quite a large bubble of pride and it would be a change for the better. Change came sooner than expected. In late 1979, the Chinese government was ready to send its first group of 50 top scientists to study and do research at American universities. At the same time a dozen undergraduates were selected from various Chinese universities to study hu- manities and social science in the United States. I was fortunate to be among them, and this was a big step forward after the end of the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s. As our flight took off—and global competition was then our goal and the competition intense. Some doors opened casually, but the fortitude needed to go through them is correspondingly greater.

Nearly every working day brings something different to my desk, not only in terms of a task, but far more importantly, through the people. I didn’t imagine myself in education administration—who does? What would be the qualifications—a love of organis- ing other people, a desire to have a finger in every pie, and a natural tendency to bossiness? I am qualified then, but I wanted to write poetry and plays, or to be a singer and an actress. Even over- wearing vanity cannot ignore the signs of limited talent indefinitely, however. I flirted briefly with the idea of academia, going so far as to start a B.Sc in Mathematics. Whence I entertained the notion that Partial Differential Equations and I could ever become comfortable bedfellows beats me. Spending that year, alienated and un- happy, nevertheless, served a purpose—it made me realize that it is people that I am about.

A Business Studies diploma brought me to work with contracts in the power indus- try. Thankfully for my sanity, I was sought out by Oxford Brooks University, to work in student housing and welfare, and then as conference organiser. After my son was born, I started a catering business, taught English to French students through the medium of drama, ran my husband’s estate agency business, and then got a job with an American study abroad programme. Luckily for me, quite soon after my daughter was born, the position at Stanford fell vacant. My bubble of pride at being appointed slightly dented when a staff member told me that, on first meeting me, she had thought I was my daughter’s grandmother, but despite this check to my confidence, I embraced Stanford with enthusiasm.

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Adiós to Fabia Fuenzalida

Every BOSP center has its “master sergeant,” the person to whom students, administrators, and faculty alike turn with their questions, the person who knows more than anyone else how the center functions. Fabia Fuenzalida belongs to this select group and has charmed and helped generations at Stanford’s Center in Santiago de Chile. As she moves on to a new life back in the U.S., Fabia says farewell:

I would never have guessed, years ago, that what started as lending a hand with some early financial details of the nascent Stanford in Santiago Program would result in 15 years of helping to receive students and facilitating their exposure to Chile and South America at Stanford in Santiago, working with the outstanding staff at the Bing Overseas Studies Program on campus and in all the overseas Centers. May overseas experiences continue to enrich students and faculty, and all who compose the Stanford Community worldwide! Gracias.

One Family’s Experience with the Stanford Overseas Opportunity

Mary Ellen Nordyke-Grace, J.D., Stanford ’75, never imagined that four of her children would also go overseas as undergraduates, three in BOSP’s programs. Here she—and they—tell us about those experiences.

Fall and winter quarters of 1974-1975 at the Stanford Overseas Program in Tours, France, were memorable for me. My adventures included singing in a local Ancient Music Choir with practices held in a church basement, low-cost travel around the Continent, and returning to the Stanford campus to help set up the French Theme House (La Maison Française), still there. Ed.) while completing a B.A. in French and B.S. in Civil Engineering.

Little did I know that four of my children (fourth generation at Stanford) would also take advantage of going abroad during their undergraduate years at Stanford. Three attended Bing Overseas Studies Program (BOSP) centers for one quarter – Paris, France, the marine biology program based in Queensland, Australia; and Berlin, Germany. One elected to go to Barcelona, Spain, for a quarter through Portland State University. Upon starting the curriculum, I was immediately surprised by the size of our group (seven people), and by our language and cultural differences. The snorkeling was fantastic, and our research projects benefited from close oversight by our professors. We all picked up local phrases and ways of doing things.

Cameron Nordyke-Grace, Human Biology, Stanford ’08 (now working in San Francisco at Triage Consulting Group), decided to explore Barcelona with the ALBA program through Portland State University. Upon starting the curriculum, I was immediately surprised by the size of our group (seven people), and by our relatively permissive class schedule (sparing three to four hours of class time per day). While unforeseen, these factors fostered two seemingly contrasting abroad opportunities: first, the small class sizes allowed for focused, repeated interactions with instructors. One of my weekly classes involved lively discussions between just me, another Stanford student, and a highly esteemed scholar on the history of European Integration. Second, less time in a classroom allowed for exploration of Barcelona and other cities. The ALBA program encouraged immersion into the Iberian cultures as much as spending time in a computer lab or classroom. The opportunities offered by this program made one of the true highlights of my college experience. (BOSP is now also the source of advice and assistance for students interested in non-Stanford programs abroad.

Trevor Robert Grace, Biomechanical Engineering, Stanford ’10, decided early in my academic career at Stanford that a quarter of studying abroad was an important part of how I wanted to grow and diversify my experiences as an undergraduate. I knew that living for a time in another culture gives one a fresh new perspective on life at home, and I sought through a quarter in Berlin the very eye-opening experience that is characteristic of life in a new culture. Although many of my expectations for life in a foreign culture were met, it was definitely a novel experience that presented itself with unknown surprises. Weekends traveling and weekdays in Berlin gave me extensive time getting used to new cultural practices and norms, and I found that my original assumptions about life abroad were changed when I realized that societies and cultures all have similar characteristics, despite being clearly distinct. One of the most important pieces of wisdom that I will forever keep from my time in Germany is that most of communication between individuals relies on non-verbal cues. The German language, being the barrier to most of my communication to everyday Berliners, unexpectedly did not hinder me from significantly interacting and understanding them through body language and facial expressions. The entire Grace family is so thankful for the opportunities provided by the Bing Overseas Study Program. (And Abroad thanks the Graces for their contribution!)
Exciting Academic Innovation and Breadth in Santiago

Iván Jakšić, Director of BOSP’s center in Santiago, Chile, outlines ways in which his concepts for the center’s programs are being realized.

Since the retirement of Dr. Edmundo Fuenzalida, the previous director, the Bing Overseas Studies Program in Santiago has embarked on a series of changes, from the move to new facilities, to new curricular offerings, to a series of new academic and cultural programs. The new facilities are located at a convenient and accessible spot in the Providencia district in the capital city of Santiago, with easy access to public transportation and within walking distance to shops and to many of the students’ houses. The space itself has been modified over the last couple of years to accommodate lecture and seminar rooms, a computer laboratory, a room for larger events, leisure space, and a small resource library. The Center also has wireless internet access, and state-of-the-art equipment for teaching purposes.

The curriculum has been modified to reflect students’ changing interests, as well as the different cultural, political, and economic environments of Chile and Latin America. More courses are taught that are wider in scope, often focusing on Chile, but also covering all of the major countries of Latin America. Other new courses reflect the richness of the literature and art of the region, without detracting from the traditional emphasis on popular political science and economics courses. What is new and different is that the Center is now able to offer a sequence of courses, throughout the year, on the marine and terrestrial ecology of Chile. These courses have been very popular and particularly attractive to students in the sciences. At the same time, they meet Chilean students and discuss relevant issues in Spanish. In essence, the overall purpose of the Santiago Program is to provide the most meaningful academic and cultural experience possible to our undergraduates. We hope the programs currently in place will help us to attract more students in the sciences and humanities, while providing unique courses on a variety of topics to all who wish to immerse themselves in the region.