Dear Friends,

I write this "letter from the Director" on the airplane returning from the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Florence center. It was a lovely occasion, attended by over 450 Stanford alumni, faculty and administrators, students, donors, and Italian guests. We had wonderful food (of course!) and a rich intellectual repast, with panel discussions, guided study tours, and intense conversation. It was also the perfect opportunity to express our gratitude to Professor Giuseppe Mammarella, who has served the Florence program with such brilliance and dedication since its inception. Our thanks go in particular to Linda Campani, our intrepid Florence director, for developing the idea for the reunion and carrying it out so flawlessly. With this issue of Abroad, we send to you President Emeritus Gerhard Casper’s keynote address: "Why Stanford in Florence?" It was a stimulating kick-off to several days of interesting discussions.

By the way, we have signed a lease for a new home in Florence, the second floor and balcony of the Palazzo Capponi, a beautiful Renaissance venue a few blocks down the Arno from our present location. The BOSP Advisory Council has contributed most of the funding for our part of the renovations and the move itself. We expect to be in the new surroundings—with really glorious and evocative Florentine paintings and furniture—within two years.

As of September 1, we will have a new Director of the Bing Overseas Studies Program, Robert Sinclair, Professor of Materials Science and Engineering and Charles M. Pigott Professor in the School of Engineering, and a "Brit" by birth and upbringing. Bob has taught for us abroad twice and brings with him great international experience in engineering education, which should serve him well in expanding the reach of our programs. As you may be aware, our "boss," John Bravman, Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, has left the university to become President of Bucknell University. We will sorely miss John and his enthusiasm for Overseas Studies. But we are pleased that the Senior Associate Vice Provost, Prof. Harry Elam of the Drama Department, has been named to step into John’s place. Harry attended our Directors’ Meeting last summer and has already demonstrated a lot of interest in and support of our programs.

My five years as Director of BOSP have gone by very quickly indeed. I have enjoyed the job to no end. There were some very tough budget issues and a few bumpy spots along the way. But I am exceptionally fortunate to have been able to rely on colleagues in the home office and abroad who are first-rate professionals. I have enjoyed working with the Directors of our Centers, who are responsible for so much of the brilliant success of our programs. As an administrative organization and as an integral part of Stanford’s educational mission, we have terrific support from university leaders, from the trustees, and from our faculty. The BOSP Advisory Council has been a dream to work with; the Council members have been both generous in their support and wise in their advice.

Maybe the best part of the job has been talking to, hearing from, and reading the reflections of Stanford students who have gone abroad with our programs. That we can contribute in some way to the sense of intellectual, academic, emotional, and spiritual growth they all seem to experience—just as you yourselves experienced it in the past—has been the ongoing source of enormous satisfaction to me. I go on sabbatical September 1 and return to full-time teaching the following September knowing that BOSP will continue doing the essential work of educating Stanford students to be world citizens and future leaders.

Norman Naimark
The Burke Family Director of the Bing Overseas Studies Program
Sinclair Named New Director of BOSP

Robert Sinclair, Professor of Materials Science and Engineering and the Charles M. Pigott Professor in the School of Engineering, has been named Director of the Bing Overseas Studies Program (BOSP) effective September 1, 2010. He will succeed Norman Naimark, the Robert and Florence McDonnell Professor of Eastern European Studies, Director since 2005.

As BOSP’s Director, Sinclair, who joined Stanford’s faculty in 1977, takes on responsibility for leading a program that now includes centers in Australia, Beijing, Berlin, Cape Town, Florence, Kyoto, Madrid, Moscow, Oxford, Paris and Santiago. Besides the eleven programs, BOSP also includes consortial programs in Barcelona and Kyoto as well as international internships.

Report from New BOSP Center in Cape Town

Dani Uribe (‘11, International Relations) was a student in the first group at BOSP’s new center in Cape Town, South Africa, this past winter. Here she tells Abroad about students’ experiences.

This past winter quarter, twenty-four of us became pioneers in Stanford’s first ongoing study-abroad program in Africa. The Bing Overseas Studies Center in Cape Town is designed to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas between Stanford students and the diverse communities found in Cape Town, home to individuals of countless nationalities and backgrounds, where our academic and personal interactions combined to make a uniquely enriching and inspiring experience.

We spent ten weeks exploring the city and its surrounding townships, being increasingly more aware of—and shocked by—the inequalities that still exist in South Africa. They manifest themselves in a variety of ways, from the most common housing issues to the more intricate failures of the educational system. We visited the monumental and historic places that attracted foreigners—from the Portuguese, to the Dutch, and the English—and found ourselves attracted and intrigued not only by the beauty, but also by the optimism and the ironies that comprise the “end” of apartheid.

Through the service-learning component of the program, we were directly placed amidst that optimism and those ironies that define the South African experience for many in this emerging African democracy. Although it was not required as part of the program’s curriculum, every student chose to engage in a service-learning placement. The townships are full of poverty and misfortune, yet are also replete with innovation and smiles brighter and more genuine than many of us had ever seen in our lives. While we visited Rosie, a black woman who started a soup kitchen for the kids in Cape Town’s largest township, Khayelitsha, she shared beautiful, inspiring words that characterize the determination and resilience of those with whom we were working closely. We learned graphically from their efforts to make their communities better places to call home. She said, as she crossed both arms (scared from a severe burn while cooking for 200 children one morning in 2007), that she knows her people do not have much, are not as fortunate as we are, and do not have enough to eat or fancy things. However, something they did have was the reason she woke up every morning: “We have each other, and we have our smiles. We will always give you our smiles, that you can count on.”

While in Cape Town, we embarked on invaluable individual quests where our ambitions, goals, and the ideals we had coming into the program to serve others ultimately served us. Students worked alongside NGO’s in areas such as microfinance, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, sustainable urban agriculture, homelessness, leadership, and entrepreneurship. In every setting we would talk about our work, the difficulties we faced, and the challenges that defined how we approached our service. In every setting we sought to complement the academics, research, and our time at the various organizations with the experiences of our house, class, and journey-mates to better understand the ever-changing society around us. We have been inspired to continue pushing ourselves to learn from our service in diverse communities, hoping to extend courage and determination to be of better use to our society and the world.
An Emotional Return to Florence!

Mike Armstrong ('70) majored in Italian and went to Florence with Stanford in Italy, Group XVI, Spring-Summer, 1968. After working as Assistant to the Directors with several later groups, he spent some years living in Florence. Mike attended the celebration of Stanford's fiftieth anniversary in Florence on June 20-22 and tells About the festivities.

On Sunday, June 20, 2010, some 450 people gathered at the Grand Hotel in Florence for a reception and buffet dinner hosted by Helen and Peter Bing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the beginning of Stanford in Italy. We were welcomed by Linda Campani, the current director of The Breyer Center for Overseas Studies in Florence, who reminded us of how appropriate that venue was, since it was in that hotel in 1884 that Leland Stanford, Jr., died of typhoid while on a grand tour of Europe with his parents. It was, after all, to honor his memory that Leland and Jane Stanford founded The Leland Stanford Junior University in 1885. After Linda’s warm welcome, we dined on excellent Tuscan cuisine accompanied by a fine Chianti and then heard additional words of welcome from Norman Naimark, the current director of the Bing Overseas Studies Program.

Further welcomes and recollections came from Giuseppe (Beppe) Mammarella, the first and now former director of Stanford in Italy and esteemed and much-loved professor of political science, and former U.S. Ambassador to Italy and former Stanford student in Florence (Group XVII, Fall-Winter, 1968-69), Ronald Spogli. Beppe’s thoughts about the origin of the program and its constant need to balance continuity and change were particularly enlightening. Ron’s experience as a student and Assistant to the Directors plus his recent ambassadorship led him to emphasize the humanity of the Italian people as one of the chief contributors to the flourishing of Stanford in Italy. The entire ground floor of the hotel was swreen with Cardinal red, and many current and former Stanford students in Florence acted as our registrars and hosts. Thanks to all of them for a job well done.

The celebration continued Monday morning with a panel of alumni and alumnae reminiscing about their experiences as students. This event was held in the Salone dei Cinquecento in the Palazzo Vecchio, a massive room in the city hall and the home of Florence’s governing body centuries ago. Florence’s mayor, Matteo Renzi, welcomed everyone from the heart and told us of the special connection that exists between Stanford University and his city. He stressed that he wanted us to feel that his city was our city during the celebration. Florence is the only overseas city in which Stanford has had a continuous presence for fifty years.

We next heard from President Emeritus Gerhard Casper who offered many compelling reasons why Stanford University has and should maintain a study center in Florence, not the least of which is the art for which the city is world-famous. Then each of the alums on the panel offered thoughts and feelings about his or her time as a student in Florence: in many cases that experience was, indeed, life-changing. Bob Burke, past chair of the Bing Overseas Studies Advisory Council and former student in Florence, masterfully led the panel through a question-and-answer session that covered such considerations as the language requirement for attending Stanford in Italy, the curriculum in Florence, and whether the program should require a minimum stay overseas. There was substantial support for the proposition that we all should do whatever we can to help students to go abroad for whatever amount of time they can manage because the value of that experience simply cannot be matched on the home campus. The time abroad, of course, needs to be structured to some extent if it is to be educationally meaningful, and many expressed thanks to Stanford for its program. After the panel discussion, there were approximately 20 course offerings (similar to the familiar Classes Without Quizzes at reunion weekends in California) from which to choose, including tours of museums, wine tasting, walking tours, art and architecture, and visits to many other special places in Florence, including the Ferragamo museum.

Tuesday morning we reconvened, but in the Aula Magna, the grand assembly hall of the University of Florence, for a roundtable discussion of “The Status Quo: European Politics and Economics.” We were honored to have the shared thoughts, not to mention senses of humor, of the following: Professors Gerhard Casper, Judy Goldstein, Roberto d’Alimonte, David Kennedy, Beppe Mammarella, and former Ambassador Ron Spogli. Professor Leonardo Morlino, President of the International Political Science Association, moderated the discussion.

Professor Mammarella presented the historical context of the European Union, and lively interaction followed among all the panelists on the subjects of the expansion of the European Union, the Eurozone, Italy’s role in the European economy, the current global economic situation, and the American view of the politics and economy of Europe, as well as some very interesting Italian views on the effect of American influence in these areas. At the conclusion of a spirited question-and-answer session, we adjourned to a light lunch served in the garden of the University, where there was ample time to greet old and new friends and head off to our afternoon classes, including visits to the Science Museum, Villa I Tatti, Villa San Paolo, Villa Salviatino and a surprise walk through the Vasari corridor connecting Palazzo Vecchio with the Pitti Palace for one lucky group who signed up to visit the hidden gems of Florence!

For those of us who were fortunate to have been able to attend this celebration, it was an emotional return to the city where we spent anywhere from an academic quarter to many years. We were thoroughly entertained in grand style and enjoyed thought-provoking discussions on many topics relevant to our study in Florence. The chance to see old friends, Italian and American, and to make new ones was an integral part of our return, and to gain a current understanding of the Italy that we love was a most welcome privilege for us. Most of all, the three days were infused with an aura of vivid memories: of earlier years in our lives, the historical context of the European Union, the contemporary global economic situation, and thoughtful and interesting discussions with the panelists.

A heartfelt Grazie Mille to Linda Campani, Fosca D’Acierno, Laura Umbreit, Anna Nicoletti, and all the staff in California and Florence who worked for so many months to put together this splendid celebration!
Italian Foreign Policy: Bantam or Heavy-Weight?

Ronald P. (Ron) Spogli (AB ’70, History) spent two quarters in Florence as a member of Italy XVII (Fall and Winter, 1988-89) and returned as Assistant to the Directors for Groups XX, XXI, and XXII, in 1970 and 1971. Little did he know he would return to Italy again in 2005 as Ambassador of the United States to Italy. Here he assesses Italy’s international role in recent years.

As U.S. Ambassador to Italy from August 2005 until February 2009, I spent a good deal of my time managing the political relationship between the two countries. On the foreign-policy front, although a close ally of the United States since World War II and often a partner on key issues, Italy had developed in Washington a not altogether flattering reputation. Disappointment centered chiefly on the country’s chronic political instability and the widespread perception of its inability to project influence commensurate with its capabilities and prominence as a member of the G-8. However, I argued passionately and often as Ambassador that, at the very least, such a view was not an accurate reflection of the country in the first decade of the New Millennium.

For more than sixty years, Rome and Washington have had an active and fruitful foreign-policy relationship, and Italy has supported most issues of vital importance to America. It was a founding member of NATO in 1949 and the EU’s precursor—the European Coal and Steel Community—in 1951. In addition, Italy became a member of the United Nations in 1955. In the 70’s and 80’s, despite Italy’s being home to the largest Communist Party in Western Europe and boasting close ties to the Soviet Union, the United States could generally count on support from Rome on most significant foreign-policy questions. Although rocked by the Mani Pulite scandal for the better part of the 1990’s and internally preoccupied as a consequence, in 1999 Italy began to make foreign-policy decisions which have served to raise considerably its international profile and further solidify a close relationship with the U.S.

In the late 1990’s systematic extermination of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo by Serbia provided a major opportunity for Italy to assert its leadership. The international community, increasingly outraged by the reports of atrocities, including mass murder, forcible displacements on a vast scale, use of civilians as human shields, and widespread rape and looting, was unable to secure United Nations authorization to intervene because of a threatened Russian veto. The European Union also could not intercede when several of its members, fearing repercussions from their own ethnic minorities, would not support military action to dissuade Slobodan Milošević. A resolution authorizing the Secretary-General of NATO to use force was reaffirmed in January 1999, providing the basis for a U.S.-led bombing campaign in which all members of the alliance made contributions, foremost among them Italy.

Indeed, the country played a crucial role in this effort to stop ethnic cleansing. NATO conducted operations principally from an air base in Aviano near Udine where American military personnel have been hosted since 1954. However, according to agreements between the two countries, any military action originating from bases in Italy must have the prior approval of the Italian government. The Clinton Administration, deeply disturbed by Milošević’s intransigence, determined to act and approached the government of Premier Massimo D’Alema seeking permission to begin military activities from Aviano. Bombing commenced in late March and lasted until early June.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that this decision ushered in a decade-long period of increased involvement by Rome in international crises. However, at the time, this interventionist decision was extraordinarily controversial, engendering large protests around the country. Still, because action was taken by an Italian center-left government in conjunction with a U.S. Democratic Administration, negative reaction was less significant than would have occurred with a government of the center-right.

Italy’s new involvement in the Balkans did not stop with the granting of permission to NATO. It has provided the largest number of peacekeepers in the area for the last decade and has often held the command of KFOR, the NATO-led assistance force responsible for peace and security in Kosovo.

Italy’s recent enhanced participation in foreign affairs has not been limited to the former Yugoslavia. In 2002 it committed significant troops to the international action against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. It has been a major presence in the country, with approximately 2,500 troops stationed primarily in Herat Province. Increasing commitments in the region in 2003, Italy joined the U.S. and Britain in Iraq after the invasion. Until its troops were withdrawn in 2006, Rome provided the fourth largest commitment of military personnel, after the U.S., Great Britain, and South Korea, with a presence which peaked at approximately 3,000 soldiers.

In the summer of 2006, Rome played host to the Conference on Lebanon convened to address the conflict with Israel. Italy was the first to announce a willingness to commit significant numbers of peacekeepers. As the second largest contingent, the 2,500 Italian troops who provided a buffer between Israel and Lebanon were determinative in encouraging France to make a similar-size contribution. Indeed, without this bold move, it remains an open question whether France would have come forward at all to lead the peacekeeping mission.

Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Lebanon represented seminal opportunities for Italy to exert leadership on the world stage, a role it had been reluctant to assume prior to 1999. Interestingly, a certain bipartisanship has characterized this stepped-up presence. Two missions, Kosovo and Lebanon, were initiated by center-left coalitions, and Afghanistan and Iraq were products of Silvio Berlusconi’s center-right government of 2001-2006. Further, if one compares Italian involvement and commitment in these international missions to those of traditional major continental powers, Italy in the aggregate has contributed considerably more. Indeed, only Great Britain, on the whole, has provided more men and materiel.

It seems clear that the country has done a great deal in recent years to shed the stereotype of an underperformer in foreign affairs. It has gone from a consumer of foreign-policy resources to a clear net provider. If ever an appropriate characterization, it is no longer correct to think of Italy as a bantam-weight in the international political arena.

Does this suggest a willingness on Rome’s part to continue in this enhanced role in the future? To the extent that involvements present themselves in the geography Italy feels vital to its future, including Southeastern Europe, North Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the greater Middle East, further meaningful commitments could be the rule rather than the exception.
Some alums of Kyoto SCTI 2000 recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of their group with a trip around Japan. Participants included Emilio Antunez, Renee Cheung, John Gibbs, and Alan Teo; we were joined by other Class of 2001 alum friends Jenny Kheng, Nam Hee Kim, and Helen Shen (’02). The trip, both nostalgic and fun-filled, was from March 28 - April 4. We started off in Tokyo, where we enjoyed the city’s renowned cuisine and took a side trip to the temple-filled historical city of Kamakura. We then bullet-trained our way to Kyoto, where we rented an incredibly preserved “machiya” home near the Geisha district of Gion. Shen (’02). The trip, both nostalgic and fun-filled, was from March 28 - April 4. We started off in Tokyo, where we enjoyed the city’s renowned cuisine and took a side trip to the temple-filled historical city of Kamakura. We then bullet-trained our way to Kyoto, where we rented an incredibly preserved “machiya” home near the Geisha district of Gion.

The next part of my story is something like an excerpt from a romantic fairytale and undoubtedly the most prominent reminder of how studying abroad in Chile changed my life. One evening out with my Stanford classmates, I met Ricardo. Through a combination of my imperfect Spanish, his imperfect English, and a series of dates in Santiago it became impossible to deny we had a special connection. Ricardo and I continued our relationship after I returned to Stanford. Intertwined with my growing love for Ricardo was a growing love for his homeland and the people, culture and language that shaped him. Today, almost five years later, I have been to Chile more times than I can count on all of my fingers, and Ricardo and I are happily married. Currently, we are both at Stanford pursuing graduate work [Ricardo just received his Graduate Certificate in International Security, Ed.]. In retrospect I’m amazed, excited, grateful, and dazzled by how one quarter abroad in Chile changed my life in so many wonderful ways!

I pursued a minor in Spanish while at Stanford, and my decision to study abroad in Santiago was in a large way motivated by my desire to fully grasp the Spanish language. I had studied Spanish in middle school, high school and college, and still I felt I was lacking what it would take to engage fluently with other Spanish speakers. So, I packed my bags and boarded a plane to sunny Santiago in January of 2006 with my college roommate and a few close friends.

The challenging and exciting state of being immersed in a language and culture started the moment I arrived in Santiago. The first few weeks were proof that even life’s simplest tasks (like ordering bread at a restaurant or asking for directions) could be nearly impossible in a foreign language. But armed with a network of Stanford classmates and the vital encouragement of Fabia Fuenzalida, our outstanding program coordinator, I explored the new environment around me. Nearly every weekend I traveled with a small group of my Santiago classmates to different landmarks, cities and countries across the continent. The college friendships and memories that I made during my time abroad are simply invaluable to me.

Alums of Kyoto SCTI 2000 Enjoy Reunion in Japan

Alan Teo, ’01 (Human Biology) tells Abroad of a reunion in Japan of some members from his SCTI group (Spring, 2000).

Study with BOSP in Santiago Brings Unexpected Surprise

Kathryn Rickertsen Segovia (’07 BA Communication, Minor in Spanish, ’07 MA Psychology, and PhD Candidate in Communication ’12) journeyed to Santiago in January, 2006, spending Winter Quarter in BOSP’s Program. Here she tells Abroad about what she scarcely expected to bring home with her!

There’s something about being a young college student dropped into a new world that brings out an optimistic attempt at immersion and an openness to new experiences that cannot be replicated by other opportunities in life. My experience studying abroad in Santiago, Chile vividly fulfilled this description and changed my life in absolutely unpredictable ways.

We also visited the new Stanford Japan Center on the Doshisha University campus. SCTI Director Andrew Horvat and his predecessor, Terry MacDougall, updated us on the current program, and the next day we lunched with the current group of SCTI students, answering their questions about culture shock, internships, and language learning in the SCTI program. I introduced my host father—with whom I’ve stayed in touch all these years—to the other alums. Visiting our old stomping grounds around the city and indulging in pastimes like karaoke were other highlights. Our trip was perfectly coordinated with the cherry blossoms, and we enjoyed them in full bloom for virtually the whole trip. After Kyoto, we stopped by the hot-spring town of Hakone, where everyone soaked away all the sore spots and feasted on regional cuisine. Then the group returned to Tokyo, where everyone parted ways with one resolution: we can’t wait until an even grander 20-year reunion!

Stanford in Oxford Advisory Council

In February, a group of alums from the Stanford in Oxford Programme launched the Centre’s first ever Advisory Council with an hour-long conference call joined by alums from three continents. The group intends to meet twice a year to help sustain the program and offer input on its future direction. Among the topics discussed were a multi-class reunion at Reunion Weekend in October, a mentoring program for current students, fundraising (including the possibility of study tours), a lessons-learned document for the program and finding new ways to deepen the partnership between the two universities.

According to the Director, Geoffrey Tyack, relations with Oxford University are on a strong footing, but there is scope for future progress. Students now have excellent access to university and college libraries, and they are also more integrated into the three associate colleges. This improvement is due in part to the scheme introduced three years ago under which two Oxford students from each of the three colleges attend Sophomore College at Stanford each fall and then, on their return, help with orientation of the Stanford students into their colleges at Oxford. This scheme was funded by two Stanford alumni, and we are hoping to find funding to continue it in the future, as the current funding runs out this year.

The Council has already recruited a full Board but it would greatly welcome participation from any other interested alums. For more information, please contact the Chair, David Arulanathan (’00) at: dparui@stanfordalumni.org.
Meet the Candidate

Winter-Quarter (2010) students in Santiago meet candidate Sebastián Piñera during an outing to explore the city. Piñera was elected President of Chile shortly afterwards and was inaugurated in March, 2010. Thanks to Director Iván Jaksić for sending it to Abroad and to Katherine Donner ('11; Science, Technology and Society) for her permission to use it.

Stanford-in-France III Fifty-Year Reunion, Paris and Tours

Preparations are underway for a fiftieth-anniversary reunion of Stanford-in-France Group III (Tours Trois) reunion in France in spring (mid-May) 2011. At least 20 classmates, plus spouses, presently plan to meet in Paris and Tours, revisit favorite places, and reflect on time together as students in France 50 years ago. There will surely be time to meander the Latin Quarter of Paris, visit Old Tours and the châteaux of the Loire, and lift a glass or two of Vouvray with old friends.

Tours Trois has had a number of delightful mini-reunions at Stanford at the time of class reunions, most recently in 2008 and 2009, building enthusiasm for the France reunion in 2011. Classmates are encouraged to contact Ken Fries, kjfries@aol.com, or Linda Wasserman, lwasserman@ucsd.edu, for details of schedule and itinerary.

BOSP Student Photo Contest Winners

From left to right, top to bottom
Yi Wen Chuah (Santiago), Andrew Aw (Kyoto), Lauren Bishop (Australia), Dayu Yang (Beijing), Jonathan Gelbart (Moscow), Sarah Macway (Madrid), Joy Zhang (Beijing)
Jutta Ley and Her Work at Stanford in Berlin

Jutta Ley is Internship and Academic Assistant at Stanford in Berlin. Like her dedicated colleagues at other centers, she is a major component of the glue that holds centers together, a friend, confidante, and mentor to legions of Stanford students. She thus has a unique vantage point as she works with Stanford students and faculty. Here she relates her experiences for Abroad.

Sitting and reading in the morning sun in a café at Berlin’s Nollendorfplatz in 1987, I stumbled across an advertisement for a position at Stanford in Berlin. As a student of American Studies and Communication at the Free University at the time, I thought to myself: If I cannot travel the world right now, why not apply for a job that brings the world to Berlin!

The “Villa” at the end of the tree-fringed path had a magical influence on me, and when I entered the front door of the sandstone landmark for my job interview, I was determined to do my best to be able to work in that beautiful building surrounded by a lush, big garden. The atmosphere immediately struck me as being very relaxed; students and professors were sitting in the same lounge chatting—a scene very different from my interaction at the Free University, where talking to a professor was an uncommon event. Fortunately, the relaxed atmosphere on that day in 1987 surely contributed to my poise, and I was hired. I have not only seen at least a thousand students come through Stanford in Berlin, but I also had the chance to see quite a number of them develop, some through extending their stay for internships, some even starting families and hosting next-generation Stanford interns in Germany. Being exposed to an increasingly diverse and ever-changing group of people from practically all around the globe at a time in their lives when they strive for independence has been and still is something I like a lot about my job—interacting with these students has a systemic impact on me and helps me broaden my own perspectives.

Is there a difference between students of yesteryear and today? I believe there has always been a genuine curiosity in people in general, an eagerness for knowledge and first-hand experience outside the familiar that moves our students whether in the past or present, whether to South Africa, Australia or Germany; it is about exploring and verifying, about energy and interest. With the world over time becoming closer, faster, and more interconnected, thereby evening out many of the visible cultural differences and stereotypes, our cultures have become (seemingly) more alike; these days one must, as one of our students did last summer, do research on the distant island of Karkar (near Papua New Guinea) to find a genuinely different cultural experience. We have created new “e-cultures” instead: we are moving around the globe. Everything is so easily accessible around the clock around the world at the same time on one technical device that it is almost as if one does not really need to go anywhere.

Yet what lies beyond cultural similarities and differences? I believe it is seeing the little things, observing the diversity, and learning to integrate differences in approaches of different people as something valuable, something that enriches ourselves and thus broadens our perspectives. Leaving the familiar, stepping out of what we know, always helps people in their search for themselves. I personally see students’ overseas experience as an important journey into their inner selves, no matter where they travel on this earth—in Germany we have a saying by Christoph Martin Wieland, one of the most prominent poets of the German enlightenment: “Den Wald vor lauter Baeumen nicht sehen.” It translates into “not to see the forest for the trees” or maybe into “sometimes you have to leave home to find it!”

Obituary: Hannelore Noack, Assistant Director at Stanford in Berlin, 1977-94

Karen Kramer, Director at Stanford in Berlin, sends the sad news of the recent death of Hannelore Noack, legendary Assistant Director at the center.

News of Hannelore’s death prompted memories from many students and faculty on whom she left an indelible impression. Wade French, alumnus, expressed the wonderful way she interfaced with students: “Hannelore was a force... She loved life. Life was never a chore, always a challenge to be savored...her very being spread this warmth as if it were a contagion of the most glorious kind...She could also sense just how much support each person needed—students, staff, and faculty alike—and offered just that much, encouraging you to find the rest of the way on your own.”

Prof. Larry Friedlander describes Hannelore’s relationship to him as a new faculty member in residence: “I met Hannelore in 1982 when I arrived, nervous and eager, in Berlin to teach for the first time. Germany was an overwhelming experience for me, and those initial months were difficult. But it was Hannelore who guided me through that time, giving me my first real insight into the nature of Berlin. Through her I came to appreciate the extraordinary and delightful qualities of the Berliners, of whom she was the very best exemplar. She combined absolute honesty, directness, and practical smarts with a huge loving heart...”

[Your editor knows from personal experience in knowing Hannelore that these recollections are only two of what could be hundreds if there were space. The comments accentuate the special role that staff overseas have played in the experiences of BOSP’s 27,000+ alums over the last 52 years.]
Why Stanford in Florence?

Delivered at the Salone dei Cinquecento, Palazzo Vecchio, June 21, 2010 at the 50th Anniversary of Stanford University’s Breyer Center for Overseas Studies in Florence by President Gerhard Casper

Why Stanford in Florence? At one level, the answer is, of course, very simple. A pithy version was given by Joan Blaeu, the great Dutch cartographer, in his Atlas Maior of 1665, perhaps the finest atlas ever published. In the introduction to his book on maps of Italy, Blaeu eloquently eulogizes Italy: “[This country] has such sweet charms that many forget their place of birth the better to sate their hearts with its pleasures.” He then goes on to describe the mountains clad in vineyards, crystalline streams, forests with tall trees, beautiful lakes, convenient ports, and opulent towns. About Florence in particular, Blaeu quotes a “near-proverbial” epithet by the Venetian humanist Marcantonio Sabellicus, which proclaims Florence beautiful “for the beauty of its buildings and the elegance of its broad, straight streets.”

Italy’s excellence is also attested to, in Blaeu’s ironic historical summary, by the “bloody wars in which the great powers of the earth each disputed its possession with the other.” “No nation has not at some time flirted with it: the Gauls, Carthagenians, Goths, Huns, Hungarians, Cimbr, Teutons, French, Basques, Navarrans, Swiss, Germans, and Spanish have all made love to it and wished to possess it, so perfectly to their taste did they find it.”

Indeed, if one wants to understand the political history of Europe, Italy is the perfect place to make an initial attempt to do so. Though I will confess that it took me a long time to grasp the apparent and the real distinctions between Ghibelines and Guelphs that were of such extraordinary importance to international politics for centuries. To this day, I have not truly penetrated the further differences between white and black guelphs, guelfi bianci e neri. All I know in this respect, but fail to appreciate, is that, of all people, Il Sommo Poeta, Dante, a “bianco,” was exiled from Florence by the “neri.”

Why Stanford in Florence?

For anybody who is considering a stay in Italy, what Joan Blaeu called the “sweet charms” of Italy are certainly a sufficient justification. Since I am neither a map maker nor a travel writer, I shall not dwell on sweet charms. In light of a world-wide consensus it is quite unnecessary.

Because of Stanford’s Arts Initiative, the role of the arts in higher education has, of course, been very much on my mind. Florence as the birthplace of Renaissance art is the perfect location to reflect on the subject.

I have just used two words, “Renaissance” and “art,” which no layperson (and I am a layperson with respect to both subjects) can employ without running the danger of being shown up as ignorant by experts or missionaries.

Vasari was the first author to refer to the decline and subsequent renaissance (“rinascita”) of the arts. However, the term “Renaissance” as defining a particular period in European history we primarily owe to two 19th century historians: one French, Jules Michelet, and the other, even more influential, the Swiss scholar Jakob Burckhardt. Michelet summed up the age of the Renaissance as characterized—more so than all other ages—by the discovery of the world and the discovery of man. Burckhardt saw the Italian Renaissance as the beginning of modernity and, like Michelet, of the development of the individual.

The other term that I invoked—“art”—is even more dangerous. Ernst Gombrich begins his unsurpassed Story of Art with the statement: “There really is no such thing as Art. There are only artists.” In this sentence, Gombrich spells the word “Art” with a capital A and reminds us that art means very different things in different times and places.

Of course, the statement “there are only artists” simply shifts the definitional burden, but it does so with a twist. Gombrich writes elsewhere: “I propose to go back to earlier usage, to the time when the word ‘Art’ signified any skill or mastery …. This good old usage was replaced in the Romantic Period by the one that is still in current use according to which the word ‘Art’ stands for a special faculty of a human mind to be classified with religion and science.”

Gombrich’s preference for the term art as signifying “any skill or mastery” is, of course, still expressed in the emphasis American universities, at least in theory, place on the “liberal arts.” In the Middle Ages, the term would have referred to the seven artes liberales: the fundamental, tools-oriented “trivium” (grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric) as well as to the more advanced “quadrivium” consisting of substantive knowledge in the fields of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. In addition, of course, one could study law, theology, and medicine at medieval universities. Note that with the possible exception of rhetoric, music is the only art, as we employ the term, that was part of the liberal arts canon. Its role in education goes back all the way to Greek antiquity.

Beginning with the Quattrocento, the curriculum in universities and other places of study began to change profoundly, e.g., at the Studio Fiorentina, the university of Florence: logic and mathematics continued their role in general education, but were supplemented by philosophy and the studia humanitatis—studies of humanity. Authors from antiquity, such as Cicero, were rediscovered and became an important influence, as did classical architecture. The very concept of
Renaissances in European history refers to a renewed focus on Greek and Roman antiquity, especially scholarship and literature.

However, I shall not discuss the seven liberal arts, the humanist curriculum, or make any effort to define the term art, with or without capital A. Instead, I shall stipulate that we generally are in agreement when we use the term art or arts, even if we have profound disagreements about artistic quality. I shall, however, admit that I have always been close to Gombrich’s view that art has much to do with skill and mastery.

It has not been ordained by natural law that universities should, in addition to such subjects as the humanities, sciences, medicine, engineering, law, emphasize the arts. Many universities the world over have not in the past, and do not now, include them. Many American universities, on the other hand, especially those with undergraduate colleges, cover music, art history, studio art, drama, dance, literature, and creative writing; they have museums. I should like to spend most of my time (though not all of it) on why this should be so.

I think there are a variety of possible reasons. Permit me to be subjective about the matter. I offer you seven justifications—a holy number.

1. The arts are about creativity: about creating worlds, about creating something new, something different, about discovering connections, about making us think, about startling us. Merce Cunningham, the choreographer, once said: “I make dances so that I can see things that I have never seen before.”

Cennino Cennini, a Quattrocento painter and the author of Il Libro dell’Arte, a handbook on painting, begins his treatise with an account of the Fall. He suggests that science and the arts are a consequence of Adam’s sin and God’s injunction that Adam and Eve support themselves by their labor and exertions.

I quote a passage from Cennini that is wonderfully direct in its naivété:

Then Adam, knowing the sin he had committed, and being nobly endowed by God, as the root and origin and father of us all, discovered by his wisdom that it was necessary to find a way to live by his own manual exertions, and thus he began by digging and Eve by spinning. Afterwards he carried on many necessary arts, different each from the other, and each more scientific than the other; .... Now the most worthy is Science; after which comes an art derived from science and dependent on the operations of the hand, and this I called Painting, for which we must be endowed with both imagination (fantasia) and skill in the hand, to discover unseen things concealed beneath the obscurity of natural objects, and to arrest them with the hand, presenting to the sight that which did not before appear to exist.

2. Execution of an artistic project is about quality, about craft: painting, sculpting, making a film, designing is not “amateur hour.” For Cennini, skill—“skill in the hand”—and imagination were of equal importance. The unrivaled attention Renaissance painters paid to their craft has been the subject of Michael Baxandall’s singular book on Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy.

3. The Arts are also about media and the limitations and opportunities associated with them: from clay to frescoes to the new electronic media. Cennini’s handbook deals with the media needed for painting.

4. If you want to understand the human condition—human circumstances, thought, beliefs, values, as they find their expression in different cultural traditions and at different times—studying its reflection and refraction in art is one way to do so. In his Italian Journey, Goethe observed: “The most definite effect of all works of art is that they remove us to the times and to the situation of the individuals that produced them.”

5. This is especially true as concerns change. One of the best ways, for instance, to grasp what happened intellectually in the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance is to study the history of European art.

6. The arts not only capture change, they move change. The arts are about freedom to change, not simply living with the status quo. The great critic Walter Benjamin put it this way: he said art “interferes”: it makes itself felt as “the cool wind of dawn.”

7. And, finally, the arts make things possible that ordinarily seem impossible. The Hasidic tradition teaches, “Through music you climb to the highest palace. From that palace you can influence the universe and its prison. Music is Jacob’s ladder forgotten on earth by the angels. Sing and you shall defeat death; play and you shall disarm the foe.” While music is the oldest of the muses, I willingly apply this teaching to all the other arts as well.

These seven reasons to make the arts a crucial component of the undergraduate curriculum are also seven reasons for Stanford students to come to Florence to have their minds, their imagination stretched, their creativity prodded.

Let me simply mention the names of three (another holy number) Florentine artists from the early Quattrocento—Brunelleschi, Donatello, and Masaccio—to provide examples of what can happen when the imagination is stretched.

Brunelleschi’s dome of the cathedral represents not only artistic greatness but was achieved through Brunelleschi’s application of reason to every aspect of the construction from the vaulting of the dome to the loading platforms, hoists and cranes, to scaffolding for the protection of workers and to canteens for feeding them.

As Andres, Hunisak, and Turner comment in The Art of Florence, Brunelleschi worked on the dome more as an inventor than designer. Though Brunelleschi as a designer is, of course, also everywhere in Florence. He gave us, among others, the Spedale di Santa Maria degli Innocenti, the Old Sacristy at San Lorenzo, the Pazzi Chapel and Santo Spirito.

The same Brunelleschi also invented a system for constructing perspective images with mathematical accuracy that has had lasting consequences for architecture and painting. “The single point of view required by perspective tied the entire perceived world into a unified order related to the viewer. Man stood at the center of a world that he could apprehend intellectually.” [Andres, Hunisak, and Turner]

And then there are Donatello’s relief sculptures and his statuary. The British art historian Pope-Hennessy has said about Donatello’s pedella for his Saint George at Orsanmichele that it was “one of the most remarkable advances in sheer seeing that has ever taken place.” Donatello’s unconventional, provocative, beautiful David at the Bargello continues “to interfere” with expectations to this day.
And finally, there are the marvels of the Brancacci chapel. The focus of Masaccio’s and Masolinio’s frescoes is Saint Peter. As Anthony Molho of the European University Institute here in Florence has shown, the frescoes in their depiction of the life of Saint Peter actually address themselves to major issues concerning Trecento and early Quattrocento debates about the nature of the Church and the power of the papacy within it. You do not, however, have to be a church historian to understand, for instance, what is being articulated in the way Masaccio depicts the payment of tribute money.

Yet, it is, of course, not the socio-political significance of the Brancacci cycle that is like “the cool wind of dawn” but the independence, gravity, and grandeur of Masaccio’s compositions and their emotional impact. [Cf. Andres, Hunisak, and Turner] Just think of the “drama of guilt and shame” that we experience in the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. [Martha Hollander]

In the speed-oriented video and texting culture of our age, it seems to me to be of exceptional importance that students do not lose the “arts of reading” (reading texts, pictures, sculptures, artifacts, buildings): to read, to read carefully (less is more), to reread, to read in dialogue, to interpret, to interpret in context. Through Brunelleschi, Donatello, Masaccio the reading of art can be taught in a context that could not be more enticing to the human mind, eye, and heart.

You can, of course, “read” Renaissance art in the great museums of the world. Just think of the superb collections of the Metropolitan Museum in New York or the Louvre in Paris. However, it is one thing to go to a museum, it is quite something else to study and experience the art of the Renaissance in Florence, where not only the art is inescapable but also the historical context that led to so many extraordinary questions and developments of great consequence to Western civilization and, indeed, the world. Let me turn to that context.

As I said at the beginning, the concept of the Renaissance, as we use it, was largely put forward by Jakob Burckhardt who, in 1860, published Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien (English translation in 1878: The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy). He saw in the Renaissance the beginning of modernity in general and the emergence of the autonomous individual in particular. Robert Nisbet has called this “the myth of the Renaissance.” And, indeed, Burckhardt has come in for much criticism. For one, it is said that there was not only one Renaissance but several (the Carolingian renaissance and the renaissance of the 12th century). Furthermore, modernity has clearly been a gradual development.

Burckhardt employed a contrast between two ages, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, that we all still make use of but that was way overdrawn. Here is Burckhardt:

In the Middle Ages both sides of the human consciousness—that which was turned within as that which was turned without—lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, illusion, and childish prepossession, through which the world and history were seen as clad in strange hues. Man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family, or corporation—only through some general category. In Italy this veil first melted into air; an objective treatment and consideration of the State and of all the things of this world became possible. The subjective side at the same time asserted itself with corresponding emphasis; man became a spiritual individual, recognized himself as such.

Well, Burckhardt’s “veil” did not melt into air during the Quattrocento. It was no doubt lifted some but certainly faith continued (as virtually all of Renaissance art will attest to) as did the significance of membership in the social groups to which one belonged.

In The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, Burckhardt devoted the entire introductory section to the emergence of the modern state, which he called a work of art (“Kunstwerk”). What made the Italian states of the Quattrocento “modern” to Burckhardt was the fact that the older bases of legitimacy were disappearing and that brute power mattered more than ever before. States were being “scientifically organized” with a view toward assuring their continued existence.

Since the states that Burckhardt analyzed were mostly tyrannies, “art” and “science” in this context meant primarily the art of ruling as detailed, for instance, in Machiavelli’s Prince. Burckhardt admired Machiavelli for the objectivity of his judgment. The concentration of power and its ruthless exercise were part of “modernity” for Burckhardt.

At times, though, Burckhardt put forward a more complex view of the matter, most emphatically in his panegyric to Florence as the “first modern state”:

The most elevated political thought and the most varied forms of human development are found united in the history of Florence, which in this sense deserves the name of the first modern state in the world. Here the whole people was busied with what in the despotic cities is the affair of a single family. That wondrous Florentine spirit, at once keenly critical and artistically creative, was incessantly transforming the social and political condition of the State, and as incessantly describing and judging the state.

For Burckhardt, the second aspect of the modernity of the Renaissance in general, and of Florence in particular, was giving “the highest development to individuality” and then leading “the individual to the most zealous and thorough study of himself in all forms and under all conditions.”

Of course, this zealous preoccupation with the self was, by no means, understood as all good. It could turn all too easily, as Burckhardt recognized, into competitive “excessive individualism.” Burckhardt offers descriptions of the Italian upper classes and “victorious egotism” that, but for the slaughter that was ordinarily entailed during the Renaissance, remind us of the competitive excesses of our own age.

As much as Burckhardt was inclined to praise Florence, he could also be sobering about the city:

Florence … was in advance of other cities. “Sharp eyes and bad tongues” is the description given of the inhabitants of Florence. An easygoing contempt of everything and everybody was probably the prevailing tone of society. Machiavelli, in the remarkable prologue to his “Mandragola,” refers rightly or wrongly the visible decline of moral force to the general habit of evil-speaking, and threatens his detractors with the news that he can say sharp things as well as they.

In reading Burckhardt, it is striking that for our encounters with the Italian Renaissance and with Florence it does not really matter whether Burckhardt was right in every respect. Perhaps the Renaissance was, like any historical period before and after, just another transition.
However, Burckhardt alerted us to features of the trecento and the quattrocento that gained special prominence then but that were also characteristic of Europe at the time Burckhardt wrote and continue to be part of our own “modernity.”

What Burckhardt said paradoxically about Machiavelli’s *History of Florence* applies to Burckhardt himself: “Even if every line were demonstrated to be false, the whole would still present an indispensable truth.”

Florence offers us not only some of the greatest artistic accomplishments known to human history but also, in connection with these very excellences, deep insights into the human condition. Studying in Florence, studying art in Florence, if done right, serves as a most stimulating jolt to our mental composure.

I should like to conclude with a quotation from a contemporary American writer whom I knew in my Chicago days. In a letter from 1942, Saul Bellow wrote:

> [T]he work of the artist cannot be expected to comprehend that of the scientist and the philosopher as well. It sets up the hypotheses and tests them in various ways, and it gives answers, but these are not definitive. However, they need not be definitive; they sing about the human situation. It is a kind of truth these answers give, the truth of sorrow and of celebration, the truth that we are stamped with immortality and the truth that we live meanly. [The New Yorker, April 26, 2010]

It is the truth of sorrow and of celebration that Florence teaches. We are grateful that it has done so for Stanford students for fifty years and I pray that it will do so as long as Stanford exists.

*Abroad* brings you President Emeritus Casper’s talk as a signal statement on Stanford’s decision in 1960 to open a center in Florence, the only city in which Stanford has maintained an overseas program for fifty consecutive years.
Preparing for Emergencies at BOSP Centers

Irene Kennedy, Executive Director of the Bing Overseas Studies Program, brings Abroad and its readers up to date regarding how emergencies are handled overseas.

It’s been almost four months since a massive 8.8-magnitude earthquake hit Chile, where Stanford has a BOSP center in Santiago. That natural disaster caused us to review conditions at the center, but also prompted a review of emergency response procedures at all BOSP programs.

How is everything at the Santiago center now?

Everything is in pretty good shape. We had seismic engineers look at the center. There was no structural damage, and the superficial cracks have already been repaired. We sent a new group of students in April for spring quarter, and by all accounts they had a highly positive experience and learned much about the national response in Chile.

The Provost praised the response to the earthquake at the Santiago center during a Faculty Senate meeting. What emergency protocols were in place?

We have emergency protocols at all the centers, and they often reflect the housing situation. Most centers rely on host families for housing our students. In those places, like Santiago, we rely on our host families and our communication plans to determine quickly the whereabouts and safety of the students. In Santiago it didn’t take long to get in touch with all the students, many of whom had already been in touch with their families both in Santiago and in the U.S.

Have you made any changes to the facility or program as a result of the earthquake?

We’ve decided to add to emergency supplies at the center itself including emergency rope ladders (which oddly are not available in Chile), power back-up systems, a satellite telephone, and a wide range of emergency

ations, water, and first-aid materials. During spring quarter we also strictly limited students’ travel in Chile, prohibiting them from going to Concepción and its surrounding areas that were hardest hit. This action was for their own protection, but also to prevent their inadvertently interfering with recovery efforts. Many students, however, have been active in recovery projects within the city of Santiago. We are also requiring each student to have a personal cell phone. The staff in Santiago has reviewed emergency procedures and refined plans for notification and evacuation.

What does BOSP do to address issues of safety and security in general?

We provide an orientation for students before they leave the home campus. But the most important safety orientation happens on site at the centers. So, if the center is in an earthquake zone, then the staff talks about earthquakes. They also talk about personal safety at every center: What is appropriate behavior on the streets or when out in the evening? What are the less desirable parts of the city? They also review the emergency-response plan. Stanford has contracts with two emergency evacuation services that can be activated in case of a serious medical situation or natural disaster or even in case of political instability.

What did you learn from the Chile experience?

The experience showed that the on-site protocol worked. But we could experience a different type of emergency elsewhere—political unrest, transportation strikes, economic crises. While the emergency plans we have are good, much depends on individual circumstances and developing very flexible responses. We will carry out a broad review of our plans at each center including a careful inventory of emergency equipment. For example, we are providing each center a satellite phone that could be very helpful if the cell-phone grid goes down or there is a lengthy power failure.

Abroad Goes Electronic

The last issue of Abroad reached the vast majority of BOSP’s alums electronically. Many of you readers responded to our invitation to comment on the then temporary switch from distribution of printed copies by mail. Overwhelmingly, comments favored continued use of e-mail as the primary means of distribution.

With those opinions in hand and in recognition of the substantial savings in budget and paper, we have decided that your copy of Abroad will be sent to you by e-mail from now on providing that you have furnished your e-mail address to the Alumni Association. Those who have no valid e-mail address on record will receive a printed copy by mail. Also, those of you who prefer the printed format may request a copy by contacting Abroad at overseastudies@stanford.edu, by a call to 650-725-0230, or by a note to Bob Hamrdla, Bing Overseas Studies Program, Ground Floor, Sweet Hall, Stanford, California 94305-3089. If you already requested a printed edition, there is no need to do so again.

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