**Director’s Letter**

Dear Friends,

Since I last wrote you in August, I have been able to complete my “tour of duty,” visiting the sites of all our regular programs, and I will describe some of my impressions later in this letter. Most importantly, I am pleased to tell you that BOSP continues its success in offering unique opportunities for study abroad for our undergraduate students, thanks to the efforts of our staffs both here and abroad and our Stanford faculty-in-residence at each of the centers.

The most important recent development, however, has been the establishment of five three-week seminars for summer 2012, with funding requests for eight and ten respectively in the succeeding years. These developments signal the reinstatement of our Overseas Seminar Program that was eliminated, strictly for budgetary reasons, two years ago. Our most important goal for this year was bringing back the Overseas Seminars since they engage additional students in our efforts to reach more of the overall undergraduate student body. In Istanbul the seminar “History, Memory and Global Experience in Eastern Mediterranean” will be centered at Koç University and conducted by Assistant Professor Ali Yayıncıoğlu, newly appointed in the History Department. Assistant Professor Marília Librandi-Rocha will teach *Río de Janeiro: A Cultural History* which will also be connected with a local university, the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro. In Amsterdam Associate Professor Mark Applebaum’s seminar will be *The Amsterdam Transidiomatic Art Practicum*, and in Tanzania Associate Professor Robert Siegel (recipient of a 2011 Gores Award for Excellence in Teaching) will engage students with *Issues of Development in Northern Tanzania*. Last, and not least, three faculty from the Center for South Asia—Professor Thomas Hansen, Visiting Assistant Professor Sharika Thiranagama, and Dr. Sangeeta Mediratta—will co-teach *Minority as Cultural Form in South Asia*. The class will include sessions in New Delhi and Mumbai, two of the most important cities in India. Fifteen students will attend each seminar, and if our historical experience is borne out there will be a high ratio of applicants to openings. We believe these seminars will indeed be very attractive to students and eagerly await the application results due by the end of January, 2012.

*Continued on page 2*

**BOSP in Santiago to Offer New Opportunities for Students in Science and Engineering**

Professor Iván Jaksić, Director of the Center in Santiago, Chile, writes about changes in the curriculum that will provide a “thematic quarter” every spring.

Stanford in Santiago has introduced important changes in the structure of its academic program. Beginning in 2012-13, the curriculum will reflect a stronger emphasis on issues of ecology and sustainability, including a “thematic” quarter every spring. The central purpose is to provide increased overseas opportunities for students in engineering and applied sciences, earth systems, human biology, and other related programs without detracting from traditional offerings in humanities and social sciences.

![Student Leslie Johnson captured this Santiago sunset, taken from the back of a bus while on an urban planning (class) field trip exploring the outskirts of the city. Taken while ascending the Andes foothills.](image)

The new thematic quarter will include two ecology courses (one marine, one terrestrial) and two urban-development courses (one centered on Chile, the other on Latin America as a region). Taught by leading Chilean scholars, these courses will provide both a strong theoretical foundation and practical experience through field trips to various locations where students will examine first hand the challenges facing the city and the environment.

Chile is uniquely positioned to foster students’ work in examining these issues in a Spanish-speaking location. Chile also provides exceptional academic resources and a wide range of opportunities for the development of research projects. Furthermore, the changes reflect some of the academic strengths of Chile and the importance of the challenges facing a country of 17 million people as it seeks to achieve viable economic growth without damage to its environment. Because of the large concentration of population in cities, especially Santiago, the capital (population 6 million), there are additional challenges concerning transportation and the development of green areas, energy distribution, and socioeconomic segregation. These topics are just a few of the possibilities.

The thematic emphasis allows for exciting opportunities for those wishing to

*Continued on page 2*
Professor Iván Jaksić Honored

The Venezuelan Academy of Language recently invited Prof. Iván Jaksić, Director of Stanford in Santiago, to Caracas to accept his nomination to membership. The Academy, founded in 1883, numbers some 29 members in Venezuela with up to 50 from other countries. While in Caracas Prof. Jaksić also addressed an academic conference at the Universidad Metropolitana on the Spanish academician, Andrés Bello.

A recent issue of the American magazine, Latino, carried a Socratic dialogue on the question, “What Does it Mean to Be Hispanic?” The conversation was inspired by Dr. Jaksić and his co-author, Ilan Stevens, through their new book, The Hispanic World and American Intellectual Life, 1820–1880 (University of Texas Press).


...the exchanges were highly educational, energetic and enlightening...and the formal program was excellently complemented by field trips to local historic locations such as the Great Mosque and Cathedral in Córdoba itself, once the most important Islamic city in Western Europe.

New Opportunities (Cont’d from page 1)

extend their stays during the summer. Progress toward graduation is possible by doing independent work supervised by a faculty member on the home campus. Some internship opportunities might be available in the areas of structural engineering and, specifically, seismic protection. Likewise, opportunities might be available in organizations concerned with biodiversity and the environment. Students coming in the Spring might also be able to take regular courses in Chilean universities, as the academic semester begins in March and ends in July. It is, however, advisable to achieve the highest levels of Spanish-language proficiency prior to arriving in the country. Prospective students are welcome to contact Maya Klimkova, our Student and Academic Services Coordinator (mklimkova@stanford.edu).

Laura Cano Rodriguez and Bonnie Kay Canori). To say that the exchanges were highly educational, energetic and enlightening is an understatement, and the formal program was excellently complemented by field trips to local historic locations such as the Great Mosque and Cathedral in Córdoba itself, once the most important Islamic city in Western Europe. Funding was generously provided by Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies, Harry Elam; Dr. and Mrs. Peter Bing; and the George Will Foundation. Our only regret was that Mrs. Helen Bing was unable to attend herself. See the article by a student participant, Vaeme Afokpa, in this issue for further details of the conference.

BOSP Executive Director Irene Kennedy and I also visited the programs in Australia, China, and Japan. The first is based at the University of Queensland in Brisbane and involves extensive field work up and down the east coast of Australia. We were both extremely impressed with the amount of hands-on work carried out by students who are mainly majors in Biology, Human Biology and Earth Systems; we realize, however, that this research requires proportionally more significant resources. The Beijing program at Peking University is planning for a move to a new Stanford Center on the same campus likely about one year from now, and we have received a strong recommendation from the BOSP oversight faculty committee to implement a second quarter at BOSP’s Center in Kyoto, Japan. Earlier in autumn quarter I also visited our Moscow Center, which clearly has a very vibrant student body, and Koç University in Istanbul on behalf of the forthcoming 2012 summer seminar.

Finally, because of personal circumstances within my home Department, it is necessary for me to continue there as Department Chair. A committee has been formed by Vice Provost Harry Elam to identify my replacement at BOSP, while I continue in my current capacity in guiding the program enthusiastically. This two-year period is going to be possibly the most fulfilling of my academic career, and I am truly grateful for all the support I have received at the home office, from the alumni Advisory Council, and from all the Directors and staff at the overseas centers. I will report more in the next newsletter.

Best regards,

Robert Sinclair
Burke Family Director
Bing Overseas Studies Program
Charles M. Pigott Professor
in the School of Engineering
Córdoba Workshop: *Islam in Europe, 711-2011: 1300 Years of Contact & [Mis]Understanding*

BOSP has sponsored many student conferences and workshops as a part of study overseas. Vaeme Afokpa (International Relations ’13), a student in Madrid in Fall, 2011, writes about the workshop held in Córdoba, Spain, in late November.

On November 24th 2011, student delegations, faculty and directors of the BOSP centers in Europe, as well as special student guests from Stanford in Washington and BOSP in Cape Town, gathered in Córdoba, Spain, to attend a four-day workshop on the situation of Islam in Europe, with each center presenting the topic from its host country’s point of view. This year’s theme, *Islam in Europe: 1300 Years of Contact & [Mis]Understanding*, was appropriately chosen, given the recent happenings in the Muslim world. With a history of eight centuries under Islamic rule, Spain was the logical choice to host the workshop.

After all fifty-seven attendees checked into the magnificent old hotel Conquistador built by Almanzor (the region of the Iberian Peninsula under Moorish reign), the workshop opened with welcoming remarks by Professor Santiago Tejerina-Canal, Director of the Madrid Program, as well as by Robert Sinclair, BOSP Director and Professor of Materials Science & Engineering, and by Harry Elam, the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. All three speakers expressed their enthusiasm for coming together to hear and discuss the different views on a highly contemporary topic.

Their remarks were immediately followed by a roundtable gathering of the various faculty members, all eager to introduce the topic of their research while giving a quick summary of what their students had learned in preparation for the workshop. Under the umbrella theme of *Islam in Europe 711-2011: An Ancient & Current Debate*, the topics ranged from the explanation and myth of *convivencia* (coexistence) in Spain to the exploration of Muslim identity in Italy before and after the Arab Spring to the micro-history of Modern Islam in Russia.

An hour and a half later, the first student session began with Madrid’s delegation setting the tone for the next two days. The hour-long presentations covered a wide spectrum of academic disciplines, ranging from historical analyses to political concepts and including feminist perspectives among other approaches.

Indeed, the Madrid delegation challenged the historical myth of *convivencia* in Al-Andalus; the Stanford in Washington panel delivered insightful US perspectives on the different levels of integration of Muslims in America and Europe.

The format of these presentations varied: some students used Powerpoint while others addressed the audience without any visual support. Some even planted audience interaction using fellow students! Needless to say, despite the length of the presentations, each one of which also included a session of questions and answers, no one was bored. Lively discussions would continue as the attendees went from the conference room to the various restaurants which we learned a lot about a time ripe and rife with religious diversity as well as ethnic assimilation and exclusion. I went back to Madrid feeling accomplished and happy, knowing that the experience would become one of my most prized memories of my time abroad. All attendees left with a leather bookmark, a parting gift by which to remember the intellectually stimulating workshop and the pleasing beauty of Córdoba.
Commemoration

Germany VII Celebrates Fiftieth Anniversary

Frank Williams, ’63, an alum of Group VII in Beutelsbach, coordinated the group effort that resulted in this recollection of a memorable reunion.

It was June 18, 1961—a foggy day at San Francisco International Airport. Sixty-eight Stanford students, together with several professors and staff, piled into a chartered Pan American DC-7C. The plane was even temporarily labeled “Stanford Clipper.” The students were heading to Stanford in Germany in Beutelsbach, near Stuttgart, West Germany. After a long flight, stopping once in Reykjavik (Iceland) for refueling, they arrived for their introduction to Landgut Burg, a converted school overlooking the bucolic Rems Valley and its myriad vineyards.

Fast forward to August 30, 2011, fifty years later. Twenty-six of these same Stanford classmates reconvened for a fiftieth-anniversary reunion at the same Landgut Burg, along with four of the staff from 1961. Many brought their spouse, significant other, or family members to show where they had spent six months studying, perhaps becoming fluent in German, traveling, being welcomed into local host families’ homes as “adopted family,” and learning more about the complex international relations of the time. Indeed, the tensions between East and West Germany served as a leitmotif for the entire six months; less than two months after the group arrived, the Berlin Wall was erected. Fortunately, one of the Stanford professors was Kurt Steiner (Political Science), who helped immeasurably with interpretation of the issues of the day.

The reunion plans began a year earlier as Linda Cook Hickman, now of London, thought it would be fun to get as many of Gruppe VII together as possible. Why not at Landgut Burg? Thanks to Linda’s persistence and the assistance of Stanford’s Alumni Association, she and others were able to connect with almost all of the surviving classmates.

The Alumni Association helped tremendously with its “individual group web page” that became a central “meeting point” for the group. Many alums wrote “Reunion pages” and submitted them for the group web page; photos from dusty slide collections also appeared on the web page, and long-dormant friendships blossomed anew.

The returnees found the local area dramatically changed after fifty years; the little town of Beutelsbach had been merged with four other neighboring towns into the larger city of Weinstadt (“Wine City”); Landgut Burg had been enlarged and remodeled into a conference center, restaurant, and hotel; and some favorite haunts were no longer in operation.

Many activities were planned for the reunion—a torch-lit vineyard walk; a reception by Weinstadt’s deputy mayor; wine tasting at the local winery; a walking tour of Beutelsbach led by the town’s historian; lunch at a local Gasthaus in Strümpfelbach after a visit to a remarkable sculpture garden of a local sculptor, Herr Nuss; a tour of the new Mercedes museum in Stuttgart, sharing of photos and slides of 1961 times; thought-provoking talks by Bob Hamrdla on German politics; and a wonderful reunion with many of the local German host families. Of course, there was time for reconnecting and reminiscing, but never quite enough.

Post-reunion comments included “It was such a very special time!” “It was great to see so many old friends and remember our time in Beutelsbach.” “Reconnecting with people is so great!” “Never have I had any experience which gave me such a strong sense of where all those years have gone—and quite fun at the same time!”

Hersche Vincent Allen
January 26, 1922-September 16, 2011

Virginia Hersche Vincent Allen died after a short illness on September 16, 2011, at the age of 89 in Palo Alto, California. Known to hundreds of students, faculty, and staff, she had worked from 1960 until 1975 with both Robert A. Walker and Mark Mancall, the first two directors of the then Stanford Overseas Campuses Program, first as Executive Assistant and later as Associate Director.

Hersche was born in a suburb of Philadelphia in 1922 and moved to Southern California with her family in the 1930’s, attending UCLA where she was a member of the Pi Beta Phi sorority. She married during World War II, and her son, Chris, was born in 1944. Later she served as an Administrative Assistant in the Stanford Associates Program. She also did volunteer work for Stanford University including assisting the Parents’ Fund, serving as a member of the Board of the Music Guild, and as a volunteer fundraiser. Hersche was one of the founding members of the Roth Auxiliary at the Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital and served as the President of the Roth Auxiliary in 1995 and 1996.

A memorial service celebrating Hersche’s life was held on September 26, 2011, at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Menlo Park, California. Memorial contributions may be sent to the Trinity Church Memorial Garden, 330 Ravenswood Avenue, Menlo Park, California 94025 or to the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children’s Health, 400 Hamilton Avenue, Suite 340, Palo Alto, California 94301.
BOSP’s annual photo contest brings in many submissions from students who present their work. Abroad selected three of them taken this past spring to give you examples of the great pictures we see year after year.

**Photo by Teresa Miroslaw**
(Florence, Spring, 2011) of students on a tour sponsored by the Bing Cultural Fund. The site is Greve, in Chianti.

**Photo by Leslie Johnson**
(Santiago, Chile, Spring, 2011) of students on the Salt Flats of the Atacama Desert in Northern Chile: Gary Champi, Leslie Johnson, Andy Altman, Alex Katz, Stephanie Lynn Tomasetta, Erica Keenan, and Karen Acevedo.

**Photo by Timmy Boone**
(Berlin, Spring, 2011) of students on the George Will Field Trip to Dubrovnik (the “old city” is within the walls). Back row: Brian Mendoza, Jordan Knapp, Timmy Boone. Front: Anthony Degani.
We gratefully acknowledge our contributing alumni and alumnae, parents, students, and friends for their generous gifts in support of the Bing Overseas Studies Program.

Gifts to Endowment (from inception of program through August 31, 2011)

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Other gifts from September 1, 2010, through August 31, 2011

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Please accept our apologies for any errors in this list; we will be grateful for your calling them to the attention of Irene Kennedy, Executive Director, imk@stanford.edu.
Florence Renovation

After a lengthy search, a new home for the Breyer Center for Overseas Studies in Florence was identified last year in the prestigious Palazzo Capponi. Lease negotiations were completed, and a delicate restoration project began to align the educational needs of the program with the historic legacy of the building.

Palazzo Capponi, located in the Oltrarno, across the river from the Uffizi Museum, was built between 1406-1411. While it is thought that Lorenzo di Bicci constructed it, recent studies cite that the unique style of the Renaissance courtyard, the first known example of its kind, might very well bear the signature of Filippo Brunelleschi. The building was acquired by the Capponi in 1435, and since then only members of this family have resided there. It is, at present, the only privately owned and inhabited Renaissance Palazzo in the city of Florence. Our landlord, Count Sebastiano Capponi, and his young family reside on a different floor of the Palazzo.

The Stanford floor of Palazzo Capponi (piano nobile) is ample and is divided into two wings: one, which is more modern, will have offices, a classroom, a break room and a common room for the students; the other wing consists of three monumental halls which will become classrooms, a students’ lounge and a reading room. Each of these three rooms boasts an impressive art collection that has remained untouched for centuries and includes masterpieces by Andrea del Sarto and Jacopo Pontormo.

A beautiful terrace overlooking the river will give our students a fantastic outdoor space to work, eat, socialize with their language partners, and take study breaks. The terrace space (but the entire floor, really) is also ideal for hosting dinners and receptions associated with Program events for our students, alumni and guests. A small but perfectly functional elevator as well as the general layout of the new facilities will make the Stanford Program in Florence accessible by people with disabilities, something utterly impossible in our current premises.

Palazzo Capponi has two entrances, one from the Arno river side and one from via dei Bardi. The entrance on the Lungarno situates our Program at the core of Renaissance Florence as it overlooks the Ponte Vecchio, the Uffizi Museum, the Galileo Museum and the National Library. The entrance from the Via dei Bardi, on the other hand, places the new Stanford home in the heart of the San Niccolò neighborhood, a truly Florentine and non-touristy area of town where students can easily mingle with Italians, find reasonably priced places to enjoy lunch, and take a stroll along the medieval walls which open onto the beautiful Bardini garden and the gardens leading to Piazzale Michelangelo. These two entrances, in their juxtaposition between antiquity and modern life, epitomize the two souls of our Program and of the entire city of Florence.

Palazzo Capponi will give Stanford in Florence a prestigious home and, most importantly, it will ensure that more and more appropriate space is available to our students and to the Program as a whole. This space, in itself, will enable us to enhance enormously the quality of our students’ academic experience as well as the overall tenor of their Florentine stay. For example, we will no longer need to limit the number and the scope of conferences, art exhibits and other special events because of sheer lack of space. On the contrary, the new facilities will provide us with the perfect setting for many academic events, a selection of which we will be able to open up to Italians colleagues as well. This new capability will expose our students to more contacts with locals; it will enable us to give something back to the city that has been hosting Stanford for over 50 years; and it will afford our Program an even greater academic visibility. Our professors will have more office space to meet with students, and our students will finally be able to invite their Italian peers to Stanford in Florence. The new facilities will also be ideal to host both a summer program (which would enable athletes who cannot leave their practice during the school year to study in Florence) as well as some selected summer alumni events.

Stanford has entered a long-term lease for this wonderful new facility. While the Capponi family is making a significant financial investment in renovating the building’s infrastructure, Stanford is facing one-time expenses to customize the space for educational purposes. Having recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Florence program, we look forward to another 50 years in this historic location in the heart of Renaissance Florence. Construction is on schedule for an opening in summer of 2012 with plans for the first Stanford students to occupy the center the following autumn quarter.

We welcome your support to help with the special one-time costs associated with moving into this landmark Palazzo. Please contact Maude Brezinski, maude.brezinski@stanford.edu, 650-723-0044, to participate in this historic renovation for the Breyer Center for Overseas Studies in Florence. You may also contribute online to BOSP at: http://giving.stanford.edu.
BOSP Orientation Recast

Victoria (Tori) Wilhelmsen, as BOSP’s staff member responsible for orientation, tells *Abroad* and its readers about the latest ideas to improve the perennially challenging problem: how best to prepare our students for going overseas with Stanford.

Throughout BOSP’s more than 50-year history at Stanford University, pre-departure orientation for students going overseas with Stanford has taken many different forms. Many of you might remember weekly hour-long meetings or one large all-day meeting as your version of pre-departure preparation; some of you might remember only the required paperwork. However you remember it, pre-departure orientation aims to prepare students as thoroughly as possible for the challenges and adventures that they are likely to encounter while abroad and make them aware of the most important matters before they leave.

The purposes of pre-departure orientation are to give students the information that they will need to have a healthy, successful, and enriching experience abroad both academically and personally. Students need to understand and complete all of the items that are required before they leave (such as applications, forms to get visas, etc.). When the orientation is inadequate or for some reason does not fulfill these two goals, students are the ones who suffer. They may get stuck in bureaucratic holes or miss amazing academic opportunities because critical information that they needed was missing or incomplete. It could be missing or not completed adequately because the programming didn’t contain that content, or because it wasn’t presented in such a way that the students could easily absorb it. In some cases orientation meetings were too short or the growing number of students going abroad resulted in less individual attention, and consequently, students never fully grasped the value and importance of pre-departure orientation.

As the overseas programs grow and change with the times here at The Farm, so the pre-departure orientation program must also change. Looking at a better way to design the orientation while keeping goals consistent, I focused on the issues that BOSP has faced over the past few years. Major issues are 1) an expanding number of programs and program enrollment that reduces the already limited availability of individual attention and 2) the repeated inability of overscheduled students to attend in-person orientation meetings. Further, current students are increasingly on computers and online, and absorb information in a different way than students who have come before. They want to be able to access the information that they need on their time and be able to find it online. Additionally, I wanted to find a way to present more content in an engaging manner that mimics the way students obtain knowledge today.

Students will first participate in a mandatory online orientation to learn logistical information on, for example, required health insurance, safety, and programmatic details. The online orientation will ask students not only to read through the information that they should know, but also to view short videos on different topics and to answer questions regarding them. This is a very exciting move; for years we’ve had online application forms—now orientation information will also be disseminated online. This online orientation will allow students to complete it on their time (normally long past my bedtime!). Quizzes and embedded tracking will also ensure that important information is processed and understood, a result that could not be efficiently and accurately monitored in the past. Failure to complete mandatory orientation will result in the student’s removal from the program.

Later in the quarter before departure, students will attend a mandatory in-person orientation that will cover both academic and cultural information. This second portion of the orientation program allows the students to meet all of the people whom they might need to see on campus before they leave and ask those tough questions such as, “What will it be like?” This meeting will be two hours long and include both an academic panel and a cultural presentation.

The new orientation programs will premier in a basic format for Winter Quarter 2012, with an expanded online orientation premiering in Spring Quarter 2012. I am excited to share this new orientation program with the students and am confident that it will overcome the shortcomings of previous programming while increasing the quality of student preparation for all of the BOSP programs.