A Letter from Norman Naimark

Dear Friends,

This is my first letter to you as the new Director of the Bing Overseas Studies Program (BOSP) at Stanford. You should know at the outset that I am an unabashed enthusiast about the program. I studied in Beutelsbach in 1964-65 (Group XIII); I have taught in our Krakow (Poland) and Moscow programs; and my daughter Sarah is a devoted graduate of our Florence campus. Many of my best friends are those students I studied with or taught abroad. It’s hard for me to imagine a Stanford education without spending time at one of our centers overseas.

The programs and activities of the BOSP office were in excellent shape when I came on board. We have an energetic and experienced home office staff and a group of stellar directors of centers and programs. So I am continuing the important work of offering our students academically challenging and intellectually exciting opportunities to study overseas. This means running nine “campuses” and an innovative and diverse seminar program in the early fall. Where we have the financial wherewithal, we also manage several interesting overseas internship programs for the students. One of our major goals is to improve the range and number of our internships abroad. This requires both additional funding and hard work on the part of our local directors.

Also among the challenges we face is the need to develop overseas study opportunities in the developing world and especially in Africa. We are doing that in part by sponsoring a quarter-long program in South Africa in winter 2006 and running two seminars in September 2006 in Tanzania and in South Africa. But we need to do more to establish ongoing and institutionalized programs. Critical international issues related to health, security, poverty, and the environment depend on an approach that highlights knowledge of the developing world.

Stanford students and faculty have also made it clear that they are interested in setting up an overseas study center in Spain. This is particularly relevant to our undergraduates, since Stanford admits such a significant population of students with Spanish language competence.

Student interest in Italian culture and history can and should complement their need to understand Spain’s historical and contemporary roles in Latin America, Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa. As a result, we are working hard to find the best location and partners for setting up a new program.

Study abroad has become an even more critical part of a Stanford student’s education in the twenty-first century than it was earlier. The world is changing so quickly that it is next to impossible to comprehend those changes solely from the perspective of a classroom in Palo Alto. Globalization is not the same thing as Americanization. As a result, we need to do everything we can to foster Stanford study abroad, help our students immerse in local cultures, and provide them with first-rate instruction in a variety of disciplines. We need to work harder to make study abroad available to and a natural part of the education of our engineering and science students.

Our Bing Overseas Studies Program Council, made up of alumni of overseas studies, like yourselves, has provided invaluable advice and guidance to the program. Many alumni have also made generous financial contributions to our programs. We are pleased to acknowledge those contributions here. Especially crucial for the successful overseas studies fund-raising campaign associated with the Campaign for Undergraduate Education was the gift of Peter and Helen Bing. We are deeply grateful to the Bings and to all of you who have contributed to the education of Stanford students abroad. Overseas Studies has become stable financially as a result of your efforts. Moreover, we are able to develop flexible and innovative approaches to our programming as a result of your generosity.

As a key component of Stanford’s presence abroad, the BOSP also will participate in Stanford’s “International Initiative,” announced by President Hennessy this past year. Like the rest of the university, we see our task as developing an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the world’s problems and cooperating with other Stanford institutions to educate our students as future leaders, world citizens, and problem-solvers. As part of our ongoing series of workshops and conferences for students from different campuses abroad, we will evaluate the new role of China in the international system in a June 2006 workshop and focus on world environmental problems in a workshop in Kyoto in June 2007. Stanford Overseas Studies will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2008. We hope to have a celebration on campus for the event. We also are planning a series of educational symposia that will examine the changes in those countries where we have studied and taught. Let us know if you have ideas or would like to participate in the planning for the event; just send an e-mail to Irene Kennedy, Executive Director, at imk.stanford.edu.

Yours sincerely,

Norman M. Naimark

Robert and Florence McDonnell Professor of East European Studies
Bing Overseas Studies Program

OSP Now BOSP

Long-time Stanford supporters Peter, ’55, and Helen Bing have endowed Stanford’s Overseas Studies Program. With matching funds from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the gift totals $25 million and will provide core operating funds to ensure that the overseas-studies experience is offered to Stanford students in perpetuity.

In recognition of the Bings’ extraordinary generosity, the program has been renamed the Bing Overseas Studies Program (BOSP). “Helen and Peter Bing have been good friends of Stanford for many years and have shaped the university in countless ways,” President John Hennessy said. “The Bing Overseas Studies Program will make a profound difference in the lives of our students and offer them opportunities to gain greater appreciation of the world’s diverse peoples.”

Norman Naimark, the Robert and Florence McDonnell Professor of Eastern European Studies and the Burke Family Director of the Bing Overseas Studies Program, said the gift will help the university reach a new stage of internationalization. “Innovative, flexible programming can be joined with Stanford’s traditional strengths in establishing campuses and centers abroad to create an environment in which all Stanford students have the potential to function as knowledgeable citizens of the world.”

“Over the years, no one has provided more support to the program than Helen and Peter Bing. It’s highly appropriate that the program would bear their name,” says T. Robert (Bob) Burke, ’64, JD ’67, chair of the Bing Overseas Studies Council and alumnus of Stanford in Italy, Group IV (March-September, 1962). “This gift is just the latest example of their generosity, which includes a previous gift to endow cultural events that have benefited generations of students. Through her service on the Bing Overseas Council and her personal interaction with students at Stanford abroad, Helen Bing has shown a deep, personal commitment to this program and to ensuring that students get the most they can from their overseas experience.”

The new endowment of $25 million has added significance beyond its primary benefit to students and the program’s future, said John Ford, Senior Vice President for University Resources. In 2000, the Campaign for Undergraduate Education (CUE) was launched with a $1-billion goal. The gift from the Bings, coupled with the Hewlett Foundation match, means that Stanford has reached its $50 million campaign goal for support of Overseas Studies. But BOSP cannot rest on laurels; areas still in need of support include 1) endowing operation and directorships of the centers in Beijing, Berlin, Oxford, Paris, and Santiago, and 2) endowing professorships in Beijing, Berlin, Florence, Oxford, Paris, and Santiago.

The newsletter of the BING OVERSEAS STUDIES PROGRAM

Bing Overseas Studies
at Stanford University

“...For the first time I was truly able to begin to understand another culture, and I thought a lot about my own.”

K A T I E P E T I T I R D , A B ’ 0 5 A R T – H I S T O R Y , B E R L I N F A L L – W I N T E R 2 0 0 5 – 0 6

The newsletter of the BING OVERSEAS STUDIES PROGRAM

Bing Overseas Studies at Stanford University

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Overseas Seminars for September 2006
The Bing Overseas Studies Program will offer seven Overseas Seminars next fall. Taught and led by Stanford faculty, these three-week courses take place just before the beginning of Autumn Quarter classes on campus. Read more about these intensive short-term study-abroad offerings on the web site http://osp.stanford.edu.

St. Petersburg, Russia
“St. Petersburg and Beyond”
Professors Nancy Kolm and Jack Kolm

Singapore
“Southeast Asia and the ‘Singapore Exception’”
Professor Donald Emmerson

Cape Town, South Africa
“A Decade of Apartheid: Contested Transitions in South Africa”
Professor Joel Samoff

Geneva, Switzerland
“The Pursuit of Peace: From the Enlightenment to the United Nations”
Professor Dan Elestein

Arusha, Tanzania
“Issues of Development in Northern Tanzania”
Professor Robert Siegel

Oxford, United Kingdom
“Workshop in Shakespearean Production”
Professor Larry Friedlander

Stanford-in-Italy Alums
Plan Reception in Rome on June 24, 2006!
B determinant Stanford-in-Italy Alumni and transfer Ronald P. Spogli (’70) swam in as an Ambassador Ordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States to the Republic of Italy in August 2005. Ron was a student at Stanford in Italy in 1968–69, and served as assistant to Dr. Mammarella at Villa San Paol’s in 1972–73.

A group of Stanford-in-Italy alums is planning an evening reception on Saturday, June 24, 2006, at the Ambassador’s residence, Villa Taverna, to honor Ron and his many contributions to Stanford. Those invited include all Stanford-in-Italy groups, present and former Stanford-in-Italy faculty, administrative staff and Stanford alumnus living in Italy. Your family and friends are welcome to attend as well. It will be a wonderful opportunity to return to Italy and catch up with fellow alumni!

We are also working with Dr. Mammarella to plan a 5-day program of seminars and sightseeing in Rome from Wednesday, June 21, 2006, to Sunday, June 25, 2006. The cost of the 5-day program, without hotel and the Villa Taverna reception, will be approximately $1,000 per person. We are in the process of arranging a block of hotel rooms as part of the program. You would be responsible for your own air transportation and transportation to and from Rome.

If you are interested in attending the Rome program or the reception at Villa Taverna, please contact:
Caroline Farrar (’73) carolinefarrar@comcast.net
Joan Robertson Lamb (’73) jrlamb@cox.net
Helena Barbev Lankton (’72) helenalarlton@hotmail.com

Spogli New Ambassador to Italy
Ronald P. Spogli (’70, AB History), alumnus of Stanford in Italy, Group XVII (September, 1968–March, 1969), was recently appointed as the United States’ Ambassador to Italy. During a visit last month at Stanford’s Center in Italy, he was the honored guest at a reception, and we saw him here meeting students, faculty, staff, along with other guests. Emelinda Campani, Director of the Center, presented him with a picture from his student days, and the students prepared an album of photos for him, including a picture of their group.

BOSP’s Berlin program has published the first edition of the annual e-newsletter “Briefe aus Berlin” for the alumni of the “Krupp Internship Program for Stanford Students in Germany”. This program has been in existence since 1982 and has placed more than 800 students from the full spectrum of undergraduate majors in companies and institutions all over Germany. The first issue of the e-newsletter updates recent developments at Stanford in Berlin and in the internship program and contains “culture capsules” on contemporary Berlin and Germany. The newsletter, in pdf format, is written in English and German and can be ordered informally and free of charge by e-mail at: intern@stanford-bu.berlin.de. The team in Berlin does not have e-mail addresses for many of the alumni of the Krupp Program. If you are an alum of the Program and did not receive the newsletter, please contact us at the above e-mail address, and please pass on this information to other alumni you may know. Susan Clark
It’s Russia!

Richard Schupbach, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literature, has been on Stanford’s faculty since 1971. He taught in residence at Bing Overseas Studies’ Program in Moscow in 2002-03 and returned this last (autumn) quarter inaugurating the center’s new location in Moscow (see related story on this page).

My academic interests center around the expanding edge of the Russian vocabulary. As society changes, the vocabulary of a language expands. It seems obvious that, given their adoption of a Western, market-society economy, there would be a recent flood of borrowings from English: “press-bruilting”, “kreditt”, and even, “kreidnaja karta”, etc. But there are other means of word production as well. My particular interests involve analysis of the various mechanisms that Russian uses to meet such challenges: they include, in addition to the borrowing of words, suffixation, prefixation, compounding, abbreviation, the spawning of acronyms, etc. It’s as though my colleagues and I have surfed the expanding edge of the lexicon.

My personal interests include collecting and identification, and, where appropriate, consumption of wild mushrooms. This is perfect “fit” with what the Russians do: they love to get out of town and collect wild mushrooms for the table. However, this year, late summer and the fall were very dry, and there were hardly any to speak of. But at least it provided a good excuse to take a walk in the woods. Russians “open up” once you get them out of the city.

As a teacher of Russian, what better place could there be for me to visit and to practice my trade than in Russia? I have taught the language for over 40 years. For me the chance to participate in a BOSP program in Russia is equivalent to a department-store Santa winning a trip to the North Pole. And Moscow has changed considerably since we were here last, in 2002-3. For one thing, Russia is awash in petro-dollars, and Moscow is booming. A fairly well-heeled middle class has emerged, and everything is available in the stores, for a price. Things are changing at a furious pace, and the traffic is unimaginable.

I am one of those very lucky people who, after so many years, still knows exactly why he/she is doing what they do: as a language-teacher I am imparting to a group of young people the linguistic wherewithal necessary to try to figure out just what the Hell is going on with the Russians—people who have a very different mind-set from ours.

At the “home campus” the best we can hope for is that our students will spend, perhaps, 8 hours per week listening and speaking Russian. There the study of the language—for that matter the history, culture, and literature—tends to take on aspects of a laboratory experiment. Here Russian is “out-of-the-bottle”: it goes on (and on) through all the students’ waking hours. They live with a Russian family, see now the generations react to each other, watch TV with them, eat their food (kots try their best to be accommodating to American tastes), learn to take off their shoes as they enter the apartment, etc. Students go on tours of the city, the Kremlin, see the museums, ballet, and opera, learn to navigate the Metro and the bus system.

I find particularly fascinating the way they eugen to “get” jokes about the Russian way of thinking that would be opaque to other Stanford students. It’s all here; nothing is staged or re-created. It’s Russia!
Stanford Celebrates in Santiago

Zack Allen (BA ’98, International Relations with a minor in Spanish and Portuguese, and MA ’99, Latin American Studies) comes from an Overseas Studies family; if there ever was one! Here he tells us about his own experience with Stanford abroad.

I’ve known about Stanford’s overseas campuses since I was about six years old. My parents (Class of ’69) studied at Stanford’s campuses in Vienna, Austria and Tours, France. So when I ended up on The Farm, I headed to the Overseas Studies office to see what the current overseas offerings were. My attention was drawn to Stanford’s program in Santiago, Chile.

In the back of my mind was a foundational experience I had in high school. I traveled with my mom and a group from my Unitarian church in suburban Ferndora to Brazil to visit several orphanages we supported in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and to explore the Amazon from the vantage point of Manaus. I was raised in a comfortable neighborhood, but I had seen poverty before, in the fringe neighborhoods of Philadelphia and on the Native American reservations my family visited during our summer road trips to my grandparents’ home in Arizona.

But the scale and rawness of the poverty I saw in Brazil was a shock to me. I vividly remember a little girl, about five years old, who came to our table while we were sipping Coca-Colas in Brazil was a shock to me. I vividly remember a little girl, about five years old, who came to our table while we were sipping Coca-Colas in Brazil's big cities.

During the days that followed, I met many more Brazil's discarded street children. I could handle living on my own in a big city and survive. Then I started to focus on everything that was different, everything that was wrong. I asked hard questions about their society. But they were also honest with me. They held me to ask hard questions about their society. They were patient with me, allowing me to ask hard questions about their society. They were also honest with me. They held me to ask hard questions about their society.

It is a lesson I continue to learn and relearn. After graduating from Stanford’s Masters Program in Latin American Studies, I found a position as program assistant to former U.S. Senator Alan Cranston, and helped him transition to his next initiative dedicated to the global elimination of nuclear weapons into a full-fledged international non-governmental organization. That work has taken me into the corridors of power and politics in Washington, D.C., the United Nations, and the government palaces of Europe. It also took me, perhaps unexpectedly, into the wilderness of Kenya and the teeming streets of urban India. All the while, I’ve kept in mind the intuitional sense of “antilien” that sold as a teenager in Brazil, and I’ve maintained a critical eye directed toward my own government, which has a large responsibility in this world. I’ve found that my way to contribute is to work to change the system by addressing perhaps the biggest elephant in the room, which few recognize or talk about: the global nuclear apartheid that ensures the dominance of the United States at the ultimate expense of the world’s poor.

The occasion also marked the dedication of Stanford’s new academic center in Santiago. This is the second move I have observed for the program since my time there as a student. The new center is bright and airy, an excellent central location, and technologically advanced. It was gratifying to see the new center and to understand that the need for a move was prompted by growing student interest in the program and the need for additional student space.

I firmly believe that the strong academic foundation laid by Emado, the quality of the program’s professional staff, the program’s new center, and the leadership of Ivan Jakas will allow the program to continue to grow, develop, and thrive. For me, the occasions celebrated at the Stanford Program in Santiago on November 16th reflect the myriad changes that have occurred in Chile since its transition to democracy and the inauguration of the Stanford Program in Santiago in 1989. I look forward to continuing my involvement with the program, continuing to make regular visits to Chile, and to observe the growth and dynamism of the program in the future.