October 2012

New Villagers

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It was a gorgeous day in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Brooke Barker, senior in management and international business, kayaked to the Island of Lokrum, the wind blew through her hair as she paddled to keep up with the group. Upon reaching the island, she began the trek to the top, where she ran into some local daredevils preparing to jump into the deep blue water of the Adriatic Sea 35 feet below. Intrigued, Brooke decided to join them.

While some spent the summer partying with friends, slowly killing brain cells playing their favorite drinking games or staying up night after night saving princesses made of pixels rather than human flesh, Brooke had experiences only a few students take advantage of. With the study abroad program she was able to spend the summer of 2011 traveling overseas, not only spitting in the face of danger, such as her time on the Lokrum cliffs, but also earning college credit and going places that a geography teacher couldn’t locate on a map.
She discovered the Semester at Sea program through a friend—nine countries in two months floating on a ship that would make even the most luxurious cruise vessels jealous. She would be in one part of the world one day and somewhere entirely different the next. But to Brooke, the Semester at Sea was more than just learning about the world, it shaped her as a person. “Semester at Sea changed who I am, what I want and, most importantly, what I plan to do with my life,” Brooke says.

Nick Morton, junior in environmental science, was shopping at a market in Fiji’s capitol, Suva, getting food to take back to his dorm, when, out of the corner of his eye, he saw the president doing the exact same thing. Not only did he see President Epeli Nailatikau, he had the opportunity to speak with him and snap a quick picture. With the president’s warm welcome, Nick realized the hospitality of the people of Fiji and came to understand the local culture.

This understanding helped him better comprehend a bit about his own country. “Learning about a culture that is so different from your own helps you appreciate your own country while getting an experience you will cherish forever,” Nick says.

Getting ready for class in the morning was different last summer. Instead of waking up ten minutes before class starts, frantically finishing homework, Nick wriggled his body into a snug wet suit as he prepared to explore the coral reefs. While scuba diving in the reef, he explored coves and saw exotic fish—two things he would have never gotten to see without the study abroad program.

Nick and Brooke learned a lot through their experiences overseas and both recommend every student look into the program. As Nick says, “Doing something different or experiencing a new thing has far reaching advantages.”

**TOP 10 STUDY ABROAD LOCATIONS**

1. **Italy**
2. **Spain**
3. **United Kingdom**
4. **Australia**
5. **China**
6. **Ireland**
7. **Costa Rica**
8. **New Zealand**
9. **Canada**
10. **Ecuador**

*Information gathered from the 2011-2012 Iowa State Fact Book*