Welcome to the second issue of the UWRF COST Newsletter. In this issue you will find a letter from the coordinator, notes from Abroad, HELP! (Q&A), and Bulletin Board.

FROM THE COORDINATOR

We have placed two TOEFL majors in China for the Spring 2010 semester. Jonathan Hendricks and Sara Allsop will be teaching English to tenth grades in Hangzhou, China. This is the first time any COST students have been placed in China, and we are hopeful that this new arrangement will become an option for all 15 institutions in the COST Consortium.

Jon and Sara recently learned that there could be as many as 50 Chinese students in some classes. We are excited to have Sara and Jon report to us so that we can learn more about our colleagues at Zhejiang Education Institute. Dr. Margaret Phinney made this placement possible as a result of her work with Xia Guoyan in the Spring 2009 semester.

Congratulations Jon and Sara!!!

Notes From Abroad

New Zealand — I have just finished my first week of school in New Zealand and I loved it! . . . The school is a collection of buildings with a center courtyard so there is a lot of running between buildings. They (the students) all have to wear sun hats whenever they go outside and they are not required to wear shoes in or out of the classroom! We have tea every morning for about 20 min. When the students eat their snack and play outside, all the teachers go to the staff lounge and have tea! Lunch is an hour long with lots of time to play for the kids. The actual content covered in class is very similar to the States and I have already been teaching a little bit. Today was the first day that was warm and sunny and the weekend is supposed to be nice too. Maybe I will poke around Auckland a bit.

— I can’t believe I have been here two weeks! I was able to teach quite a few lessons this week. I have learned that they use different terms for punctuation and I had to modify my lesson about “periods” to a lesson about “full
stop” thank goodness I ran it by my teacher before I taught or else I would have had a lot of confused students! This weekend I was able to get together with Tina (Abegglen)! She is also here in Auckland teaching on the North Shore. On Saturday we explored Rangitoto, a volcanic island off the coast of Auckland. We caught a ferry boat out in the morning and spent the whole day hiking (or tramping as they say it here). We climbed to the summit, saw the crater, crawled through lava caves, and walked through lava tunnels. We had a fabulous time exploring the downtown area and eating dinner. Tina was feeling particularly adventurous after the day’s activities and ordered Malaysian food while I stuck to nice and familiar Indian. We discovered that Malaysian food is very spicy and it is best when eaten with a fork :) — Danielle Mandich, Fall 2009

Mexico — Hola! I’ve only been in Mexico for a month, but it feels like years! My host family is fantastic. I have my own room and bathroom, which is nice. Apparently I live in the servant’s room (every house is built with one and most families who have enough money have a “muchacha” who cooks and cleans). This is still an unsettling fact for me because I am so used to doing my own laundry, cleaning, dishes, and cooking. The “helper” Vicky is very nice and patient when I butcher Spanish in order to speak with her. My host mother and her kids are fluent in Spanish and English, which is great!

I love, love, love the school! It is a private bilingual Mexican school. I work with two different third grade teachers and two different classes. Every five days I switch teachers, which is great because then I can gain more experience with different teaching styles. I teach in English, but I sometimes have to explain concepts in Spanish so that the children will understand. My Spanish comprehension is really improving, but I am very shy and scared about actually speaking.

Mexico is different, yet very similar, to the U.S. Querétaro, where I am living, is large: about a million people! There is a quaint and bustling historical center, and then many commercial areas.

... the time is flying by! I learn something new every day, which is great!

I have been asked to teach an hour-long tutoring session three times because those teachers have been sick. For the second-graders and Pre-Firsters I had to teach the entire lesson in Spanish! At first I was sooo scared because my Spanish is so rusty, but by the time I taught the Pre-Firsters it was flowing (slowly and with many mistakes) out of my mouth like water. Apparently, my five years of Spanish classes are coming back to me, albeit slowly.

Today, I am going on a field trip with the third grade to the Museo Regional de Querétaro and then we are talking a bus ride around the city center. I’m excited! I’ve been there on my own many times, but it will be nice to get a guided tour. I’ve only left Querétaro once, to go to the beautiful city of San Miguel de Allende with a fellow teacher. — Holly Knudtson, Fall 2009

Christine Abegglen and Danielle Mandich, New Zealand Fall 2009

Where it all begins — Study Abroad Fair, students pick up a brochure Fall 2009
What about the FBI background check; how do I get one, when should I do this?

It is important not to get your background check done too early so that it is still pertinent for the time you travel, however it takes about three months. About 5 months before you are to leave you should have this done. Be sure to use the COST background check form. You can either pick this up by stopping in WEB 257, or ask to have one sent to you. You must take the card to a jail to have your fingerprints recorded and the have form sent from there (you do not send it in yourself).

How do I get credit for my COST experience?

We have two different evaluation forms:

1. UWRF Student Teaching Observation form
2. COST Participant Survey form

These forms will be given to you physically, as well as sent to you electronically as backup copies. You must take them with you to your COST placement site. The UWRF Teaching Observation form and COST Evaluation of Student Teaching Experience form are used to generate your grade for the semester. In order to receive credit for the overseas experience you must evaluate your COST experience using the COST Participant Survey.

Who do I contact in case of emergency?

The Global Connections Office emergency number is: 715-425-4891, after hours: 715-425-3133

Money Tips for Safe Travel

As you plan your trip overseas review these financial safety travel tips to keep your money safe and secure.

- Limit the amount of plastic you take with you. No more than two credit cards or one credit card and one debit card (for cash withdrawals) are recommended.
- Notify your financial institution that issued your debit and credit card that you are traveling.
- Carry traveler’s checks. These are great for back up if your credit and debit cards are lost or stolen.
- Get foreign currency. If you are traveling abroad, get $100 in the currency of the country you are visiting. This will cover expenses such as taxi fares, etc. before you have the chance to change money.
- Safely carry your money. If you don't have a hotel safe, keep your money, credit/debit cards, passport and airline tickets on you at all times. Don’t carry everything in a purse or backpack, use a money belt.
- Leave behind valuables. Keep your valuable jewelry, family keepsakes and Social Security Card at home. Also leave behind store membership cards that you won’t need.

Meetings

COST Meeting for Spring 2011
3:00 p.m. February 25, 2010, Lounge area on second floor WEB

Please be sure to let us know when you plan to leave for your destination, when you arrive overseas, and let us know when you return from overseas. Use the address from which you receive e-mails to contact us.

Stay in touch and be sure to send us digital photographs of you with your students (be sure to receive permission in writing for student photos to be used for newsletters and marketing). You may find yourself in a newsletter and could use it when you apply for a full time job.

Send us your stories & photographs for the next newsletter!

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