

Spring 2014

International Panther, Spring 2014

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international
panther
spring 2014



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Letter *from the* Director

Greetings from CIEP!

The transition to our new facility is nearly complete and we are grateful to the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) for the financial, logistical, material, and labor-intensive support required to relocate the Culture and Intensive English Program (CIEP) to the newly renovated Bartlett Hall on the UNI campus. The transition has been a smooth one and CIEP teachers and office personnel are fully utilizing the space to serve students. We are proud of the new facility we have been afforded and look forward to utilizing its full capabilities and capacity to serve students. A video of the CIEP's new facility is available on the CIEP home webpage for all to see.

In other news, the CIEP welcomed special program groups to campus this past semester. In January the CIEP has welcomed a group of 18 students from Kyungpook National University (KNU) in Daegu, South Korea. The students participated in a custom program sponsored by the government of South Korea. In February, the CIEP welcomed a group of seven high school teachers from the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil. The group was

sponsored by funds from their government and observed classes at area schools. Finally, a group of 20 students sponsored by the Brazilian Scientific Mobility Program (BSMP) to attend both English language programs and academic programs of study arrived to begin studies in the CIEP. The BSMP program is sponsored by the government of Brazil and administered through the Institute of International Education (IIE). IIE has approved for UNI to accept more students in fall 2014. Teachers are impressed by the energy and intellect of the students from both KNU and those sponsored by BSMP.

Over the past semester, CIEP staff members have also participated in several professional development opportunities including attending conferences such as: TESOL Arabic Conference in Dubai, TESOL Conference in Portland, and National and Regional NAFSA conferences.

Finally, as we wrap up the spring semester on the UNI campus, I wish safe travels to those returning home and a happy summer to those staying in the U.S.A. ■





VIDEO OF BARTLETT





UNI OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL ADMISSIONS

helping international students navigate UNI

By Olivia Randolph, CIEP Office Assistant

Located in Gilchrist Hall within the University of Northern Iowa Office of Admissions, the Office of International Admissions is dedicated to recruiting, serving, and processing applications and inquiries from undergraduate and graduate international students (interested in) studying at UNI. The process begins when Kristi Marchesani, Assistant Director of International Admissions, travels to different schools and fairs around the globe to visit with prospective students.

After meeting with Kristi, prospective students fill out an application for UNI, and wait for a response from International Record Analysts Bryant Dowd (Undergraduate International Record Analyst) and Linda Jernigan (Graduate International Record Analyst). In their response, Bryant and Linda inform

applicants about the application process and the documents that are needed in order to have a completed application.

“The application starts the whole process rolling,” says Linda “after we receive the application, I tell them about the next steps they need to take, and how to complete their application.”

The Office of International Admissions tries to help make the application process as easy as possible for students.

“We have really tried to make the process more international student friendly. With more development technology-wise, we can do more outreach, and we can provide more information online. As far as some of our admissions policies, we try to be very fair and give our students lots of options. We have to understand that we’re dealing with students from many

parts of the world, so we’ve really tried to learn more about the circumstances in those countries and adapt our admissions standard so that its still supporting what the university needs and wants but is considering the situation in that country,” says Kristi.

After receiving all of the necessary documents, Bryant and Linda spend time researching and analyzing them to make sure the prospective student has fulfilled all the requirements to be considered for admission to UNI. After they ascertain that the application is complete, the application is sent to the specific academic department the student has applied to, who then makes the admissions decision.

Students can be fully admitted, conditionally admitted, or denied admission to the University.

If a student is conditionally admitted to UNI, the Office of International Admissions contacts the Culture & Intensive English Program to enroll the student in intensive English courses.

“We work very closely with the Culture & Intensive English Program in that some of the students we work with are not quite ready for academic courses so they need to start with some English coursework,” says Kristi “and so then I work with the CIEP to make sure they get that training and then they can transition back into academic courses.”

The CIEP and Office of International Admissions work closely together to make sure that conditionally admitted students receive the English instruction that they need in a timely matter, so they can transition into academic courses.

“We work with CIEP letting them know who the conditionally admitted students are going to be, and then when those students arrive we share some responsibility for helping them get tested and then determining exactly what they’re going to be doing as far as their first semester at UNI. As students work through the program, the CIEP stays in touch with us about their options of transitioning into academic courses. We let students sometimes transition by taking one or two academic courses in their final semester at CIEP,” Kristi states,

“Theres a lot of work between the two offices, making sure that we’re assisting students, we’re giving them the correct information, and that we’re helping make that transition as soon as possible. We have had a lot of great students come out of CIEP and be very successful.”

Helping students is important to the CIEP and to the Office of International Admissions.

“Bryant and I both, we spend a lot of time servicing students, both the current students that are already on campus and prospective students,” says Linda, “but I truly love my job and being able to help students navigate UNI and the admissions process. There are a lot of hurdles for international students to jump over, and I feel good about my role in being able to help them. It is a very rewarding job.” ■





Conversation partners bring Intercultural Communication students

hands-on experience

By Sally Roos, Student Services Coordinator

Intercultural Communication students formed a social bridge to the campus community for South Koreans studying English and Stem Education in CIEP this January. Dr. Victoria DeFrancisco's section of Communication Studies upperclassman served as temporary conversation partners for Kyungpook National University students during their short 4-week stay at UNI.

The project benefited both groups, providing a real-life intercultural communication opportunity for UNI students and a conversational English opportunity for KNU students.

"It is one thing for students to read about how to build intercultural relationships in a textbook, it is quite another to actually try to apply what they read," said Dr. DeFrancisco, Professor of Communication Studies. "The conversation partner program makes the text (and the course) come alive."

UNI Senior, Monica Sodergren, took the course as a requirement for a Conflict Resolution Certificate from the Social Work Department. She found out that she had more in common with her conversation partner, Seoyoung Yoon, than she would have thought.

"The class prepared me for being open to new experiences and appreciating differences instead of being annoyed with them," she said.

According to DeFrancisco, some of her students from small towns understand that college is a good opportunity for them to interact with people from different countries. The personal and academic benefit of meeting with CIEP

students depends on how much time and effort they make to volunteer.

"For those students who put in the time, the experience was very fulfilling and they said it opened their eyes not only to another culture, but to the unique qualities of their own culture," she said.

On Martin Luther King Day, the students were first introduced to one another over hot cocoa and structured conversational activities facilitated by Dr. DeFrancisco and Sally Roos, the CIEP Activities Coordinator. Smiles and laughter filled the UNI Wesley Foundation as both groups of students shared something unique about themselves, posed for pictures with their new partners, looked for common interests, and discussed cultural differences. Future meetings between partners were decided upon individually. Conversation Partner pairs went to movies and restaurants, attended CIEP events together, or just met in the student union or in the dormitories.

"When I was with my conversation partner, I could only speak English, and that made my language skills better," said KNU student, Jooyeon Lee. UNI Communication Major, Karlee West, surprised Lee, a city girl, with her story about her big backyard and turkey hunting during Thanksgiving.

"And also, Karlee listened to me very carefully, and she try to understand when I was speaking to her and also she spoke in slow, and clear language to help me understand well."



Top Left: KNU students, Seoyoung Yoon, Yeonji Oh, Jiyeon Moon, gather with UNI students during a CIEP activity.

Top Right: Students participate in a cultural exchange led by UNI Professor Dr. Victoria DeFrancisco.

Bottom Right: KNU Student, Hoseop Bae, discusses his experience with CIEP Director, Philip Plourde, and Associate Provost of International Programs, Craig Klafter.



Keeping up in a conversation with native or fluent conversation partners is a challenge for many students studying in the CIEP, and the KNU students felt the same. However, working through the challenge benefits both the learner and the volunteer. Heejeong Shin, a KNU student, tried to make the most of the opportunity to improve.

"I asked her to correct my grammar and words which were incorrect," she explained. "And she gave me some advices. For example, I was afraid of speaking English for the first time I met her, and I told her about this. She gave advices that I should be confident in speaking English. This advice was really helpful for me to improve my English speaking skills."

For UNI Communication Majors, working with second language learners improved their communication skills and understanding of intercultural concepts from class.

"I learned to be patient and understanding," said Hallie Berg, a UNI junior who is majoring in both Communications and Global Studies. "Being an outsider in a foreign culture is confusing and scary, so it's important to be patient with them and to help make them feel more comfortable in an unfamiliar environment."

Meeting with a conversation partner gave KNU students opportunities and confidence to meet other UNI students. For example, Heejeong met her partner Erika's roommates and gained exposure to American slang.

KNU student Donghyeok Choi met weekly with his conversation partner, Austin Swantz. While his listening skills were challenged by the speed of conversation, he was impressed by Austin's kindness and personality. Donghyeok also made other American friends by playing basketball at the UNI Wellness and Recreation Center.

"I learned that American university students are very outgoing people," said Donghyeok.

At the KNU Farewell party, many conversation partners came to say goodbye to their international friends.

"Everything was memorable!" said Heejeong about her experience. "But if I should choose just one part, I will choose the last time. We exchanged the letters, and I was really impressed when I read her letter after say good bye."

CIEP hopes to collaborate with the UNI Communication Department in similar ways for future programs and create memories for years to come. ■



STEM Pedagogy Program begins at UNI CIEP

For four weeks during Spring Term 1, a group of STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) pedagogy students from Kyungpook National University in South Korea attended English classes taught by program assistants Ashley Jennings, Carol Floyd, and Christina Tsimpides and teaching assistant Kate Hein. These instructors created lessons that allowed students to improve, regardless of their proficiency level.

In the reading class, Kate Hein put students in control of their learning by assigning high-interest STEM-related articles and allowing student groups to generate their own vocabulary lists and questions. She used these student-generated materials to guide her instruction, and she found that students enjoyed working in small groups and being able to help each other with the assignments.

Ashley Jennings taught listening/speaking, focusing on presentation skills, conversation strategies, and debates. When asked to describe the best part of her experience with the KNU class, Jennings explained a speed dating activity her class completed:

“I divided the class into 2 groups and had them form 2 circles, with the outside and inside circles facing each other. Then, I told them that no matter the topic, the inside circle would need to disagree with the topic (and give arguments for opposing it) and the outside circle would need to support the topic and provide reasons. They got SO into it!”

Christina Tsimpides and Carol Floyd taught writing and grammar. The culminating project for this class was a three-page formal research paper. In addition to intensive writing

By Kate Hein, CIEP Graduate Assistant

instruction, this class also addressed perfect tenses, noun clauses, and passive voice. The grammar portion of the class was interactive and engaging for students. Tsimpides explains that she used interactive Powerpoint presentations and grammar games, such as “passive voice jeopardy, in which students had to answer trivia questions about UNI/American culture using the passive voice.”

Notably, UNI faculty also contributed to the success of the program by delivering and preparing materials for 2 hour sessions discussing STEM Pedagogy with the group. These staff members included: Jihaw Noh (Associate Professor, Mathematics), John Ophus (Associate Professor, Biology), Jeffrey Morgan (Associate Professor, Physics), and Scott Greenhalgh (Assistant Professor, Technology). ■

CIEP Welcomes Teachers from Minas Gerais

During the Spring 1 session, the CIEP welcomed a group of nine education professionals from Minas Gerais in Brazil. The group participated in intensive English courses, culture activities, and also observed classes.

Within the four-week program, participants had the chance to observe modern language classes at UNI and foreign language courses at Cedar Falls High School in addition to improving their English skills at CIEP. Participants also attended culture talks discussing language learning strategies. One participant described her experience,

"[The CIEP activities] were good opportunities to learn more about the people and local culture. Everything that I needed, [the staff] supported me. I'm very satisfied!"

Outside of the classroom, the group took some time to visit various places in the Midwest including Iowa City, Minneapolis and even taking a skiing trip in Galena, Illinois!

While on campus, the students met community members and collaborated with UNI students and staff through a variety of CIEP activities, the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP), attending athletic events, joining in Conversation Corner, a sponsored event from the UNI TESOL club.

Before departing, this group also shared a bit of Brazilian culture with CIEP, by helping to organize a party for Carnival. During this event, other CIEP students enjoyed learning about Brazilian culture and traditional festivals while enjoying food and dance! ■



2014 Minas Gerais Teachers Program Participants



Program participants share their experiences with CIEP Program Coordinator, Carolina Coronado-Park

Special Programs at UNI CIEP!

Intensive Business English Program

The Intensive Business English Program (IBEP) is designed for international students majoring in business or related careers.

This program focuses on:

- Improving English language skills
- Business English vocabulary
- Guest Lectures
- Visits to local and transnational companies

Academic English and STEM Program

The Academic English and STEM Program is a four week special program with a specifically designed curriculum to focus on:

- Academic English
- STEM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Math) courses taught by UNI faculty
- Opportunities to meet native speakers
- Class exchange with UNI students and faculty members

English Language and Culture Immersion Program

The CIEP English Language & Culture Immersion Program facilitates cross-cultural understanding and enrichment by providing a unique opportunity for:

- Cultural immersion
- Intensive language study
- Exposure to academic classroom settings
- Travel excursions
- Recreational adventure
- Life-long friendships
- Conversation skills



CIEP Alumni Isabel Garcia

By Sally Roos, Student Services Coordinator

In 2007, Isabel Garcia moved with her family from the big city of Madrid, Spain to a small college town in Iowa when her husband had been relocated by John Deere & Company, an international engineering and tractor manufacturing company that employs many in the Cedar Valley area.

The adjustment process to life in Cedar Falls, Iowa was not easy.

“It was a bunch of mix feelings...” said Isabel. “... missing home and open for new adventures in a completely different type of community and city size.”

Isabel’s husband found the Culture and Intensive English Program at the University of Northern Iowa as a place for her to continue learning and developing. With a degree in Journalism and further studies in political science, Isabel was already well-educated in many topics, but CIEP was a different kind of educational opportunity that interested her. She was particularly interested in the practical uses that English training afforded her.

“I was able to actually learn and practice English in many different environments... from class to fun!” she said.

She joined a slang class and learned how to talk like others around campus.

In addition to coursework, Isabel had two conversation partners during her time at UNI. One of her partners, Sally Roos, went on to work in CIEP after serving as a volunteer. Good friends are some of Isabel’s favorite memories at UNI.

“Both Sally and Molly are two great friends that I miss. I remember all their good thinking about journalism and culture. I still keep contact with them through Facebook and email.”

Although a wife and mom, Isabel also made time for CIEP activities and especially enjoyed international food potlucks.

“Yes, I enjoyed as many student outings as possible,” she said. “Good memories of the dinners with food from all around the world!”

After graduating from CIEP, Isabel was enrolled in communication studies at UNI. She had the opportunity to take coursework at the graduate level which provided her with a background in public relations and cross cultural communication. The program was a great match for her career and personal interest.

Since her time in the CIEP, Isabel moved to Germany for a few years due to another John Deere transfer and back home to Madrid with her very close-knit family of five. Staying busy, she currently works as an executive coach for a company called Seeliger & Conde Consultancy, which provides services such as strategic consulting for professional development and talent management. The company provides services to many local and international clients.

“I have too many hobbies but little time to enjoy them,” she said. “Now, with three kids and a full time job, my spare time is so little that I am very selective in what I do. Mainly, I practice horsebackriding and hiking.”

Isabel is proud of the diversity of her country, Spain, which has many different foods, cultures and people. Spain has four official languages: Castilian, Catalan, Galician, Basque, and Valencian.

While the Western lifestyle of the U.S. was not too different from Spain, Isabel called U.S. the most convenient place she has lived. She also misses some of the food she ate in Cedar Falls, including soups from Panera Bread, BBQ ribs from Famous Dave’s, and hamburgers from Texas Roadhouse.

Isabel encourages current and future CIEP students to: “Enjoy every single minute there at full speed!”



ISABEL GARCIA

Home Country: Spain

CIEP Certificate Year: 2007

Current Occupation: Executive Coach, Seeliger & Conde Consultancy

Advice to current students:

“Enjoy every single minute there at full speed!”



Are you a graduate of CIEP? Visit: <http://uni.edu/ciep/alumni/alumni-record> to tell us what you've been doing since your graduation and you could be featured in this section!

CIEP Activities

By Shawna Schrock, CIEP Activities Assistant



Trip to Amana Colonies

On Saturday, January 25th students went on a day trip to the Historic Amana Colonies for the annual Winterfest Celebration. Students were able to eat a delicious German meal, participate in traditional German winter games, visit the local shops, and end the day with shopping at Coralridge Mall in Coralville.

Waterloo Blackhawks Game

Students traveled to Young Arena in Waterloo to watch an exciting game of hockey between the Waterloo Blackhawks and the Muskegon Lumberjacks from Michigan.



Valentine's Day Culture Hour

A few days prior to Valentine's Day, CIEP students and UNI students got together to enjoy an afternoon of sweet treats and discussion of dating and relationship customs and traditions in the United States.



Conversation Partner Appreciation Night

At one of the last activities of the year, students thanked their Conversation Partners by enjoying a short recognition ceremony and a showing of "Captain America" together at College Square Cinema.



Off-Campus Culture Talk: Learn about the History of Waterloo

Students traveled to nearby Waterloo to visit the Grout Museum District and learn about the evolution of a small town into a Midwest industrial center.

International Food Potluck

On a Saturday evening, CIEP students brought food from their home countries to a potluck to share with their classmates, as well as several conversation partners and host families. Dishes from around the world were enjoyed by all!



Language Learning Strategies Panel

CIEP students gathered for an interesting panel discussion about strategies and tips for learning languages. Panelists had each learned multiple languages and brought valuable varied experiences to the table.

CIEP Social and Cultural Activities

SPRING 2014



Ski Trip

Students took advantage of the Iowa winter weather and headed to Chestnut Mountain Resort for a day of Skiing and Snowboarding on the slopes.

Ping Pong Tournament

Students gathered for a fun night of pizza and competition as classmates and friends participated in a Ping-Pong tournament, complete with prizes for the winner.

Trip to Des Moines

On Saturday, April 26, a busload of students traveled to the State Capitol for a chance to tour the historic Salisbury House and Gardens, visit the Jordan Creek Mall, and watch a professional bull riding show.



CIEP Current Student

Tasleem Alsaffar

By Sarah Stephany, CIEP Activities Assistant

Meet Tasleem! She is a current CIEP student who arrived here in January from Qatif, Saudi Arabia. She is passionate about traveling, drawing, animals, and learning new languages. She is the only one of her siblings to have studied abroad, but she says that her family was very supportive of her decision. When asked if she was afraid to leave her country, family and friends, Tasleem said she was a little sad, but not afraid at all. She had been waiting for this chance since she was sixteen! Before coming here, Tasleem had a cat, turtle, lizard, bird, snake, iguana, a dog, and fish. Besides leaving her family and friends, she also had to give each of her pets away so that she could come to study. However, she is not regretful of her decision at all.

“I have become more outgoing since coming to the United States, and I have met many people. When I talk to my mom at home I tell her that the people here are really nice. I have also improved my English skills in speaking and writing grammar.”

One aspect of CIEP that she really enjoys is her diverse group of classmates.

“In class I listen to the other students tell stories about their home culture and I also get to share my opinion on topics as well.”

She also mentioned that she really likes how her teachers spend time making sure they understand the material, instead of just memorizing information. CIEP has helped Tasleem continue learning English so that she may travel to other English-speaking countries in the future. So far, she has had the opportunity to travel around the United States, visiting Florida and Chicago, taking in all that each place has to offer. Tasleem has also spent time getting to know Americans through the Conversation Partner Program, through CIEP activities, and by spending time with her Host Family. A favorite memory of hers is celebrating Valentine’s Day with her host family by making cookies and playing with the kids. She also enjoyed the trip to Salvation Army when she had the opportunity to play soccer with the kids there.

Although she has only been here a short time, Tasleem has grown tremendously in her English abilities and in her overall cultural awareness. She still talks to her mom at home in Saudi Arabia daily, but is excited for what the future offers her as well. She hopes to study at another university to experience another part of the country. She plans to become an Electrical or Mechanical Engineer so that she can make enough money to support her travel bug and continue exploring all that the world has to offer! ■



CIEP Receives First Wave of Students from Brazil Scientific Mobility Program

By Cory Cottingim, UNI International Recruiter



In early March, the CIEP welcomed sixteen Brazilian undergraduate students who will participate in two sessions of intensive English studies in the program before moving on to academic classes at UNI in their respective fields of study. The students, all of whom are enrolled in undergraduate programs in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), were selected for their academic excellence and desire to expand their academic, linguistic, and cultural horizons through an exchange experience in the United States. The Brazil Scientific Mobility Program (Ciência sem Fronteiras in Portuguese) is organized and sponsored by CAPES, an agency affiliated with the Brazilian Ministry of Education which promotes excellence for educational exchange programs and post-graduate studies.

Each of the STEM students will hone their skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English until August, when they will transition into academic classes in their chosen fields of study. The students will then complete two semesters of

STEM classes at UNI before returning to their home universities throughout Brazil with their newfound English skills, academic perspectives, and more than a few new friendships.

The CIEP is happy to welcome this first group of Brazilian exchange students and already expects to receive more students through the Brazil Scientific Mobility Program in the coming months. Without a doubt, the students are already enriching the UNI community with their presence! It is our hope that this group represents the start of a long relationship between the CIEP and the BSMP. ■



CIEP Staff Accomplishments & Professional Development

UNI International Students & Scholars Office: Teaching International Students, Lecture Series

In February 2014, Lauren Rein (CIEP Academic Support Specialist) and Philip Plourde (CIEP Director) joined Ali Kashaf, Joyce Milambiling, and Chris Schrage for a panel discussion about the challenges, strategies and rewards of teaching international students.

TESOL Arabia Conference & Exhibition

Kyle Talbot, a CIEP Graduate Assistant, presented a paper at the 20th Annual TESOL Arabia Conference & Exhibition in Dubai. His paper was titled, "Using electronic portfolios to authentically assess student proficiency." Daryl Veatch, CIEP Graduate Assistant also attended this conference.

Mental Health Training

This semester, Phil Plourde (CIEP Director), Carolina Coronado-Park (Program Coordinator) Ana Bender (Department Secretary), Cristy Steffen (Admissions & Promotions Assistant), Sally Roos (Student Services Coordinator), and Mike Williams (Academic Support Coordinator) completed the Mental Health First Aid course. This course is coordinated by the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare.

TESOL Conference

CIEP Academic Support Specialists Tom Riedmiller, Lauren Rein, Emily Luttrell-Narigon, Jaime Lyon, and CIEP Graduate Assistant Kate Hein, attended the National TESOL conference in Portland, Oregon.

NAFSA Annual Conference

In May 2014, CIEP Director Philip Plourde, Student Services Coordinator Sally Roos, and Program Coordinator Carolina Coronado-Park will attend the National NAFSA: Association of International Educators Conference in San Diego, California.

Sally Roos

In just five years at CIEP, Sally Roos has made a lasting impact on both the students and the CIEP. Sally attended UNI, graduating in 2009 with a Bachelors degree in Communications Studies and a minor in Journalism. Sally became interested in learning about other cultures and meeting international students after she was required to do a service project in her Introduction to Communication Studies class. Sally decided to become a conversation partner. She also had a college roommate that encouraged her to get to know international students and invite them to her home over breaks. Those experiences guided her decision to work with international students. During her senior year of college, Sally was offered an internship with the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier and a position with the CIEP. Ultimately, Sally chose the position at the CIEP and has not looked back since.

While Sally has had multiple international travel experiences in Mexico, Indonesia, Japan, and Taiwan, starting from a young age, her most advantageous was a teaching experience in South Korea. In 2009, Sally journeyed off to South Korea where she taught English to Korean children of all ages. While she was there, Sally lived with a host family. Five out of seven days in a week, Sally was with only Korean-speaking people. The language barrier and the culture differences were very difficult, but Sally and her host family were able to overcome these differences and make a compromise. Sally found a church service that was given in English and she attended that every weekend. At these services, Sally met other Americans and began to do things with them on the weekends. Sally stated,

"It really put me in the same perspective of our students here. I think it helped me to see why they need to spend time with people from their own countries sometimes, and how hard it can be." At the beginning, the main concern for Sally was to figure out how to manage a classroom. It was not until after the first months,

OOS

CIEP Staff Spotlight

By Haleigh Weatherly, CIEP Administrative Assistant

that Sally saw progress in the students. Sally gained a lot of insight from her teaching experience and found out that she really enjoyed the challenge of implementing and using a diverse range of teaching methods. These experiences are what led Sally to now pursue her Masters degree in TESOL.

As the Student Services Coordinator of the CIEP, Sally has a wide variety of duties. She plans and leads activities for each session, and also works to recruit and retain host families and conversation partners for CIEP students. In addition to her current title, some would say that Sally also has a title of “CIEP Guidance Counselor.” Sarah Stephany, Activities Assistant, stated,

“She is really sensitive to each individual and what they’re going through. She always makes time too if they stop in her office, and she’ll just chat with them about how life’s going and how are they feeling.” A past student of the CIEP, Chang Lin Tsai, also commented,

“The first person we met in the U.S.A. was Sally. Since then, Sally took care of us whenever we encountered problems. She also regarded us as her family, inviting us to watch movies and play video games at her house. Thanks to Sally, I learned a lot of knowledge and life experiences but also had a great time in America. Sally is the best and all of us love her!” Another duty of Sally’s is to orient students to our culture. An example of how she does this is holding an activity called, Culture Hour. In this activity, Sally invites UNI students to come and talk to CIEP students U.S. culture and how the U.S. works.

When asked what kind of impact she hopes to leave on our students and the UNI campus, Sally replied with,

“I hope to be a woman that is showing grace and truth in everything that I do and building them up so that they see that example and lead. I want to lead in such a way that makes them want to be leaders.”



COSTA RICA

“Happiest Country on Earth”

Costa Rica is a beautiful country in Central America with a small land area of 51.1 thousand square km and a population of 4.7 million people. Costa Rica, which means “rich coast”, is the number one country in the region to protect its rich bio-diversity with a quarter of its territory preserved in national parks and biological reserves. With one of the most stable economies and political systems in Central America, Costa Rica is the second country in the world without an army. In this country, the benefits from the coffee trade, bananas, pineapple and tourism are invested in environmental conservation, public education, and public health.

According to the annual survey Happy Planet Index (HPI), conducted by the New Economics Foundation in 2012, Costa Rica tops the HPI Index for the second time. It is scored by measuring the experienced well-being and the life expectancy of the population, in contrast to its ecological footprint for future generations. The report said, “the country has embraced sustainability in its national policies: it produces 99 percent of its energy from renewable sources, has reversed deforestation in the country, and, in 2008, committed itself to

becoming carbon neutral by 2021” (13). HPI gives special attention to the Ecological Footprint of a nation which is calculated by the bio capacity of a country and its contribution to the world. Costa Rica is famous for being one of the most biologically rich spots in the world. Though it occupies less than 0.01 percent of the planet’s landmass, the tiny nation is home to 5 percent of all species! Also, the country has pursued an aggressive agenda to protect this diversity. The government has set aside 25 percent of its land for conservation, which means it is closing in on an important milestone under its treaty obligations in the 1993 U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity .

The experienced well-being of Costa Ricans (also known as “ticos”) is about expressing their belief of a good life that is perceived in the country in general. With a good economy, tropical weather all year round (72° F) with only rainy and summer seasons, beautiful mountains, beaches, and landscapes, Costa Rica represents a good quality of living. Maybe this is the reason for the long life expectancy reflected in the HPI report. Also, without having to travel longer distances,

This World’s Window article was written by Hilda Betancort, a Level 6 Writing Student at CIEP. She is from Cartago, Costa Rica and is also working in the CIEP Office as a Project Assistant.



most Costa Ricans have access to rural and protected areas of the coast, and enjoy the pureness of nature and its ecosystems, as well as the hospitality of the people that live in this region

The Ticos are very proud of living in a peaceful country and this peaceful way of life is also observed in the fact that the military army was abolished for good in 1949. Only local police guards are the security of its habitants. In general, Costa Rica has lived in peace with its neighboring countries and in most cases has brought to the table of negotiation any possible conflicts to promote peace. Carefree state of mind is the way that Ticos are, and the phrase to describe this is PURA VIDA (PURE LIFE!). However, it is more than just enjoying a pure life; it describes the behavior among the people, a code for life if you want to call it that way. Pura Vida is used for many situations as in greeting people or expressing: "I am fine", "everything is going to be fine" or "thank you". The "Tico time hour" is another concept, where the people do not expect punctuality. It is acceptable to arrive 15-30 minutes late. Costa Ricans usually adapt to everything and try to figure out a way to solve situations that may affect them, and if they can't then they will make jokes about it.

The economy has mainly been agricultural based. Since 1820, the most important exported products have been coffee, bananas, and pineapple. However, in the last 15 years it has become an Industrial Zone, as other U.S. call centers and survey companies have brought to the country a good source of income and employment. But the most important activity today is the

tourism industry. It has created jobs and micro enterprises with food supply and hospitality services, hotels, restaurants, real state, rent-a-car companies, and more since the late 80's.

The investment in public education as helped Costa Rica to have one of the most elevated literacy education rates (98.7% female and 97.9% male between 15-24 years of age), according to UNICEF . The children all over the country can attend public schools financial with governmental funds. Even Costa Rica has four world renowned public universities with free tuition cost for domestic students and exchange programs for international students in institutions all over the world. English language instruction is offered in most public schools and universities although not at a very high level. But, if students can afford private education, they can become fully bilingual with English –Spanish by the age of 14. The secondary and post-secondary education system is one of the most renowned in the region, having a nice population of international students from the neighboring Central and South American countries.

Lastly, another important fact of this beautiful country and people is the creation of Caja Costarricense del Seguro Social (CCSS) on November 1, 1941.

This provided public health services, allowing free health services and medicine to all citizens and foreigners that require medical treatments. CCSS hospitals and services were extended across the nation after its creation, and although private medical services always provides better customer service, this public healthcare system enriches many populations at risk. Many countries have wanted to imitate this solidary practice and have come to study its function and services provided.

Let's take a trip to this beautiful country to see its beaches, mountains, volcanos and national parks. Walk in the "Mercado Central" in San Jose, the country's capital, where most of the cheapest handcrafted art is sold. Come discover the warm culture and friendly people, and immerse yourself in their hospitality. A lifetime experience awaits you in Costa Rica.

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We wish our graduates the best of luck in all future academic and professional careers! Congratulations on your accomplishments in CIEP!

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