

Winter 2013

International Panther, Winter 2013-2014

University of Northern Iowa. Culture and Intensive english Program.

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international panther



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winter 2014

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Greetings to all from the folks of the Culture and Intensive English Program.

In December 2013, the CIEP made an important transition by moving to its new location in Bartlett Hall, near the center of the University of Northern Iowa campus. Since its inception in 1982, Baker Hall was the home of the program. However, the Baker Hall will soon be scheduled for demolition. The renovation of the Bartlett Hall and demolition of Baker Hall has been planned for some time and the newly renovated Bartlett Building is now home to several departments and offices. The new facilities afford the CIEP more space and much needed work areas including: a computer assisted language laboratory, a student lounge area, a curriculum library, a private conference room for student – teacher consultations, and new work spaces for all its employees. With this change, the CIEP looks forward to improved services for its students.

In addition to its new location, the CIEP also welcomed a new partner to campus. The Gammon Institute is a private school offering primary and secondary education to students

in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. The CIEP welcomed 8 students and 2 chaperons from Gammon Institute in mid-October and enjoyed the energy and intellect of the group members. Dr. Alysson Carvalho, Director General of the institute, accompanied the group as a chaperon and was impressed by the level of service afforded to the students and the campus environment in general. Also, winter visited a little earlier this year, so the group was glad to experience snow for the first time. It was a pleasure to host them on the campus and plans are being developed for next year's group.

Finally, in the coming months CIEP will be adjusting to its new facilities and welcoming other special program groups to campus while continuing to offer its regular program of study. I wish all a happy and healthy new year.

Philip Plourde, CIEP Director


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PROMOTING Wellness

for international students

By Olivia Randolph, CIEP Office Assistant

There are many UNI resources

available to international students on campus to help them be effective and successful academic students. The Academic Learning Center, Rod Library, ITS, and many individual departmental resources are just a few examples of the variety of services available to help students learn and achieve their academic goals.

In addition to recognizing the importance of academic success, the University of Northern Iowa recognizes that students cannot succeed if they are sick or unhealthy. The UNI Student Health Clinic, located next to the Schindler Education Center and 23rd Street, provides a wide range of services to ensure that UNI students are able to receive exceptional health benefits. According to the Director of the Student Health Clinic, Shelley Matthews, the health clinic offers family practice style services and much more. She explains,

“Health care services are provided by physicians, physician assistants, a psychiatric nurse practitioner, and registered nurses. The student health clinic provides general medical care, immunizations, mental health services, travel consultants, allergy injections, laboratory services, eating disorder management, women’s health services, and pharmacy services.”

International students receive some additional health services from the clinic when they first come to UNI. Upon their arrival, international students receive a mandatory health screening. This includes a health assessment, immunization review, and Tuberculosis/Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (TB/MMR) screening. The mandatory health screening has changed since Dr. Matthews started working at the student health clinic, but she believes it has changed for the better. Matthews says,

“It’s become more in depth, to alleviate students’ concerns when they first come here and to help them get a feel for what our health care system is like. They also find out where the health clinic is, and meet the people that they will see at the health clinic because through the health screening they get to see the receptionists that help make their appointments, they get to talk to Connie who is in charge of insurance, and they get to meet almost all of our nursing staff when they are here. They’re getting a really good picture of the clinic right when they get to campus.”

Parts of the mandatory health screening are received through sessions during new student orientation. During orientation, students receive the TB/MMR screening, and the information session on the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP).

Tina Jorgensen, UNI Student Health Clinic nurse, is one of the nurses in charge of administering the TB/MMR screening and, if necessary, the TB/MMR vaccine to new CIEP students. Ensuring that students understand the immunization and the requirements behind them are important to Tina and the health clinic staff.

“We have translations for the MMR in all the languages of the students that we have here and that’s provided through the Center for Disease Control (CDC). You can’t expect to administer any type of care without somebody understanding the risks involved in that and understanding the need or importance of it without them being able to read it,” says Tina.

An insurance information session is also offered to new international students during orientation. During the insurance orientation session, Connie Potter, Administrative Specialist, UNI Student Health Clinic Patient Records,

SS

UDENT HEALTH CENTER



talks about the health insurance, and gives students a hand out that contains information about making appointments at the health clinic, as well as information on the clinic's business hours and contact information. She also shows students how to find the recently added international insurance page on the health clinic's website, which has the health information translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turkish. Connie is the first to admit that navigating the health insurance world for new international students can be difficult.

"It can be confusing for us that have lived in the US all our lives," Connie says. To combat those difficulties, Connie maintains an open door policy that allows students to come into the health clinic with questions or concerns about SHIP at any time during business hours. The UNI Student Health Clinic continues to develop better ways to serve UNI domestic and international students.

"We continue to make improvements, we continue to look at our processes, by adding the language lines, adding the changes in translations, and working with the CIEP office to make sure we have interpreters available," says Shelley Matthews. Additionally, the staff is constantly developing ways to ensure that Health center policies conflict as little as possible with students' cultural and/or religious beliefs.

"We listen, and we try to be sensitive to that need, and if what we are saying they need conflicts with a certain time related to religious policies during the year, then we wait until that time is over," says Tina "we need to be sensitive to what they are saying and our goal is always to be sensitive to any student request, and just listen and accommodate as best we can. If their health is at risk, certainly we work with them to gain the goal of wellness."

As the international student population has grown at UNI, health clinic staff have also grown in their understanding, appreciation, and awe of international students.

Meet the Health Center Staff!



Connie Potter



Shelley Matthews



Tina Jorgensen



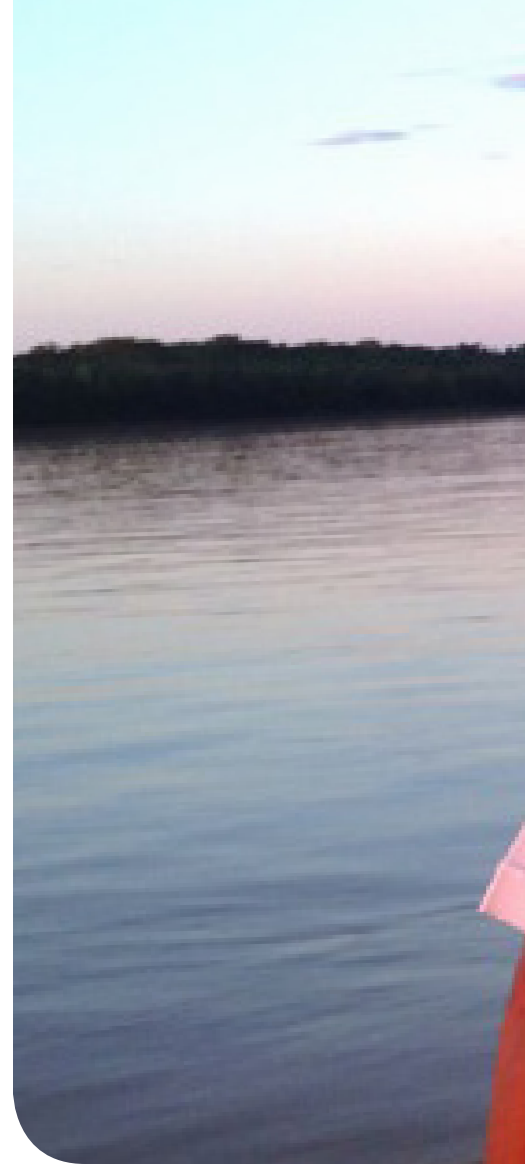
CIEP ALUMNI

DR. ERNESTO ORTIZ GARCIA

By Vanessa Hilst Robles, CIEP Administrative Assistant

Dr. Ernesto Ortiz Garcia came to the CIEP from Peru in 2002 to improve his English skills. After his time in the program, Dr. Ortiz moved to Iowa City, Iowa where he obtained a Masters in Public Health (and met his wife). After spending some time researching infectious diseases for the University of Iowa, Dr.

Ortiz returned to his home country with his wife where they lived for four years while he worked for the U.S. Navy conducting research on tropical infectious diseases in Peru. Now, Dr. Ortiz works as a research scientist for the Duke Global Health Institute at Duke University. He researches environmental health and tropical infectious disease with a focus on the South American region. Dr. Ortiz and his wife currently reside in Durham, North Carolina. The CIEP caught up with Dr. Ortiz to find out how his time as a student in the program in 2002 helped shape his life over the past eleven years.



CIEP: Why did you decide to study English?

Dr. Ortiz: “Nowadays in this globalized world, without English you are lost. Knowing English is a must. If you want to be up to date with the latest scientific and technological news you must know English. If you want to interact with other cultures [and/or] make business with people from other countries English is the standard, accepted language.”

CIEP: What was your favorite aspect of CIEP classes?

Dr. Ortiz: “Besides improving my English, I really liked that several of the classes were focused on giving the students a very good idea of American History, American Culture and even American Politics.”

CIEP: How did studying abroad change you?

Dr. Ortiz: “Studying abroad is one of the best investments someone could do. In my case, while improving my English, I got the opportunity to experience living in a different culture and learn from it and its people. It widened the perspective of how I see things. It helped me to become more independent and self-confident.”



CIEP: How have the skills you learned at the CIEP benefited you?

Dr. Ortiz: "Being at CIEP not only helped to improve my English skills but also facilitated my immersion into the American culture."

CIEP: What was your favorite part about the program?

Dr. Ortiz: "I enjoyed every part of it! [It] was great to interact with students from all over the world that were also learning English. The environment at CIEP was great! The director at that time, Dr. Bob Pesek, and the [teachers] were very keen on us learning about the American culture, [having] us interact with American students, organizing pot-lucks, trips to hockey games, ice skating, etc. While in CIEP I made really good friends (Americans and from around the world) with whom I still keep in touch until today, eleven years later."

CIEP: What advice would you have for someone considering the program?

Dr. Ortiz: "I will really encourage anyone who is considering learning or improving their English to go to CIEP. It's the perfect place to learn, it's a very complete program that not only focuses on the classes but also on all the other aspects of learning and getting immersed into the American culture. There are a lot of extracurricular activities that make it even more enjoyable. And Cedar Falls, Iowa is a great place!! [It is] a nice college town with very welcoming people. I really like the Midwest culture; I liked it so much that I even [married] an Iowan!"



By Ashley Jennings, CIEP Program Assistant and Gammon Special Program Coordinator

On October 14th, 2013, eight high school students and two chaperones arrived to Chicago, Illinois after making the 16-hour journey from Lavras, Minas Gerais, Brazil. The group spent three days enjoying the sights and shopping in Chicago before continuing their journey to the University of Northern Iowa campus in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Upon their arrival, the students were shown to their respective dorms (males in Shull Hall, females in Hagemann Hall), and then they were able to enjoy a delicious American-style feast at Famous Dave's Barbeque. They were also taken on a shopping trip to Walmart to purchase any necessities they may have forgotten.

After settling in, the students and their chaperones took the CIEP placement exams, got their schedules, and began taking a full course-load of classes in the CIEP program. In addition, they attended a one-hour culture-class three days per week where they learned about various holidays and celebrations in the United States, the different family structures and familial relationships that are common in the U.S., proverbs and idioms that reflect cultural values, and discussed and analyzed how American culture is represented in the media (primarily Hollywood movies) as well as the accuracy of that representation.

Furthermore, they worked hard to prepare an excellent Brazilian Culture presentation given to their peers where they spoke about Carnival, soccer, Brazilian families, tourism, weather, music, dance, and more. They also prepared some exquisite Brazilian food including arroz carreitero (a rice dish with tomatoes, beef jerky, onions and peppers) and brigadeiro

(a Brazilian sweet treat made from condensed milk, butter, and cocoa powder).

Although the students were in Cedar Falls for less than a month, they were able to participate in a variety of activities. They attended the CIEP Fall Party where they were able to carve pumpkins for the first time. They listened to several Culture Talks about a variety of topics including gender roles and expectations in the United States and on campus and the Holocaust. They also were able to meet with different Conversation Partners and RSVP volunteers to practice their listening and speaking skills. They attended various UNI sporting events including basketball, football, and volleyball games. They also enjoyed full access to the on-campus facilities such as the dining centers and Wellness and Recreation Center.

In addition to all of the activities they participated in while in Cedar Falls, they were also taken on excursions to both Des Moines and Minneapolis where they were able to experience one of the greatest tourist attractions in the Midwest, the Mall of America.

All in all, the students and chaperones have adapted to their lives in the United States and in the CIEP program. The majority of the students commented that although they think that the CIEP is very difficult because of the amount of homework, they enjoy their classes and are learning a great deal.

When asked what her favorite part of the program has been thus far, chaperone Rebeca Cordeiro said, "I really love the campus, it's beautiful, and the classes I've had so far."



Travels in

LATIN AMERICA

UNI RECRUITER: CORY COTTINGIM

Boarding a flight for the Costa Rican capital of San José on October 15th, Cory Cottingim of the Office of International Programs embarked on a six week trip which would take him to as many Central and South American countries. Flying out with more than 40 pounds of brochures and flyers explaining both the CIEP and the various undergraduate and graduate programs offered by the University of Northern Iowa, he was prepared to introduce the university to high schools, universities, and language institutes throughout the region.

In San José, Cory gave presentations for students at several international and Costa Rican high schools, generating interest in English programs and undergraduate degree programs. The highlight of his visit to the city was meeting and spending time with Andrés and Hilda Betancourt and their beautiful daughter Ariana, who will be joining the UNI family in January of 2014.

Next, the trip led Cory to Panamá. There he continued to promote the University of Northern Iowa in the numerous bilingual high schools in the capital city. As a bonus, he was able to make a visit to the Miraflores Locks of the Panama Canal. The importance of international shipping and commerce brought about by the country's strategic location in the Americas means that many Panamanians are highly interested in perfecting their English-language skills through the CIEP or completing degree-programs through UNI.

Passing through Caracas, Venezuela, before traveling on to Bogotá, Cali, and Armenia in Colombia, Cory was greeted warmly by CIEP alumni Pilar Montoya and Jaime Usma in the stunning garden city of Medellín. Pilar and Jaime were of critical importance to several promising meetings with potential partner universities in their native city. Thanks to their assistance, the CIEP and UNI are poised to gain several new institutional partners in the city and welcome more Colombian cordiality to Cedar Falls.

Lima, Peru, and its many universities and high schools were the next stop for Cory on the whirlwind tour of the

northwestern region of South America. As in Medellín, CIEP alumni Mardely Salas and Fátima Seminario showed him typical Peruvian hospitality and treated him to some of Lima's gastronomic delights. As in Colombia, the CIEP alumni proved to be very helpful in making contacts with high schools and universities in their city. After Lima, a quick stop in the stunning Incan capital of Cusco gave Cory a chance to meet with Magna Cusimayta of the Universidad Andina de Cusco to discuss the expansion of cooperation between UNI and the partner university.

The sixth week of the trip brought Cory to the Ecuadoran capital of Quito, which at 9,350 feet above sea level, is the second-highest capital city in the world. After enjoying a weekend exploring the colonial streets of the city center and taking a cable car to 13,300 feet up the slopes of Pichincha Volcano, Cory made key contacts with several of the city's most prestigious universities and presented UNI in high schools throughout Quito. He then traveled on to the coastal city of Guayaquil, where he continued presenting in bilingual high schools and language institutes in the country's most important business center. After enjoying his last ceviche of the trip, he boarded a flight to Miami en route to Iowa.

After more than 18 flights, 30 hotels, and countless taxi rides up and down Andean cityscapes, Cory returned to Cedar Falls in time to spend Thanksgiving with family. The trip introduced UNI to more than 60 high schools, universities, and language institutes throughout the region, laying the groundwork for a wide variety of new students, inter-institutional programs, and exchange activities which are sure to enrich UNI and the CIEP. Beginning in early 2014, Cory will continue to promote the university and its exceptional programs in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay. But for now, he is excited to spend some time with family and enjoy the wintry beauty of Cedar Falls before heading back to warmer climes to continue the work of building the international profile of UNI.

Schrage Farm Trip

On Labor Day, students visited a local farm where they were able to cook their own lunch over a bonfire, play sand volleyball, and learn how to drive tractors.

[Picture: Top Left]

Trip to Cedar Rapids

On Saturday, September 7th, students took a day trip to Cedar Rapids. They were able to tour the Czech & Slovak Museum and Library, visit a local indoor farmer's market for lunch, pick their own apples at an orchard in the afternoon, and finish off the day with shopping at Coral Ridge Mall.

Conversation Partners and Host Families

During the first month of the term, students participated in orientations for both the International Friendship Program and the Conversation Partner Program. They were paired with conversation partners and host families and started meeting with their new American friends!

Volunteering

This term students visited a local after-school program for elementary and middle school aged children. Throughout their visit, they helped the children carve pumpkins and read stories.

Talent Show

On September 27th, various students participated in the annual CIEP talent show. Performances included skits, songs, presentations, and dances.

Fall Party

On October 24th, students and their conversation partners got together to carve pumpkins and eat chili. Afterwards, students were able to visit a local haunted house.

Des Moines Trip

Students took a day trip to Des Moines, the captiol city of Iowa, on Saturday, October 26th. They were given the opportunity to eat lunch in downtown Des Moines, tour the State Capitol Building, do some shopping at Jordan Creek Mall, and visit a Corn Maze on the way home.

Minneapolis Trip

The first weekend in November, students visited Minneapolis. Over two days, students visited various restaurants and markets, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the Minneapolis Sculptor Garden/Walker Art Center, and shopped at the Mall of America.

[Picture: Bottom Right]

Travel the World Event

For International Education Week, students created an event to share various aspects of their cultures with staff and students from UNI. Visitors were given a "passport" and could visit seven different "countries" sampling various foods, looking at traditional clothing, and participating in cultural activities.

[Picture: Top Right]

Holiday Party

On Friday, December 6th, students were welcomed into a local home to eat traditional holiday treats, and participate in a gift exchange.

fall ACTIVITIES

By Shawna Schrock, CIEP Activities Assistant



SCHRAGE FARM TRIP



TRAVEL THE WORLD

Additional CIEP Activities Included:

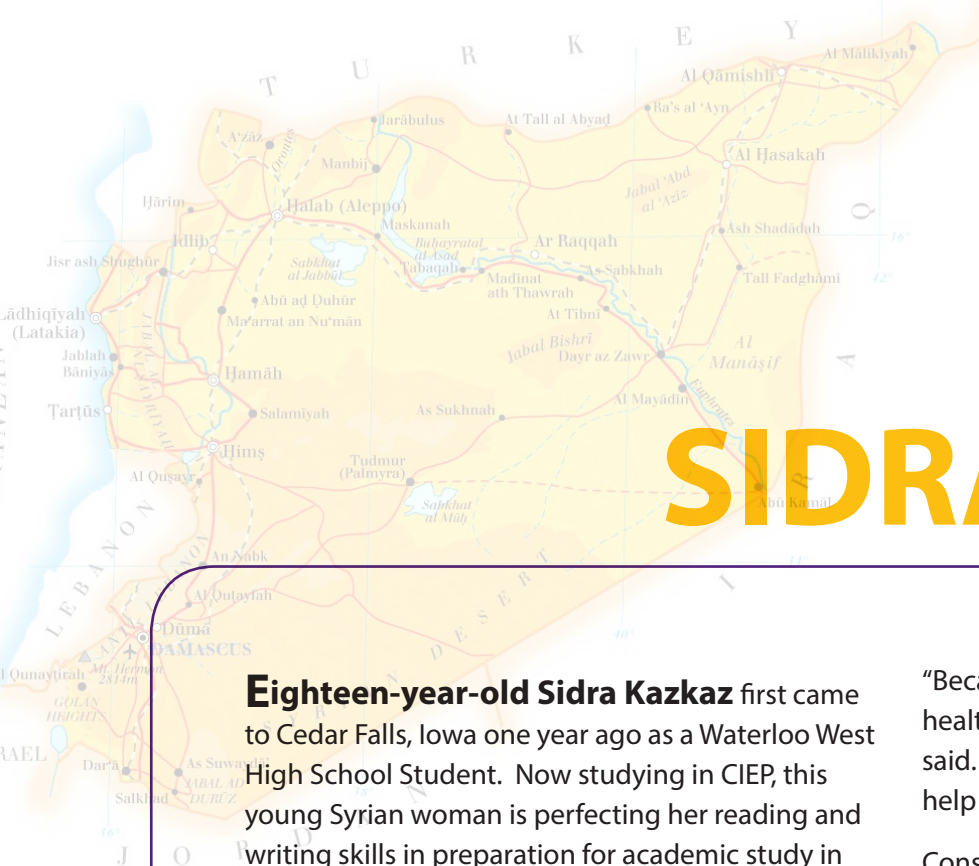
International Student Dinners, Retired Seniors Volunteer Program, Class Exchanges, Welcome Party, Iowa City Trip, International Friendship Program, UNI Homecoming activities, Graduation celebrations and coffee hours.

Culture Talks were also presented on the following topics:

The Local Food Movement, Homecoming, Relationship Safety for Men and Women, Brazilian Culture, Holocaust and Genocide Education, Family, and Study Strategies.



MINNEAPOLIS TRIP



SIDRA KAZKAZ

By Sally Roos, CIEP Activities Coordinator

CIEP CURRENT STUDENT

Eighteen-year-old Sidra Kazkaz first came to Cedar Falls, Iowa one year ago as a Waterloo West High School Student. Now studying in CIEP, this young Syrian woman is perfecting her reading and writing skills in preparation for academic study in Chemistry at UNI.

Sidra enrolled in CIEP classes when she did not obtain the necessary TOEFL score for full-time academic study. TOEFL is an international English examination often used as a requirement for international student college entrance. Initially, her family in Syria was surprised to hear about CIEP study, but she soon realized how valuable the experience would be for her studies in the long term.

“It was really useful... And just like big hand to do the things in a better way,” reflected Sidra about her language learning. “It was helpful for me in my academic classes I’m taking right now....When I took the questions, there was a word that I didn’t really understand. I used the rule I learned in reading class to look at the words around it.”

Sidra also emphasized learning how to write topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences. She admitted her concern for the workload and difficulty level of university classes.

After studying chemistry at UNI, Sidra has plans to study pharmacy and open a laboratory with her like-minded friends to make medicine in her home country.

“Because especially right now, to be involved in health, it will be really helpful to my country,” she said. “After I get a degree here, I want to go back and help them .”

Considering the condition in her country, Sidra admits the risk she is taking that some employers may not accept a pharmacy degree from the United States. The Syrian government may even require her to start over and complete her high school diploma in the country.

“After four years or six years, we’re not still gonna have Assad, so probably the rule is going to change,” she said, remaining hopeful about her career aspirations.

Generally, Sidra contacts her parents and friend via Whatsapp—a free application with texting service. A few months ago, she had to wait patiently for contact from distant relatives when her city was under siege. Her family members were without water and electricity, and messengers traveled between cities to check up on their well-being.

High school teachers comforted Sidra during a difficult time last year when her close friend passed. Persevering in spite of political unrest, she won’t forget much of the culture shock and difficulty experienced during her first year at Waterloo West High School. As the only student in hijab during the first week, many classmates stared and commented to each other. However, Sidra eventually chose to be friendly to her classmates despite the stares and made friends after a difficult first semester.



Syria

Population: 18,389,000

Capital: Damascus

Language: Arabic, Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian, French, English

Location: Southwest Asia, Middle East

Industry: Petroleum, textiles, food processing, beverages

Agriculture: Wheat, barley, cotton, beef

Learning how to express one's own personality in a second language is hard for many students:

"Probably you understand everything, [but] you can't really communicate with them," she said. "You can't express your personality. You can't really say who you are. It was really hard for me. I wanna do something. I wanna say, 'I can talk. I can be funny.'"

Sidra still spends time with her high school friends on the weekends—eating at local restaurants, shopping at the Waterloo mall, learning to belly dance with her Pakistani friends, and playing tennis at West High, where she competed on the team last year.

"I just love it," she exclaimed about playing tennis. "I didn't want to, but my friends said you should do that. We had a lot of fun. We went out of town to play..."

Sidra recommends that current and future CIEP students enjoy what they're learning and take it seriously. While on campus, her favorite spot is the University of Northern Iowa Rod Library,

"Not for reading books, but for relaxation. Actually, most of the time, I'm in the library."

Congratulations to our GRADUATES

FALL 1 2013

Mohammed Al Slamh, Saudi Arabia
Abdullah Aldawoud, Saudi Arabia
Wanchen Han, China
Kan Xu, China
Tenzin Yangchen, Tibet
Zhipeng Ye, China

FALL 2 2013

Ghader Albayat, Saudi Arabia
Noor Albayat, Saudi Arabia
Nashmi Albughubar, Saudi Arabia
Modaher Allabbad, Saudi Arabia
Jing Zhao, China
Yasamiyan Aldawayan, Saudi Arabia

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



CIEP ALUMNI RECORDS

Are you a graduate of the CIEP? We hope that you have been able to use your English skills in many ways. We also hope that your past CIEP experiences were filled with accomplishment and fun memories. If you have not done so, please complete the CIEP Alumni Record form online. We use this form to stay in contact with you. We also enjoy hearing about your experiences in CIEP and learning about your accomplishments after graduating from CIEP! We look forward to hearing from you soon!

www.uni.edu/ciep/alumni/alumni-record

In addition to the authors listed, the following individuals also contributed to the creation of this newsletter:

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