Letters from Returnees: Sharing the Value of
Study Abroad

International Programs

9-22-2012

# Linfield College: Study Abroad in France

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Dear Linfield Students,                                                                     9/22/12


I was asked by the college to reflect on my experience in the Linfield Study Abroad program that I participated in during my sophomore year at Linfield.  I spent a semester in Paris during the fall of 1984 and I have to say it was the best semester of my college experience (and I had a great 4 years at Linfield).  I was fortunate to have studied 4 years of French in High School plus 1 year at Linfield prior to the trip.  Our group was a mixture of students with only 1 year of college French to several of us with similar backgrounds as mine.  I believe everyone had a great time and we certainly all learned a lot with great improvements in our understanding of the French culture and ability to communicate in French.

My experience was somewhat unique in that I arranged my own lodging with a family that I knew prior to participating in the program and lived with a French boy my age.  Most of the other students lived with families contracted by the college and did not have people their age in the household.  In general, they were treated more like boarders than family, but still formed a certain amount of connection with the people they lived with.

All of us took a couple of weekend trips to other places in France or other countries.  Some went alone, while others went in groups.  I still have pictures and memories of those trips that I shared with my fellow students.  Almost 30 years later, I still look back and appreciate the opportunities provided by this experience at Linfield.

This past summer, my wife and I travelled to France and spent 2 weeks touring the country.  I visited old friends, had an opportunity to see monuments again that brought back memories and renewed my love of the country.  Amazingly, even though I have not studied French for more than 25 years and seldom take the opportunity to communicate in French, we were able to spend the time easily getting around and communicating in French with the French people.  My wife was pleased to have an interpreter and guide since she had never been to Europe and only speaks English.  The company that I work for is international.  I had the opportunity to visit one of the branches in France and get a tour.

I know the students who spent a semester in Vienna had similar experiences and would not trade that semester of college for anything else.  Many of them came to Paris during their semester and visited us (we had a different break schedule) sharing their experiences in Austria and allowing us to give them a tour of Paris, the city we had come to know and appreciate.  One of my friends who only had 1 year of Linfield German and studied Physics, now works for the Department of the Navy as a civilian and has spent years in Germany utilizing the German language that he first started learning at Linfield.  He has made many friends in Germany and continues to travel there for work related business to this day.

You never know where an opportunity like this will lead you.  I hope you take advantage of this program offered by Linfield, regardless of which language you study and country you visit.

Regards,

Brian Adams (Class of 1987) (Chemistry Major, French Minor)