

UC San Diego a National Leader for Long-Term Study Abroad



led the first systematic archaeological survey of the an important water source bordering Jordan's unique per ore district. The survey team—from left to right rvath, Ian Jones, and Kyle Knabb—rappelled down a waterfalls to identify ancient trade routes and settlement

Drawn to Barcelona for the excitement of a large metropolitan city and the opportunity to interact with a global community, Mireya Pinell-Cruz recently embarked on a yearlong study abroad journey to Spain. Sharpening her language skills and opening her mind to new possibilities, Pinell-Cruz enriched her experience by becoming involved with a ballet folklorico dance company, teaching English and participating in an internship with a local cultural association.

Pinell-Cruz is one of more than 100 UC San Diego students who study and conduct research abroad for a year or longer —part of a total of 1,200 UC San Diego students who go abroad each year. According to the Institute of International Education Open Doors Report, UC San Diego ranks 8th in the nation among doctoral institutions for the number of students who participate in long-term study abroad. The extended period of time allows students to fully immerse themselves in the local culture, participate in community service projects, conduct independent research and more.

“Studying abroad is an opportunity to create experiences that you may not even know exist,” said Pinell-Cruz, a senior at Sixth College with a double major in international studies and linguistics. “I did so many things I didn’t know were possible while studying abroad—from running my first marathon to

dancing at the professional level and activating my own bank account in a foreign country.”

During her time in Spain, Pinell-Cruz became involved with the Mexican-Catalan Cultural Association where she hosted a radio podcast featuring Chicano artists. She also took classes alongside Spanish students and taught English at the University of Barcelona. Her most memorable experience from the

trip was the opportunity to explore the interconnected styles of ballet folklórico and flamenco dance and perform professionally with two Spanish ballet folklórico companies.

“The experience opened my mind to new possibilities and different ways of thinking,” said Pinell-Cruz. “Staying for a year allowed me to further immerse myself in the culture of Barcelona. I got involved with multiple communities throughout the city, and now I have friends from all over the world.”

Depending on their interests—from studying international relations in Madrid to volunteering for a community restoration project in the Dominican Republic and participating in a public relations internship in Tokyo—students can choose from thousands of programs in virtually any country in the world (U.S. State Department Travel Warnings are always abided by), from a one-week community service project to a yearlong academic adventure.

The Programs Abroad Office has collaborated with academic departments and all six colleges to ensure that students are able to find international courses that will satisfy their degree requirements without adding to their time to graduation.

“The students who return to campus after being abroad are transformed in so many ways—from learning about new academic disciplines through the perspective of local contexts to gaining increased self-knowledge and networking internationally in their field of interest,” said Kelly O’Sullivan, director of the Programs Abroad Office. “There is no field of research or challenge that the world faces today that does not cross national boundaries. An international educational experience prepares UC San Diego students with the knowledge, skills and sensitivities they need to succeed in this world.”



During her time abroad in Barcelona, senior Mireya Pinell explored the interconnected styles of ballet folklórico and danced professionally for the first time with two Spar companies.

Graduate students also benefit from research opportunities abroad, their work enhanced by hands-on investigation, interaction with diverse cultures and partnerships with international scholars.

It was an undergraduate study abroad experience at the UC San Diego field school in Jordan that inspired Kyle Knabb to pursue Near East archaeology.

“The experience changed my life,” said Knabb. “I completely fell in love with the language, culture and archaeology of Jordan, and I’ve loved going back every time.”

Now nearly finished with his Ph.D. in anthropology, Knabb has spent more than a year in Jordan—over a series of four trips—conducting research and teaching undergraduates how to perform field work at the site of an 8,000-year-old copper mine. A collaborative venture, Knabb is working with professor

Tom Levy as well as other UC San Diego professors, Jordan researchers and community members to uncover whether mining pollution was a leading cause in the collapse of highly-organized labor operations in the region.

“Research abroad is completely essential to my success as a young scholar,” said Knabb. “The intimate knowledge gained about the culture, environment and history of the region I am studying is invaluable to my work.”

Students are encouraged to look into study abroad opportunities early in their academic careers. Advisors at the Programs Abroad Office are available to help connect students with international courses in their majors as well as financial aid and scholarships. For more information visit pao.ucsd.edu.