CELEBRATING THE GLOBAL NETWORK: 50 YEARS OF STUDY ABROAD
Standing on the Shoulders of Global Giants

by Mark Putnam, Central College president

A few months ago our campus community assembled in the Harry and Bernice Vermeer Banquet Hall of the Graham Conference Center to kick off a year of celebration, recognition and reflection for the 50th anniversary of our study abroad programs. During my remarks I noted we were gathered together, “standing on the shoulders of giants.” After my presentation, Professor Emeritus Larry Mills pulled me aside to say that was the first time he ever had been publicly referred to as a “giant.” Larry may be small in stature, but he, along with many others, are towering figures in the history of Central College in general, and our study abroad programs in particular.

Together we can see the work of people such as Barb Butler, Jim Graham, Charles and Marianne Haydon, George Ann Huck, Don and Max Huffman, Don Lubbers, Bill Wing, Ken Weller and many more as a foundation for all we are doing today. We have inherited this legacy and are building on it for the future.

We stand today at the midpoint of a century of Global Experiential Learning (GEL). We have behind us an amazing 50 years to celebrate success and recognize achievement. We now begin to turn our attention to the next 50 years as the legacy continues and we envision what we will need to accomplish.

As is the case with all academic disciplines, professional fields of study and experiential learning programs, things change. The fast pace of change in the global context is breathtaking and our 50 years have been witness to profoundly important international developments. That pattern continues.

Our goals are ever the same. A rigorous and substantive international experience is simply transformative for our students. The tales of transformation told by generations of Central alumni could fill volumes and be translated into many languages.

The journey ahead will require the same creativity and enterprise Central’s giants taught us by their examples. They took some risks … we will need to do so as well. They had a bias toward action … that will serve us as well. They embraced change and opportunity with a willingness to pilot new things and try out new ideas … an important example for us to embrace.

We look ahead to the centennial of study abroad in another 50 years. In the meantime, we have a lot of work to do to honor the legacy we inherit today. Giants have a way of setting the bar very high.

Read more of Mark Putnam’s writings in President’s Corner at civitas.central.edu.
Major changes at Maytag Student Center

The Maytag Student Center has been under heavy construction as it received a $3.1 million renovation. Funding for the renovation came from the Fred Maytag Family Foundation and is among the largest single donations in the college’s history. It was also the Fred Maytag Family Foundation that provided much of the funding for the original Maytag Student Center in 1990.

The renovations have drastically changed the look and layout of the building to better utilize space according to students’ needs. Some of the changes included moving the student activities center upstairs to the second level, while moving the J. Gilbert Boat, Shirely Weller student activities center upstairs to the second level, while the student activities center will reside in the basement of Maytag Student Center.

The conference rooms will reside in the basement of Maytag Student Center. The new conference rooms feature standing tables, and the stage is smaller. The exterior of the student center remains mostly unchanged. The frequently congested northwest entrance to the building, which faces Central Market, has been expanded to create easier movement between the two buildings.

Another change to the building is that it is the first self-locking structure on campus. Every evening at a pre-determined time it will lock, and only those with Central key cards will be able to access the building.

The wellness center downstairs will always require students, faculty and staff to use their key card for access. This will create a safer environment for the locker room area.

Central College President Mark Putnam is a member of the executive committee of the governor’s STEM advisory council.

Central is committed to providing students a solid foundation in these growing fields, and Putnam said the statewide focus on STEM “is an initiative that fully aligns with Central’s role in education, particularly in education for the STEF fields.”

The STEM fest also included refreshments and music from the Flying Pans Steel Band.

CLASS GIFT AIMS FOR A LASTING LEGACY

The class of 2014 has given a pond filtration system to the Central College campus as its senior class gift. The environmental conscious pond filtration system will rely on biologists and aquatic life to help keep the water clean in the pond outside of Maytag Student Center.

The senior gift planning committee, with the help of Adam Haselhuhn and Cindy Wilson in the advancement office, selected three different gift ideas for students to vote on. After voting, the pond filtration system was the clear winner with almost 70 percent of the popular vote.

Meghan Sloss ’14, a member of the planning committee, says, “Alumni and current students understand the fun-filled traditions that are centered on the pond, so it is great to be giving this area an eco-friendly makeover for future generations to enjoy, and it carries the potential for continual growth and additions for years to come.”

Money was raised by the class of 2014, the 40-year reunion class of 1974, and additional costs were covered by the Central Facilities Management and Planning Office. Overall, 49 percent of the class of 2014 donated toward the project.

Kyle Frieschlag ’14, a member of the planning committee, says, “While this gift was very expensive, we raised a significant amount of funds from the senior class, and our partner class, the class of 1974.”

The project was designed and will be constructed by Country Landscapes, a professional landscaping company based in Ames.

“In past years the pond discoloration has been due to excessive algae growth,” says Mike Lubberden, director of facilities planning and management. “The system being put in will work with algae growth, not against it.”

The pond filtration system will have four biologists installed. The biologists are silent and use pipes to either push water into or pull water out of the filters. The actual filter is a system of plant roots held in place by river gravel. The roots of the plants will feed off the algae, cleaning up the water.

This will hopefully be a solution to a long-standing maintenance problem for the college, and we are glad that we are able to pool resources together to make this happen,“ says Adam Haselhuhn, director of annual giving.

Keeping with the theme of sustainability, the river gravel was taken from the roof of Gaass Hall when it received an upgrade in July.

The plants chosen for the project were carefully selected based on whether they are native to Iowa, their impact on the pond ecosystem and availability. Plants will include water lilies, blue rush and irises. With the additional plant life on the pond, there will be a stronger ecosystem for frogs, fish, turtles and a variety of other animals to live.

The pond’s most famous residents—the Canada geese—will actually have a better environment for the future. The pond has been due to excessive algae growth,“ says Mike Lubberden, director of facilities planning and management. “The system being put in will work with algae growth, not against it.”

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Three Central players are all-conference in men’s golf

Central junior Desmund Stoll finished second at the 72-hole Iowa Conference men’s golf tournament and was joined by junior Adam Squires and junior David Watson on the all-conference list.

Squires won a playoff for fifth place while Watson tied for 10th. Junior Jon Prescott finished 14th and junior Clayton Curwin was 18th.

Central nearly erased an 18-shot first-round deficit but saw its three-year league championship run end, placing second behind Dubsau at 313-295-310-1217.

Northern Illinois coach to lead Dutch tennis programs

Ryan Ferrell left his post as Northern Illinois University head women’s tennis coach to take over the Central men’s and women’s programs.

Ferrell was head women’s coach at Drake University for seven years before joining the Northern Illinois staff in 2006. He replaces Steve Tyler, who retired.

Ferrell was a second-team selection after hitting .410 and driving in 46 runs. His 23 doubles broke the school record set by former coach John Edwards in 1970.

He helped spark a spirited stretch run by the Dutch, which posted a 28-16 record and placed second in the Iowa Conference tournament, giving Central 103 wins over the past four seasons.

Senior designated hitter Robbie Rushing became the first Central baseball player in 44 years to receive all-America recognition.

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Senior shortstop Jordan Judkins and senior pitcher Judson McKown joined Rushing on the all-Central Region squad as third-team honorees. McKown was 6-3 with a stingy 1.50 ERA while Judkins hit .379 with 30 RBIs.

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Schirm named baseball coach

Veteran assistant Matt Schirm is the new Central head baseball coach.

A graduate of Coe College, where he was an all-Iowa Conference player and a team captain, Schirm assisted at the University of the Cumberlands (Ky.), helping direct the North Carolina Baseball Academy and was an assistant at Wartburg before joining the Dutch staff.

Central lands record 26th NCAA softball berth

A 30-12 record and a record 26th NCAA Division III tournament berth left the Central softball team 20th in the national rankings following a typically memorable season.

It was the fifth straight NCAA appearance for the Dutch, who were chosen to host regional tourney play for the 11th time.

Hall of fame coach George Wares eclipsed yet another milestone, becoming the first coach in Division III history to record 1,000 wins. Central’s leader since 1985, Wares has compiled a 1,007-335-3 (.749) career record.

Gritty junior third baseman Whitney Sowers was a first-team all-Midwest Region pick. Despite a brief dip as the result of a late-season injury, Sowers hit a steamy .491, the second-highest season mark in school history. She had five homers and 23 RBIs, while sparkling in the field, committing just one regular-season error.

Senior shortstop Annie Sarcone and junior second baseman Abbey Strajack were second-team selections. Sarcone, a four-time all-conference pick, hit .433 with 14 doubles, seven homers and a school-record 51 RBIs. She set school career marks for homers (25), RBIs (172) and total bases (304). Strajack batted .354, scoring 35 runs and stealing 12 bases. She’s a two-time all-league honoree.

All-America baseball distinction for Rushing

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1960s
- Total cost of an entire year in Paris in 1965 was $1,975—including travel expenses from New York City, tuition, room, board and excursions.
- President Ken Weller is among the many Central faculty members who have spent time teaching in the Yucatan.
- In 1968, Inge Drappier was a student with Central’s program in Paris. By 1975, she was the Paris director, using her room at the dorm as an office.
- In 1968, 122 Central students were studying abroad in France, Germany/Austria and Spain.
- In the late 1960s, students studying in the Yucatan lived in a convent along with several practicing nuns.

1970s
- Webster University professor Jon Dressel used his Welsh background to establish and direct the Wales program in 1976.
- President Weller’s son was among the first 20 students to study abroad on Central’s London program.
- Students enjoyed the water in sunny Spain in 1971.
- During their London semester, students have worked at British Parliament, the United Nations, Greenpeace, local magazines, museums, publishing houses and theaters.
1980s

- Dr. William Sronko, a Dutch native, set up the Netherlands program at Central after successfully founding programs at Dordt and Trinity Christian College.
- In the late 1980s, at the end of the Cold War period, a field trip to Berlin was part of the Leiden program.
- In 1980, the Spain program included spending July and August in Comillas, September in Madrid, and the next nine months in Granada.

1990s

- The first Central students study in China
- Central’s International Programs Project Team (IPPT) makes it a goal that over half of Central students study abroad
- More students had studied in the Yucatan than any other program

1998

- During the ‘90s, a popular course in Wales was Soviet Studies. After studying the USSR, students had the option of a fieldtrip to Russia.
- In 1998, a program was established in Essex in conjunction with University of Essex (primarily for math and science students).
- Students in the China program were assigned a pengyou, or friend to help with their integration into Chinese language, arts, history and culture.
- In 1998, the Wales program still offered a trip to Moscow, interest and Russian situation permitting.

2000s

- Since Central was not allowed to buy 7 Bedford Place in London (a registered national landmark) the college was forced to rent the former hostel until the purchase of Vandon House.
- Early 2000s saw a new emphasis on service-learning, a positive result of director of Community Based Learning Cheri Doane’s (’98) visits to all sites abroad.

2010s

- More than 15,000 students from over 400 American colleges and universities have studied with Central College since the launch of its first international program in 1965.

2010

- Summer program in Ghana is established

2015

- Central celebrates 50th anniversary of study abroad
Being a guest in the Central College house in Merida, Yucatan, in January for three weeks made me so happy I could not sleep the first couple of nights I spent in the “faculty room.” I was an sabbatical from my home institution, Allegheny College, where I teach comparative and Latin American politics, and I was in Merida doing research for a new project, Val Grimley, the resident director, graciously invited me to stay in the house during my time in Merida, which gave me a marvelous vantage point to reflect on the impact of Central’s study abroad programs on my life, during this 50th anniversary year.

As a guest in the Central house this winter, I experienced some of the same feelings I felt during those weeks in residence as a student over 25 years ago: the intense delight and sense of discovery in speaking Spanish and the joy of being in such a warm place—both in terms of temperature as well as in terms of Yucatecans’ effusiveness. In general, Mexican are very verbal and my love of talking—particularly in Spanish—quickly immersed me in Yucatecan culture in 1988 and allowed me to deepen and broaden my friendships and connections in 2014 as well. My stay in Merida allowed me to reflect on the joy I’ve experienced in learning a foreign language and on the importance of finding places that feel like home.

Living life in a foreign language makes everything more interesting! A simple thing like riding the bus downtown feels special. Overhearing conversations about the most banal of topics seems like a revelation. I have never quite gotten over my delight at hearing Spanish-speaking tennis players yell, “Ve la bola” (Watch the ball). It just sounds so much more poetic in Spanish.

In January, I asked a transit police officer in the neighborhood adjacent to the Central House (Itzimna) where I could pick up the bus going downtown. He told me that I simply had to “raise my little hand, deposit my little coin and I would be on my way.” I was enchanted. My little hand? My little coin? How could such a charming series of instructions come from the much disliked (in Mexico) transit police? Grinning broadly, I crossed the street to position myself at the corner, little (or not) hand ready for action.

Multiple personalities are also possible, depending on the language spoken. I think I am more forgiving, have a better sense of humor, and may be a more patient person in Spanish.

I met my best friend, Suzanne Corley, on the Merida program. Today she teaches Spanish at Tulane University, and it was in Merida where so much of her love for and immersion in the Spanish language began. Together we learned the difference between North and South America, between Latin America and Latinos and grappled with Mexico’s Hispanic and native histories. On the language front, it was so easy to learn from Yucatecans, with their quiet effusiveness. In general, Mexicans as well as in terms of Yucatecans’ sense of humor, and may be a more patient person in Spanish.

I carry much of that semester in London with me each time I am in a city: THAT FEELING OF OVERSTIMULATION AND EXCITEMENT.

Parliament for my internship with Scottish MP George Foulkes several times a week immersed me in the art and pleasure of city strolling. The varieties of human experience on the streets of London stimulated me, broadening my notions of individual agency and style. And the variety of museums, gallery openings, and bookstores made me giddy. I’ve often remembered the surprise and excitement I felt one Saturday afternoon at the British Museum when I spotted the Dead Sea Scrolls, fragments of which I had read in Professor (Thomas) Jefferson’s Modern Christian Thought class. I wasn’t looking for them, yet there they were, seemingly could not believe that I was seeing the original texts of some of the gospels that hadn’t made it into the New Testament canon. As an impressionable undergraduate I wanted to ask the big questions: What would Western civilization have looked like had these gospels become the annotated ones?

On so many levels, Yucatan felt like home to me, and still does. The following year in London I discovered a love for the cosmopolitan—the city and all that it offers. I never became an Anglophile, but after living a semester in one of the world’s great cities, I fell in love with the urban experience. For many Central College students, studying abroad offers the chance to live in a city: so many of us are from small towns in the Midwest. And what glorious immersion into the pleasures of metropolitan life. As students at 7 Bedford Place in Bloomsbury, many of us took a course on British Theater from Michael Billington, the celebrated theater critic of The Guardian newspaper. Billington approached us as if we were urban sophisticates, sharing his recommendations for each upcoming weekend, assuming we would want to take in at least a couple of shows, in addition to the ones we were required to see for class each week.

And why not? Several of us spent one unforgettable day at three back-to-back Shakespeare plays performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company. We emerged after nine hours at the Barbican exhilarated and not at all sure if English really was our native language! Just walking down Whitehall Road from Bloomsbury to the Houses of Parliament for my internship with Scottish MP George Foulkes several times a week immersed me in the art and pleasure of city strolling. The varieties of human experience on the streets of London stimulated me, broadening my notions of individual agency and style. And the variety of museums, gallery openings, and bookstores made me giddy. I’ve often remembered the surprise and excitement I felt one Saturday afternoon at the British Museum when I spotted the Dead Sea Scrolls, fragments of which I had read in Professor (Thomas) Jefferson’s Modern Christian Thought class. I wasn’t looking for them, yet there they were, seemingly could not believe that I was seeing the original texts of some of the gospels that hadn’t made it into the New Testament canon. As an impressionable undergraduate I wanted to ask the big questions: What would Western civilization have looked like had these gospels become the annotated ones?

I carry much of that semester in London with me each time I am in a city: that feeling of overstimulation and excitement, the sense of desire generated by so
many beautiful things to enjoy and to see, that sense of being alone and accompanied that cities offer. And always, always, that sense of discovery and surprise.

At the heart of a liberal arts education is the notion that the more we know about the world, the more interested in the world we become. That interest propels us to want to contribute something significant and to make our lives matter somehow. George Ann Huck, resident director of Central’s Mérida program for over 35 years who retired in 2005, embodies the intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm at the heart of liberal arts. She finds virtually EVERYTHING she sees in Mérida interesting. Driving down the street with her in 2014 (in the same car she had in 1988, that green Volkswagen bus!), I was caught up, as always, in her excitement in showing me a new art gallery that had just opened, in discussing the talk we attended together about the Maya world on the cusp of the Conquest, in telling me about a human rights group she is a part of, among myriad other observations. (For those of you wondering, she has no plans to replace her beloved bus).

Who among the alumni of Central’s Yucatán program could forget pulling into small hamlets in large yellow buses and George Ann’s dramatic entrances, knocking on doors, her booming voice resounding: “¡Bueno, ¿Hay alguien en este pueblo?” After showing us how it was done, she let us loose to find answers to all the questions we surely had about life in rural Yucatán—get going, people!

A BIGGER WORLD, MORE POSSIBILITIES


I’m seated across the desk from the executive director of a local community foundation. I’ve come to her office to learn more about the community I live in to get ideas on how to improve the city blog that I manage. It is five years after graduation from Central College, and I find myself living in a town similar to Pella. It is a small community in the Midwest, with cornfields just outside of town. The liberal arts college there draws students from across the country and around the world, and downtown is full of local businesses and landscaped flowers (but there are no fines for picking tulips).

I’m active downtown, working at a local café and cheese shop and managing 10 community volunteers from high school to retirement, who are blogging about the positive stories in a city that is transforming after years of economic struggle. I see the college students; I see the community leaders and I see the local business people. I also see the retirees, the old men who trickle into the coffee shop in the late morning for their daily social hour, congregating on the comfy chairs that, like the couch on “Friends,” always seem to be free when they walk in.

It’s this last group that I think of as the executive director describes the makeup of the community from her years of experience. “Many people have never lived anywhere else,” she says. “My niece got a great job opportunity but turned it down—she lives with her mom and doesn’t need the money. She is attached to what is familiar to her.” She leans across her desk to emphasize her point. “I’m encouraging her to study abroad, to get her outside her bubble.”

I sympathize with this. For 20 years, my bubble was the size of a small town in Iowa. Then I left to spend a year on Central College’s study abroad program in Vienna, Austria—living in a country the size of Iowa, speaking a foreign language and exploring a city of 1.7 million. Now I am back to small-town Midwestern living, but something has changed.

For starters, I eat differently. A simple flour dumpling cooked in chicken broth when I feel like I’m in heaven, floating on clouds that are made out of dumpling. I discovered my favorite mealtime while studying abroad: brotzeit (literally: Bread Time), a snack where bread and rolls take a starring role. And the only cake I routinely make from scratch is the Austrian cake called Sachertorte (chocolate cake layered with apricot jam).

Now, I speak differently—not just that I can now speak fluent German. When learning a new language, I practiced asking what words meant. I became aware of how often I’d nod along when I didn’t understand words. Then I noticed that, in English, there were vocabulary and cultural references I did not understand. Now, I ask. I’m a better conversationalist in two languages.

I even travel differently. I now know what it is like to live a year without car payments, without stops at gas stations, without surprise trips to the mechanic. All that, and to get everywhere I want to go, quickly, for just 50 Euros a semester. Back in the States I am living out of my car again—because the public transportation in my area is expensive and inconvenient—but I take trains whenever I can and have since found excursions into Chicago to be much less stressful. In nice weather, I park several blocks from my destination to enjoy a walk.

Most importantly, my abroad experience helped me see new possibilities, everywhere. During my senior year at Central I funneled my excitement about international studies into an internship in the study abroad office. That experience gave me the confidence to commit to a year of AmeriCorps VISTA, working full time in a small non-profit in Des Moines. As a VISTA, I met my future husband, and we decided to move to Madison, Wisconsin, together. There. I made a living in international food, sharing recipes and trying a variety of multiethnic fare as a crew memmember at Trader Joe’s.

In the present, our conversation is wrapping up. The executive director shows me to the door and sends me on my way with a friendly goodbye. I head out into the parking lot. I may live in a small town, but I know that somewhere, it’s 7 p.m. and Viennese are boarding subway cars on their way to a dinner of roast pork and bread dumplings.

It gets harder and harder to tell what parts of my life were impacted by my study abroad experience. Like the proverbial pebble in the pond, the ripples of influence get larger and dissolve into the whole. It has influenced every part of my life now, and it will continue to cause unseen ripples throughout the rest of my life. Unlike a piece of Sachertorte, however delicious, investing in a study abroad experience is something that will continue to pay dividends the rest of my life.
The popularity of Central's Wales program is on the rise, with record enrollment for 2014. Modic and Wales resident director Tecwyn Vaughan Jones attribute this surge to the Outdoor Pursuits experience in the "hauntingly beautiful" Snowdonia National Park.

According to Jones, the Wales program takes advantage of its location in many ways. "The Outdoor Pursuits class enables students to interact with the environment of what is arguably the most striking and beautiful in the whole of the United Kingdom. Bangor is on the threshold of Snowdonia National Park and the class takes advantage of this location and offers an opportunity for students to acquire practical knowledge of flora, fauna, climate and weather, landscape and settlement patterns, as well as skills which emanate from such an environment," Jones says.

He also stressed that the program is founded on the belief that learning is an active process, and the best learning occurs as a result of direct and meaningful experience.

In the fall and spring semesters, groups of 10 students are transported once a week from the classroom site at Bangor University to the Outdoor Pursuits Centre on the shores of the Menai Strait in Anglesey, about four miles away. During the summer program, students go to the Centre daily. Once on site, students are provided with equipment and clothing for activities like surfing, gorge scrambling and raft building. The first hour is dedicated to health and safety instruction.

"The Outdoor Pursuits class provides students with a unique opportunity to engage with the natural environment, while developing leadership skills." — Tecwyn Vaughan Jones, director

Outdoor Pursuits students in Wales take on rappelling, kayaking and more

According to Modic, excursions as part of study abroad programs are common and expected if a program is to maximize a student's time abroad. But what sets Central's programs apart is that 1) Central includes these intra-curricular trips as part of the overall programming price, and 2) excursions are integrated into academic coursework.

"Few other study abroad programs include the price of the excursion in the overall programming price, integrate the excursion into the curriculum and require participation," Modic says.

Excursions support the goal of experiential learning, which emphasizes direct and active engagement, beginning on campus and continuing as program participants make their way out into the world.

The concept of "excursion" conjures images in your mind of luxury suites and infinity pools, you are not a likely candidate for Central's Outdoor Pursuits course in Wales or Morocco Exchange in Granada, Spain. If, however, you seek authentic cultural learning, physical and mental challenges, and the daily potential for life changing experiences, then these Central College program offerings promise to deliver, as they have for more than a decade.

Blaire Modic, director of Central College Abroad since 2013, said excursions offer many advantages since 2013, said excursions offer many advantages for students. "Over time, you can accumulate experiences on-site," Modic said, "but leaving the site gives students the opportunity to reflect on what they are learning and to break away from the routine of daily life." According to Modic, excursions as part of study abroad programs are common and expected if a program is to maximize a student's time abroad. But what sets Central's programs apart is that 1) Central includes these intra-curricular trips as part of the overall programming price, and 2) excursions are integrated into academic coursework.

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OUTDOOR PURSUITS, BANGOR, WALES

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"The Outdoor Pursuits class provides students with a unique opportunity to engage with the natural environment, while developing leadership skills." — Tecwyn Vaughan Jones, director

Come for the experience, stay for the social media? Tecwyn Vaughan Jones recently retired from the Wales program, after 14 years as program director. When he started in 2000, the program was based at Trinity College in Carmarthen; since 2006, the program has been associated with Bangor University. Jones has seen remarkable changes over that time, but perhaps the most notable are those of student and parent communications. He says, "During the last 14 years there has been a tremendous change in student participation, and the impact of new technology, particularly social media, has been very noticeable. In 2000 the students contacted friends and family by email and letter only, but 14 years later, there is an abundance of communication networks including cellphones, which I feel have altered the depth of the abroad experience.”

Today, Jones said students are in contact with friends and family several times a day, and this sometimes requires program directors to make sure communication with home does not predominate in the study abroad experience. Jones said students are required to join societies and organizations abroad to make integration easier and help students become independent of social media and contact with home.
background. “For the uninitiated, the challenge is to overcome fears of participation, lack of confidence and whether they are able to fit in,” Jones says. “To the slightly more experienced, it is being able to deal with students of lesser skill and help them overcome their fear.”

Throughout the course, Outdoor Pursuits compels students to get out into the world and test new skills. “The challenges in this class cannot be replaced by any reality TV”, Jones said. “Students use terms such as ‘life changing,’ ‘the best thing I have ever done,’ and often say they achieve confidence in this class.”

For some students, the class even provides an introduction to a future career.

This was the case for Kris Johnson ’14, a double major in environmental science and sociology. He says, “The greatest benefit and challenge of Outdoor Pursuits was learning how to effectively communicate and work with others. Many of the activities required good communication and teamwork, forcing me to rely on my classmates for my safety and completion of a goal.”

Johnson brought his newfound skills back to the United States and is putting them to work in his career. As assistant farm manager at Red Earth Gardens, an organic farm that is part of the Meskwaki Settlement in Tama, he says he now effectively works with a team of people. “My majors tie together in my passion for sustainable agriculture, which I realized while I was abroad. I was forced out of my comfort zone on several occasions. Outdoor Pursuits gave me the confidence, decision making and teamwork skills that I now use in my everyday life,” he says.

Bryanna Pierce ’15, an athletic training major and psychology minor, had the chance to put her first aid skills to work during her semester’s excursions. “This class gave me an opportunity to see how I react in different situations and how much I enjoy helping,” she says. “I know that I have chosen the right career path, and I can’t wait to continue my education through the Central athletic training program.”

Students still spend time in the classroom. Jones teaches a required course module, Introduction to the History and Culture of Wales, to educate students about the country’s archaeology, architecture, tourism, industry and way of life. The course requires students to complete journals and a final essay on “What is Welchness?” Identity is a major theme of the required class, and students cannot talk about identity without first looking at their own.

Overall, Jones says, “The Outdoor Pursuits class provides students with a unique opportunity to engage with the natural environment, while developing leadership skills; challenging students both physically and mentally; teaching them to act responsibly and to care for others; helping the students to be self-sufficient and persevere in the context of personal challenges.”

For four days each semester, students travel throughout the Kingdom of Morocco to meet with peers, participate in homestays and visit historical sites and ruins. Montero says the schedule is action-packed.

On the first day, students travel from Tarifa, Spain, by ferry to Tangier, where they visit a women’s center and have lunch with students from the University of Tangier. After visiting Assilah for a walking tour in the afternoon, students travel to the capital of Rabat to meet their host families for the night.

On Day 2, students meet peers from the University of Rabat, visit monuments, meet with Fulbright scholars and Peace Corps volunteers in the region, and have lunch with their host families.

On Day 3, they leave the capital for a mountain village, where they visit a school and have lunch with a local family. That afternoon, students travel to the fortress town of Chaouen, where they spend the night in a hotel.

On the final day, students take a walking tour of Chaouen before heading to Ceuta for the return trip to Granada.

When students return, Montero says they are more knowledgeable about many aspects of the region, including society, economics, education and politics. “Our students are the perfect age to experience and explore places, people and things,” Montero says. “When students arrive in Granada, see their surroundings and hear the historical background of the city, they develop a bigger interest in getting to know more about the history, the culture of Islam and the culture of Spain.”

Modic points out the importance of the Moroccan Exchange’s emphasis on direct student-to-student contact. “There is lots of time built into the schedule to create new relationships,” Modic said. “In their group discussions with Moroccan peers, students talk about everything from their reactions to political events to their favorite new websites.”

Montero says the students become enthralled with the hospitality of their host families. “They are very aware of the land they are visiting and the people they are talking to,” she says.

Morocco Exchange, known as the cultural highlight of Central’s Granada semester, is an intense excursion across the Strait of Gibraltar to North Africa, where program director Veronica Montero says, “Nothing is typical.”

“Connecting two of Central’s strongest programs—service learning abroad is a relatively new component that took root about 12 years ago. Service learning is an experiential component that allows students to learn and develop skills by volunteering in the local community. In many cases, these skills relate directly to students’ future careers by helping them learn about contributing effectively to an organization.”

Elaina Loyd ’15 volunteered at Centre Cerise, a community center in Paris. Loyd tutored children in English and led English conversation hours for both children and adults. This opportunity gave Loyd hands-on experience that will support her future plans to teach English in France after graduation. “I thoroughly enjoyed myself and learned a lot about French culture,” Loyd said, “while simultaneously improving my language skills and making great connections.”

Destiny Romberg ’16 says the experience has impacted the way she views her future. “The program influenced my career decision-making by allowing me to be more open to other people and their backgrounds,” says the sociology and Spanish double major.

As the program celebrates its 10th anniversary, Montero recalls the Exchange was once “simply an idea.” At that time, students were informed about Morocco through a presentation by program leaders. Morocco Exchange then became an official part of the Granada program in fall 2009, and Montero said it “provides a safe environment for students, who always come with eyes open in astonishment.”

### Central’s study abroad program turns 50 this year, but service learning abroad is a relatively new component that took root about 12 years ago. Service learning is an experiential component that allows students to learn and develop skills by volunteering in the local community. In many cases, these skills relate directly to students’ future careers by helping them learn about contributing effectively to an organization.

“Connecting two of Central’s strongest programs—service learning and study abroad—was a way to help students maximize their potential by giving them an experience they could utilize for the rest of their lives,” says Cheri Doane, director of Community Based Learning.

**CONNECTIONS THROUGH SERVICE**

by Hillary Hotz ’15

**Elaina Loyd ’15**

Volunteered at Centre Cerise, a community center in Paris.

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**Morocco Exchange immerses students in a completely new culture.**

“**OUR STUDENTS ARE THE PERFECT AGE TO EXPERIENCE AND EXPLORE PLACES, PEOPLE AND THINGS.”**

Veronica Montero, director

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**Morocco Exchange, 9 GRANADA, SPAIN**

Veronica Montero, director
McMorran teaches Japanese studies at National University of Singapore.

STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES LEAD TO CAREERS THAT REQUIRE AN INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING.

We live in a society that loves to measure things. We are constantly asking for data: How long is the movie? How far is the restaurant? What’s the ROI on this? What’s the cost? Give it to me in a spreadsheet.

But some things in life aren’t easily measured. What, for instance, is the value of a study abroad experience that sparked a passion for foreign policy, provided experiences crucial to graduate school admission essays and eventually led to a job working with the Department of State? How do you measure the worth of a semester abroad that led to further exploration of world cultures and ultimately to a position teaching Japanese studies at a university in Singapore?

While we can’t hold up a yardstick to these experiences, hearing the stories of the people impacted by study abroad helps us to understand the many ways it has permanently impacted the course of their professional lives.

McMorran’s Ph.D. research focused on domestic tourism in Japan, and the people who work in tourist spaces. His research brought him to rural areas where family-run inns are popular, and McMorran found many stories waiting to be told about the people—who mostly women—who end up working at the inns.

“The laborers they hire are often very vulnerable,” he says. “The people that I worked with when I did my research were mostly women who had been divorced or abused or in some way had found themselves with nowhere to go. McMorran says, “I feel like there is a story to be told of the behind-the-scenes, you might call them micro-economic, of gender and labor that can be revealed in these traditional Japanese inns.”

While the jobs provide the women with food, shelter and a salary, they often have nowhere else to go. McMorran says, “As an English teacher in Japan as part of the Japan program to spend the night in a family-run inn, I didn’t stop the exploring I learned to do while I was at Central;” he says.

While at Central, McMorran, a sociology major, participated in a campus tour early in my senior year and fell in love with the campus and the atmosphere. “While I was at Central.”

Every summer since 2010, a small number of students have taken advantage of Central’s newest study abroad program in Ghana. The one-month program takes students through Ghana’s history and introduces them to the nation’s performing arts.

Program director Samuel Mate-Kodjo, an associate professor of Spanish, said Ghana’s past few decades have been fascinating because citizens have been adjusting to a host of changes in their country. “They have been re-finding themselves after a period of crisis,” Mate-Kodjo said.

Now students with Central College Abroad can also explore the events, traditions and opportunities that define Ghana. Mate-Kodjo said program courses are enriched by excursions to European colonists’ plantations, a tropical forest reserve and the world’s largest manmade lake, where Ghana produces electricity for several nations.

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of a big city—Singapore has more than 5 million people—and small-town life. For instance, he can walk to work in 15 minutes and enjoys never having to drive in traffic. In fact, he doesn’t drive at all, saying there is no reason to have a car in Singapore because public transportation is so good. He also likes the fact that Singapore provides a convenient hub from which to travel the world—a flight to Australia takes only five hours.

McMorran still has the travel bug and tries to visit one new country every year, continuing his experience of living as a global citizen that began at Central. Today he says he “has no hesitation about living almost anywhere in the world. And I think that has to do with being exposed early to opportunities to study abroad while I was at Central.”

GLOBAL CAREER PATH
Stephanie Heiken
Heiken didn’t expect that she could “translate her study abroad experiences into a career,” but the path she’s charted since Central appears full of global possibilities.

The political science and Spanish double major recently completed a master’s degree in foreign policy at American University in Washington, D.C. She is also an adoptions arts major, Goethals was interested in international affairs as a result of her study abroad and Washington Center experiences. Each experience provided a stepping stone on a career path that is taking Heiken closer and closer to her dream job.

CONNECTING TO AN IDEAL INTERNSHIP
Experiences abroad act as a springboard for future career plans. Stephen Goethals, a 2014 graduate of Bradley University, recently spent spring semester abroad with Central’s program in Vienna. As a television arts major, Goethals was interested in an internship that would provide relevant experiences and subject matter understanding to discuss in my application.”

While a Central student, Heiken studied in the Washington Center program in D.C. in fall 2010, in the Merida, Yucatan, program during spring 2010, and in Leiden, the Netherlands, in 2012. McMorran still has the travel bug and tries to visit one new country every year, continuing his experience of living as a global citizen that began at Central. Today he says he “has no hesitation about living almost anywhere in the world. And I think that has to do with being exposed early to opportunities to study abroad while I was at Central.”

“I chose Leiden because it was advertised as a political science major at Central that I was interested in foreign policy, especially focused in Latin America. And I knew from my study abroad experiences in Mexico and the Netherlands that I wanted international affairs to be the focus of my career,” Heiken says. Later, graduate study further solidified her career path. “My master’s program developed a strong interest in national security and foreign policy development and implementation,” Heiken says.

Her experiences abroad proved helpful when it came time to apply to graduate programs. “Study abroad helped me enter grad school,” Heiken says. “The program that I recently completed is highly competitive, and study abroad helped me gain experience in his field as well as align with another of his passions: soccer.

Goethals explained to Ruth Verweijen, director of Central’s Vienna program, that he wanted to intern with an Austrian soccer team. She made the connection, giving Goethals contact information for Peter Gretschhammer, the director of the youth academy for SK Rapid Wien, one of Vienna’s two professional soccer teams. After meeting with Gretschhammer and showing him examples of his previous work, Goethals began attending youth team trainings to see how they could be filmed for use in promotional videos.

“After the Easter holiday I brought my camera where ever I would be, spoke with the U9 trainers, and started collecting footage,” Goethals says. “After a couple of trainings I formed a general idea of how I wanted the video to be and decided to interview the coaches and kids. My German was really terrible at that time, so I just learned much from it. I then edited the videos at home.”

While he isn’t yet sure exactly what career path he will pursue, Goethals’ internship offered a great background in real-world media production, which is the field in which he hopes to work. “I have recently taken an interest in script writing and I have been looking for jobs and internships in radio because there is more of a focus on writing,” he says.

Goethals considers his internship the most valuable part of his study-abroad experience “because I was able to learn about Europe outside of the classroom,” he says. He encourages other students to seek out opportunities abroad that take them into the day-to-day life of the countries in which they are living.

“Travel, go on tours, learn about the history of other countries as well as the one you’re studying in,” he says.

For Goethals, as well as other study abroad alumni, their experiences have paved the way for a future as global citizens. Often, this mindset directly impacted their careers, taking them further than they dreamed was possible.
WHERE ARE THEY NOW

ERIC SNEDDON served Central students as the London study abroad residential director from 2001 to 2009. Today, Sneddon still works in London—now as associate director with New York University’s academic center.

Sneddon now oversees a much larger program—more than 450 undergraduates per semester—but said Central’s small size is truly an asset.

“She is a remarkable woman, and Sneddon says.

“I remember taking my Normandy 1944 class on their weekend field trip to France to visit the Norman beaches and battlefields,” he says. “Lots of laughter and learning, mingled with somber reflections of what young men their age had endured in the cause of freedom—it added layers of emotional and factual comprehension to our textbooks and class-based learning.”

Sneddon distinctly remembers the many different trips and excursions he led with students during his time abroad.

“I am proud that I can still count former colleagues amongst my friends, and whenever I meet (Central) program alums, there is an immediate happy bond through having a shared experience,” Sneddon says.

To read the full Q&A with Eric Sneddon visit civitas.central.edu.

GEORGE ANN HUCK, professor emerita, served Central College students from 1968 to 2005 as the residential director in Merida, Yucatan. She experienced a number of changes to Central’s program and within the country during those 37 years.

“From the moment of my first interviews with Central, I understood that curiosity and creativity were valued,” says Huck. “Working abroad in areas of intercultural learning that were slowly integrated into academia also offered a career of endless learning opportunities and surprises.”

Huck may have retired, but she has not slowed down. Her recent activities include directing the Association of Academic Programs in Latin America and the Caribbean (AAPLAC); founding the women’s rights group Por Nuestros Derechos, Mujeres en Red; serving as vice president of the Association of Academic Programs in the Historical Series of the RCA since its inception in 1968, Donald published its 80th title, the three-volume “Holland, Michigan From Dutch Colony to Dynamic City” by Robert P. Swierenga. Don and wife Erma Van Roekel Bruggink ’53 live in Holland, Mich.

John Hiemstra ’52 credits Central College for giving a boy just out of the farm the knowledge to take on the world—and he’s still doing it as minister of the Reformed Church in Closter, N.J. During his career in the ministry, John served as president of the General Synod of the Reformed Church, president of the New York State Council of Churches and president of the Classis of the Greater Passaics of the Reformed Church. This spring John was named the Bishop Wight Clergy of the Year by Christ for the World Chapel, a ministry of the Council of Churches of the City of New York. John and wife Norma live in West Nyack, N.Y.

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GEORGE ANN HUCK
CIVITAS.CENTRAL.EDU
THE '90S

For information about Chris Stone '96 and Eric Forsberg '99, see the '90s.

Matthew Reimer '91 is the head men’s basketball coach at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minn. and they live in Annapolis with their two daughters.

Terri Thomas Schollfield '91 is the elementary school principal in Centerville. Terri and husband Daryl live in Albion with their three sons.

Bo White '93 is interrim director of Study Abroad at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. Bo and wife Tamara live in Champaign with their two children.

Pamela King Keller '95 is a post-award administrator at Iowa State University in Ames, where she lives with husband Wade and their two children.

William Snyder '95 is the management and program analyst with the United States Department of the Treasury: Bureau of Fiscal Service in Kansas City, Mo. William and wife South live in Leawood with their daughter.

THE '00S

Teresa Keoke Dusil '81 and Shannon Peck Judkins '83 "were in Tucson, Ariz., over spring break to cheer on their sons Ryan Dusil '14 and Blake Judkins '17 and the Dutch baseball team, when they ran into their former golf coach Maurine Timmer. They are pictured (L-R): Ryan Dusil '14, Teresa Keoke Dusil '81, Maurine Timmer, Shannon Peck Judkins '83, Blake Judkins '17 and Jordan Judkins '14."

Patrick and wife Chris live in Cave Creek, Ariz.

Lisa Shaffer Milig '77 is senior market service representative at Camden International Corporation in Houston, Texas, where she lives with husband Timothy.

THE '10S

Rod Overlander '82 owns and operates The Overlander Agency in Denton, Texas. Rod and wife Linda Thomas Overlander '84 live in Argyle.

Marty Lange '93 is the human resource safety manager at McCanlaur Corp., in Cedar Rapids, where he lives with wife Jan and their daughter.

Jay Sandermon '97 is a strategic business unit manager at Vermeer Corp. in Pella, where he lives with wife Deborah Robus Sandermon '90. Deb is an educator for the Pella Community School District. Jay and Deb are the parents of three daughters.

Caren Fiala Carter '98 is a young "fixes" teacher at Holland Public Schools in Holland, Mich., where she lives with husband Brian.

Michael Ellers '99 is the operational risk manager at Wells Fargo Bank Iowa in Des Moines. Michael and wife Amy Dietrich Ellers '88 are the parents of two sons and live in West Des Moines, where Amy is an assistant program representative at March A. Co.

Lisa Beanham Mark '99 is a career liaison for Liberal Arts at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, S.D., where she lives with husband Douglas.

Kristen Heerenas '99 of Reistertown, Md., is a product manager at SECU in Linthicum.

Cindy Haner Xiong '89 is the founder and executive director of Hmong American Peach Academy. Chris, who came to the United States as a refugee in 1976 with no English skills, was the first Hmong teacher employed by the Milwaukee Public Schools and the first Hmong principal in the city of Milwaukee. Chris and husband Tou Bee live in Milwaukee, Wis.

Angie Ireten Forsberg '00 opened her own dental practice, Pleasant Dental PC, in Pleasant Hill. Angie and husband Eric Forsberg '99 live with their son in Altoona, where Eric has his dental practice at Altoona Smiles PC.

Megan Avrada '00 of Bettendorf is a data coordinator at John Deere Headquarters in Moline.

Denise Barnard '02 of Iowa City is a senior academic advisor at the University of Iowa.

Krista Rankin White '02 is the ministry coordinator at Lutheran Church of Hope in West Des Moines. Krista and husband Kadin live in Ankeny with their two children.

Cintho Houssenou '04 is a neurosurgeon at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, in Nashville, Tenn.

Kate Vander Linden Hughes '04 is a marketing analytics manager at Farm Bureau Financial Services. Katie and husband Robert live in West Des Moines.

Dekone King Negley '04 and husband David Negley '04 live in Winterstar. Her debut novels, “Love Always,” “Kate” and “The Spirit,” published by Limitless Publishing, were released in April. Deke writes under the name d. Nicole King.

Rebecca Hodges Pospeliv '04 is the director of quality improvement at Easter Seals in Des Moines. Rebecca and husband Andrew live in Clive with their daughter.

Kelli Debeer Stevers '05 is a compliance analyst at Simmons Animalry Group in West Des Moines. Kelli and husband Justin live in Clive with their daughter.

Laura Van Uytven Anderson '06 is an audit team administrator at TD&T CPA's and Advisors in Oakarosa, where she lives with husband Nicholas Anderson '06 and their daughter. Nicholas is a product analyst at Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Co.

Andrew '06 of Seattle, Wash., is a sales manager at Endura Technical Cycling Apparel.

Adam Gregg '06 announced his candidacy for attorney general for the State of Iowa and received the nomination at the Republican State Convention. Adam was a member of the senior staff handling legislative liaison duties from the governor’s office. Adam and wife Cara Rehder Gregg '07 live in Johnston. Cara is employed by Wells Fargo Bank.

Matthew Harre '06 is a product support specialist at Commerce Bank in Kansas City, Mo. Matthew and wife Rhonda live in Lee’s Summit with their son.

Joshua Wignall '06 of Nixa, Mo., is planning a campaign at EFCO in Monett.

Dana Boh '07 of Des Moines is an account manager at Marsh and McLennan Co.’s.

Sarah Butterfield '07 and Carlos Diaz of Columbia, South America, were married Dec. 1, 2013. Sarah and Carlos are involved in missionary and volunteer work in the area.

Emily Markby Marshall '07 teaches English at Legend High School in Parker, Colo. Emily and husband Eric live in Denver.

Brandon O’Neill '07 and Jordan Jesse of Pequotseset, R.I., were married July 10, 2015. Brandon is the director of strength and conditioning at Brown University in Providence.

Trenton Blythe '08 is an associate director of advancement at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Trenton and wife Mollie Late Blythe '08 live in Oak Park. Mollie teaches music education at St. John Berchmans School in Chicago.

Lindsey Knedlerhouse '08 of West Lafayette, Ind., is an Odyssey postdoctoral fellow at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Allison Knott '08 and Adam Cooke of Sanborn were married March 8. Allison is the chamber director and coordinator for the City of Sheldon.

Katie Pethy '08 graduated from the Aveda Institute Des Moines in January with a degree in cosmetology. Katie is a cosmetologist at Sher Hairdressing in Pella, where she lives with her son.

Masse Carr Petting '08 is an athletic academic coordinator at Iowa State University in Ames. Masse and husband David Petting '09 live in Ankeny. David is an associate hyvac sales engineer at Johnson Controls Inc. in Urbandale.

Lacey Ritscher '08 of Royal Oak, Mich., is a registered nurse at St. John Hospital and Medical Center in Detroit.

Drew Wilson '08 is a technology solutions senior associate at McGladrey Pullin in Eden Prairie, Minn.

Kapil Chugh '09 of Iowa City is a computer programmer at the University of Iowa.

Bryanne Hessing '09 of West Des Moines is a minister for children at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Ankeny.

Central College attendees (left to right): Blake Judkins '17 and Teresa Keoke Dusil '81 and Shannon Peck Judkins '83 and Carrie Hedges Pospeliv '04 and Bo White '93 and Jordan Jesse.

life and alumni coordinator at Allen College- Unity Point Health. Emma Putnam ’13 of Des Moines is a freelance photographer and artist at Four Fish Studio. Cameron Von Kosteln ’13 of Schenectady, N.Y., is administrator of the Lunn Cooperative, funded by the First Reformed Church of Schenectady.

ADVANCED DEGREES

Marjorie Pestana Vansel Wagen ’66, masters of divinity degree, McCormick

Study Abroad Alum: Leiden Adventure Leads to Job

Study abroad is often the catalyst to a career. That was the case for Luke Ridout, an alum of Central’s 2011. Ridout, an English and Dutch language and culture major, traveled to Central in spring 2010. His experience abroad led directly to a job in the Netherlands soon after graduation.

“Due to the international experience and language skills I built while studying abroad, I just had the opportunity to teach secondary school full-time back in the Netherlands,” Ridout says. He taught at Hartrijt Secondary School near Rotterdam, where he instructed in English.

While studying abroad with Central, Ridout made connections that enabled him to achieve the teaching position. He says, “I gained international experience and contacts that I can use in international business and travel to very different cultural contexts. Additionally, learning to be adaptable in new circumstances has endless applications in all types of professions, no matter what field you’re in.”

In addition to his professional connections, Ridout values the small aspects of Leiden (sp) he experienced. “Simply learning how to live daily life in the country that I had intensively studied, but never visited, was unforgettable,” he says. “I still remember the magical feeling of my first view of Leiden’s canals on a snowy winter’s day.”

The Dutch art scene also thrilled Ridout, and he says, “Having [Elwin, director of Central College in Leiden] be your personal art history guide in the 17th century within a half-hour train ride was unbelievable!”

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THE GIVE IT TWICE TRUST

Looking for a way to help secure your family’s future while making a gift to Central College? The Give It Twice Trust is a popular option that allows you to transfer your IRA at death to a term of years unitrust. The unitrust will pay income to your family for a set number of years and then distribute the balance to Central.

BENEFITS OF A GIVE IT TWICE TRUST

- Full value of IRA invested to produce income.
- Payments made to your children for up to 20 years.
- Estate and income tax savings for your gift.

HOW IT WORKS

- A typical estate plan will first transfer a portion of the estate outright to children.
- Then the IRA or other assets are transferred to fund a term of years charitable remainder trust at death.
- Because the unitrust is tax-exempt, no income tax is paid when the IRA is distributed to the trust.
- Full value of IRA is invested and pays income to children up to 20 years.
- At the end of this time, the trust remainder is distributed to Central as a charitable gift.

HOW THIS PLAN MEETS YOUR GOALS

- Provides way to help secure your family’s future while also making a charitable gift. In effect, the property is used twice.
- Provides valuable savings on income and estate taxes.
- Transfers equal value to your children over a number of years through regularly scheduled payments.
- Ensures the value of your IRA will not be spent down quickly.

To learn more about how the Give it Twice Trust may work for you, please contact Don Morrison at (641) 628-5280 or morrisond@central.edu.

Diving into Dutch Insurance Company

Chris Poesch ’15 combined studying in a new country with his first internship and found insight into his career path.

by Jenni Hodges

The first weeks of a new job can be stressful for anyone, and interns often learn this as part of their first work experience. For Central College accounting major Chris Poesch ’15, these first weeks on the job were combined with his first time in a new country—the Netherlands.

“It was kind of scary at first,” Poesch says. “It was my first internship; I was in a new country, the project was really tough to complete.”

Poesch, a Central senior from Waverly, Iowa, worked in the finance department for insurance company Aegon in spring 2014. His assignment, after two weeks of intensive Dutch language study, was to simplify Aegon’s corporate cost sharing program. After learning the existing files thoroughly, Poesch spent two months designing a new version that was easier to understand.

Stormi Peterson ’15, also an accounting major at Central, helped Poesch land the internship. Peterson worked for Aegon the previous spring and referred Poesch to her internship supervisor in the Netherlands.

According to Poesch, the opportunity to study and work abroad presented a tough decision, but the benefits were overwhelming. “I was concerned about falling behind,” Poesch says, “but I think the skills I gained from studying in a completely different country can’t be matched.”

The highlight for Poesch was experiencing the everyday realities of a business environment. He worked at Aegon’s corporate center and said it was eye-opening to work with many experienced and intelligent people.

“It was my first time in a professional environment,” Poesch says. “I think I grew a lot.”

Poesch also enjoyed getting to know Dutch coworkers and experiencing their unique work environment. Poesch said he was surprised how relaxed the workplace could be, recalling a day when corporate leaders gathered everyone to celebrate the fourth quarter report and ended the workday at noon to eat and drink together.

Poesch said the internship also enlightened his thinking about a future career. “Before this, I wasn’t sure if I wanted to get a job in accounting,” Poesch said. “This showed me that I really do enjoy my major.”
Bilingual and Loving It

by Cindy Deppe

Katie Huff ’11 uses her language skills on the job.

Her French skills, honed through language exchanges during a semester abroad in Paris with Central College, got Katie Huff ’11 her first job and recently a promotion, with opportunities to travel internationally.

The business management major with minors in French and economics is currently pursuing an M.B.A. while working as a bilingual dealer service representative for John Deere Financial in Johnston. Soon, she will become a John Deere Financial credit analyst, “getting to work on the construction and forestry side.”

In her current work, the Loveland, Colo., native is the main point of contact for John Deere dealers who sell John Deere equipment and have billing issues to resolve. “I was hired because I spoke French and they were transitioning the group that supports the Quebec dealers from the Canada office to the Johnston office,” Huff says. “There are so many aspects of the business, like exchange rate differences and pricing, that you just don’t think about. It really interests me to learn about the cultural differences in all of these countries.”

Huff has travelled to Ontario and India for John Deere and says having previous travel experience was a key factor in getting selected for those opportunities to travel abroad for work. “My study abroad experiences help me to not make assumptions about people and cultures. I wouldn’t have felt confident in my French speaking abilities without the Central abroad experience. It definitely helped me to get the job,” Huff says.

“Study abroad makes you more well-rounded. You mature and learn about yourself and your interests. Having a native French roommate and taking a variety of classes in French with other international students was the most memorable part of the experience for me—you interact with native speakers who want to improve their English and you gain so much by spending time with them.”

Huff’s only regret is that she couldn’t fit another study abroad experience into her busy schedule. “I wish I could go back and do a second semester abroad. You never get another opportunity to immerse yourself in the culture and study. The next time you go, you will be working so you can’t explore the way you can as a student. When you study abroad, you make the most of the opportunities.”

Huff managed to make the most of her own travel experience while completing a major and two minors. She also played volleyball, worked in the admission office, tutored fellow economics students and balanced three internships, including one for the Central College Abroad office.

“I was very busy as a Central student, but you can do it all and still fit in study abroad,” Huff says. “It’s about the whole experience, and I wouldn’t trade that experience for anything.”

Huff’s ambitions continue—she expects to finish her M.B.A. in three years, while learning her new job and, not surprisingly, also plans to take advantage of an international educational experience offered through the graduate program.