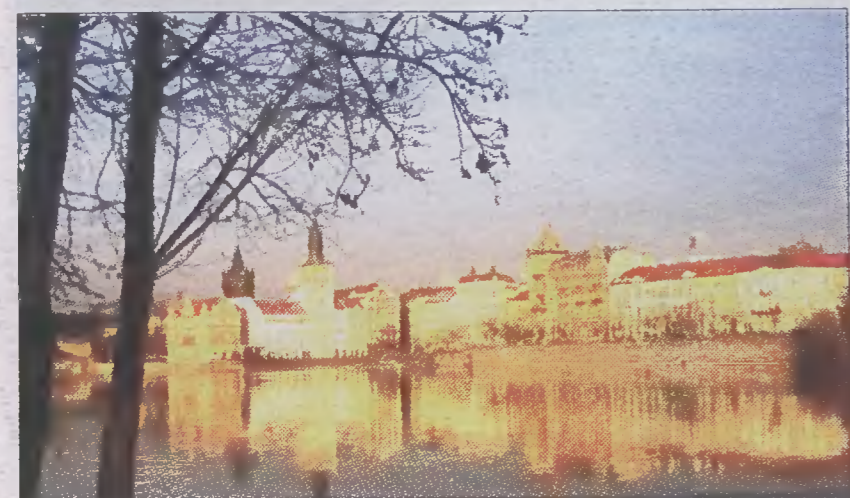


# Students reflect on study abroad



By Thomas Wotherspoon  
STAFF WRITER

Traveling abroad has always been a major part of the Guilford experience.

Approximately one-third of our student body spends at least a semester abroad and return with a wealth of experience and a renewed appreciation for the opportunities and advantages the world has to offer.

This semester is no different, with students returning from around the world with stories and perspective to share.

Experiential learning is the core goal of the international studies program, which many students value when returning to campus.

Students returning from abroad for a new year and a new semester experienced various countries and cultures; mainly due to Guilford's encouraging array of choices of international study including at least eight countries to choose from, not excluding other non-affiliated foreign studies programs.

A dinner on Jan. 16 welcomed those students returning from their international study.

"It can be disconcerting to come back during the spring semester so it's important to have an event to welcome you back," said Jim Hood, director of the study abroad program.

Those present in the audience had traveled to a variety of places ranging from Guadalajara, Mexico, to Munich, Germany, with many places in between: London, England; Barcelona, Spain; India; and Maastricht, Holland.

When asked about his experiences abroad, junior Peter Linden, who studied in Maastricht, Holland, cited a trip to Prague in the Czech Republic as the highlight. Prague, one of a minority of major European cities fortunately not devastated architecturally by WWII, offers a plethora of historic sites to explore.

Of his visit to the Muzeum Komunismu, Linden said, "The museum of communism was the most unbiased" that he had witnessed,

especially given that, "it was from the Czech perspective."

"One had to be self-sufficient if you want to learn how to survive I would recommend that you go (to Maastricht)," said Linden.

Joe Carey, a senior who studied for four months in Kunming, the capital of the Yunnan province of China, had similar pronouncements about studying abroad.

"Once you can do things independently you become more comfortable in China," said Carey. "I felt uncomfortable with the stares that I got while walking down the street, because it's not considered impolite to stare."

Other than the stares, Carey said, "Chinese people are obtuse but normally quite open and friendly...they're excited to talk to foreigners."

After getting back in the U.S., Carey says he's had a hard time "adjusting to the pace of life."

"It's hard to get used to," he said.

Breezy Mayo, a junior who studied in Barcelona, traveled abroad

for the first time in the spring. Mayo spoke Spanish for the first time outside of the classroom and heard Catalan for the first time: a language native to the region which is significantly different from Spanish.

When contemplating her time abroad, Mayo stated, "Knowing that my experience was going to end, that I was going to leave, made the experience special."

These types of sentiments allow for the truly enriching experiences that Guilford strives to provide for students. It is only fitting that these students should be returning to Guilford, and home, to share their experiences and renew their studies with new perspectives.

For those interested in the study abroad options at Guilford, there will be an information meeting about the Sienna semester on Thursday, January 21, in Founders Gallery from 7:00-8:00 p.m.

For more information about other programs visit the study abroad offices or the web site, at [www.guilford.edu/academics.international/study\\_abroad](http://www.guilford.edu/academics.international/study_abroad).



Photo credits, counterclockwise from top: Junior Jen Albury, Mexico; Junior Cloud Gamble, Thailand; Junior Maya Oliver, Germany; Junior Jonathan Richter, China; Maya Oliver, Germany; Junior Morgan Howard, Italy.