

Students travel across the globe for Mini-Term 2012

By CAROLINE DESAUSURE

Mini-Term was met with excitement and anticipation after a long second trimester. Students reflect on their Mini-Term 2012 experience- abroad, around the US, and on campus.

16 students travelled to an island a few miles off the coast of southern Belize to design and execute field research projects at the Wee Caye Marine Lab. They observed mangrove swamps, turtle grass communities of the coral reefs in the Caribbean Sea, and tropical ecology for the week they spend in neotropical Belize.

"We stayed on an island the whole time and slept on a dock where you could see all of the stars perfectly. We got to see nurse sharks, sting rays the size of tables, lobsters, eels, squid, octopus and even found a conch that we got to eat," said junior Anne Kelley.

A group from NCSSM, originally planning on travelling

of Pisa, and the Vatican. It was a great experience to immerse ourselves in another culture and in some ways, it gave us an appreciation for the things we have in the US," said seniors Jeremiah Collins and Denise Elizondo.

The trip to Spain gave students the opportunity to stay with a family from Madrid for the extent of the trip, take classes at a Spanish high school, visit museums, sightsee, and be immersed in the Spanish language.

Senior Tyler Kissinger, who participated in the "Particle Accelerator Physics" Mini-Term said, "Traveling to Switzerland to see the Large Hadron Collider and put our particle physics knowledge to the test was an incredible opportunity in and of itself, but the most valuable part of the trip for me was learning how to approach big problems, from finding the mass of the top quark



Students on the Panama Miniterm pose with local school children. Courtesy of Caroline DeSaussure

systems, processes, and the environment by exploring cave systems of central Kentucky, visiting state parks, and visiting a university lab.

While many students spent their Mini-Terms off

campus, others had equally rewarding experiences here at NCSSM by taking part in interesting projects and getting a chance to relax and have fun.

"Staying on campus during Mini-Term allowed us

to eat at Dame's Chicken and Waffles, explore UNC Chapel Hill, paint in the art studio, eat free pancakes at IHOP, watch movies, and get a lot of sleep. Overall, it was a great experience," said seniors Grace Yook and Melody Paye.

Junior Burton Burrows stayed on campus for Mini-Term and said, "We did several motion studies about movement of the body. We looked at several key muscle groups in the shoulder and knee through a cadaver and ultrasound machine."

Some students even took the initiative to design their own independent Mini-Term courses.

"Our miniterm trip to New York City was designed so that we could do normal touristy things, such as seeing monuments, shows, and museums, while-staying within a tight budget. We had a lot of fun and it was neat to see how much you can do on a cheap budget," said senior Austin Hopkins.



Students on the Italy miniterm in Florence.

Courtesy of Tyler Hayes

to Tegucigalpa, Honduras for a water brigade had to change plans quickly due to civil unrest in Honduras. The group ended up being the first environmental high school brigade in Panama and worked with the indigenous community of Piriati Embera to build organic greenhouses for several families.

Senior Vivian Chen said, "Panama was one of the most humbling and real experiences I have ever had the privilege of being a part of, and I miss it terribly."

The longest Mini-Term trip was a little under two weeks to Italy where students gained an appreciation for the impact of the Renaissance on the modern world by embracing Italian culture and interacting with Italian high school students. They visited Florence, Rome, Pisa, Venice, and other smaller cities.

"We had the world's best gelato and saw the David, the Coliseum, the Leaning Tower

to navigating my way through a foreign country."

Students spent five days backpacking and camping on the Appalachian Trail observing the geology and wildlife of the region.

"The five days on the trail were some of the toughest, but most rewarding days of my life. The best part was just seeing all of the majestic beauty of the mountains and bonding with the other students," said senior Sandy Lerebours.

"Cave Systems and Field Geology" learned about earth



Juniors Waverly Wolff and Mary Poletti pose with starfish on the Belize Miniterm. Courtesy of Mary Poletti