

Meredith students travel to and from Europe

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As students packed this past May to go home for the summer, others packed to travel across Europe as part of Meredith Abroad 1999.

Twenty four students from Meredith College traveled to Europe to experience a summer of studying and sight-seeing. The program for 1999 was divided up into two main parts: Meredith Abroad in Great Britain and Meredith Abroad in Italy and the Czech Republic. Ten students completed the entire summer program. Seven students participated in only the first half of the program and seven others participated in only the second half.

Students who participated in the entire program departed from the US on Friday, May 14 and arrived back in the states on August 5. Meredith Abroad 1999 consisted of more than 11 weeks of studying and traveling. "Students had the opportunity to fulfill general education requirements and take other interesting classes, while at the same time having the opportunity to sight-see," said Dr. Betty Webb, program director for Meredith Abroad.

Students who completed the entire program earned 12 credit hours, and students who participated in half of the program received 6 credit hours.

Webb has been involved in Meredith Abroad for over 20 years. When asked which country she favored the most, she replied, "I tend to think the one I'm in is the best....I like it

all!"

Other faculty members who participated in the program this summer are Dr. David Lynch and Ms. Cathy Rodgers, department of music, speech and theater; Dr. Janice Swab, department of biology; Dr. David Price, department of history and politics and John Rose, Retired Clerk in the House of Commons.

Webb said that any faculty member can volunteer or submit a proposal to participate in the program and encourages them to be involved. Webb said that Meredith Abroad is not only a great opportunity for students, but faculty also because they "get to spend more time out of the country than they would usually."

Junior Laura Gadd said she decided to participate in Meredith Abroad this summer because she "always wanted to travel to Europe and sight-see." She also said traveling with Meredith Abroad was a great opportunity because "you're not alone, you're with a group from Meredith." Gadd enjoyed the program because students were able to take classes in the mornings and go sight-seeing in the afternoons. Gadd said that she would recommend the program to anyone. "It opened my eyes to things I didn't know about and made me want to travel more." Gadd completed the entire program for this summer.

Becca Smith, junior, participated in the first half of the program in Italy. She said the Meredith Abroad program was "a good opportunity to see

other countries and experience other cultures." Smith's favorite part of the trip was Switzerland. She said that she loved both the people and the landscape of the country. Although Smith said that the trip was "probably the best part of her life," she added, "I was glad to get back to the States where I was familiar with everything!"

Students who participated in Meredith Abroad this summer were not limited to working in the classroom. Webb stated that while students were free to travel independently, they had to learn how to use the rail system and the local bus system. Webb also said that students had to learn to travel to an unfamiliar city, find food and lodging, and travel back.

Course offerings for the 1999 program included: British Parliamentary Government; Arts, Artifacts and Culture;

Themes in Drama; Natural History and Arts and Ideas.

Webb invited interested students to come by her office for information on application and costs. Meredith Abroad is open to all students, and many say

that it offers a great opportunity to travel and study in a new and exciting environment.



The participants in Meredith Abroad gather in Sansepolcro, Italy.

SUBMITTED BY LAURA GADD

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tions that freshmen could apply to their reading. "We hashed it out in committee and developed readable questions. We knew we had to introduce it well to help the freshmen get ready," said Duncan.

During the summer freshmen were mailed the packet introducing the program and the questions for reflection. Readers were also asked to interview a woman whom they admired and to bring a memento that symbolized the meaning of the book to add to a collage. Duncan introduced the idea of making collages to represent the underlying meanings of *Having Our Say*. Freshmen could bring photos, quotes, magazine clippings, bumper stickers—anything that revealed her impression of the book. "We wanted to make it playful. We wanted something visual to come out of it, and it was also a friendly way to start or conclude a discussion," said Duncan.

On Monday, Aug. 23, 1999 freshmen advising groups met to discuss the book and create collages with faculty advisors and student advisors. During the 50-minute period, groups generated ideas about theme, the true nature of the characters, and the struggle for women in the context of a discriminating time period. Jenny Costa, student adviser, said of the program, "It was a great way to bring the freshmen together. It gave them something in common with the city they had moved to and with the new friends they were making."

Freshman Allison Lowery enjoyed the book; however, she felt there should have been more opportunities to apply the discussion questions. "I am glad we did it. It was a good experience, but I think we needed more time for discussion," said Lowery. "I would like to know the discussion

schedule in the summer so I will know how I will be using what I have prepared."

While the program was viewed as an overall success, planners know adjustments will be made to the program.

"It will be interesting to see where we go from here," said Bumgardner. "The Creative Ideas Fund is usually a one shot deal. Hopefully it will become a part of the budget."

Duncan agrees, "It was a success. We learned a lot, and we want to continue it."

The Summer Reading Program will not end with the discussion groups; it will continue on into next week with a special convocation on Monday, Sept. 13 at 10 a.m. in Jones Auditorium. The first annual Freshmen Convocation, "Having Your Say," will honor the Class of 2003. "The convocation will be the climax," said Bumgardner because the collages of each discussion group will be displayed together and students will get to hear from speakers such as Suzanne Britt, Dr. Carolyn Happer and Dr. Alisa Johnson.

"The book was an excellent historical account from a slice of life perspective," said Costa. "I enjoy hearing stories from people who overcome social limitations and become successful despite stereotypes." The Summer Reading Program not only gave students the opportunity to reflect upon the lives of two sedulous and courageous women, but to allow the Delany sisters' example to empower their hearts. Duncan agrees, saying that "even though the Delany sisters were African American and over 100 years old, characteristics that would seem to single them out, everybody can identify with them."



Junior Laura Gadd poses in front of London Bridge.

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