



## Fall 2011 Newsletter

# International Education Knowledge Community Chair's Welcome

David Adams, Pittsburg State University



Greetings IEKC members!

The IEKC Leadership team has been busy over the past few months working on some of our goals which include;

- \* To stimulate increased awareness of the global perspective in higher education.
- \* To provide a structure and opportunity for members to communicate regarding and addressing global issues related to student affairs.
- \* To encourage professional connections with colleagues in other countries.

A few of the ways we hope to accomplish these goals include;

- \* The 17th International Symposium occurring at the Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona.
- \* The IEKC manual, a 34-page document, was developed and updated to further assist the Leadership Team.
- \* At least once each month, an International Student Affairs/Services topic is discussed on the listserv.
- \* The Best Practices Awards have a strict timeline to increase submissions and attendance at the International Symposium.
- \* And a Regional Representative wrote an article for the Knowledge Community publication (coming out this Fall).

And there is much more going on regarding Administrative Exchanges and a Study Tour. As a result of NASPA's goal #3, "Launch an Initiative to collaborate with student affairs worldwide," many conversations are happening at NASPA headquarters and the International Advisory Board will take International Education to another level in the years to come. As the Annual Conference approaches, there may be numerous positions available on the Leadership Team. If you would like to increase your involvement with the IEKC, I encourage you to contact the incoming Co-Chairs; Kat Callahan at [katwolf21@gmail.com](mailto:katwolf21@gmail.com) and/or Mary Kate Blake at [marykate.blake@nd.edu](mailto:marykate.blake@nd.edu). I hope you enjoy the Fall newsletter and if you would like to see any topics in the future, do not hesitate to contact the Newsletter Editor, Tracy Lea Hensley at [tracyleahensley@hotmail.com](mailto:tracyleahensley@hotmail.com).

David Adams, IEKC Chair

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## NASPA's IEKC is accepting applications for the 2012 Best Practice Awards

The four categories are:

I - International Programming - *Programs that advance awareness and global perspective in college students through campus-based initiatives, projects, and conglomerates, all sponsored by student affairs organizations.*

II - Global Partnership Program - *Programs that encourage international cooperation, with and between colleagues and students to enhance worldwide perspective.*

III - International Exchange Program - *Programs that promote global competency and cultural exchange via campus sponsored travel and/or hosted family initiatives.*

IV - Student Philanthropy - *Programs that encourage and facilitate student participation in an internationally focused service mission. Program length may vary (i.e. short term relief effort or an ongoing project).*

Visit <http://www.naspa.org/kc/iekc/bestpractices.cfm> for the application  
For questions, please contact Kevin Stensberg at [kjs75@georgetown.edu](mailto:kjs75@georgetown.edu).

**Applications must be submitted no later than November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011.**

# Life as an International Intern

By Ardith Feroglia

## How I Ended up in the Caribbean

When I started my graduate career at Oregon State University, I set myself a “simple” goal: I was going to complete one internship abroad. I didn’t specify where or for how long or anything else--just that I was going to go outside of the U.S. to experience a university system unlike my home country’s.

After graduating from Western Washington University in 2008, I took a full-time job, only realizing several months later in that I belonged in education. I started the process to apply to graduate school, and after admission to several programs, I decided it was time to travel. I went to Madrid for a month, then traveled to various other parts of Europe for another three weeks. I was officially hooked on travel, and I decided to make it a point to combine my passions for travel, other cultures, and higher education into a single experience.

**“I had submitted an application for placement into a summer-long program in Europe. I was anticipating acceptance, but I was also bracing for hefty overhead costs.”**

By the time the national NASPA 2011 conference rolled around, I had submitted an application for placement into a summer-long program in Europe. I was anticipating acceptance, but I was also bracing for hefty overhead costs. It was about that time that Kristal, a graduate student at another institution, casually mentioned she was going through a similar process; she had decided to take on an international internship. Like me, she had no preference for where or how long. Somewhere along the line, she connected with an administration down at the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, one campus of the multi-campus UWI system, located in Trinidad and Tobago.



*Most of the group that hiked through the mountains to Maracas Beach. This is immediately after the afternoon rains soaked us to the core.*

*Photo provided by Kristal Sawatzke.*

Long story short, her contact mentioned that if she wanted to bring a classmate, the school could accommodate two interns. I gladly volunteered. Shortly thereafter, we were set to arrive on June 13th and stay until July 7th.

Fast forward to June, and at 6:00AM Pacific Time, two days after the end of my first year of graduate school, I was sitting on a plane destined for Houston, TX. I would then meet my connecting flight to Trinidad and it would whisk me away to a country I knew nothing about. Though luckily, I had a few books to read on my six-hour flight to Trinidad.

## Arrival

Once in Trinidad, Kristal and I immediately ran into a problem at customs; namely, we had neglected to find out the exact address of the house where we were staying. After searching frantically for our contact’s phone number and making an expensive call to the United States on my cell phone which surprisingly still worked, we squared away everything and were on our way. We hoped that the snag at customs would be our biggest problem during the trip (spoiler alert: yes, it was).

On the other side of the gates, we met our host for the upcoming week and left the airport, becoming immediately enveloped in a thick blanket of humidity. I was so distracted by the near 100% humidity, I did not notice until about halfway through the ride that we were driving on the *other* side of the road.



*First day on campus  
Photo provided by Kristal Sawatzke.*

Additionally, we received a quick tour of the university campus on our way to our new home. I noticed it was fairly compact and a gated complex. We were briefed that the crime rate in Trinidad is not something to brag about and it would be wise to not walk around after dark. Again, as we drove past our future apartment, we were told to be careful to not to walk the streets of our neighborhood after 6PM.

Outside of the university, it was easy to pick up on surface differences between the U.S. and Trinidad. For one, the exteriors of houses were drastically different from those I usually see in the Pacific Northwest. While our homes are boxy and usually painted in colors to blend in with trees and brush, homes in Trinidad were a rainbow of colors. Some were red, others bright yellow, and I fell in love with a few pink houses along the way.

In general, Trinidad was more liberal in its usage of bright colors, especially when it came to clothing--which I really loved. Kristal and I were lucky in that we had a full week to adjust to our new home, going on beach excursions with friends and just generally "liming."\*

\*liming = hanging out

## The Internship

While to some, my internship seemed like a vacation due to its Caribbean location, the experience itself was full of learning moments. For one, neither Kristal nor I expected the work environment in a Caribbean institution to be so formal; as student affairs graduate students in the U.S., our typical "office" wear consists of items like "nice" jeans, "nice" t-shirts, and the occasional dress if the weather cooperates. After our first day at UWI - St. Augustine however, we scrambled to the shopping malls to find more office-worthy clothing. We looked good in our business outfits which reminded us of the different culture in which we were immersed. However, even though work attire was more formal, it is not to say that the work environment was stuffy or unwelcoming. Like any good student affairs professionals, the people at UWI approach their jobs with enthusiasm and a genuine want to help students.

Our internship work primarily consisted of conducting a series of informational interviews with departments and units on campus to understand how services functioned. We noted differences and similarities between our home institutions, and then began the task of formulating a document of observations and recommendations which, at the moment, remains in progress!

One of the biggest influences on how UWI approaches its work is the involvement of parents in their students' lives. Trinidad and Tobago, overall, is a more collective culture.



*From L to R: Ardith Feroglia, Mr. Chandar Gupta Supersad (our internship supervisor), and Kristal Sawatzke  
Photo provided by Kristal Sawatzke.*

Furthermore, children typically leave “the nest” later. One method for making sure parents are prepared for their child’s college life is to have an entirely separate orientation day for support persons. I noted some of the sentiments expressed by UWI parents were very similar to concerns from parents of first-generation students in the U.S.

Later on in the summer, I was able to take what I learned from UWI and apply it on a project I was working on for a community college in my hometown. Being able appropriately make connections across cultural lines appropriate has proved to be one of the best takeaways from my UWI internship.



*American delegates at CTLPA Conference  
Photo provided by Kristal Sawatzke.*

(CTLPA) conference. After the first day, I improved my understanding of how cultural context affects higher education. One particular presentation presented preliminary findings between UWI – St. Augustine and the University of Louisville’s incoming class of students. Results from the questionnaires showed differences in students’ perceptions of themselves, as well as in motivation for attending university. Overall, the primary question of the conference remained, ‘how do student affairs professionals provide the best services and the best experiences for all students?’

Strangely enough, I was not the only person from Corvallis, OR in attendance. Out of seven American delegates, two were from Beaver Country; the National Intramural-Recreation Sports Association’s (NIRSA) Executive Director was in attendance--an organization headquartered in Corvallis. It took flying halfway around the world for me to find this out.

## Conclusion

Just like any university, UWI has its strengths and areas of opportunity. Budget woes, as an example, were a common topic of discussion. In true Trini fashion, though, people make due with what they have. Staff members change hats frequently, shifting from one meeting to another. Silos exist, and part of our project was to make recommendations on how to collaborate across those divisions. Staff at UWI are aware of the inefficiencies this creates and they are working to slowly push for realignment and reorganization.

Kristal and I were the first American graduate students to attend the CTLPA conference. While we found this internship opportunity through personal connections, it happened because we took the initiative to seek out international opportunities. As professionals in a globalized world, we need to develop ourselves in order to help *others* grow. I challenge my fellow student affairs graduates and professionals to take time to step out of the “norm” and look at what is going on at the college-level around the world. For some, it may mean traveling to a country they know little to nothing about; for other, it may be becoming more actively involved with organizations like NASPA’s IEKC. Regardless, stepping outside of the familiar, even for a short amount of time, was an incredibly valuable experience that I will be sure to remember.



*Pigeon Point, Tobago. Okay, so there were some added bonuses to interning in the Caribbean. Photo provided by Kristal Sawatzke.*

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# NASPA's Region 1 Conference: "Si Possiamo!: Integrating Residential Communities in International Environments"

By Stephanie Muehlethaler and Colin Stewart

On June 2nd, Franklin College Switzerland hosted the NASPA Region 1 Conference in the southern canton of Ticino, Switzerland. Roughly 50 attendees traveled from nine different countries including Bulgaria, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Southern Africa, to name a few. The conference sponsors included the Qatar Foundation and European University College Association. During the opening session, the Deans of the College offered a warm welcome as well as a brief introduction to what life is like in Switzerland.

Day 2 started with a panel of experts who shared and answered questions pertaining to various residential issues on their respective campuses. This presentation sparked intriguing dialogue and raised questions surrounding international student development across the world. The questions and issues raised were the perfect lead into the rest of the conference. The next session included different best practices of community development programs which highlighted several schools in the Boston area.

During lunch, attendees learned about the featured sustainable practices of the Qatar Foundation. Following lunch-which included authentic Ticino food-, the first round of the World Café took place. What makes the Region 1 Conference distinctive is not only the opportunity to connect with other colleagues from around the world, but the World Café gives presenters the opportunity to present in an intimate setting. Some of the World Café presentations included topics on assessment, cultural programming, faculty in residences, transfer students, leadership, and international living learning communities. Similar to other conferences, participants also had the opportunity to share swag from their respective schools.

The final night of the conference included a special dinner which was held in the hills of Lugano at a Grotto. During the dinner, attendees experienced a true Swiss dinner followed by an exclusive tour of wine cellar.

The conference ended with a unique presentation that fused improvisation, intercultural conflict practices, and student development theory. This presentation not only shared various role playing activities and exercises but gave participants a glimpse of how improvisation can be utilized to approach intercultural conflict in an international setting.

Following the conference, attendees had the opportunity to experience several aspects of the city and region of Ticino. The conference planning team was honored to host and considered the "Si Possiamo!: Integrating Residential Communities in International Environments" to be a great success.

*Stephanie Muehlethaler and Colin Stewart at Franklin College.*

**"What makes the Region 1 Conference distinctive is not only the opportunity to connect with other colleagues from around the world, but the World Café gives presenters the opportunity to share their presentation in an intimate setting."**

# Lessons from Lugano

By Virginia Schaffer

From the moment I saw this year's conference theme, "Si Possiamo!: Integrating Residential Communities in International Environments," I had high expectations for the NASPA Region I International Conference, and it exceeded all of them! Not only did I enjoy authentic Swiss cuisine, learn a few Italian phrases, and experience a whole new culture, but I had the opportunity of a lifetime to connect with colleagues from around the world who share my passion for greatly impacting the lives of the students they serve.



*Staff from Franklin College, McGill University, and the Qatar Foundation discuss integrated, global residence communities. Photo taken by Raul Fernandez from Boston University.*

If I had to describe this conference with just one word, I would choose *community*! From living learning communities, international communities, and transfer student communities to communities that promote (and assess) intercultural awareness, multicultural inclusion, and sustainability, the collection of conference keynotes, panels, and presentations did an amazing job appealing to a wide range of interests while providing practical guidance to enhance my day-to-day contact with students within residence life. Furthermore, the conference's intimate setting at Franklin College Switzerland afforded us with a community of our own through which we were able to support, engage, and rejuvenate each other.

The World Café Roundtable presentations along with the rich moments of informal dialogue were particularly rewarding for me, as they provided a myriad of opportunities to brainstorm and reinforced the extraordinary caliber of our conference community. For instance, I had the opportunity to engage in remarkable conversations about education abroad, student leadership development practices, institutional approaches to assessment in the US and Canada, aspects of race, culture, sexual identity, and language-based discrimination, as well as "both/and" approaches to multicultural student development in the US and South Africa. Each of these valuable discussions enlightened, recharged, and challenged me to become a better professional and be more effective in my work with students.

This conference has definitely impacted my life in considerable ways – ways from which I want my students to benefit, develop, and succeed! I look forward to putting into action some of the dialogue, brainstorming ideas, and recommendations for practice this upcoming year. Special thanks to the conference planning team, conference sponsors, Franklin College Switzerland, and NASPA Region I, as well as the wonderful community of presenters, participants, colleagues, and student hosts for such an amazing experience!

**“If I had to describe this conference with just one word, I would choose *community*!”**

*Virginia Schaffer is the International Education's Knowledge Community's Region I Representative and the Assistant Director of the Educational Resource Center at Boston University. To contact Virginia, e-mail her at [gschaff@bu.edu](mailto:gschaff@bu.edu)*

# Do you have something to share with the International Education Knowledge Community?

All of the content for the IEKC Newsletter comes from our community members.  
The IEKC welcomes submissions related to the community goals.

## 2011—2012 IEKC Newsletter Issue Information:

Issue Focus	Submission Deadline	Publication Date
IEKC Awards and Annual	January 27th	February
Annual Wrap Up	April 26th	May

## Submission Guidelines:

1. Articles should be no less than 250 words and no more than 1500.
2. All articles should be relevant to the mission and purpose of the International Education Knowledge Community.
3. Articles should include the name of the author, job title, email and school affiliation.
4. All work should be saved in .doc (Word) format.
5. Photos and artwork should be sent as high quality .jpg files and should include the name of the photographer/artist.
6. Please take the time to proof and edit your work.
7. All submissions must be sent to [tracyleahensley@hotmail.com](mailto:tracyleahensley@hotmail.com)

## Feedback & Suggestions?

The IEKC would love to hear from you. Share your comments, feedback, suggestions, questions, etc. with us! E-mail your feedback to [tracyleahensley@hotmail.com](mailto:tracyleahensley@hotmail.com).

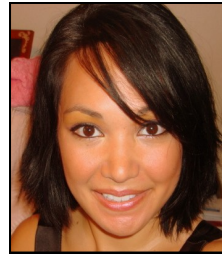
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## Three Goals of the International Education Knowledge Community

1. To stimulate increased awareness of the global perspective in higher education.
2. To provide a structure and opportunity for members to communicate regarding and addressing global issues related to student affairs.
3. To encourage professional connections with colleagues in other countries.



**IGNITE LEADERSHIP**  
*Influence Change*

2012 NASPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
MARCH 10 – 14, 2012 PHOENIX, ARIZONA

**GOALS & ANNUAL**