

MSU is Top U.S. Public University for Study Abroad

Michigan State University is the top public university in the United States for study abroad according to *Open Doors 2005*, the annual report on international education released November 14, 2005 by the Institute of International Education.

During the 2003-04 academic year, the most recent year for which data are available, 2,269 MSU students studied abroad, second only to New York University among all colleges and universities. National data reflect an increase in study abroad participation of 9.6 percent for 2003-04. At MSU, participation grew by 21.7 percent during that time.

“Ranking Michigan State’s study abroad program number one among public universities across the country underscores the strength of our institutional commitment to advancing our historic land-grant mission toward ‘world-grant,’” said MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon. “Some sort of international experience or understanding has become a necessity in today’s world, and by offering our students access to such opportunities, we prepare them to be citizen leaders with a global understanding.”

MSU’s program options are among the most diverse, with well over 200 programs in more than 60 countries on all continents. Programs range in

length from two to six weeks to a semester or full academic year, and they are offered during each session, including winter and spring break.

“MSU is active in every world region,” said Jeffrey Riedinger, acting dean of International Studies and Programs. “Despite continuing funding challenges for public higher education, MSU is enhancing its commitment to internationalization of the campus and international engagement.”

Some of MSU’s newest offerings include innovative programs for science and engineering, options in Geneva and Cologne that incorporate an internship with academic study, and a program in Madagascar that looks at how natural resources have shaped the culture of that island nation.

Historically it has been difficult for science majors to make study abroad work in their course of study, but MSU has several options. A new program in Sweden, *Renewable Biobased Energy Systems*, is a joint effort of the College of Engineering and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources in cooperation with the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. The Department of Fisheries and Wildlife is sponsoring *Fish, Wildlife, and Environmental Issues in Russia*. Students in the College of Human Medicine have the option to do a brief program in Costa Rica.

New Program Takes Students to Madagascar

Brown lemurs, such as those in this photo, are only one reason students may want to participate in MSU’s new study abroad program, “An Island Apart: Culture and Natural Resources in Madagascar.” According to the official description of the program, this African island nation, which is located in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Mozambique, supports a wide array of flora and fauna, although many common types of animals are surprisingly absent, such as woodpeckers, toads, salamanders, and poisonous snakes. The country also has impressive diversity in its human population – 18 different ethnic groups – united by a single language, Malagasy. On this summer program, sponsored by the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the College of Natural Science, students will learn about the biodiversity of the island, the relationship of the Malagasy people to their natural resources, the threats to those resources, and various approaches to balancing conservation with human needs. Participants will begin in the nation’s inland capital city of Antananarivo and will proceed from there to visit highland towns, rain forests, canyons, and coral reefs. This photograph was taken by Nancy Leonard, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, one of the program’s faculty leaders.



MSU Study Abroad Resumes in Israel

Based on careful review by MSU’s Study Abroad Risk and Security Assessment Committee, MSU Provost Kim Wilcox has approved renewal of a faculty-led summer program in Israel beginning in 2006.

During the 1990s, through the Jewish Studies Program, Michigan State University established relations with three Israeli universities: the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv University, and Ben Gurion University. It also began a faculty-led summer program at the Hebrew University’s Rothberg International School. Students studied at these universities in increasing numbers. Growing connections with Israel also attracted scholarship donations. After 2000, however, during the Al Aksa intifada, MSU evaluated the risks associated with travel to Israel and suspended formal study in that country, as well as financial aid and scholarship support to MSU students studying there.

Last year, MSU resumed provision of financial aid and scholarships to students deciding independently to study in Israel. Nine students did so during summer 2005, studying Hebrew, Middle East politics, Israeli politics, and archeology. The summer program, which earlier went in 1998 and 2000, is now being resumed. According to Wilcox,

safety has increased in Israel, incidents are down significantly, universities have upgraded security protocols and procedures, and MSU can add additional guidelines to maximize student safety.

Program director Ken Waltzer will lead 15-20 students to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for a four-week program, June 27-July 27, 2006. Consistent with the Jewish Studies Program’s emphasis on the transformation of Jewish life, which has drawn Jews from Europe to North America and Israel, students will be offered a course on American Jewry and Israeli Jewry focused on the making of two different societies and cultures by people with common origins. They will also take the core course in the Rothberg School’s summer Middle East Institute, Making the Modern Middle East. They will live in Hebrew University dorms, take field trips with classes, and engage in program activities.

Scholarships for study in Israel have been made available through a generous half-million dollar endowment established by Ed Levy, Jr. and an additional gift from Dan Gilbert and David Katzman of Rock Financial.

—Ken Waltzer

Students on the summer 1998 MSU Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, Israel, study abroad program take a break during a field trip in the Judean Desert. Led by an archeologist, they were exploring archeological traces of how Jews drew water from wells in the desert. The photograph was taken by Ken Waltzer, James Madison College and currently director of the Jewish Studies Program, who was the program’s faculty leader that year. The program was based at Hebrew University’s Rothberg International School and focused on ancient as well as modern Jewish life.