

Opportunities to Study in Asia *Spotlight on Study-Abroad Programs in China and Hong Kong S.A.R.*

ASIANetwork spotlights three study-abroad programs that focus on China or Hong Kong S.A.R. The programs are: Lingnan University Student Exchange Programme in Hong Kong S.A.R., Central College's China Program, and Pacific Lutheran University's Program in Sichuan Province.

Lingnan University Student Exchange Programme, Hong Kong S.A.R.

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Lingnan University is proud to be a member of ASIANetwork, and is one of the few universities in Asia that has joined the organization. Lingnan has a very active student exchange program, with many of the partner institutions also being members of ASIANetwork. We welcome the opportunity to explore with other ASIANetwork member institutions the possibility of establishing exchange agreements which would be mutually beneficial.

Our Mission Statement

Lingnan University in Hong Kong traces its heritage back to Lingnan College, which was established in Guangzhou in 1888, but which was closed in 1952 during the reorganization of higher education in China. Lingnan College alumni founded Lingnan College (now University) in Hong Kong in 1967, and today the university aspires to be an internationally recognized liberal arts university with Hong Kong characteristics. It seeks to provide its students with an education in the liberal arts tradition from both East and West. Lingnan takes a whole-person approach to education, which enables its students to think, judge, care, and ultimately, act responsibly in the changing circumstances of Hong Kong, the region and the world. The university has approximately 2000 undergraduate students, plus some graduate students, primarily in research-style M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees. More information about Lingnan University can be found at <http://www.LN.edu.hk>.

Whole Person Education: The Student International Exchange Programme (SIEP)

Launching the SIEP

To assist in accomplishing this mission to become Asia's leading liberal arts university, one of our educational goals, as stated in the "University Strategic Plan," is to help graduates "have an international outlook and exposure and

to be able to analyze problems from the cross-cultural perspective." For this reason, in 1999 Lingnan University launched the Student International Exchange Programme (SIEP), with the ambitious goal of assisting 25% of each class of students to have the opportunity to study abroad for one credit-bearing semester.

Aim of the Programme

The SIEP aims to enable Lingnan University students to gain exposure to different educational approaches, interact with students of different nations, learn more about other countries' cultures, gain intercultural understanding, enhance language abilities, and enlarge their world view.

To capture some of the spirit of what we are attempting, we have chosen the slogan: "Engage the World."

Operation of the Programme

Because of Lingnan's commitment to fully implementing the SIEP, in October 2000, the University created the Office of International Programmes (OIP), with the Associate Vice-President and Academic Dean (Humanities & Social Sciences), Professor J. Barton Starr, serving concurrently as the Director of International Programmes, and Ms. Sandy Kwok employed as the Senior International Programmes Officer.

The OIP primarily liaises with partner institutions and coordinates with departments and offices of the University over the administration of the Programme. In addition, the Office handles enquiries and applications from both Lingnan and overseas students, gives advice to students on study abroad and provides counselling services for those who might encounter difficulties with culture shock or homesickness.

In all of the exchange agreements, Lingnan and overseas students continue to pay tuition fees at their home institution. In most exchange agreements, students pay dorm fees at their home institution, although for reasons specific to each institution, sometimes students are required to pay for the dorm fees at the host institution. In order to enhance the cultural experience of the exchange, an unwritten part of the agreements is that students will not room with another exchange student from their home country.

In four short years, Lingnan has made substantial

progress in establishing exchange agreements and sending and receiving students. For the 2004-05 year, Lingnan will send approximately 23-24% of the year's intake abroad (including all of the various study abroad programs).

Students' Responses

The feedback from the student evaluations reveals that both overseas visiting students and Lingnan students have found the overseas experience, both personally and academically, enlightening, enjoyable and fulfilling.

Overseas students find that Hong Kong is an amazing place which remarkably combines both East and West cultures for the most diverse experience. Lingnan University provides them with a caring and personal atmosphere. Generally, they report that the rigor and intellectual quality of academic work at Lingnan approximately equals that of their home institutions.

Lingnan students generally feel that after having studied abroad, (i) they have become more mature and independent, (ii) the level of their English proficiency has improved, (iii) their horizons have been widened and they tend to look at things from many angles, and (iv) they have a deeper understanding of other countries' cultures as well as themselves (e.g. some said they thought a great deal about their national and regional identity). Last, but not least, they have made many life-long friends.

More information about the SIEP can be found at: <http://www.ln.edu.hk/oip/siep/home.htm>.

Two "Spin-offs" of the SIEP

Lingnan has established two other programs as a result of the implementation of the SIEP. Both of these programs are only available to graduates and faculty from our partner universities.

First, a pilot program was developed fully into the Lingnan Visiting Tutors (LVT) Scheme, by which selected recent graduates from our partner institutions are employed by Lingnan to serve as English-language facilitators. In this highly-competitive program, the university provides the LVTs with an apartment, a salary and insurance coverage.

The second program is the Lingnan Visiting Scholars (LVS) Program. The university established this scheme to assist faculty from our partner institutions who wished to come to Lingnan for a semester or a year for teaching and research. Lingnan provides an apartment, a small living stipend, medical insurance and a round-trip airline ticket for the appointee. In return, the LVS teaches a reduced load and participates in other activities of the university.

Information about both of these programs can be obtained by contacting Prof. Starr (contact information is at the end of this article).

Looking Ahead

The OIP has been vigorously exploring possible exchange opportunities with suitable institutions around the world and will continue to do so. We firmly believe the program serves to enhance a multicultural and international ex-

perience among all visiting and local students. As of December 2004, the University has entered into active exchange agreements with 28 institutions in Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, the U.K. and the U.S., plus consortia agreements through ACUCA (Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia) and U.S. UMAP (University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific).

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