

**Annual Study Center Review
CIEE Study Center at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
Liberal Arts Program
Madrid, Spain
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Each summer, program directors write a Study Center Review for each CIEE Study Center program commenting on the previous academic year. The program director writes the review based on input from the CIEE Academic Consortium Board members, resident directors, sending institutions, and student evaluations. Each report is made public on the CIEE website at www.ciee.org.

Program Goals

The CIEE Liberal Arts program allows independent, advanced level students the opportunity to matriculate in a combination of content courses in Hispanic studies (Cursos de Estudios Hispánicos) and regular university courses in social sciences, humanities, journalism, pre-law, and engineering. Students also participate in seminars with Spanish students while they continue to improve their language skills and take advantage of the vibrant and rich cultural milieu of Madrid.

CIEE hosted the St. Mary's College program during the fall 2008 semester while its Director took a leave.

The program was evaluated by the ACB in spring 2008. Among a number of recommendations, CIEE staff have focused on improving pre-departure materials, working more closely with the host institution on improving Cursos de Estudios Hispánicos (CEH) courses, better clarifying the goals of the teaching course, and reviewing and recasting requirements related to the internship option.

The CIEE Liberal Arts program met its goals during the fall 2008-09 academic year.

New and Noteworthy

Academic

Spanish Language

Community Language Commitment

During the orientation for both the fall and spring semesters, resident staff discussed personal goal setting and had each students write out their personal objectives. CIEE staff and students then sign a language commitment agreement. CIEE homestay hosts also receive specific instructions to adhere to the CIEE language comitment.

Spanish language faculty has noticed many differences in language levels of CIEE participants where students with higher level of Spanish switch to English when talking with peers who

cannot express their ideas coherently in Spanish. CIEE staff noticed the same trend during CIEE meetings and activities.

Students always communicated with CIEE staff in Spanish. CIEE hosts reported back to the staff when students spoke more English or noticed that their language fluency deteriorated from speaking too much English.

CIEE staff is preparing a different orientation session and will show how culture and language are linked. Bilingual speakers will be encouraged to be role models and become team players with the language commitment. CIEE staff will continue to experiment with some office hours and cross-cultural reflection workshops where Spanish is optional, so that emotional issues can be expressed in English.

Language faculty added new and revised grammar exercises to adapt to mixed language levels of CIEE students. Student feedback reveals that language classes are rigorous and academically challenging.

Out of Classroom Activities

Carlos III language classes do not have out of the classroom activities. During orientation, CIEE students are introduced to the Carlos III student network where students participate in structured cultural activities that include role playing in social scenarios. CIEE participants received contact information for a Spanish partner and were encouraged to organize language exchange meetings on campus. The student network is also invited to CIEE activities in Madrid to help encourage a Spanish speaking environment. During the academic year, CIEE staff, in partnership with the Language Lab on campus, organized four language exchange encounters with food and drink for CIEE and Spanish university students. CIEE staff provides information to participants on how to attend "conversation clubs" of 30 minutes each at the Language Lab. A CIEE student is placed with three Spanish university students, who volunteer beforehand, as a way to meet Spanish students and practice language during class breaks on campus. These sessions are optional but were not popular among CIEE students.

Subject Area Courses

CIEE courses

Ten students in fall and six students in spring enrolled in the CIEE Professional Teaching Development, but only few students were able to receive credit for this class from their home university. Students apply critical thinking skills to pedagogy, in addition to keeping a class journal and preparing a teaching portfolio that reflects their work and progress throughout the course. The course includes a textbook, a reading packet, seven in-class observations and evaluation of a class taught at the university and research paper on a pedagogical topic of 1500-2000 words, as well as a teacher mentorship program. In fall, students rated this course very highly for its practical experience of being able to teach actual classes to Spanish university students. In spring, students were more critical of the course.

In the future, CIEE will no longer offer this course, and will instead offer several optional non-credit training workshops for students interested in teaching.

Direct Enrollment courses

Due to home school registration/major requirements and insufficient language levels, some students were enrolled in regular courses in English in fall. These were exceptional cases that received special permission from both the sending US university as well as the University.

Students enrolled in the following courses and seminars during 2008-09:

Fall Semester :

Decision and Game Theory, Micro Economics, World Economy, Aplicacion de la red en periodismo español

Humanities Seminars:

Arquitectura in 20th Century Spain, Viaje por el Laberinto Vasco, Violencia y Política, El movimiento laboral en el cine, La novela policiaca en España

Spring Semester:

Historia de Iberoamerica, La Prueba en el Proceso Penal, Periodismo local, Problemas Sociales I: Desigualdad y exclusión, Derecho Parlamentario, Economía Industrial, Comunicación corporativa en Periodismo, Géneros cinematográficos, Sociología de las organizaciones, Procesos de creacion multimedia, Psicología Social, Tratamiento de la informacion en la radio, Periodismo internacional, Macro Economía II,

Humanities Seminars:

Los mariscos: cuatro siglos después, Imágenes de la inmigración en la literatura y el cine español, La mujer en el cine franquista, Picasso y la Vanguardia.

Regular courses at the university do not include excursions outside of the classroom.

Journalism courses are reviewed as very dynamic and interactive since they require group work assignments and often include software programming geared towards new media resources. Journalism majors in both fall and spring semester commented how much they enjoyed the academic rigor of these particular classes. In the Humanities seminar on the Mariscos, the professor also organized a day trip to Toledo so that students could see where this group lived in medieval times. This also included visits to synagogues.

Students are advised that Economics courses tend to large. In these courses, professors and assistants are not able to provide the extra help that some program students need or expect.

Non-Academic

CIEE Orientation

In both the fall and spring session, CIEE organized a student network composed of eight to ten Spanish university students from Carlos III to help with activities. These included helping program students purchase a cell phone and participating in structured interactive role plays where both US and Spanish students had to imagine how to organize a birthday party, consider differences in alcohol and drug use in Spain and US, learn colloquial words, consider social etiquettes about dating and gender relationships, as well as common courtesies in the classroom. CIEE staff provides feedback and the cultural framework after students completed activities. One reason for this change was that previous students preferred to meet more Spanish students during orientation. These cultural values were previously transmitted by CIEE staff through PowerPoint presentations. All Spanish students were also invited to student meals during orientation so that CIEE participants could mingle informally and set up social links for the rest of the semester. Students also participated in a flamenco dance class at a local dance studio.

Cultural Activities/Field Trips

Day or Evening Activities

In the fall the program offered three CIEE cultural workshops: “Diversity issues in Madrid, “Spanish attitudes in the work place and home” and “dealing with Spanish stereotypes”. In addition the resident staff led visits to the contemporary photography exhibit at Casa de America, accompanied the group to the military parade on October 12 in Madrid, and met with the students to discuss “being Spanish”. The program attended a Lorca play, *Casa de Bernarda Alba*; and also had three Language Exchange Encounters with Spanish students at the University with food and drinks. The program held a re-entry to the U.S. meeting discussing how to incorporate the study abroad experience into job interviews. There was a highly anticipated on-campus visit and speech by former NYC mayor Rudy Guiliani in October. He spoke on the upcoming U.S. presidential election.

In spring, all of the following activities were optional. Three CIEE cultural workshops were held: “Identity and race in Spain”, “Gender and Women’s space in Madrid”, and the Re-entry to the U.S. meeting which discussed how to incorporate study abroad experience into job interviews. Students went to the oldest cinema in Madrid, Filmoteca, and saw a large screen projection of Pedro Almodovar’s *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*. CIEE staff then led a follow up discussion on the representation of Madrid in the fillm. There was a one-day RD-led visit to the medieval city of Alcala de Henares to learn about its impact on Spanish theatre, Spanish language and Muslim history. Staff also led a two hour interactive walking tour of the Madrid neighborhood Chueca to learn about its historical links to socialism, communism and its contemporary gay scene, the RD led a two hour cultural walking tour of Madrid neighborhood Lavapiés to learn about the role of Jewish history, architecture and immigration in Madrid. The was also a staff led reflective walking tour of the Atocha memorial monument and the Parque Retiro. The group also visited a local art gallery with artwork on Immigration in Spain. There were two Language Exchange Encounters with Spanish students at the University with food and drinks. Finally, CIEE sponsored a flamenco course with three students and one CIEE staff member.

Despite initial student interest at the start of both semesters for the activities listed, staff had to remind and generate interest by sending out weekly reminder emails. In short, CIEE students seemed to prefer to choose their own activities without CIEE involvement. In the future, staff will consider fewer staff led opportunities and or explore the possibility of adding a course on contemporary Madrid for the few students who actively want to participate.

Overnight Fieldtrips

In fall the program participated in a three-day excursion to Palma de Mallorca, with an official tour guide and a local Palma student. The visit included a hotel stay in medieval city of Palma, a tour in the historic downtown to learn about regional identity and the Jewish and Arab complexities of Palma, a visit to local history museum, the gothic cathedral of Palma, to see art work by world renowned artist Barceló, and a day visit by antique train to the village of Sollér, visit to medieval Berver castle of Palma and a bike tour with Spanish students along the island coast. A separate excursion was organized for the St. Mary’s students to Tenerife in the Canary Islands.

In spring there was a three-night excursion to Tenerife. CIEE hired an academic tour guide who explained the regional culture and politics of the Canary Islands, including the whistle language used and the local populations struggles related to immigration. Students visited small towns by bus to learn about their colonial and historical significance. Excursion highlights included an

outdoor kayak activity and a visit to El Teide National Park to climb the third largest volcano in the world.

All excursions include a reading packet with news and academically researched articles that helped student quickly access current issues in the places where they would be visiting. CIEE excursions include meals but this is difficult to organize as a group event with students who have specific food preferences, or because of the group size it is a challenge to find restaurant deals, space or good service (in some places, a sit-down meal takes 3-4 hours). Students appreciate that meals are included and many prefer to do meals on their own. Therefore, CIEE staff, as in previous years, issued a stipend for each meal. Staff organized at least one group meal for each excursion to create a sense of “group spirit”. The Tenerife trip in spring did not include any interaction with Spanish youth as in previous excursions and this influenced student attitude as feeling more like distant observers than feeling connected to the local community. Another difficulty is organizing three-day excursions when students have other academic commitments on Friday. Two-day excursions will become the norm in future semesters.

Housing

In each semester, 15 % of CIEE students were in CIEE group housing with a resident fellow, 85% were in a homestay. No students chose an independent living arrangement this past year.

Due to the loss of interest by several hosts and a strong interest from CIEE students to have more independence, CIEE offered group housing starting in the fall that included a local resident fellow. The fellow lived with three CIEE students and, among other things, acted as an academic resource.

Most students are surprised that many hosts are “young” (in their late twenties or thirties), but many made it very clear that their host was not to be their “friend.” Students compare their housing experience with each other, and later on, they also compare the housing with other U.S. programs. During orientation, the coordinator explains to students the uniqueness of the hosts who collaborate with CIEE, but staff needs to continuously advise students on their homestay experience to minimize the stereotyping and customer perceptions of students. When WiFi is not working some students notified staff of “not getting the service they paid for.” Five out of the six students who lived in the group housing reported a rewarding experience.

CIEE staff continues to hold four hosts meetings throughout the academic year and updates homestay hosts on the characteristics of the “millennial “generation. There is a large interest from hosts to learn more about U.S. student idiosyncrasies and new homestays are recommended regularly to CIEE by current hosts because they say that CIEE has developed very positive and respectful attitudes towards the host community and responds quickly to student incidents.

Community Engagement and Integration

For-Credit Internship and Community Service Options

CIEE offers an internship for credit. In the fall, students worked at a language school and at a cultural press company. One student coordinated four U.S. culture workshops for Spanish youth, created, edited and organized marketing materials and promoted weekly cultural events for the language school. She collaborated with senior Spanish staff in changing the website. Her final research topic focused on teaching methodologies and the difficult of transmitting cultural information to Spaniards in a classroom setting. The second student researched and wrote four

magazine articles under her own name and interviewed Spaniards on topics such as Spanish cuisine, film, dance and art festivals in Madrid for a publication with a circulation of 350,000. In addition, she completed news research and data compilation for two editors. Her final research paper questioned the changing role of traditional office space in Spanish media.

In spring, one student interned with an international radio network that emphasizes alternative news reporting. The student investigated, produced and acted as a radio journalist in a high-paced work environment, created and produced four recorded reports, included witness interviews on the Iraq War, immigration in Spain, economic decline in Africa, and education in the U.S. All 6-8 minute reports were broadcast during news hour segments. In addition, the student compiled news data and interview segments and helped other radio journalist produce news stories. His final research paper focused on the practice and technological approaches of alternative journalism in the U.S. and Spain. Another student interned with a local broadcasting station. The student learned the technical and logistical aspects of doing a live radio broadcast in collaboration with a Spanish team. She researched and interviewed women for community outreach by visiting six neighborhood organizations and compiled news information for live radio broadcasts. Her final research paper looked at how local Madrid government agencies dealt with women and disability issues as a social problem in the marginalized working class neighborhood of Pinar del Rey. Another student worked in a small business that deals in multimedia products. The student initiated, designed and completed market survey to create client profiles and increase product sales in the Spanish market for seven multimedia software programs. The student acted as a public relations person for sales of software of a Canadian company by preparing presentations and meeting with Spanish clients on purchasing the system. His final research project explored the conflict of Spanish work ethics and attitudes in a global world as a small business dilemma in Madrid.

Not-for-Credit Community Service/Volunteer Projects

Many students taught English during both the fall and spring semesters.

No students signed up for short term projects this year albeit several were organized by CIEE staff, such as a volunteer day at an immigrant community center.

Challenges

Academic

Spanish Language

Students arrived with very mixed levels this past year. Class sizes are small, with no more than 15 students in language classes. About 1/6 of CIEE students were placed in the Bilinguals Spanish language course.

Cursos Estudios Hispánicos (CEH) content courses

All Carlos III Professors used electronic blackboards for notes and used PowerPoint presentations (which are often posted on-line in case a student cannot write down notes as quickly). In fall, students had mixed reactions to the CEH courses, often finding them intellectually tedious, albeit the Spanish level adequate. CIEE staff also noticed that CEH language instructors suffered from “burn out” symptoms with US students, which in turn created additional anxiety among participants who commented that professors were “too strict” or “mean.”

CIEE Courses

The CIEE instructors are well versed in the needs of teaching U.S. students and communicated serious problems to the Resident Director in a timely manner. In fall, there were 2 students in the CIEE internship course and in spring there were 5 students in the internship course. Some students criticized the class workload.

Non-Academic

CIEE staff organize various activities for the CIEE group to get to know one another in both formal and informal settings to help them process cultural adaptation. In both fall and spring, there were various levels of Spanish in the group that complicated communication. Not all students fit into the group and staff needed to intervene to maintain a positive environment and to offer a highly “personalized” attention to individual students.

Internet access is now available in all home stays and group housing. Hosts reported that students do not excessively use internet and students seemed a lot calmer than groups from previous years about this issue.

During both semesters, the home stay meal plan includes a stipend for some students, depending on their meal choice they indicate on the questionnaire and is linked with the hosts’ work or week schedule. However, some students in the last month of the program wanted to receive money in place of home cooked meals so they could use the cash to travel.

In fall, student integration with the Spanish student peer network worked successfully and helped students connect to the local culture instantly. CIEE students were invited to birthday parties, weekend visits to rural homes, etc. The spring semester is even easier for integration efforts since regular classes started almost immediately after orientation and students could meet students in direct enroll classes. However, despite the ease of meeting Spaniards, CIEE staff held orientation sessions during both semesters about personal goals and expectations, especially related to definitions of friendships and the role of money among youth. CIEE students also receive information on how to meet Spanish students through the Erasmus student activities and they receive a list of university students interested in a Spanish-English language intercambio. The majority of CIEE students set up at least one intercambio meeting and approximately 50% of students keep up this cultural activity throughout the semester on a weekly basis.

Future Directions

The housing selection process is based on a unique, highly personalized selection process. For future semesters, it may be worthwhile to keep a set number of special housing locations for students who are seeking a culturally-motivated host who is active in the community. The meal stipends that offer money in lieu of a home cooked meal may be revised in the near future if it is possible to secure a supermarket purchase card so that money is not transferred from CIEE staff to students. Another option is to consider that all meal plans include breakfast so that less money goes into the hands of students and avoids student pressures on staff to keep changing meals plans each month. Currently, university cafeteria meal cards are already part of the meal plan

Academic advising has been enhanced with a group session during orientation week during the Carlos III orientation that involves video testimonials from past CIEE participants and attendance of local Spanish students to help explain the course content, work load, expectations, etc. However, students still seem to need to have individual attention during

registration. Very often the course syllabi do not clearly explain the research component of the course and expectations on how to use the library. In some cases, students lack confidence in their language fluency or fear that classes may be too difficult and ask for the “easy” class. In addition, students should continue to be advised to sign up for a library tour that is offered for free by library personnel each semester to all students, including CIEE participants. This session is very structured and includes excellent tutoring on how to access electronic resources at the library.

CIEE internships are unique opportunities and work well for highly motivated students. However, the time commitment continues to be a burden, especially in coordinating student work hours and class schedules.

Future students who are interested in direct enroll courses such as Journalism and the Internet, Journalism and Media Resources, Internet Marketing, Economic Strategies on line, should be advised that there may be independent home work assignments that require specific software programming. Students learn basic skills during the course on how to use any specific programs for a few homework assignments. In the past, students were not tested on their tech knowledge in the final exam. However, the problem is that instructions are in Spanish and it often requires students to figure out the software on their own. Finding Spanish tutors is not easy because even the Carlos III students may not be well versed in the applications.

Legal Studies Program Update

The Madrid legal studies program began in 2008-09.

No students enrolled in the fall semester, but CIEE staff hired a Resident Fellow and rented and furnished a group apartment on calle Atocha, near the CIEE office. Three students from the Liberal Arts program lived in this house with individual rooms, a shared kitchen and a fourth room that was occupied by the Resident Fellow, a law professor in her early 30’s, who teaches constitutional law at the Getafe campus and has a clear interest in cross cultural learning. She organized dinners, birthday parties, socials in the Retiro park, cooking classes and movie nights for the three students. She went way beyond her assigned duties of a weekly dinner that was focused on cultural reflection and discussion. Student evaluations for fall rated this experience as superb.

In the spring semester, CIEE accepted two students in the Legal Studies program. However, one student disliked the involvement of the resident fellow in house activities and this created a rift with the other students in the group housing. A group meeting helped resolve these differences and this one student became cordial with others albeit non-participatory in many of the cultural events in the group housing. The other student very much enjoyed the group housing format. The resident fellow will continue next year with CIEE in the same housing format and CIEE staff is making adjustments to the selection criteria for this type of housing and student placement.

Legal Studies students enrolled in regular law courses were surprised by the amount of reading required for final examination although they found the course content to be very good. Students took regular classes in Criminal Law, Constitutional Law, Negotiation and Conflict Resolution, Law in Spain, and Sociology and Law. As in previous years students do not recommend taking a full load of regular law courses because of many study hours required. Students received final grades in the B and C range.

Due to the small size of the program, the core course in contemporary law was not offered, but two site visits were organized for the Legal Studies students. One was to a criminal court in Madrid where students met with a judge in her chambers, who explained court proceedings and her role in it. Then student observed a few cases, including one for domestic violence, an immigrant arrested without proper work papers, a car thief, and a drug smuggler. The second visit was to the Spanish Senate where students got a personalized tour with a senior legislative assistant, who explained some of the laws being discussed by the Senate that week, such as the closing of a nuclear power plant, extension of paternity leave to 6 weeks for fathers of recent babies and criminal penalties for domestic animal cruelty.

The two students both participated in internships. One worked at a Spanish Legal NGO based in Madrid with focus on improving laws for immigrants and refugees. The other interned at a government run agency that works with nearly 2000 immigrants in Madrid.

Students participated in all other CIEE activities, such as excursions, walking tours, etc. where they mingled with students in the Liberal Arts program. They also participated in the same orientation, but received different information regarding their academic registration. For future, CIEE staff will separate Legal Studies students into different activities to help distinguish more between the programs.