

**Annual Study Center Review  
CIEE Study Center at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid  
Madrid, Spain  
2007**

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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](http://www.ciee.org).

**Program Goals**

The program allows independent, advanced level students the opportunity to matriculate in a combination of content courses in Hispanic studies and regular university courses in social sciences, humanities, 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.

These goals were met during the 2006-7 academic year.

**New & Noteworthy Features**

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**Academic Features**

**Spanish Language**

**Community Language Commitment**

During the orientation, resident staff discussed personal goal setting, and had students write out their personal objectives. Some students introduced Spanish language learning as a desirable goal that CIEE staff and students should adhere to and then all parties involved sign a language commitment agreement. Spanish was spoken during all CIEE events and activities. Students were reminded of this policy at the beginning of each activity or excursion. Also, CIEE homestays received specific instructions on this CIEE language pledge.

Initially, students accepted the language pledge and agreed this was a worthwhile agreement. Other U.S. study programs at the host institution do not have a similar pledge and CIEE students succumbed to peer pressure, and sometimes spoke English. Also, CIEE students comment that they copy the grammar mistakes of other CIEE students and prefer to communicate in Spanish with native Spanish speakers only. Some Latino students who are fluent seemed pressured to prove that they are also fluent in English, too, as a way to gain recognition from U.S. peers.

Most students always communicated with CIEE staff in Spanish. During both semesters, some students expressed stress regarding the language commitment, especially when

meeting with CIEE staff. Some students thought the policy was too strict when the RD reminded them of it. A significant number of them are bilingual speakers and argue that their goal is a cultural one and not always linguistic.

Overall, CIEE believes that despite comments from some participants, that the community language commitment serves the majority of students in helping them meet their goal of greater Spanish language proficiency.

### **Language training/Language materials for CIEE courses**

University Language teachers update their materials each semester and use Spanish film as a teaching method. CIEE students often commented that the university run language courses were their favorite and they found teachers very able and willing to give advice on how to further their language acquisition.

There are no more than 15 students in language classes. About one third of the CIEE students were placed in the Bilinguals Spanish language course.

### **Out of Classroom Activities**

The Carlos III language classes do not include out of the classroom activities.

During the academic year, CIEE staff organized five language exchange encounters with food and drink for CIEE and Spanish university students with the Language Lab on campus. In addition, CIEE has organized unsupervised “conversation clubs” of 30 minutes each also at the Language Lab. A CIEE student was placed with three Spanish university students, who signed up before hand. These sessions are optional but popular among CIEE students as a way to meet Spanish students and practice language during class breaks.

### **Subject Area Courses**

#### **CIEE Courses**

The CIEE internship course was new this year and was taught by the Resident Coordinator, Senzeni Steingruber. Students met once a week as a group to discuss topics related to Spain and the workplace. Students kept a journal and worked with a supervisor at the internship site on a special project.

#### **Direct Enrollment Courses**

In the fall, students enrolled in the following regular university courses in Business, Economics, Comparative Literature, and Humanities:

Principios de organización  
Gestión de operaciones  
Gestión financiera  
Derecho Bancario y Bursátil  
Movimientos literarios contemporáneos  
Teoría y análisis de la narrativa audiovisual  
Movimientos artísticos.

CIEE students enrolled in the following Humanities seminars in fall:

La dictadura de Franco

Picasso: Tradición y Vanguardia  
Teoría y practica política en Euskadi  
Concepción del hablar y representación del mundo

In the spring, CIEE students enrolled in the following regular university courses:

Cine de autor  
Geografía regional  
Historia de relaciones internacionales contemporáneas  
Economía mundial  
Mecánica de fluidos  
Ecuación diferenciales en derivadas parciales  
Gestión internacional de empresas  
Problemas sociales I: Desigualdad y Exclusión Social  
Financiación internacional  
Geografía regional  
Estructura social  
Historia del tiempo presente

In the spring, one student enrolled in the following humanities seminar:

El Teatro Por Dentro.

With the agreement of the individual professor, the University has allowed that international students can request to take final exams via fax at their U.S. sending institution the same day as the professor administers the exam in Spain. This allows students to depart the program prior to the Christmas holiday rather than wait or return in February to take a final. CIEE makes it clear that students who enroll in a regular university course need to be on hand to take their exam OR need to ensure that their professor will accept the faxed exam, prior to registering for each university course. In practice, this has been a challenge. If there is a Saturday exam, then the university cannot administer a faxed exam because no one would be at the U.S. institution. Some professors require that U.S. students take the exam at the exact same time as it is administered in Spain, and not willing to take the time difference into account.

This past February, the process for faxed exam requests was an administrative challenge because they occurred in the middle of the CIEE orientation. Several professors had forgotten that they agreed to do a faxed exam and the coordinator had trouble locating a few of the professors, some who were away at conferences. Some U.S. study abroad advisors changed exam venues at the last minute, requested email attached exams in place of faxed exams, or simply ignored the email instructions that had been sent previously and in reminder emails from CIEE staff because the student told them a different version of the faxed exam process. As a result, the RD had to step in, make calls to the U.S. and help coordinate the process with both the host institution and the U.S. sending schools. Due to this, some sessions of the spring 2007 orientation program had to be rescheduled.

In compliance with a university wide norm, the CIEE Resident Director is no longer allowed to represent a student who cannot review their exam of a regular university course. All professors set up a time shortly after the grades have been posted on the internet. This is when all students from the course are allowed to review their exam and

question their final grade. The professor may change the grade as necessary, but is allowed to do this only if the student has appeared in person at this meeting. After this time, the grade becomes final. A student, who wants to contest their grade but is not in Spain, can request to do a repeat exam via fax, but this request must come from the student in writing or via email with the instructions attached as provided by the Cursos Estudios Hispánicos. Some professors only approve this request if a student shows up in person.

### **Outside Activities in Estudios Hispánicos (CEH) classes**

Two CEH courses, offered both semesters, include excursions. For instance, the Spanish Geography class goes on day trips to Segovia and to visit a marginalized neighborhood of Madrid. The Art course holds several of its classes inside the many top rated museums of Madrid, such as El Prado, Museo Reina Sofia and the Thyssen-Bornemisza.

### **Non-Academic Features**

#### **CIEE Orientation**

In the fall, outdoor sessions in the Parque Retiro (at an outdoor terrace) were added to discuss housing norms and cultural adaptation. This session worked well because of the nice weather. The time allotted to buy cell phones was not enough in the fall and more time was allotted during spring orientation to do this, including a presentation from a cell phone representative. In the fall, CIEE staff led a walking tour of the immigrant neighborhood of Lavapiés to show students another side of Madrid, however, this was eliminated from the spring orientation and moved to later in the spring semester as students were too tired to fully enjoy the walk during orientation. In spring, a new orientation hotel on a quieter street with a better breakfast menu and conference room facilities was used.

### **Cultural Activities/Field Trips**

#### **Day or Evening Activities**

In fall, the program participated in a one day kayak-volleyball activity on the Lago Lake in the Casa de Campo Park in central Madrid with a Spanish trainer. The group also enjoyed a guided walking tour of the Moncloa section of Madrid, and a visit to the Spanish Civil War Journalists exhibit at the Instituto Cervantes. They attended the October 12 military parade in Madrid followed by a discussion on what it means to be Spanish. They attended a documentary screening at the Filmoteca on Spanish Civil War survivors. There were two Language Exchange Encounters with Spanish students at the University with food and drinks.

In addition, there were monthly meetings at the Resident Director's home to discuss a variety of themes including Spanish food, culture shock, homophobia, parents, and re-entry and also an optional Thanksgiving dinner. Students could also participate in a lecture series on Latin American Writers at the University co-sponsored by CIEE.

In the spring semester, the program enjoyed a one day field trip to El Escorial and the tomb of Franco at the Valle de los Caídos, which including a reflection exercise on remembering the past. Students also visited the exhibit of the Education Missionaries in 1930's rural Spain at the Museo Conde Duque, attended a film screening of Spanish film about Franco era with CIEE hosts, had a guided walking tour of Madrid's Moncloa neighborhood with visit to the Museo de Américas and Library, three Language Exchange

Encounters with Spanish students at the University with food and drinks, and a CIEE lecture and food tasting about Carnival in Spain. They visited the Museo Reina Sofia exhibit on Latin American Art, took a walking tour of the new Atocha memorial monument and Parque Retiro. Monthly meetings with the Resident Director's home were again held on a variety of themes, including culture shock, adaptation to Madrid, homelessness in Spain, re-entry and identifying your job skills after study abroad. An optional lecture series of Spanish women film directors was held at the University co-sponsored by CIEE.

In the fall, RD monthly meetings were required and student reaction was negative. Students felt too programmed. In the spring, RD meetings became optional and most students attended and the flow of the meetings was more relaxed with a better interaction between CIEE staff and students.

Staff put in a great deal of effort to organize activities that students may not necessarily seek out on their own in Madrid (often with free entrance), send out reminder emails for these optional activities and invite CIEE hosts to join in (and who showed up), but very few students attended them.

### **Overnight Fieldtrips**

In fall, the program participated in a two day "pueblo" experience, including a kayak trip in a natural park, Hoces de Duraton with the largest meat-eating vulture colony in Europe, and stay over in a small pueblo in Segovia to participate in the local fiesta activities (a Saint's procession, bullfighting and guided walk of Roman ruins). A highlight of this trip was the meeting with six young Spaniards from the pueblo for a group dinner in a local restaurant with other festival revelers. It was rowdy with a lot of folk singing by the Spaniards. The students were mixed so that a CIEE student had to sit next to a Spaniard at dinner and they shared various plates of Spanish food. At the end of the dinner, the group stood outside the restaurant and saw the running of the bulls at midnight. Students walked around the pueblo to visit the different peñas, or clubs, in the pueblo to observe how each one celebrated the virgin of the pueblo. Students liked the whole experience because they were the only foreigners in a small village where the streets were packed with nearly 2000 Spaniards.

In both fall and spring semesters, the program went on a three day excursion to Seville. Students enjoyed guided walking tours of the Barrio Santa Cruz and learning mystery of the Gold Tower and Rio Guadalquivir, met with Spanish university students for a tapas tour, guided tour of the Alcázar and the Cathedral, visit to the Plaza España and the Parque Maria Luisa. There was a flamenco show at extra cost to students, a visit to the Museo de Bellas Artes and open air art market. The spring trip also included a visit to the CIEE Study Center in Seville where students heard a lecture on the origins of Carnival in Spain, tried some typical carnival candies and played carnival instruments and learned carnival songs. The following evening, students attended the song winner's carnival in the city center, a free event open to the public- so that students could see the festive environment in the city.

In spring, students were given an excursion stipend to go on the Erasmus organized overnight trip to Barcelona (2 nights) which half the CIEE students participated on and another one to the Fallas celebrations in Valencia which the majority of CIEE students attended.

All overnight excursions included Spanish youth guides as well as an official guide and one or two CIEE staff members.

Meals were sometimes difficult to organize though students applaud that meals are included. Many prefer to do meals on their own. Therefore, in the spring, CIEE gave meal stipends to the students. Overall, this new policy is much better from a logistical point of view.

### **Housing**

The housing questionnaire is extensive and requests a great deal of information from students. The coordinator has changed questions regarding meals and food as most students are expected to cook and prepare their own meals. Some students describe themselves as “independent” but, in practice, this is not always the case and requires some handholding in the homestay.

In the fall, as an experiment, CIEE placed four students closer to the university (10 minutes by metro), but further from the city center (30 minutes by metro). CIEE had found a group of young hosts with interesting backgrounds in arts, communications, and international relations and thought, on balance, that the experience would be a good one. However, despite the larger rooms, internet access and engaging hosts, three students asked for a change to live in the city center (this meant smaller rooms, no internet, etc.) because they could be closer to their friends and enjoy the nightlife of the city center. As result of this experiment, CIEE focused host recruitment in the city center and has abandoned the idea of hosting outside of the immediate downtown area of Madrid.

Due to the language pledge, some students did not always know how to express their homestay situations in Spanish with the coordinator. Next semester, the housing coordinator will hold follow-up meeting in English as necessary. There were some household matters that involved students with personal hygiene problems that concerned the hosts (such as not doing laundry/wearing dirty clothes, lack of deodorant-use, walking with muddy shoes in the home).

Most students enjoy their homestay and are surprised that many hosts are “young” (in their late twenties or thirties). Several students used words such as host service, room lodging, food catering, kitchen menu or maid cleaning when describing their housing, revealing a customer service perspective in their homestay experience. During orientation, the coordinator explains the uniqueness of hosts who collaborate with CIEE, but staff needs to continuously advise students about the homestay experience to minimize the stereotyping and customer service expectations of students.

Overall, placement is successful but the biggest challenge is the student departure dates and their official exit from the homestay. Students feel they can renegotiate departure dates with their hosts, who become anxious. This was an acute problem for the Christmas holidays and in June as some hosts were expecting family or traveling themselves. CIEE staff had to intervene despite giving out reminders and holding exit interviews with all students’ well in advance.

## **Community Engagement and Integration**

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### **For-Credit Internship and Community Service Options**

In fall, one student who was a Business major participated in an internship at two companies. One was a market research project to help improve the management structure of a fresh fruit juice company, and once this was completed, the student did another market research project for a Spanish charity NGO, that was putting on a high-profile music benefit concert. She helped with planning and publicity of this event.

In spring, another Business major participated in a market research project organized by a Language Academy based in Getafe. A Journalism student participated in an English teaching internship at the Language Department of the Universidad Carlos III.

In the fall, the student felt the internship was rewarding, but 125 hours work hours seemed excessive to the student in addition to the academic workload and travel time between the different companies and the university campus. The spring students were similarly concerned. CIEE is looking into re-structuring the internship. The location of the internship sites in Getafe helped students manage their schedules as they could complete their internship hours between classes and avoid additional travel time in the Madrid metropolitan area.

### **Not-for-Credit Community Service/Volunteer Projects**

During both fall and spring, several students signed up or found their own English classes to teach in their neighborhood through the help of their Spanish host, or through flyers. The Resident Coordinator helped advise students with teaching methodologies, books, and other teaching tools and resources.

One student in the fall volunteered at a Red Cross fundraising event with her CIEE host. One student was an active member of the Madrid Frisbee Club team and participated in the national Frisbee championship in the Canary Islands in November, 2006 where they won first place.

In the spring, one student volunteered with his host in the municipal election board meetings and Spanish voter recruitment. One student participated, with her CIEE host, in the grape harvest by a local community in Burgos. One student was offered a volunteer post in various theater productions at the art company run by her host family. Students enjoyed these opportunities to integrate further with Spanish people.

## **Challenges & Future Directions**

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### **Academic Challenges**

#### **Spanish Language**

Students generally like the courses but feel they have to study too much. During fall and spring, students also complained about participants from other U.S. programs (in their Estudios Hispánicos classes) that do not always have a good Spanish fluency, forcing professors to repeat materials, or starting to speak slower.

### **CIEE Courses**

This is the first year that the CIEE internship was offered. CIEE needs to take a closer look at the academic component of the internship since students expected the course to be more practical and less academic. Students performed very well in both the internships and the course component but were stressed about the academic work load.

### **Direct Enrollment**

In fall, students are not required to direct enroll but have the opportunity to take the humanities seminars. However, since many U.S. schools will not grant credit for a 10-30 hour class, students have chosen not to taken them. In spring, taking a direct enrollment course is a requirement of the program.

### **Non-Academic Challenges**

#### **University Location**

While students always express surprise and displeasure initially at Getafe's location outside central Madrid (despite it being described in numerous predeparture materials), ironically, the campus becomes one of their favorite aspects of the program. Students like the feel of a small U.S. style college campus where they feel surrounded by Spanish students, studying at a "real" Spanish university.

#### **Group Dynamics among students**

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 was peer pressure to travel on weekend in groups, and take classes together. Not all students fit into the group and staff needs to intervene to maintain a positive environment. In the fall, there was a clear division between Latino, fluent Spanish speakers, and those who were non-native speaking students.

#### **Internet access**

All students have access to wifi on campus. In the spring, all students brought their own lap top. This became a problem when laptops broke down, required technical assistance or part replacements from the US. Laptop repair is very expensive in Spain, and sending computer appliances via postal mail is cost prohibitive. Overall, lap top problems caused stress for students who, as a result, had a limit to their internet access. Almost all students in spring had a profile on Facebook and used this internet to tool to form virtual friendships before attending the CIEE program.

#### **Housing**

Housing during the December and January break is complex. CIEE had to find alternate housing arrangements for five students in fall who were in enrolled in regular courses. Many Madrid hosts receive out of town guests and need the student room, or go on vacation themselves and do not want to leave students alone.

#### **Student Integration into Community**

In fall, integration seems more difficult because CIEE students arrive in September when most Spanish students are in their exam period until October. As a result, there are few activities possible with Spaniards, and CIEE students quickly make friends with other Americans. CIEE tries to organize as many activities as possible during September, such as overnight excursions that include the participation of Spaniards, activities with CIEE

hosts, and also Language Exchange activities to help break this trend, but it is very challenging.

The spring semester is easier for integration efforts, but CIEE staff has to hold orientation sessions during both semesters about personal goals and expectations, especially related to definitions on friendships and the role of money. CIEE students tend to select high end entertainment venues and long distance travel journeys that are not part of the social scene of Spanish youth, who often do not have the money or financial resources to keep up with that lifestyle.

### **Future Directions**

The Resident Director will contact students prior to their departure to promote the Humanities Seminars and to remind students that direct enrollment is strongly encouraged in fall and required in spring.

In order to strengthen students' commitment to speaking in Spanish, CIEE staff has prepared a new orientation session which demonstrates how culture and language are linked. Bilingual speakers will be encouraged to be role models and become team players with the language pledge. CIEE staff in going to include incentives to keep the language pledge active, such as placing a white board in the CIEE office, called the community dictionary, where students and staff will be encouraged to write down new words that they have learned that week. Also, CIEE staff plan to experiment with some office hours during the day where Spanish is optional and others where it is required.

For the future, the internship course professor will hold meetings every two weeks rather than each week and organize a workshop session with a focus on professional development/research writing. Also, the final presentation will be in two parts: a midterm PowerPoint exercise and a final written paper.

CIEE staff will continue to offer optional group activities and also start individual coffee meetings with students to help advise them and keep them on track with both their language pledge (reminding them of other ways to practice language, such as reading on-line newspapers in place of English websites, using Spanish to communicate on Facebook, etc.) and also helping them to stay on track with their goals that they wrote down during orientation.

CIEE will increase the number of Language Exchange Encounters at the University, especially in the fall, to help students connect with Spanish students earlier on. Resident staff will assist with devising strategies on making friends with Spanish youth and on how to propose and select appropriate social activities.

Students will again be informed in the pre-departure materials and also during orientation about the computer and internet access on campus, and the lack thereof in the housing. As in previous semesters, CIEE staff will continue to do orientation walking tours where students are shown internet cafés and libraries in Madrid center on alternate venues for wifi and internet access. Students will be encouraged in the updated pre-departure materials to seek out insurance for their laptops in case of theft or technical breakdown while in Spain.

For December and January housing, CIEE will give a stipend to students to stay in a hostel during holidays if they remain in Madrid. Students have been told in pre-departure

materials and will also be informed again during orientation regarding the housing situation during the Holiday Break in December.

CIEE has hired a recent graduate of Universidad Carlos III de Madrid through a part time internship program. This student will become the Student Services Intern who will organize, plan and participate as the activities coordinator for students based on their interests. For example, organize movie nights, walking tours of Madrid, assist students with finding sport and cultural activities on campus, etc. The Student Services intern will also participate in the CIEE excursions.