



Above: IEP LLC Holiday Party. Residents celebrate the end of the semester by decorating cookies, playing games, and exchanging Secret Santa gifts.

Happy Holidays from the IEP!



This Fall the IEP Living & Learning Community welcomed 73 students, including a record 21 exchange students from China, France, Spain, and Canada. With a renewed focus on community building and programming, our Graduate Housing Advisor Samantha Stevens, along with our student-led House Council, hosted a variety of fun and cultural programs. In addition to programs for house residents, the IEP and TI Houses were also the home to several weekly language conversation hours, including French, German, Spanish, and Arabic. Since we had so many international students this semester, there was a focus on diverse programming that showcased both American and foreign cultures. In addition, our resident exchange students from China offered free tutoring for those studying Chinese in the living room of each house. These are just some of the many things that set the IEP LLC apart from other housing on campus!



Left, top: Residents show off their Halloween pumpkin-carving skills.
Left, bottom: LLC residents participate in rock climbing/team-building exercises at URI's North Woods Challenge Course.

THINK BIG  WE DO™

International Engineering Program
University of Rhode Island
61 - 67 Upper College Road
Kingston, RI 02881

uri.edu/iep
facebook.com/iep



THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
INTERNATIONAL
ENGINEERING
PROGRAM

Global Update

Fall 2013 Volume 16 Issue 1 uri.edu/iep

Director's Notes



Dr. Sigrid Berka,
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

This Fall semester the IEP has seen several exciting developments. We have been fortunate to hire a new coordinator for the Spanish IEP, Alexis Gonzalez, who is originally from the Dominican Republic and has a Master's in Education from the University of the Balearic Islands (UIB) in Ibiza, Spain. Alexis is assisting SIEP director Megan Echevarria in managing over 100 Spanish IEP students in this 2nd largest IEP program. He has made great strides in placing interns in Spain while also expanding efforts to Latin American countries. Welcome to the IEP, Alexis!

To leverage the fast-growing economy in Chile and to create more visibility for Latin America as a site for technology and culture, Megan led the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Pontificia Catolica Universidad de Valparaiso. She also submitted a grant proposal to the Partnerships for the Americas Foundation which, if successful, will allow us to send 24 SIEP students to Chile in 2014 for study, internships, and summer research on sustainable development. Please keep your fingers crossed as we are developing new strategies to off-set the sluggish economic growth in Spain.

Responding to increasing student demand and taking advantage of an already thriving major in Italian at URI, as well as a new MOU with the Universidad

de Calabria, we have launched an Italian IEP this semester. Michelangelo La Luna, Associate Professor of Italian and an accomplished writer with a Ph.D. from Harvard and one from the University of Calabria, has begun to get Italian companies/institutions on board such as FERRARI, BSP Pharmaceuticals, and the Center for Maritime Research and Experimentation of NATO! Michelangelo has also secured a generous donation in the memory of Teodoro Raffaele Diaco to establish the Italian IEP, and in particular an Italian wing in our IEP Living & Learning Community. Congratulations, Michelangelo, and welcome aboard!



New Italian IEP director **Michelangelo La Luna** (far right) and representatives from the *Universidad de Calabria*.

The Chinese Flagship Program under direction of Wayne He has also made huge strides in moving this rigorous, government-sponsored program forward. Engineering students now make the majority of Chinese Flagship participants (28%) followed by business and other majors, and they can benefit from several unique features: increased contact hours per week (5 instead of 3) which has already resulted in remarkable proficiency gains for the students; additional tutoring; winter and summer immersion programs in China; research opportunities with Chinese faculty on campus; and funding through combined Flagship, Confucius Institute, and IEP Hasbro funding sources. The November review committee led by Mike Nugent, now Director of the Defense Language National Security

Education Program, was delighted to see the program's progress, especially the way it is able to effectively integrate and retain our IEP engineers, which makes it a truly distinct program amongst its Chinese Flagship peers around the country.

On the French side, Lars Erickson is piloting a new 1 credit French for Engineering course in the Spring semester to provide tailored content to our FIEP students. He will also lead a group of younger French IEPers to Paris, Lyon, and Peau in January 2015 during a J-term study tour.

During this year's 16th Annual Colloquium on International Engineering Education in Lexington, KY, Heather Price, Erin Papa, and I represented the IEP team reporting on how to get started with an IEP; how to build the Chinese Flagship/IEP Engineering community; our new transfer plan agreement with SUNY Adirondack; and plans to develop an IEP track at North Kingstown High School to fill the pipeline.

Provost DeHayes launched a new J-term initiative this year and our 3 credit "Germany Today: Science, Technology & Culture" J-term course has been accepted to start this January. Damon Rarick will teach an intensive three-day intensive preparation module on campus and Anett Geithner, our fabulous new DAAD Lecturer (welcome Anett!), and I will then take the students to Berlin, Hamburg, Braunschweig, Wolfsburg, Wuppertal, and Cologne. The trip is generously funded by the Van Meeteren Foundation, the DAAD, and possibly the Max Kade Foundation. Anett and Damon are also going to run a DAAD-sponsored professional development workshop in mid December for 25 German faculty members from U.S. institutions to develop their expertise in creating languages for the professions curricula such as German for Engineers.

I thank all of you for your support of the IEP and wish you a wonderful end of the year as we are heading into the holiday season.

--Dr. Sigrid Berka

IEP Student Profiles



Rachel McAteer '17

Majors: Chinese; Biomedical Engineering

Hometown: Cranston, RI

Activities: URI Student Senate, Flagship Student Ambassador, URI Women's Rugby, Society of Women Engineers (SWE)

Why study Chinese? My interest in Chinese originated as a challenge to myself. Because it's a critical language, and typically regarded difficult to learn, I thought it would

be worth the investment. After I started studying Chinese, however, it was both the language itself and the culture that made me realize just how interested I really was.

Why did you choose the IEP? Before coming to URI I had always known I wanted to study Chinese, but primarily I wanted to focus on engineering. The IEP was the answer I was looking for when choosing a college. Not only does the program lay out a curriculum for the student to successfully achieve two degrees, but it also gives them the opportunity to graduate with international study and internship experience. After I heard about the IEP there was no other option for me.

What do you look forward to about studying in China? I think it's so important to gain an understanding of the rest of the world and my year

abroad will really be a great opportunity to start. It will be a challenge for sure, but also an adventure, and a way to prove to myself that I'm capable of utilizing the skills I've dedicated my time to developing.

The Language/Engineering Dual Degree: Double-majoring is by no means an 'easy' task, but the variation between my engineering-based classes and my language-based classes offers a nice, and beneficial, balance. If I have a night full of math or physics homework, studying my language almost feels like giving myself a break, and vice versa. The double major allows me to switch gears regularly for a different type of learning, which helps keep me stay on task and promotes time management. The shift in subject matter is good for sanctioning off study time. I've found the same to be true after joining different organizations. Rather than feeling like I don't have time for other activities, being in the IEP has only encouraged me to continue expanding my horizons. Having two different majors has helped me feel more well-rounded as a student, which has allowed me to branch out and become part of different groups. The IEP definitely requires time management, but the program by no means prevents you from becoming involved in other ways.

Why would you recommend the IEP to prospective students? The IEP truly offers you a total package of opportunity. Learning a second language can only help you in the future. It may sound overwhelming on paper, but being a part of the IEP program has been a great, and entirely manageable, experience. If you're interested in becoming an engineering student, joining the IEP program will truly maximize your college experience. The IEP will break down more barriers, and open more doors, than you even know exist.

James Brooks, '16

Majors: German; Biomedical Engineering

Hometown: Romford, Greater London, UK

Activities: eXposure dance crew, URI American Sign Language Club, URI Fencing, URI Quidditch

The IEP Living & Learning Community: This year is my third academic year living in the TI House and I really enjoy it. I really like the convenience of the house due to its central location in relation to the academic buildings as well as the fact that foreign engineering students also live here. I enjoy being able to practice my language skills without the need to be in a classroom to do so. I have also met some really interesting people here whom I wouldn't have met otherwise. I have gained some lifelong friends.

Why did you choose the IEP? To me, choosing the IEP was all about the fourth year. While other universities may allow their students to major in engineering and a language, the IEP is the only program that sends students abroad for a full year with six months of study and a paid six-month internship. That was really the main reason why I decided to come to URI and do the IEP.



The Language/Engineering Dual-Degree: I have always loved languages and the IEP didn't force me to choose between engineering or languages. It is also a different way of thinking, so it is a nice break from the harder engineering classes. Balancing the two majors can be difficult. Engineering takes a lot of time and effort and if I am not careful, I sometimes devote too much of my time to engineering and not enough to German. The balancing act is all about time-management skills and I think the IEP definitely teaches its students about time-management.

Why would you recommend the IEP to prospective students? Apart from the fact that the IEP, the internship, and the experience look good on a resume, it is a lot of fun! So far I would describe my college experience as a fun, positive one. I enjoy what I do, I enjoy the like-minded people I find in the IEP, and I like the fact that everyone is driven and putting in a lot of effort in order to achieve something. I think it is a fun yet productive atmosphere and I hope that prospective students would have similar experiences to mine.



Jessica Damicis '14

Majors: Spanish; Civil Engineering

Hometown: Richmond, RI

Internship: Lur Geroa in Irutzun, Navarra, Spain

Lur Geroa does forestry and environmental project consulting and ecosystem restorations. I worked one-on-one with two engineers. We spent 60% of the week in the field, and 40% working in the office.

I spent my time at Lur Geroa preparing maps and design layers in ArcGIS for various consultations. I also worked closely with my coworkers on various turnkey environmental restoration, forest infrastructure, and design projects. I was able to follow the projects from initial consultation with the municipal government to design, then construction. I also collected GPS data for rural routes connecting mountain villages and added the data layer to the regional map database.



Kayla Belanger '14

Majors: French; Chemical Engineering

Hometown: Hudson, NH

Internship: Solvay-Rhodia in Saint-Fons, France

Solvay is a global chemical company whose goal is to improve the quality of life and customer performance. Rhodia is one of the three groups of Solvay and includes businesses in aroma performance, engineering plastics, silica, and many more. My internship was in process safety working on a project with the Novocare team.

My job was to assess and improve a chemical process of the synthesis of a copolymer. Half of my project entailed laboratory work: synthesizing my product and collecting data, while the other half was computational based. I was in charge of learning a process simulation program new to the company and using it to improve the safety of the copolymerization process for industry scale production. During this project, I strengthened my knowledge in reaction kinetics and became very familiar with the evaluation of a potential runaway reaction.



5th Year IEP students Jessica Damicis and Kayla Belanger present posters of their year abroad at the 16th Annual Colloquium on International Engineering Education in Lexington, Kentucky in November 2013.

IEP 5th Years Reflect on Their Year Abroad



Maria Briones '14

Majors: Spanish; Civil Engineering

Hometown: East Providence, RI

Activities: Engineers for a Sustainable World, Theta Tau Professional Engineering Fraternity, American Society of Civil Engineers, IEP Student Ambassador

Why study Spanish? I was born in Ecuador and when my family immigrated to the US the focus on learning Spanish was lost, so my sister and myself never grew up speaking Spanish. I knew this chance at URI would be my last opportunity to learn my family's native tongue...so I took it!

Interning in Spain: I interned at the Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones de Gipuzkoa (CEIT) in San Sebastian, Spain. I worked in the environmental engineering research department using computational fluid dynamics to create computer simulations of oxygen transfer in aeration tanks of waste water treatment plants--the most expensive process of a plant. Essentially I was modeling in which states could we run this process most efficiently without the expense and risk of doing it experimentally.

Experiences abroad: My most memorable experiences were the ones I shared with the locals I had met in San Sebastian. They took me to neighboring villages for special events, showed me some beautiful sights and really made me feel at home. My favorite traveling of all was the small towns of the Basque country. Their beautiful landscapes, world-renowned cuisine, and small town feel were much more favorable to me than bustling tourist cities.

What did you learn about yourself? During the year abroad I realized that I am much more capable than I ever thought of developing a life in a completely unknown place. My independence and self-reliance matured my character and is motivating me to take on similar opportunities in the future--the kind where you don't necessarily know where you'll end up. From now on I don't think I see myself staying put in one place for very long!

The IEP Living & Learning Community: I have lived in the IEP/TI Houses for 2 out of my 4 years on campus. It has definitely been my favorite living situation and I recommend it to all IEP students. My favorite part about living here has to be a tie between the really good food and the incorporation of exchange students into the houses. Even before going abroad I was able to make friends with students from the university I ended up studying at, and living there now I love being able to continue practicing my Spanish and share common experiences.

Zachary Lorusso, '14

Majors: French; Computer Engineering

Hometown: Middletown, RI

Activities: Work at the Engineering Computer Center

Why study French? I studied French in high school and I really enjoyed it, so I decided it would be a good idea to become fluent.

Interning in France: I worked at LMS Imagine, a software company recently acquired by the Siemens group. They have branches in many countries all over the world working on different projects not only in software but many fields of engineering. I worked in Lyon, France on their major software product, AMESim. I designed two prototype plugins for the program; the first allowed users to quickly get information from their design in the program from a database and the second was a "meta-modelling" plugin that both allowed for simple high-level design of systems as well as the separation of detailed (or low-level) design. These plugins were intended to help companies that have many teams (often all over the world) work on the same project fluidly and allow the rapid integration of new members into teams.



Experiences abroad: Outside of France I visited Belgium, England, and Italy. While in France I visited Paris, Lyon, Normandy (Le Mont Saint Michel being my favorite landmark), Nice, and Monaco. My favorite trip was to Le Mont Saint Michel, a medieval monastery built on an island, which was eventually surrounded by a fortified city. It is one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen, however the French Riviera does come close. I could go on, but to sum things up succinctly I believe I can say that I will never taste better coffee, wine, bread, or cheese. There is always something unforgettable about an afternoon/evening with friends chatting, and eating good food.

What did you learn about yourself? I learned how to become a lot more outgoing. Before I went to France I had a lot more difficulty talking to, and meeting new people, but now it's practically second nature. I also feel as though I can take care of myself quite easily now. Dorm life, life in a Fraternity house, or even at the IEP House is a lot less like the real world. In essence, while in France I had to learn how to shop, cook, pay rent, and even find a place to live. In my opinion, most college students are very immature, and a year abroad can very easily teach maturity.



Emily Serman, '14

Majors: German; Civil Engineering

Hometown: Newark, MD

Activities: Peer Ambassador, IEP Student Ambassador, Admission tour guide, IEP student worker, IEP House Council

Why study German? When I was in high school my family hosted a German exchange student. We are still very close with her family and I wanted to be able to speak with them in German.

Experiences abroad: Most of my memorable experiences came when I was traveling. The ones that stick out to me are sledding in the Alps, climbing up to the top of the cathedral in Florence, shopping in the many Christmas markets in Dresden, and exploring castle ruins in Scotland. I've always looked at those amazing photos of exotic places online or in travel magazines and said I want to be the person taking that picture. I want to be there and see this for myself. It was amazing to get a chance to do that.

Interning in Germany: I interned at a construction company in Stuttgart called Züblin. In Germany, when a building is finished it is the responsibility of the construction company to return all of the approved plans to the person who owns the building. My first project was to organize the completed and approved plans from a high rise in Frankfurt and prepare them to be returned to the building owner. There were thousands of plans that needed to be sorted numerically by section and level of the building. Then I made sure that all of the plans were accounted for in a giant Excel table. My second major project was to download, print, and distribute plans for a metro station in Qatar. The plans were drawn up by a company in England and then sent to us in Germany. If the engineers had trouble locating a plan or needed a copy, they came to me.

What did you learn about yourself? I gained a lot of self confidence in my year abroad. I don't feel as uncomfortable in new situations or speaking in front of groups. I also got my first taste of living on my own, paying my own bills, etc. I also came away with a love for travel and planning trips!

The IEP Living & Learning Community: I love living in the IEP House because, not only is it incredibly convenient, but there is a sense of community that you don't get living in other places. I enjoy living with people from all over the world and learning about other cultures. After I came back from Germany I realized there are a lot of things I miss about it, and this helps ease that sense of "loss."