NSE participants explore diversity of U.S. culture

As a part of the National Student Exchange program, approximately 30 UW-Eau Claire students will study at one of 107 colleges and universities across the United States during one or both semesters of the coming school year. These students will be among 2,300 students nationwide to study at universities in 49 states.

"NSE gives people a wonderful opportunity to see a different place to go to graduate school, to explore job opportunities and to find places they might like to work in the future," says Mary Ryan, associate dean of students and NSE coordinator at UW-Eau Claire. Ryan explains students benefit from the chance to experience a different environment, since they often try living in a city that is much larger or smaller than what they are used to.

She says these experiences encourage personal growth on academic, social and cultural levels. "Some of the people going next year will be going to places with majors that we don’t have here."

To qualify for the NSE program, students must be enrolled full-time, have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 with at least 30 credits and be sophomores or juniors at the time of the application. Participants pay the same state or out-of-state tuition fees as they do at UW-Eau Claire. Expenses for room, board, transportation and incidentals are the student’s responsibility. NSE requires a $35 processing fee with each application. Eligibility for financial aid remains the same.

Course work completed at the host institution transfers back to Eau Claire, and all grades received during the exchange are computed into the student’s cumulative GPA.

Selection criteria include evidence of flexibility and the ability to adapt to short-term relocation, indicators of clear-cut academic and personal goals, and the ability to act as a representative of UW-Eau Claire and Wisconsin.

Former NSE participant Paul Hagemann, a senior business administration and administrative management major from Arpin, studied for a semester at California State University at Fresno.

"It was the best time of my life, a very good learning experience. I had friends from all over the world. Ten different countries were represented on my floor in my dorm," Hagemann said.

He decided to go to Fresno because of the school’s size and to see if he would like to work and live on the West Coast. "I wanted to go west to a school that was larger than Eau Claire; Fresno was three hours from San Francisco and Los Angeles," he says. The experience helped clarify his planning for the future. "I wouldn’t want to live in Fresno because it is in the desert. I also don’t want to get into a big city. I think maybe it’s the traffic….everything’s just so congested and so close."

Senior Darcy Luoma, a German and math education major from Grand Rapids, Minn., attended Towson State University in Baltimore, Md., during her sophomore year. She said she signed up to go on exchange for one semester, but after a month or two decided to stay longer and was able to continue spring semester.

"I found the hardest thing was deciding where to go in the first place," she says. Luoma points out that in making her decision, she looked at airfare expenses and whether she wanted to go to the East or West Coast.

"Finally, I decided where to go because there was so much within an hour or two — New York, Washington, D.C., Annapolis and Virginia.

"If I want to apply for a teaching job, I know that I’m going to have to be flexible because Wisconsin produces a lot of teachers," she said. "I learned I would not want to teach in a big city. Now, when I apply for jobs, I’ll have an idea of what I like or don’t like."

The NSE program can act as an access channel for international student exchange programs. Most of these programs require that students plan eight to 10 months in advance, make special arrangements and additional payments. Hagemann said he decided to participate in the NSE program after talking with a friend of his who had just gotten back from a foreign exchange.

He chose the NSE program because it was less expensive than going on an international exchange and was closer to home.

He explained that if the objective in going on exchange is just to get out of the state of Wisconsin, the NSE program may be the best choice.

"I would recommend the program to other students for two reasons: one, you can meet a lot of different types of people — Eau Claire is somewhat culturally deliminated, you get to travel to a new part of the country at a low cost," he says. Luoma says the experience opened her eyes to different cultures. "I was criticized because I was not prejudiced. She said others tried to convince her that where she grew up she never had to deal with different ethnicities, so she never developed certain prejudices. Luoma said the cost of living in Baltimore was high, so during spring semester she became a resident assistant.

Now she’s an RA at UW-Eau Claire. "I really learned not to take UWEC for granted, I learned that you need an environment conducive to learning."

Michelle Sreboda

Research a winner

Students’ research accomplishments claimed the spotlight on the first Student Research Day April 28. Sixty research posters representing the work of 83 students and 46 faculty competed for cash awards. Among the undergraduate winners was a project that analyzed the content of the kids’ favorite characters. The faculty-student collaborative team included, from left back, seniors Kelly Bloom, Jessica Berch, Paul Guigieberg, junior David Kohnst and (front) Judy Simms and Joseph Giordano, both assistant professors of communication and theatre arts.

The event highlights the important role faculty and academic staff play as mentors in the scholarly activity process. UW-Eau Claire is recognized as a Center of Excellence for student and faculty research collaboration within the UW System. During 1992-93, 150 faculty enhanced classroom teaching by involving about 400 undergraduates in research projects.

Mother of four wins Scholarship

Barbara Duffenbach, a junior from Cadott, has been selected as the recipient of the Clayton T. Piercy Memorial Scholarship for the 1993-94 academic year.

The $5,000 scholarship is UW-Eau Claire’s largest and is awarded annually to a student who demonstrates excellence in scholastic and co-curricular accomplishments. Duffenbach was chosen from among 23 applicants nominated by department chairs.

Jerry Richards, director of special gifts in Development and University Relations, said the scholarship was established in 1987 by George T. Piercy in honor of his late brother Clayton. George, who studied engineering along with Clayton for a couple of years at UW-Eau Claire, also has established memorials in the names of his other deceased siblings at other universities that have maintained a quality of excellence.

Duffenbach is the first nursing major and non-traditional age student to receive the award. She is the mother of four children — Amy, 14, Eric, 12, Adam, 9, and Eden, 7.

She is involved with numerous community activities, such as the Make A Wish Foundation telephone, local blood drives and the Challenges and Choices program. Duffenbach also is active in campus organizations, including seven honor societies and one professional society: Alpha Lambda Delta, Sigma Gamma Zeta II, Omicron Delta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Theta Tau.

Barbara Duffenbach

SOPHS and Mortar Board. She also is current president and historian of the Student Nurses Association.

Richards said George Piercy wanted the scholarship "to go to a student who demonstrated excellence in as many ways as possible, but especially in academics.

Duffenbach, who has maintained a grade-point average of 4.0, will graduate in May of 1994. She received her award at an honors banquet held April 21 in Davies Center at UW-Eau Claire. Michelle Sreboda