

Study abroad opportunity provides education at sea

■ Semester at Sea takes students worldwide to experience and learn.

By SARA GARDNER
Staff writer

Semester at Sea is one study abroad program that rolls on a different wave than the rest.

Unlike most study abroad programs — such as UNL at Oxford — this one exposes students to eight to 10 countries during one semester.

Each fall and spring semester, about 600 students from universities around the world live on an old cruise ship, said Paul Watson, director of Enrollment Management at the Institute of Shipboard Education in Pennsylvania.

Two UNL students — so far — are signed up to head out to sea this spring.

The students will have the opportunity to attend an Afro-Venezuelan Drum workshop, a Candomble Ceremony in Brazil or a Sufi Derish, which is a brotherhood meeting in Turkey.

When students aren't visiting a

country, they are learning on their floating campus in the middle of the ocean.

For one portion of the program, students spend a few days in the different countries and compare issues that tie the United States to these countries.

That's what attracted Nick Johnson, a junior at the University of Kansas, to the program.

"It's not necessarily the classes that I will learn a lot from, but being exposed to the world as a whole," he said. Johnson sets out to sea in the spring.

Jami Dickinson, a UNL alumna who lives in Arizona, embarked on the sea journey during her junior year in the spring of 1998.

"The program did so much for me," she said. "I came back with more motivation. I met a lot of people that I still keep in contact with. Also, the experience definitely says a lot on a resume."

One concern students who have participated in the program have is the reputation it has garnered for being a "party trip."

After watching episodes of MTV's "Road Rules," which recently used the Semester at Sea on its program, some may get the idea that par-

tying goes on a lot during the trip and interferes with the schoolwork, but Dickinson said that was not the case.

"Semester at Sea is not about the partying. What you will get out of this program is what you are willing to put into it," she said.

Watson feels the program is a benefit to any major.

"Studying abroad is one of the best things a student can do," Watson said. "It adds so much to their college years by giving them knowledge and experience from many global perspectives."

The ship has classrooms, dormitories, a bookstore and a fitness center. Students usually take 12 or 15 credits, which transfer to UNL.

This year, the program is expanding to include a summer session running from June 14 to Aug. 18.

The program is administered by the Institute for Shipboard Education and is sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh.

Any full-time undergraduate student with a GPA of 2.75 or better may apply.

The cost of the program is \$13,280 including tuition, room and board. Financial assistance is available to those who need it.

Minority enrollment percentage inches up

ENROLLMENT from page 1

dents are choosing other universities.

"We lose a lot to Creighton and KU," she said. "They have superior scholarship programs."

Jimmi Smith, director of Multicultural Affairs and TRIO programs, said it is up to the faculty, staff and upperclassmen to change the trend and create a positive atmosphere for diversity.

"The itty-bitty growth is something that has gone on for years and years and years," he said. "In order to expect large things, new things, retention numbers have to be strong."

"If students of color have a good freshman and sophomore experience, then a greater number will return and encourage other first-time students to come to UNL. Students need to be shown that there are opportunities for them here to connect with faculty and take on leadership roles."

Smith said UNL is providing its minority students with a quality education, but some students come away from college with the wrong mindset.

"Lots of colored students graduate, but they don't say, 'This is my university, and I had a great time.' We must pick up on that and make them feel like they are wanted and welcome," he said.

Vernon Miller, a senior business administration and business education major, is an American Indian student.

UNL enrollment by ethnicity

	1999	1998
Black	479	484
Am. Indian	90	83
Asian	1,177	1,226
Hispanic	446	417
White	19,950	20,198
Total	22,142	22,408

He has had a positive college experience, he said, but hasn't felt he can relate to many of his classmates.

"I went out of my comfort zone to get involved, but I haven't met a lot of students that I can totally relate to," he said. "I would like to see more Native Americans, African Americans and Latinos here."

Miller said he hoped the university is able to attract a more diverse assortment of students in the future.

"The university is trying to focus more and more on diversity," he said. "But unless various scholarship programs are made available to minorities, it won't get done."

Distance education is key for newly appointed leader

O'HANLON from page 1

emphasize them.

James Sherwood, director of distance education, said O'Hanlon was a good fit with the extended education programs.

"I think he'll bring a good faculty perspective," Sherwood said. "He can bridge the faculty and administrator viewpoints."

The area of extended and outreach education was boosted in 1997 when Irv Omtvedt, vice chancellor for agriculture and natural resources, became the first formal leader of the distance education efforts.

O'Hanlon is taking over the position for Omtvedt, who will pursue his position in the Institute of Agriculture and National Resources full time until he retires in June.

Since its inception, distance learning in Nebraska has taken off, O'Hanlon said. Representatives from colleges across the nation and the globe have come to the University of Nebraska looking for ways to collaborate with the distance education program.

While looking at how programs can work in other states and nations, O'Hanlon said, his first priority is seeing to it that Nebraskans have access to

programs.

"Our first interest is always the state of Nebraska," O'Hanlon said. "There may be things that are of value and interest to other states as well, however."

Reaching goals O'Hanlon is setting for the next two years will be one challenge. Keeping up with the rapidly changing technology to support it will be the next, he said.

With the constant influx of new ways of transmitting information, O'Hanlon said, it is important that the University of Nebraska realizes how to best use the technology.

By not being on the lookout, the university could miss out on another learning tool that could benefit Nebraskans, he said.

"When I first came here, the way we offered classes to people outside of Lincoln was we got in our car and drove," O'Hanlon said. "We wouldn't be doing the things we do today if we didn't take advantage of the technology."

O'Hanlon, who will officially fill the position Friday, said he is excited about learning more about the position and the area of extended and outreach education.

"I think I'm going to get a real extended education."

Meth lab discovered, one arrested

METH from page 1

but brought in from the southwestern United States or Mexico, Bullock said.

The arrests were the second group of meth lab-related arrests made in Lincoln, Bullock said, adding that he expected more in the future.

"Meth is becoming fast — real fast — the drug of choice," Bullock said.

Bullock said the first arrests were made last year.

Lincoln Police and the Nebraska State Patrol combined with the Sheriff's offices of Lancaster and Filmore counties, the County Attorneys' offices of Lancaster and Seward counties and the U.S. Attorney General's office in Omaha to conduct the investigation.

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