Changing Places
East and West on Exchange

Justin in New York …

Melbourne Campus social science student Justin Inverarity, 24, has broadened his educational experiences in both the US and India this year.

Currently at St John’s University in New York, Justin has quickly made new friends, found work in a student office, volunteered, travelled to many great tourist destinations and enjoyed a stream of Broadway shows at student prices as well as his study.

“St John’s University has a great reputation,” said Justin, pictured above with students in India earlier this year. “They provide an excellent array of social science units and it is a fantastic metropolitan university.

“With a major in sociology and a minor in politics and history, I am currently studying units in criminology, sociology of prisons, inequalities, race, gender and class and the history of modern Asian wars.

“Being on exchange is great. I would recommend it to everybody. I’ve been exposed to such a diverse education. My history professor graduated from Harvard; my inequalities professor has written many books on black politics in the US; I’ve attended lectures by people who have been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and I’ve had many discussions in class with my prisons professor on her work at Riker’s Island prison.

“In May this year, Justin went to India with 12 fellow Ballarat Campus students as part of one of his sociology subjects. He volunteered with the Wildlife Trust of India, working on Tibetan wildlife conservation; attended lectures by human rights experts, monks, nuns and former political prisoners who had fled Tibet; and taught English for two hours a day at an Indian school.

“India was a fantastic opportunity for me to study Tibetan culture, something that has interested me for a long time,” Justin said. “It also gave me the opportunity to see India, a fantastic country full of rich culture and history.”

Passionate about “helping those who are less fortunate”, once back in Australia, Justin hopes to eventually work in policy development in the public sector.

He has thanked sociology course coordinator Dr Jen Couch for the “incredible” Indian experience, and International Education Exchange and Study Abroad coordinator Herta Derrij “who spent countless hours helping me fill out forms, organising travel and my curriculum for my trip to New York City”.

“Being on exchange has been fun, interesting and enlightening. It has really opened up options for me.”

Opening Doors Abroad

All ACU National students are invited to consider completing part of their degree overseas, on exchange.

Local and international undergraduate and postgraduate students who have completed a year or a semester of study at ACU National, respectively, are eligible to apply, as long as they have at least a credit average and can undertake a full-time course load of three or four units.

ACU National contributes up to $2,500 towards travel costs, and there are no extra tuition fees. Students also continue to receive any Centrelink payments they currently receive, and undergraduate local students are eligible for a $5,299 Overseas Higher Education Loan Program (OS-HELP) from the Federal Government.

Exchange and Study Abroad Coordinator Herta Derrij is also keen to hear from staff who are interested in forming any new exchange agreements that would enhance opportunities for their students, or who would like to visit exchange partners while overseas.

For more information
Email herta.derrij@acu.edu.au or visit www.acu.edu.au/exchange.
COASTING IN FROM THE US

Sam Hyat, Dan Kagdis, Will Lamb and Matt Murphy, photographed recently on Moreton Island, Queensland, were among 18 students from Fairfield University in Connecticut in the US to experience a slice of Australian life with a semester of study at the Brisbane Campus.

Fourth-year education student Alison Stary, 24, of the Ballarat Campus, was among only eight university students to be chosen from hundreds of applicants to represent Australia at the Asia–Pacific Model United Nations Conference in Korea earlier this year.

Dan, 21, from Maryland, described Brisbane as “awesome”. “All the staff and students have been very welcoming and have gone out of their way to help us out,” said Dan, who undertook an internship with ACU National’s marketing unit as part of his business degree.

“It’s hard coming to a completely different country. The University community has made it a lot smoother than we expected.”

Fourth-year education student Alison Stary, 24, of the Ballarat Campus, was among only eight university students to be chosen from hundreds of applicants to represent Australia at the Asia–Pacific Model United Nations Conference in Korea earlier this year.

“Attending the conference meant that I could contribute to the current national debate around social welfare issues, equality and food shortages in third-world countries,” said Alison, also a World Vision volunteer.

The focus of the UN conference was on how to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and on reducing global poverty.

Alison joined some 700 like-minded students from around the world, a new network of young people concerned with social justice, leadership and the future direction of the world.

Participating in the conference reinforced Alison’s strong beliefs in equality.

“My team was representing Cambodia, and the discussions reinforced to me that every single human being should have access to everything that I have access to,” she said.

“We wrote a working paper and resolution around poverty reduction. It was exciting to see my idea around empowering local communities included in the submission to be handed to the UN in New York in December.

“I have always wanted to make things better for people. We don’t often realise how lucky we are in Australia. I feel obliged to do as much as I can to make a difference on a bigger scale.”

Alison hopes to teach in the Asia–Pacific region after graduating. “I love teaching, as I feel I can make a difference to students’ lives, even if I pass on my passion for helping others. Every day I feel like I am contributing to their life.”

Attending the conference reinforced Alison’s commitment to social justice. “In life I think that one person can make a difference. I definitely want to stay involved with the Model United Nations organisation. I really enjoy contributing to global debate.”