

## USAC Gateway News May 2011

"The lessons I learned and the experience that I gained are some things that may look good on a resume, but the changes that I see in myself are the biggest gain. I view the world in a completely different manner than I did before. The things that I value and the way that I now see the diverse world and its people will contribute to my success in the future."

**Carly Pritchard**

Boise State University  
USAC Alicante, Spain Alum

### In This Issue

#### Greetings from USAC!

As always, you'll find this issue filled with news from around the world: USAC program highlights, news from our Resident Directors about local events and how USAC students are integrating within the local community, profiles of outstanding students and faculty, and university news. We welcome your thoughts, suggestions, and comments. Please share this newsletter with friends and colleagues. The newsletter archive can be found on the [USAC News page](#).

#### In this issue:

[USAC Torino Students Visit EU Headquarters in Brussels](#)

[Summer Internship Opportunities Continue to Diversify and Grow](#)

[USAC Interns and Volunteers Shine in Placements Around the World](#)

[USAC Alum Advises Future Students to Pack "Half-Full"](#)

### USAC Torino Students Visit EU Headquarters in Brussels



On April 18-19, students from Professor Marco Dastru's class, *Economic Integration and Common Markets of the EU*, visited Brussels to tour the EU parliament,

### Coming Up in May

**May 1:** Summer Session II Application Deadline

**May 1:** China International Labor Day Holiday

**May 2-6:** USAC Accra Revision Week

**May 12:** Finals in Costa Rica

**May 14-25:** Finals at St Andrews

**May 21:** World Day for Cultural Diversity

**May 22:** International Day for Biological Diversity

**May 23:** USAC Santiago Summer Session I Courses Begin

**May 28:** USAC Prague Field Trip to Kutna Hora

**May 28:** USAC Pau Field Trip to the French Basque Coast

### Outstanding Student: Hunter Sharpless



Junior English major **Hunter Sharpless** (University of Iowa) has kept a [blog](#) while studying in Torino this semester, as many students do. His work has appeared on the University of Iowa website and recently one of his pieces has been picked up and published in the [Iowa City Press Citizen](#). Well done, Hunter. Congratulations!

commission, and council buildings. A professor with USAC for over 15 years, Prof. Dastru is our local specialist on EU issues. The group was given a tour and presentation by Isabella Poldrugo, the assistant to [Minister Mario Mauro](#), head of the PDL Christian Democrat group and President of the Parliament's intergroup on Social Economy. Later the group also met Mr. Mauro.

That evening the group was also invited to a special meeting and presentation on measuring corporate sustainability. The meeting included Gianni Pittella, the first Vice President of the European Parliament; Maurizio Zollo, professor at Bocconi University in Milan; Pietro Scott Jovane, CEO of Microsoft Italy; and Antonio Tajani, EC Vice President for Industry and Entrepreneurship.

Overall the group loved the experience—visiting the EU headquarters, meeting many people, and seeing the governmental process in action—as well as getting a small taste of the city of Brussels itself.



"The trip to Brussels was an incredible opportunity and something I never thought I would experience while in Italy. I enjoyed the sustainability session because it gave me a first hand look at issues that are being dealt within the United States and here in Europe." **Madeline Logan**, Kansas State University

"It was interesting to see how much actually goes on in the parliament there, seeing hundreds of people rushing around and speaking tens of different languages. This was particularly interesting to me, as a European citizen, because decisions made in these buildings are having an increasingly large influence on the laws in my own country." **Jake Rankine**, United Kingdom

"It was a very informative and interesting experience to be able to go inside of the EU Parliament! I never thought I would have been able to get a personal tour of the Parliament and learn so much about the European Union. I'm really glad I went, and I would love to do something like this again." **Chris Hughs**, University of Nevada, Reno

## Summer Internship Opportunities Continue to Diversify and Grow

USAC summer internship opportunities continue to grow, adding to the service learning and volunteer opportunities already available to enrich the summer sessions. In addition to teaching English in a local kindergarden in [Viterbo, Italy](#), working in the US Consulate in [Prague](#), and veterinary and health-related internships in [San Ramón, Costa Rica](#), USAC students now have summer internship

## Outstanding Faculty: Laura Ciglioni

USAC Professor Laura Ciglioni—who teaches Government and Politics in Italy and Europe in Viterbo—received a grant in support of her participation in the American Association for Italian Studies Annual Conference at the University of Pittsburgh in April 2011. She presented a paper as part of a panel entitled, "A Decent Democracy? The Italian Political System Seen from Abroad."

## Outstanding Conversations

Direct personal contact and the encouragement of friendships and collegial relationships are a hallmark of USAC programs as a way to immerse USAC students more fully in their host cultures. Conversation partners, buddies, and "intercambios," are formally and informally established in many of our programs. Recently, these kinds of connections and conversations have been particularly fruitful. In [Torino](#), 11 students in the *Italian Conversation* course met with 10 local Italian students in Palazzo Nuovo. The USAC students introduced themselves and asked questions in Italian, while the Italian students did the same in English. It was a happy and active discussion that continues in ongoing email and Facebook exchanges.

Meanwhile, in [Shanghai](#), "One on One" Conversation sessions have been developed where students get set times to directly converse with a language instructor. Students are assigned topics and can only speak in Chinese during the session. These provide the opportunity to have the teacher's undivided attention, to speak personally in their newly-learned language about interesting topics, and adds an extra setting in which students can practice (and get corrected, if needed).

[opportunities in Shanghai, China](#). Spots available include positions with BlueScope Steel International, Fish Industrial Design and Architecture (FIDA), and even in the USAC Shanghai office itself. More information on the new Shanghai internships can be found in the internship course descriptions for [Shanghai Summer 2011](#).



## USAC Interns and Volunteers Shine in Placements Around the World

We continue to be amazed at the work our students accomplish in internships and volunteer work around the world. Just a small sample of what they have been up to recently follows below.

### Accra, Ghana

Interns and volunteers in Accra have been busy. Service Learning students have completed projects at local orphanages, primary schools, and in the community. "This was extremely beneficial," writes student **Nicole Tripoli** (University of Nevada, Reno), "I was able to see firsthand the services offered to children in vulnerable situations, as well as the deficits in those services." Interns worked at [The Chronicle](#) newspaper and at the West African AIDS Foundation. **Cari Dighton** (University of Idaho) was particularly pleased with her placement: "It was great to be able to come home with a lot of published article clips from *The Chronicle*, and other news websites even picked up some of the pieces I wrote!"



### Pau, France

Interns in Pau this semester are working in diverse placements including the Public Library, FNAC, Galeries Lafayette, Pau Golf Course, Bachelet Cheese, free trade store, and the Children's Clinic.

### Torino, Italy

Interns this year worked in arts and culture, tourism and hospitality, architecture,

## USAC Alum Reflects on Reality TV Experience



Puntarenas alum **Kara Vincent** (Purdue University) flew from Costa Rica to Chicago to audition for the reality television series *America's Next Top Model*. She was selected to participate and was featured in the 13th season of the show. Though that season aired in the United States in 2009, it just recently aired in Latin America. In Costa Rica, [The Nacion](#) newspaper recently caught up with the USAC alum to interview her about her reality TV experience. Though she is still interested in modeling, she is focusing now on her studies in International Affairs at the University of Chicago.

## Congratulations, Alex Gonzalez!

Congratulations to **Alex Gonzalez**, beloved staff member in the UNLV International Programs Office, who was named the April Employee of the Month at the university. As UNLV is a member of the USAC Board of Directors, Alex's work impacts study abroad students at UNLV and at many other universities nationwide who receive transcripts via UNLV. And she is, in a word: awesome. Congratulations, Alex!

## USAC Alum Advises Students to Pack "Half-Full"

"For me, having a 'half-full' mindset has been a defining part of studying abroad. It's the idea that we're never complete, always changing and growing, and always remaining humble to the fact that we don't have

education, marketing, communications/writing, e-commerce, finance, and even in a completely-Italian-speaking local salon school! A team of nine students also worked for car designer Tom Tjaarda on marketing, graphic and interior design, and strategic business research projects.

### Alicante, Spain

Interns and volunteers this year in Alicante worked in local schools, at hotels, tourist/travel agencies, and other local organizations. **Rosemary Feikert** (CSU Stanislaus) volunteered at Hospital General de Alicante.

**Erica Wiethorn** (Loyola University) worked at Hotel Rambla. "I like to be exposed to all types of cultures, and at the hotel many people from different countries pass through.

Also, I spend a lot of time with my coworkers which allows me to practice my Spanish for hours at a time and also learn from them about Spain and their customs." **Alyssa Meyer** (Boise State University) interned at Estudio Sacramento, a recording studio in Alicante. "My internship at the recording studio is exactly what my major is geared towards.... I give my opinion on the tracks and help run the equipment. I have loved listening to the various types of bands that I record in the studio."



all the answers or know exactly what is coming next. It's the ideal mindset of the study abroad students that I like spending time with, and the ideal of how the process and experience can change your life." USAC Alicante alum **Steve Hanna** explains why and [how to pack your bag--and, most importantly, yourself--half-full](#) on the USAC website.

The **University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC)** has provided university students with quality study abroad programs for nearly 30 years. USAC is a non-profit, university-based organization with 39 program locations in 24 countries.



### Bilbao, Spain

A cohort of students in both Bilbao and San Sebastián received scholarships for which they were asked to complete a minimum of 30 hours of volunteer community service. In Bilbao, students interned/volunteered at an engineering company, UNICEF, local elementary schools, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, a theatre school and festival headquarters, a pharmacy, a marketing company, the City of Bilbao Tourist Information Center, a publishing company, a NGO devoted to the well-being of children from dysfunctional families, and a medical center specializing in physical rehabilitation and sports medicine. Two students worked for El Centro de Estudios Chinos Lu Xun, a cultural nonprofit organization dedicated to teaching Chinese language and culture in Spain. The Center provides a variety of programs, including all levels of language classes and cultural activities such as calligraphy and painting. **Xian Wang**, a graduate student from CSU Chico, worked with second-generation Chinese immigrants to Spain, who came to the Center to learn about their Chinese heritage, and helped the editor of the Center's magazine to translate and proof articles.