

**Annual Study Center Review
CIEE Study Center at the Universitat de les Illes Balears
Palma de Mallorca, Spain
2008**

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Each summer, program directors write a Study Center Review for each CIEE Study Center program commenting on the previous academic year. The program director writes the review based on input from the CIEE Academic Consortium Board members, resident directors, sending institutions, and student evaluations. Each report is made public on the CIEE website at www.ciee.org.

Program Goals

The program goals are to further develop spoken and written Spanish language skills and to pursue a variety of academic fields within the areas of humanities, business, tourism studies, Spanish literature and language, and social sciences. These goals are accomplished through daily interaction in Palma's business, social, and academic environment, a combination of CIEE language and content courses, and direct enrollment in university courses, living with Spanish-speaking families, class-related excursions, a conversations exchange program, a University volunteer program, and an internship opportunity.

The goals were met during the 2007-08 academic year.

New and Noteworthy

Academic

Spanish Language

Language learning is a central element of the program in Palma de Mallorca. Classes are small and students are given individualized attention. In the fall CIEE offered "Advanced Spanish Business Writing." The class was positively evaluated by all students. In the spring, "Spanish for Students of Business and Tourism" was taught. Most students commented positively about the class and the professor; a few students commented that they were not challenged sufficiently, or the class was too difficult. Nevertheless, these students commented that the professor helped them outside of class and they did learn a good deal during the semester.

Both classes incorporated a new series of readings and exercises leading to an individual final project – the development of a business plan in Spanish. Both semesters, the projects were successful. At the end of the semester, students did an oral presentation, in which they had to act as if they were the owners of the new company. Students used PowerPoint and other tools in order to convince investors to collaborate with the company. The other students voted on the different proposals based on the quality and originality of the presentation, and on the convincing arguments of the student.

Each semester the university offered a language class for Spanish and international students: "Skills and Resources for Oral Communication in Spanish" (fall) and "Text Writing and Composition in Spanish" (spring). CIEE students with a higher level of Spanish were encouraged to enroll in this university class instead of the CIEE language class. These

Universitat de les Illes Balears (UIB) classes work very well for native speakers of Spanish, and they also afford these students more integration into the University.

Community Language Commitment

For the first time this year CIEE students actually signed a language commitment agreement. During orientation, CIEE staff introduced the importance of using Spanish at all times and in different settings, and students were encouraged to use Spanish among themselves. Compared to previous semesters where the agreement was merely verbal, staff did not observe a significant difference in Spanish language usage. As previously, most students have not been able to keep using Spanish among themselves, especially during spring semester when the level of Spanish of the students was lower. Palma and the UIB are small enough for students to make close connections with the locals, the professors, the families, and other international students. Students who take advantage of this opportunity are the ones who feel more positive about the program, and considerably improve their Spanish language proficiency.

This year, the intercultural activities incorporated Spanish students who were enrolled in the UIB "Spanish Syntax" class. Students were able to meet earlier in the semester and activities were spread throughout the semester. In both semesters, staff organized a farewell gathering in which each student cooked a traditional Spanish dish.

In addition, each CIEE student had at least one language exchange partner. These language exchange partners come from the UIB Departments of English, Tourism Studies and Business.

Students participating in an internship are required to use Spanish at all times on the internship site. Company mentors are aware of this requirement and factor this into the student's overall evaluation.

Out of Classroom activities

The Spanish language classes included a number of out of classroom activities including visits to a family owned winery and farm, the home of Fray Junipero Serra, the founder of the missions of California; Sa Nostra, a local bank and its cultural foundation; Palma central market and the 18th century creamery, Can Joan de S'Aigo; and a cooking class.

In spring, the CIEE cooking class became part of the Spanish class. The professor prepared pre-activities, accompanied students to the cooking session, and in the next class session did a series of exercises related to the content of the cooking class. The professor also related also this activity with the projects students were doing with their UIB language exchange partners. This worked well and proved to be an interesting way to work on linguistic development.

Subject Area Courses

A full course load is considered four (13 credits) or five courses (16 credits). Students enroll in a CIEE language course (or, for most advanced students, the university Spanish language class), a CIEE core course, regular university courses, and/or an internship. In the spring, students tend to take more regular university courses. Academic year students during the spring normally enroll in four to five regular university courses.

CIEE Courses

In fall, CIEE offered *Contemporary Spanish Cinema and Literature*, and *Politics and Society*. In spring, CIEE offered: *Palma in the Mediterranean*, *Spanish Politics and Society*, and *Contemporary Spanish Cinema and Literature*. This was the first time that CIEE offered *Palma in the Mediterranean* during the semester, which had been offered only during the summer program.

In the spring, students had a lower level of Spanish and less knowledge of Spanish culture and history than in the fall. Professors teaching CIEE classes commented that they had to lower their expectations in their classes, because more basic concepts had to be introduced before moving to their main content. Since classes were small (no more than five students), professors were able to adapt as needed.

Out of Classroom Activities

In both the fall 2007 and spring 2008 semesters, two field trips provided a practical component to the CIEE courses. In *Spanish Politics and Society*, student attended a lecture on immigration (fall) and a political meeting during Spanish elections campaign (spring). In addition, they had a guided tour of three buildings related to the three cultures that lived together in Palma during Medieval times: Jews, Christians and Muslims. In *Palma in the Mediterranean*, students visited the Cathedral and Mallorca Museum of History and La Granja, a 10th century Cistercian convent converted into a manorial palace, which displays Mallorcan traditions through the centuries. In *Contemporary Spanish Cinema and Literature*, students regularly went to movies with other Spanish students and attended the play "Ay Carmela", during the fall semester.

Direct Enrollment Courses

CIEE maintains a list of courses most appropriate for program students. Syllabi for these regular university courses have been translated into English by staff and are made available to program students. Staff are regularly contacted by UIB for new courses that these faculties believe would be a good fit for CIEE students. CIEE continues to expand the list of courses and have added, most recently, a significant number from the Departments of Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Studies, Physics, Engineering, and International Law.

This year, CIEE students enrolled in regular university courses from the following Departments: Spanish (12), Tourism Studies (8), Business, Marketing & Economics (4), Pedagogy and Psychology (4), and Mathematics (1).

In fall, students enrolled in the following regular university courses:

- *Skills and Resources for Oral Communication in Spanish*
- *Theory and Practice of Drama*
- *Management of Hospitality Corporations*
- *Creative Writing in English: Writing with a Full Palette of Color (taught in English)*

In spring, students enrolled in the following regular university courses:

- *Classical Mythology*
- *Mathematics Methods for Economics III*
- *Literature and Society of Spanish Enlightenment (18th century)*
- *Contemporary Spanish Literature I*
- *Woman and Literature in Spain and Spanish America*
- *Education of Gifted Children*
- *Gender and Society*
- *Introduction to Marketing*
- *Analysis of Financial Operations I*
- *International Economy*
- *International Tourism*
- *Management of Hospitality corporations*
- *History, Art, Literature, and Traditions of Spanish Culture*
- *Text Writing and Composition in Spanish*

Three of the five best evaluated regular classes were from the UIB School of Hospitality Management: *Cultura Europa*, *Management of Hospitality Corporations*, and *Introduction to*

Marketing. The other highly evaluated courses were: *Education of Gifted Children*, and *Skills and Resources for Oral Communication in Spanish*.

There were a small number of student complaints (relations with a professor, content too difficult, etc.) related to course. CIEE staff relayed those, as appropriate, to UIB. University officials continue to be responsive to CIEE concerns.

Out of classroom activities

Some UIB courses require out of classroom activities, especially classes at the School of Hospitality Management and Spanish language courses.

Non-Academic Features

CIEE Orientation

Guardian Angels (UIB students who collaborate with CIEE) helped students during orientation, accompanied CIEE students to activities and outings, and joined CIEE on some program excursions. When regular classes began, CIEE students felt they already knew some students on campus because of the Guardian Angels which made the transition less stressful.

During the second week, CIEE students attended the welcome activities organized by the UIB for international students. (These students are mainly from Europe and Latin America.) Activities included a welcome reception, tapas dinner, excursion to Soller by train, and a guided tour of historic downtown Palma. Volunteer Spanish students joined these activities. This year, CIEE students commented that these initial activities at UIB helped them make friendships that endured throughout the semester.

Cultural Activities/Field Trips

In addition to class activities, students in each semester took part in a wide range of activities and field trips. In the fall semester, these included:

- Bellver Castle, Gothic round castle from the 14th century
- Modernist Museum
- Miró's Museum and Home
- Tour of the historic center of Palma
- Contemporary Art Museum
- Night of Open Museums
- Biking Palma Bay
- Various activities with Spanish students including films, shopping, playing ball games at the beach, playing Spanish table games over dinner, going out to eat tapas
- Outside traditional market with Spanish students
- Thanksgiving at CIEE Housing Coordinator's home, with students, professors and other UIB students
- Roman walls and ruins in Alcudia, Pollença's town and harbour, and views of Formentor's natural park
- Towns of Valldemossa and Deià
- Town of Soller by 1912 train, and Port de Soller by tram, with UIB international students
- Drach caves

In spring, the program offered the same activities and excursions, but substituted or added the following:

- Annual presentation and tasting of Mallorcan wines (special invitation by Spanish Department)
- Lunch at Costa d'en Blanes, cooking traditional dishes with Spanish students
- Horseback riding
- Joined the traditional celebrations of the Day of the Balearic Islands including demonstrations of traditional dances and human castles ("castellers")
- Palma's Half Marathon along the harbour and the coast of Palma: one of the CIEE students ran in the race

Overnight Fieldtrips

Each semester, the program travelled to Madrid, with the Resident Director and a Professor of Art and History. Among other activities, the group visited Museo del Prado, Museo Reina Sofía, the Royal Palace, Parque del Retiro, The Senate, Debod temple, and had a tour of Madrid.

Housing

All students live in homestays, one student per family. Academic year students may opt to share an apartment with Spanish speaking friends, though no students chose this option this year. Students were generally very satisfied with their homestays and commented on how much the families included them in events. There were one or two students who had complaints and staff worked to help resolve them as possible.

Community Engagement and Integration

For-Credit Internship and Community Service Options

Five students participated on in internship organized by the UIB, three in the fall and two in the spring. Three of the internships were in companies used for the first time. Students presented a weekly journal, a final project, an oral presentation at the end of the program, and were required to always speak in Spanish with their colleagues. UIB and CIEE organized a session for final presentations that involved UIB professors, CIEE students and staff. Students commented positively on the close and welcoming attention received by the company mentor, and that the UIB tutors were extremely kind, available and helpful. Given the size of the program, UIB tutors have managed to place students as requested, and in companies in which there were few or no other interns.

Not-for-Credit Community Service/Volunteer Projects

During orientation, CIEE staff explain the volunteer options available but also tell students that these require dedication and often some compromises. Students who were most interested were the same students who ultimately chose internships for credit.

Challenges and Future Directions

Academic

The program has been able to adapt the fall program calendar to be compatible with U.S. universities' calendars (ending before the Christmas holiday). The pre-registration form indicates which classes end in December. Also, the Resident Director establishes email contact with students to complete the pre-registration process prior to arrival and is able to ascertain which students need to leave in December.

Although all students have the requisite Spanish language proficiency, a few students are at lower levels in actually once onsite. Two students this spring presented challenges in this regard this spring. Staff organized a number of tutorials, and because of their own strong dedication, the students were able to succeed, but the situation was not ideal.

Adding additional hours of language classes (60 instead of 40) had a positive impact on student proficiencies. Language improvement was observed not only in the language class, but also in the CIEE courses and with the resident staff. Three students each semester needed tutoring, and each followed staff advice with very good results.

Non-Academic

Every semester, CIEE has experienced problems receiving University student IDs. These IDs are used mainly to access computer labs. In spring, it was even more difficult than in previous semesters: half of the IDs arrived by mid semester, and half of them never arrived. Staff found a temporary solution, obtaining temporary anonymous computer cards that allow students to use computers on campus. Moving ahead, this approach will be used if the problem persists. CIEE is negotiating with the UIB to find faster ways to obtain the IDs.

Some students find it difficult to approach Spanish professors and some times they do not understand the assignments. One student did not take a final exam because she did not understand she needed to. Most UIB professors have been very accommodating. In this case, the professor allowed the student to email a written project from the U.S.

Group dynamics among students during fall and especially during spring, were not always good. Being such a small group, this impacted the dynamics of classes, activities and excursions. There were clear divisions between students who are looking for an immersion study abroad experience and want to take advantage of the many opportunities for meeting Spanish and other international students on campus. The others tended to isolate themselves into a small American student group and go to destinations mainly populated with tourists.

All students have access to computer labs and wi-fi on campus. Some students brought their laptops. In spring, some students complained that they lived in a homestay without internet, while other students lived in homestays with internet access, and that this was a disadvantage for them.

The metro stopped functioning due to a flood in October. Although it was supposed to reopen in January, it did not reopen until July. This created a problem because the buses were saturated and students had longer commutes to their homestays.

Future Directions

In order to address a number of academic and logistical issues, a second registration meeting with each student will be required by the end of the second week of direct enrolment classes. Students will be advised to speak with the professors of the classes they are taking, and to collect syllabi for all the classes, before this second meeting with the Resident Director. During this second appointment, the Resident Director will discuss each class with the student, particularly asking if the has understood the requirements and grading system of the class, if the student is likely to need tutoring support in the class, and if the student understands that the program departure date is on the date of the last final exam.

During the semester, CIEE staff will organize two new sessions on Expectations and Adaptation, and Re-entry. In the first session, various topics will be covered including advice on cultural options of things to do in Palma, and a follow up on some of the orientation topics, such as language partners, relationship with the housing, language commitment, Catalan in Mallorca, and things students can do to meet locals. The objective will be to help students better adapt to the study abroad experience, and to establish a closer relationship between CIEE staff and the students.

Since the number of students participating on the program is small, the housing coordinator has managed to meet frequently and for extended time with each one of the homestay families. If enrolments increase, a group housing orientation session will be held.

Students will receive a temporary UIB computer card during orientation.

Pre-registration forms will include a date by which students need to contact the Resident Director to discuss their course schedule. This is particularly critical for the fall semester. For spring, students will be required to indicate a date by which they need to return to the U.S. for summer obligations.