

**Annual Study Center Review  
CIEE Study Center at the University of Cape Town  
Arts and Sciences Program  
2009**

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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](http://www.ciee.org).

**Program Goals**

The CIEE Study Center at the University of Cape Town provides students with a range of academic and intellectual experiences that enable them to reflect upon the complexities and challenges facing the new South Africa. Through integration in local communities, students become participants in, rather than mere observers of, this dynamic and evolving environment. Through this process, students gain a comprehensive understanding of social relations within South Africa.

Based on feedback from CIEE students and staff, this program successfully met its stated goals in 2008-09. Students were given the opportunity to experience South Africa firsthand through the various academic and co-curricular components of this program.

CIEE was able to expand its capacity for the program in 2008-09 and, as a result, welcomed a record number of students to Cape Town this year. Despite the large size of this program, student feedback suggests that CIEE Cape Town staff did an excellent job of providing top-quality on-site support and personalized attention to the students in both fall 2008 and spring 2009. An overwhelming majority of the students rated this program as “excellent” or “good” and indicated that they would recommend this program to their home school advisors and friends.

**New and Noteworthy**

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Over the past few years, the CIEE Cape Town Arts and Sciences program has become the flagship program for U.S. students interested in studying abroad at the University of Cape Town. The relationship between the University of Cape Town International Academic Programmes Offices (IAPO) and CIEE is very strong, and the past year allowed for a variety of new collaborations between CIEE and UCT staff. There were no major changes to the academic and co-curricular elements of this program in 2008-09, but CIEE made various improvements to the program in an attempt to provide students with a more integrated overall experience and greater opportunities for cultural immersion and reflection. Overall, students in 2008-09 rated the CIEE and UCT components of the program very favorably. Feedback on the CIEE resident staff, program housing, and field trips and excursions was particularly positive. CIEE Cape Town staff successfully met their goal of increased student participation in community engagement projects

this year, and students reported a high level of satisfaction with their volunteer projects in 2008-09.

### **Academic**

The CIEE Cape Town Arts and Sciences program allows students to enroll directly in language and subject courses at the University of Cape Town. While most students this year enrolled in courses in the social sciences and humanities, some students selected courses in the natural sciences. CIEE staff encourage students to take courses in a variety of academic departments at UCT and have been pleased to see an increased participation in science courses over the past few years. In 2008-09, CIEE added a new course on intercultural communication called the *Seminar on Living and Learning*. This new course proved very popular with the students. All indications suggest that this course will become an important hallmark of the CIEE Cape Town Arts and Sciences program.

### **Afrikaans and isiXhosa Languages**

As part of their coursework at the University of Cape Town, CIEE recommends that students enroll in an Afrikaans or isiXhosa language course. Students who participated in these language courses had generally good things to say about their experiences, and several reported that the language classes helped them to develop basic communication skills that proved useful in both daily interactions with local students as well as people who they met during their volunteer work.

### **Direct Enrollment Courses**

Students enrolled directly in regular courses at the University of Cape Town. CIEE resident staff encouraged students to select at least one course with a South African focus. At the same time, staff encouraged students to select several courses that did not have a South African focus. This is due to the fact that the South African-themed courses are typically taken almost exclusively by foreign students. In contrast, the other courses have very few foreign students.

Here is a sample list of the courses taken by CIEE students in 2008-09:

#### Fall 2008

African Dance  
African Instruments  
isiXhosa  
Gender and Development  
Politics of Gendered Knowledge  
Culture, Identity and Globalisation in Africa  
Urban Challenges in SA City  
African Literature and Language Studies  
Media Power and Culture  
Political Theory  
SA Political Thought and Tradition  
Third World Politics  
Religion in Africa  
Religion, Ethics and Human Rights  
Anthropology of Power and Wealth  
Race, Class and Gender

#### Spring 2009

African Dance  
African Instruments  
Xhosa  
Roots of Black Identity  
Understanding Gender  
African Language and Literature  
Introduction to the History of Film  
The Media in South Africa  
History- Africa: Making of a Continent  
History- Liberation in Southern Africa  
History- War and Society  
Crime and Deviance in South Africa  
Applied Ethics  
Conflict in World Politics  
Making of the Modern Middle East  
African Traditional Religion  
Medical Anthropology  
Poverty, Development and Globalisation

Most students said that they enjoyed their courses at UCT, although some commented that the majority of the UCT courses were interesting but not especially difficult. The UCT academic system is quite different from the U.S. system, so CIEE staff talk with students during the on-site orientation about the challenges of adapting to the South African academic environment. According to the CIEE Resident Director, students who took the UCT science courses found them very challenging but generally rewarding. Feedback suggests that students in 2008-09 enjoyed their overall experience with UCT courses more than students in the past few years.

### **CIEE Seminar on Living and Learning**

In fall 2008 and spring 2009, CIEE offered students the opportunity to enroll in the new CIEE Seminar on Living and Learning course. This course focuses on intercultural learning and provides students with a series of opportunities, both in and out of the classroom, to develop the insights and skills necessary to interact effectively and appropriately with the local culture. This course was offered as a non-credit optional course in 2008-09, and enrollment was limited to approximately 20 students per semester. The course was taught by the CIEE Cape Town Resident Director, with additional support from the Assistant Resident Director and members of the local community.

Students rated this seminar course very favorably, with several of them commenting that it was a highlight of their overall experience in South Africa. CIEE plans to offer this course for academic credit beginning with the fall 2009 semester. Student and staff feedback suggests that this course provides an important “space” for discussing intercultural issues, reflecting on the students’ experiences in South Africa, and developing skills and strategies for interacting with people from different cultures.

### **Out of Classroom Activities**

UCT science courses often included one-day field trips and weekend excursions. Students had positive things to say about these out-of-class experiences, as they allowed students to explore the unique natural resources and beauty of the Western Cape.

The CIEE Cape Town Seminar on Living and Learning course included an optional excursion to Johannesburg in spring 2009. Students and staff visited the Constitutional Court and the Apartheid Museum and stayed in Soweto. Students and staff reported that this was an extremely beneficial and rewarding experience.

### **Non-Academic**

#### **CIEE Orientation**

CIEE Cape Town students participate in both a special CIEE orientation and portions of the UCT international student orientation. Students rated the CIEE orientation very positively, and most students said that it adequately prepared them for life in Cape Town and their studies at UCT while also providing them with an enjoyable introduction to South African culture. CIEE Cape Town resident staff lead the orientation together with a specially-recruited and trained group of UCT students known as the CIEE SOLMates (Student Orientation Leaders). The SOLMates work closely with the program during orientation and throughout the remainder of the semester. The CIEE Cape Town staff arranged a special training workshop for the SOLMates prior to the start of the fall 2008 semester. During the CIEE orientation, these student leaders are responsible for leading several important small group discussion activities with the CIEE students. These small group interactions allow the local students to talk with the American students about various cultural issues in a comfortable “peer-to-peer” environment.

Despite the large size of the program, CIEE is continually attempting to create smaller group activities to provide maximum support for program participants. Several students this year commented that CIEE provided much more support and a better overall orientation than any other program at UCT. The orientation successfully balances important issues such as health and safety, academics, and cultural adjustment with fun activities designed to introduce students to local communities and resources around Cape Town.

### **Cultural Activities/Field Trips**

The CIEE Cape Town Arts and Sciences program includes a variety of cultural activities, field trips, and excursions each semester. CIEE Cape Town staff have restructured some of the activities to include more time for discussion and reflection. The goal is to have students think more carefully and reflect more about their experiences and time in South Africa. Results suggest that these changes worked well in 2008-09, as students had very positive things to say about the program's activities and excursions. One of the highlights in both fall 2008 and spring 2009 was the CIEE Ocean View homestay weekend.

### Day or Evening Activities

CIEE staff arrange various local activities throughout the semester. Many of these are open to the entire group, while other activities require students to sign-up in advance. Here is a list of some of the day and evening activities arranged by CIEE in 2008-09:

- Robben Island
- Rugby at Newlands
- Soccer
- The students get to understand the racial dynamics within sports in South Africa. Rugby has a very strong white support base, while soccer has a very strong black support base.
- "Mirror Mirror"
- Students and staff attended this play that is a satire that deals with the importance of keeping government accountable for its actions. CIEE arranged for the students to meet with the playwright after the performance. He talked about protest art in the "New South Africa."
- Wine tasting
- This popular event introduces students to the SA wine industry through cultural and historical lenses, as they learn about the impact that the wine industry has had on the country's history, racial relations, and land issues.
- Township Tours
- Various UCT sporting events
- Guest lectures by prominent South African leaders at the Center for Conflict Resolution
- River rafting
- Sea Kayaking
- Group dinners at South African themed restaurants
- Music concert in the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens

CIEE staff continue to work with the SOLMates (Resident Assistants) to develop more post-excursion/field trip reflection activities. This includes making the student assistants more familiar with the CIEE Cape Town program learning goals and helping them to foster more discussion and reflection within individual CIEE-managed houses.

### Overnight Fieldtrips

Every semester, CIEE Cape Town organizes a homestay weekend in Ocean View, a marginalized community that was resettled during the Apartheid period. This CIEE excursion is a defining point in the semester for many of the students. Students spend the weekend living with Ocean View families and have the opportunity to learn firsthand about this vibrant community and the struggles and successes of its residents. A significant number of students in both fall 2008 and spring 2009 rated this homestay weekend as one of the most rewarding and important parts of the overall CIEE program. Many students developed strong bonds with their host families and returned to Ocean View independently on several occasions later in each semester.

As previously mentioned in this report, the CIEE Cape Town Seminar on Living and Learning included an optional multi-day excursion to Johannesburg. Students rated this excursion very positively. CIEE will consider making this a regular program option in future years, as it allows students to contrast and compare two very different South African cities (Johannesburg and Cape Town) and learn firsthand about the challenges of life in the Soweto township.

### **Housing**

The CIEE Cape Town Arts and Sciences program offers students three housing choices: UCT residence hall, CIEE-managed houses, and CIEE homestays. Here is an approximate breakdown of the housing choices during the previous year:

#### Fall 2008

UCT Residence Hall: 40%  
CIEE Houses: 55%  
Homestays: 5%

#### Spring 2009

UCT Residence Hall: 28%  
CIEE Houses: 64%  
Homestays: 8%

Students rated the CIEE housing very favorably during both fall 2008 and spring 2009. Each housing option has a distinct set of potential advantages and disadvantages, but most students this year felt satisfied with their housing and the housing support provided by CIEE resident staff and student assistants.

Students who lived in the residence hall were satisfied with the high level of cultural integration this housing option provided. Students in the residence hall shared 2-3 room suites with local and other international students. The dormitory staff and students organized a variety of activities and social gatherings throughout each semester, and many CIEE students commented on the positive sense of community that exists there.

Students who lived in CIEE-managed houses were generally very happy with the quality of their accommodations. In order to help provide an additional layer of support and enhanced cultural integration, one CIEE SOLMate (Student Orientation Leader) lives in each CIEE house as a Resident Assistant. These RAs helped monitor the house environment, reported problems to CIEE resident staff, and assisted students with various personal and cultural issues. The CIEE-managed houses are located in neighborhoods close to the UCT campus, allowing for easy access to campus activities as well as local supermarkets, restaurants, and cafes.

Students who chose the homestay option reported that they were very satisfied with the cultural integration opportunities that this option provided. They generally got along well with their South

African hosts. Homestays provide students with a superior cultural immersion experience and the opportunity to get a firsthand look into South African society and the daily lives of local families.

## **Community Engagement and Integration**

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### **For-Credit Internship and Community Service Options**

This program does not offer a formal for-credit internship option, although it does allow students to do community based research through a CIEE Independent Study course. Most students who are interested in doing for-credit internship work select the CIEE Cape Town Service-Learning program. This program has developed quite successfully over the past few years and provides students with a rigorous academic service-learning experience that goes far beyond the volunteer projects that the CIEE Cape Town Arts and Sciences and most other “service-learning” programs offered by other organizations in Cape Town. Please see the Annual Study Center Reviews and ACB Evaluation Reports for the CIEE Cape Town Service-Learning program for more details.

### **Not-for-Credit Community Service/Volunteer**

Over the past several years, CIEE Cape Town staff have increased the range of volunteer and community engagement activities available to CIEE students. Changes were made to the volunteer program in 2008-09 to provide better overall support for volunteer activities. CIEE has a dedicated Community Engagement Office with two CIEE staff who support community-based activities for the CIEE Cape Town Service-Learning and Arts and Sciences programs.

This year, staff reported that approximately 98% of the students each semester attended the initial CIEE volunteer information session and tours of the various project sites. It is impressive to note that more than 80% of the students both semesters engaged in on-going community volunteer projects throughout the semester.

Many students commented that their volunteer projects in local communities were a highlight of their time in South Africa.

CIEE has worked closely with the UCT-based SHAWCO (Students’ Health and Wellness Centres Organisation) for many years. As CIEE enrollments have increased, many of the SHAWCO projects have reached capacity. In order to provide a greater range of volunteer projects and increase the overall volunteer program capacity, CIEE Cape Town staff have worked diligently over the past few years to expand their local volunteer networks. Therefore, CIEE now offers students the opportunity to work with SHAWCO projects as well as other schools, clinics, and organizations throughout the greater Cape Town area. Here is a sample list of the organizations that hosted CIEE Cape Town volunteers in 2008-09:

- **The Ark**  
This organization is a Christian-based safe home for homeless people. The organization includes a school, daycare center, a sewing room, and a church. CIEE students helped children with homework and activities. One student this year also worked closely with senior citizens at this organization. The organization’s leader has been very pleased with the support from CIEE and its students over the past few years. CIEE volunteers help lower the staffing and teaching costs for the organization and provide the people with valuable educational and social support.

- **Baphumelele Children's Home**  
This children's home hosts a large number of CIEE student volunteers each semester. Students continue to comment very positively on their experiences with this organization.
- **Emasithandane Children's Home**  
This is an after-school program that hopes to develop into a full-fledged home for underprivileged children. CIEE students provide after-school support and assistance with various educational and social activities.
- **Brooklyn Chest TB Hospital**  
Students volunteer to read and talk with children several hours each week. This year's group reported that the experience was very uplifting and memorable.
- **LEAP School**  
This is a high school established to help South Africa produce more scientists, especially from the previously disadvantaged groups in South Africa. CIEE students assist with the Life Orientation sessions at the school. They also assist as educational tutors within the school and its associated community training hall. CIEE students are also involved with the school's cultural activities, including playing chess, doing traditional dances, and participating in poetry readings, singing, or drama. LEAP remains one of the most popular and rewarding volunteer opportunities for CIEE students.
- **Scalabrini Center of Cape Town**  
This is a meeting place for refugees who are trying to adjust to life in South Africa. CIEE students assist with a variety of on-going projects, including helping with educational curriculum development (language training, computer training) and assisting refugees to search the newspapers and internet for possible employment. Some students this year helped teach computer skills' classes and English classes. CIEE was also instrumental in helping to arrange food and clothing packages for newly arrived refugees at the center.
- **Lawrence House**  
The Lawrence Children's Home is part of the Scalabrini Centre. It provides housing and support services for refugee children age 6-18. All students from this home attend local schools. CIEE students volunteered to help children with their homework assignments and served as tutors. This year's CIEE group also collaborated with the children at this home to create a cookbook. This was based on a photography project that a CIEE student had arranged at this organization several semesters ago. CIEE students and the children had a wonderful time working together on the cookbook, as it included group cooking activities and photography.

In addition to these organizations, CIEE students volunteered with a number of other local organizations in 2008-09. These included a variety of SHAWCO projects, the Township Baseball Academy, a township debate club, and Ilitha Labantwana (Place of Safety).

Both CIEE resident staff and students had many positive things to say about the program's volunteer opportunities this year. CIEE staff will continue to work with students during orientation to explain the importance of committing to an organization for the entire semester, as several students dropped out of the volunteer projects mid-way through the semester as they became busier with their academic work. All in all, however, this was one of the most successful

years for volunteer activities within the CIEE Cape Town Arts and Sciences program. Many of the students this year and in recent years have returned to the U.S. and organized fundraising campaigns to help the organizations with which they volunteered during their time on the CIEE program.

## **Challenges**

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### **Academic**

Overall, the academic components of the CIEE Cape Town Arts and Sciences program continue to receive positive feedback from the students. Students can choose from a wide range of academic courses at the University of Cape Town. CIEE has added additional time during the on-site orientation to help students with course advising and registration issues. Students in 2008-09 were generally pleased with the courses that they took at UCT.

One of the biggest challenges to the academic program is that some of the more popular South African-themed courses are struggling to accommodate the large number of foreign students at UCT. As part of the overall academic advising strategy, CIEE staff are encouraging students to select courses from a more diverse group of academic departments at the university. This has helped some of the CIEE students to escape the “foreign bubble” that can exist in some of the courses at UCT.

### **Non-Academic**

Although students are generally very satisfied with the program’s housing options, many advisors and parents have expressed genuine concern over safety and security issues in Cape Town. In order to address the safety and security realities of life in South Africa, CIEE has invested a significant amount of time and resources into housing security and staff training over the past three years. Security features at the CIEE-managed houses include security guards, perimeter fencing, alarm systems (including panic alarms), security gates, and burglar bars. The addition of local student Resident Assistants over the past few semesters has been perhaps one of the most important factors leading to an overall decrease in the number of security incidents involving CIEE students. The local students live with the CIEE students and can thus provide a peer support network that helps remind the American students about the necessary safety precautions that CIEE staff discuss during orientation and throughout the semester. It is important to note that there have been no violent crimes against CIEE students in recent years. Incidents have been limited to petty crime such as theft of personal items.

Regular house meetings led by RAs and staff have helped provide a helpful venue for giving students important reminders and discussing key issues involving health and safety. CIEE staff review housing security every semester and make necessary adjustments to houses in order to help minimize the likelihood of security incidents.

In the past three semesters, a few housing security incidents have resulted from CIEE students hosting large social gatherings at the houses. As a result, CIEE Cape Town staff implemented a new policy that prevents students from hosting large parties. While small gatherings are still fully acceptable, the goal is to minimize the likelihood that uninvited guests will join a large social event at the houses or that a guest or student will leave a security gate open at the end of the evening. Although students this year were clearly not happy about this new policy, most indicated that they understood the rationale behind the decision and that they were still able to have fun gatherings with a small number of friends in the houses.

## **Future Directions**

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The CIEE Cape Town Arts and Sciences program had a very successful year in 2008-09, and overall student feedback indicates that this program provides a very strong academic and co-curricular experience for all of the student participants. Students continue to rate the CIEE on-site staff as “excellent,” and there is almost unanimous student support for the excursions, volunteer projects, and other elements of the program. As a result, no major changes are planned for 2009-10.

In order to help improve the on-site support for students and overall management of the CIEE Cape Town Study Center, CIEE added three new staff positions in 2008-09. This includes a new Financial and Administrative Coordinator, an additional Program Assistant, and a new Residence Life Manager. The Residence Life Manager was hired to help improve the overall housing program and to work with the other staff on enhancing the students services aspects of the program. This individual has a background in campus security and residence life, and his expertise with local security issues has already helped CIEE to make some important improvements to a few of the CIEE-managed student houses. With an expanded staff and the addition of some additional office space within the UCT international office, CIEE anticipates an even more successful year in 2009-10.

Finally, CIEE will launch a new South African Studies Summer Program in summer 2010. This program will combine an innovative core course on South Africa with an integrated community engagement and service component. The program will be managed and led by experienced CIEE staff from both the CIEE Cape Town and CIEE Stellenbosch programs.