

Who says Science, Math and Engineering students can't study abroad?



At IFE, a semester of research is tailored to a student's requirements.

From IFE's vantage point, it seems that most biology majors speak French! But that is probably because those that do, flock to IFE as one of the few options where they can pursue science and research on one hand and language and culture on the other, all in the same intensive semester. And not only do they not fall behind in their science education, they even tend to find they got further ahead due to exposure to high level work and techniques in their field.

Too numerous to describe in detail, the experiences of science, math and engineering students at IFE do offer, however, some surprising data in the aggregate. Over the last seven semesters, 16 students in the Paris Field Study and Internship program – or more than 10% of total enrollment – have been majors in biology, biochemistry, public health, engineering, computer science, physics, civil engineering or clinical psychology. Eleven chose to pursue research in a laboratory setting, joining the scientific staff at institutes like the Center for Biomedicine at the College de France, the Neuroscience Institute of the Pierre and Marie Curie University (Paris), the Curie Institute, INSERM (French national research institute for biomedicine), the Space and Astrophysics Institute of the University of Paris/Orsay, and others. Alternatively, computer scientists and engineers have chosen to work in the private sector, epidemiologists in public health agencies and research centers, and pre-med students in social medicine or international organizations. Some have used this opportunity to combine interests: plants and math, biology and environmental studies, medicine and literature, public health and anthropology.

Often, IFE has arranged laboratory placement prior to a student's departure from campus so that home science departments can sign off on the laboratory, the scientists with whom their student will be working, and the nature of the project. Similarly, IFE works with students well upstream, and their academic advisors, to ensure that a student's placement and research will dovetail with their academic requirements and bear credit for their major, if desired.

For students who speak French, IFE speaks science and math!

For French NGO, civil rights are not the berries



Reporters without Borders denounces Blackberry decision to share information with British law enforcement

Reporters without Borders (or "RSF" as it is widely known) regularly hosts IFE interns interested in journalism, human rights, and/or video production. As recently as this past Spring Daniel S., a budding vidéaste, worked on video stories generated and collected by RSF while researching and analyzing the structure and content of RSF's visual communication. In August, RSF itself made the news when it revealed that the Canadian firm RIM, maker of the BlackBerry cell phone, had agreed to provide data to British police in the wake of recent rioting in the UK. BlackBerry instant messages are encrypted in a way that makes them difficult to track by anti-riot forces and therefore a favorite tool for organized mayhem and pillaging. While taking seriously the need to restore public

order, RSF nonetheless is equally concerned by the future impact on civil rights of this Western world precedent, including the right to privacy and the right to share information. Noting a similar precedent, the Guardian observed that the decision by the MI5 to participate in the post-riot investigations is a first for this body normally devoted to national security, terrorists threats and the like, with the police are charged with maintaining public order.

RSF also criticized British PM David Cameron's declared intention to survey social media more closely, even though these media were little used by rioters and, even more vehemently, the decision by British television to turn over to the police all footage filmed during the unrest. In what could be the NGO's slogan, RSF denounced moves that "reduce the press to an auxiliary of the forces of order".

At the least, these debates make for interesting internships!

The envelope please: the next President of the French Republic is...



IFE students watch (and get involved?) as France chooses a President

On Sunday April 22, 2012 French voters will go to the polls to choose their favorite among what is typically a long list of candidates. Two weeks later, on May 6, they will return to choose between the two finalists of round one. Between now and then, a kaleidoscope of posturing, positioning and promulgating will slowly sort itself out as a picture of the candidates of the major parties emerges. IFE students engaged in the Field Study and Internship preparatory session, currently underway in Paris and Strasbourg, are observing, among other aspects, the Socialist Party's attempt to organize the first ever "primary" in French party politics as a method for designating their champion. The Greens have opted for coalition (Europe-Ecology) and even union, although there is a long and splintery path from here to April. The UMP (center-right) has the incumbent, but there are nonetheless rumblings of discontent in that quarter too, as Nicolas Sarkozy's penchant for controversy may be coming home to roost.

All in all, popular dissatisfaction is high, as it is elsewhere in Europe, and is making for some fascinating bedfellows. Many voices are calling out, few will be chosen, but one thing is certain: the process offers high political theatre for those who like such. Students with a political bent, and with some French already under their belt, would do well to think about enrolling in IFE Paris or Strasbourg for the Spring semester and requesting a placement somewhere in the political process.

European economic governance: smoother sailing may require a better rudder



IFE's Belgian Board Chair, Pierre Defraigne, speaks out in favor of increased European governance in response to crisis.

Pierre Defraigne, Executive Director of the Madariaga – College of Europe Foundation in Brussels (<http://www.madariaga.org/>), who also chairs the board of directors of IFE's new Brussels structure, issued the following letter recently, which encapsulates a certain body of current thinking in Europe.

A common market and a common currency are per se major advances for Europe, but since their inauguration Europe's social model has noticeably deteriorated, stirring dangerous tensions between on one hand the world of work, salaried and

independent, and on the other hand institutional Europe. The current preoccupation with strengthening European economic governance is to be applauded, but only if it does not cause Europe to drift toward deflation and rising unemployment.

In order to head toward full employment, the key to the European social model, by emphasizing productivity and household demand, the EU must attack its twin deficiencies in financial regulation/supervision and fiscal harmonization. At the same time it must increase the overly modest EU budget and resolve the lack of common policy in energy, innovation and defense, which are the pillars of a de-carbonized industrial policy for Europe and of an increased weight of Europe in the world.

Finally, in order to avoid a deepening chasm between Brussels and European public opinion, the members of the Euro-zone must sign a pact on social policy, since the current level of heterogeneity among the 27 member-States of the Union is unlikely to permit any such agreement soon.

BRIEFLY

IFE CONNECTS... IFE now has an institutional Facebook site, containing news and notes from IFE, its former students, current students, partner schools, host organizations and anyone else in the IFE universe. Please visit "IFE-FRENCH-FIELD-STUDY-AND-INTERNSHIP-PROGRAMS" and "aimer" IFE!

IFE DISCONNECTS... IFE joins growing concern that sustained Internet use can impede learning abroad. In addition to increasing the vehemence of its warnings to students of this potential trap, exhorting them to stoke their intellectual curiosity to the point where it leads them out of the comfortable and into discovery, IFE has also instituted three professionally-led coaching sessions, as part of preparation for an internship in another culture. Led by a "coach" experienced in preparing young people for the professional milieu, this training component puts students in situations and role plays to ready them for working in another culture. Going further, the sessions lead students to assess and improve their own inter-cultural openness and ability to connect with their surroundings in meaningful ways. Which includes disconnecting from a virtual world elsewhere.