
=RAINBOW SIG NEWSLETTER=

NAFSA: Association of International Educators, Spring 2005, Vol. 11, No. 2

Letter From Our Co-Chairs on upcoming NAFSA Conf. in Seattle...

Dear Friends,

As you are all well aware, the Annual NAFSA Conference is fast approaching! If you are planning on being in Seattle, we encourage you to participate in as many of the SIG functions or GLBT related sessions as possible, a few of which are listed below. Above all, we encourage you to attend the SIG Business Meeting (1:45 – 3:00 pm) and the Rainbow SIG Reception (6-8 pm), both on Wednesday, June 1st.

An email will be sent shortly before the conference with an invitation to the reception and all the details for our Business Meeting and the SIG Information Table. We will be asking for volunteers to staff the table, usually near the registration area, so please think about giving us an hour or two. In the meantime, please let us know if you have any questions, and we will look forward to seeing you again (or meeting you for the first time) very soon!

Best wishes and safe travels,
Terry and Jan
Co-Chairs, NAFSA Rainbow SIG

Terry Crouch (tbcchicago@yahoo.fr)
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- Baltimore NAFSA Business Mtg. Minutes
- Study Abroad in Latin America: Student Perspectives...
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Calendar of Sessions, Meetings and Reception

Tuesday: (May 31, 2005)

1:00pm - 2:30pm – SIG Leadership Forum
(Sheraton Hotel - Douglas Room)

2:30pm -3:45pm – Encouraging
Study Abroad: Support Services for
Underrepresented Students

2:30pm -3:45pm – Region VI Highlight: We
Don't Have Those Where I Come From—
GLBT Issues in the Intercultural Context

4:00pm - 5:30pm – Rainbow SIG Advisory
Board Meeting (Sheraton Hotel, Lobby)

Wednesday: (June 1, 2005)

9:15am – 10:15am – Sex and the Single
Student: Media, Sexual Stereotypes, and
Student Advising

1:30pm – 3:00pm – Rainbow SIG Annual
Business Meeting (Aspen Room in the
Sheraton-Seattle)

6pm-8pm – Rainbow SIG Annual Reception
(The Rosebud Café on Capitol Hill; 719 East
Pike Street)

Thursday: (June 2, 2005)

1pm- 2:15pm – Strategies for Student
Recruitment, with Emphasis on
Underrepresented Groups

Friday: (June 3, 2005)

11:15am-12:30pm – HIV/AIDS and
International Education: The Impact and the
Issues

Impressions from an American Overseas in Spain

Submitted by: Eero Jesurun, CIEE-Madrid

Matthew Beaufait, originally from Michigan, is a certified English teacher and EF Tours group leader in Spain. Matthew conceded to the following interview about his experiences working in international education.

1. Please explain your job responsibilities as an EF Tours group leader and if you can be “out” professionally to the accompanying teacher and student groups from the US? Please explain why you decide to be “out” or not when leading a group.

As an on-site tour leader for US high school student education trips in Europe, I organize short term itineraries that include orientation, meals, hotel, city guides, transportation, etc. while also coordinating the logistics with the accompanying teachers (who often do not speak the local language). Part of my obligation on the EF tour is to assist with any type of personal emergency such as illness, theft, dealing with issues such as culture shock, etc. Being “out” to the teachers, on the whole, is neither a priority nor is it discussed up front unless I am asked by a teacher. In the six years that I have done this job, no one has directly questioned my sexual orientation in the work context. Their main concern (as well as mine) is that the tour runs smoothly and that the tour leader is competent and professional. On numerous occasions, I have been able to share stories about my private life with students and teachers without any repercussions, but I also judge the group dynamics and determine which groups would be accepting of me doing this.

2. Which countries did you visit in Europe and Africa in the last two years and how did you find that you were treated as a group of Americans? Did you encounter any individual homophobic incidents (verbal, physical, etc.), — please explain if you think this is an issue of concern or not?

I have led tours and visited Spain, France, Italy and Greece. In general, the students have not experienced any anti-American or homophobic attitudes with the exception of a few isolated incidents. I personally have not encountered any problems with being gay on the job in these countries.

3. Having lived overseas for over ten years, what is your impression of American high school students from the US and their attitude towards homosexuality and sexual orientation?

In general, my experience with young Americans on these tours is that they have quite a liberal attitude towards sexual orientation issues. They are open with their ideas and about themselves when travelling. Sometimes, it depends on what part of the States they are living as some regions tend to be more conservative than others. Overall, I am quite impressed with the overall acceptance among American high school students regarding sexuality and dating. Because of the short term education experience combined with the excitement of overseas travel could explain why these students tend to be more open and accepting of other cultures and lifestyles.

4. Can you give us an example of leading a group where one of the students was gay? What was the experience for you (did you have to advise the student differently, were there any special circumstances that required a different leadership approach, etc.)?

I have led EF tour groups where I suspected that at least one of the participants was gay, but they have never told me this up front. On one particular occasion, while in staying in a Madrid hotel near the gay neighborhood of Chueca, a student asked me if I knew if this area existed where he wanted to take a walk and investigate on his own. Albeit this neighborhood is a safe

area of the city, I did warn him to be careful. He smiled and said that he knew what he was doing. On other occasions, I have had very effeminate acting boys in the group who were not treated any differently by their peers in the group.

5. In addition to being a tour leader, what is it like to teach English as a gay man from the US in Spain?

The majority of my students know about my homosexuality and for them it is not an issue. I have been teaching many of them for several years and naturally the subject of do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend comes up. I am very open with my students regarding my sexual orientation and they are equally up front and direct with me. I think this is a Spanish cultural trait that I have picked up – being up front when it comes to communication and also about my sexual orientation. As a teacher, I never was confronted with any homophobic attitudes and it has been quite the opposite – possibly because I teach in a large European capital and Madrid has a fairly progressive image when it comes to issues of sexual orientation. I some times worry that in the US I would have problems as a high school teacher if I were to publicly be “out” as a gay man.

Rainbow SIG Advisory Board Members 04-05

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Calling All SIG Members! Volunteer in Seattle!!

Interested in volunteering for the SIG at NAFSA? No prior experience is necessary. Just be friendly and available to answer questions. And it's a great way to network!

The Rainbow SIG needs volunteers to help staff the SIG information table during the conference—usually near the registration area and the message boards. We will provide things to give to people who walk by like SIG brochures, Rainbow flag stickers, and invitations to our reception. You will also have a supply of SIG logo pins which you can sell for \$5.00.

We request volunteers for a minimum of a 1 hour block - longer blocks are wonderful!

The SIG table hours will be:

- **Tuesday 12:00-5:00**
- **Wednesday 8:00-5:00** (except during our Annual Business meeting)
- **Thursday 8:00-5:00**
- **Friday 8:00-12:00**

Please email Jan Kieling <kieling@berkeley.edu> ASAP with tentative or confirmed blocks of time.

Studying Abroad in Latin America... Thoughts from Two Students

Valparaíso, Chile

by Jeff Kosbie, Brandeis University

Being gay could seem to limit the choices for study abroad locations, especially amongst the predominantly Catholic Spanish-speaking countries. Although I was concerned about social tolerance, I decided to make these concerns a minor issue in choosing a study abroad site. In fact I chose a Catholic University in Chile. I decided I'd just have to make some adjustments for a semester.

Having chosen my study abroad location, I did try to learn a little about gay rights in Chile. All I found were book facts, which were good background, but did little to tell me about daily life beyond the conservative reputation of the country. Actually the most important preparation I did was being completely forthright with my concerns in my correspondence with the study abroad program. Most significantly, on my housing placement form I wrote that the most important thing was to be placed with a family that was tolerant.

After arriving in Chile, the first week was shaky and awkward. I did not have the same confidence as my freshman year of college where I was out to my whole hall on move-in day. But after that first week I decided that I had to go with the decision I had made before leaving home: I could adapt how openly I presented myself for a semester, but I could not go back to being completely in the closet. Definitely easier than I expected. Most of my friends are, for better or for worse, the Americans on my program (who are all pretty accepting). Time, language, and cultural constraints make befriending Chileans difficult. The upshot is that my sexuality will likely never be an issue that comes up with the few Chilean friends I have made.

My only hesitation was with my family: although they knew that I'm gay, there was never any mention of sexuality. It turns out even that was in deference to my silence. When I recently mentioned a research paper on the gay rights' movement to my host mom, she told me about how attitudes are slowly changing in Chile, stressing that she believes we're all equal before God and adding that she has raised her kids to respect everyone.

This is when I realized just how important that housing form was. She told me that most host families do not accept gay students, but before I arrived she told everyone in the house that I'm gay and that she expected no problems. Afterwards I felt the warmth of "I just had the coming out talk with my parents who said they still love me anyways," except this time it didn't include the "it's just a phase!" Oh yeah, and as to that research paper, I found a recent survey showing that 57.9% of Chilean high school students think that a gay student should not have to hide their sexuality.

In all, I'm very happy with my decision to study in Valparaíso. I've yet to visit any gay bars or clubs—which I'm told exist, but are very discrete, often with unmarked doors—but I didn't come here to be gay. I'm here to learn a language and a culture. And when I do get to know the gay community here, it'll be a very different experience because of the more discrete nature. Of course, a Chilean pololo (boyfriend) would be nice, but I can do without that.

CALL FOR NEWS ITEMS:

If you have comments, NAFSA conference updates, student articles, etc., please send them to the newsletter. We would like to include both perspectives from international students who are in the US as well as study abroad program participants. Please send any news items articles to Eero Jesurun at: Ejesurun@ciee.org or J. Scott Van Der Meid at: svanderm@brandeis.edu

Buenos Aires, Argentina

By Robert Marx, Brandeis University

For many, the desire to study in a Latin American country might seem to run in direct conflict with the desire to embrace an openly queer lifestyle – conservative, predominantly-Catholic countries may not have the best reputations for open acceptance of alternative lifestyles and non-traditional gender roles. Although I took that into account, I still felt that studying in South America would be the best way to improve my Spanish, as well as an amazing opportunity to open my eyes to a new way of life and a different culture. After a bit of research, I decided that a large, metropolitan city would be the best way to combine my desire to study in Latin America with my open sexual orientation. Larger cities are typically more accepting of differences, and there is normally a larger queer community. Buenos Aires turned out to be the intersection of these otherwise competing objectives; a huge, sprawling city filled with diversity, colorful nightlife, and monolingual Spanish-speakers.

Once I had decided on Buenos Aires, I knew that I needed to choose a program that, beyond being queer-friendly, was well organized and effective in integrating its participants into Latin American culture. The Institute for Study Abroad at Butler University's Argentine University Program, looks as good on paper as it does in the flesh – I have been able to enroll directly in Argentine universities, attend a two week orientation program to help me to adjust to cultural differences, and has been incredibly sensitive to my needs. As a Queer student, I was placed in a host family that was especially accommodating and accepting. Moreover, the program has an amazing support system within the organization: I know that, were I to have any problem, I could call upon anyone on staff to help me resolve my issue. It's a great relief to know that, were the worst to happen, I am equipped with the tools to handle it and make the best of the situation.

That having been said, I haven't dealt with any queer-related issues since arriving to Buenos Aires. My host family, the students on the program, and the Argentines I have met have not given me any reason to fear for my safety, acceptance, or ability to live as an openly gay man. I have started to volunteer with SIGLA (Society for Integration of Gays and Lesbians in Argentina) and have found it easy to work with the gay community. Considering all that could have gone wrong and hasn't, my experience in Buenos Aires and my decision to enroll in my program was clearly the right one. I don't mean to say that everything is perfect in Buenos Aires, that everyone embraces the queer lifestyle with open arms and that Argentina is a gay paradise, but I have found a higher level of acceptance and comfort than I ever though possible, especially in a traditionalist, conservative country.

Multicultural Diversity and Education Abroad

Anthony Ogden, of the Education Abroad office at Pennsylvania State University, has developed a series of brochures addressing multicultural diversity and education abroad. Covering five topics (race/ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation and disability issues), each brochure provides resource information and encourages reflection on three levels: preparing to study abroad, while living and studying abroad, and bringing the experience home. (Available at <http://www.international.psu.edu>)

- *Gender Issues and Study Abroad*
- *Individuals with Disabilities and Study Abroad*
- *Race/Ethnicity and Study Abroad*
- *Religion and Study Abroad*
- *Sexual Orientation and Study Abroad*

Minutes: Rainbow SIG Annual Business Meeting – Annual NAFSA Conference in Baltimore

Wednesday, May 26, 2004
1:45-3:00 PM

The meeting opened with a reading of the mission statement for the Lesbigan SIG; the name was changed to Rainbow SIG in 2002. This was followed with an introduction of the officers and advisory board members.

New attendees were welcomed. They were informed of the newly revised membership brochure and new member guide as an introduction to the SIG and its purpose.

The co-chairs, Jacqueline Bedard and Terry Crouch reviewed the activities of the SIG over the past year. Much of their work the past year has been guided by the brainstorming sessions that were held during the annual business meeting in Salt Lake City in 2003. New initiatives included the development of a SIG lapel pin, the revisions of the brochure and increased communication with NAFSA. Specifically NAFSA was asked if an introduction to the various SIGs could be included in the new member orientation. The response was no, due to already high demands on the limited time available in new member orientation. NAFSA was also asked if SIG mission statements could be included in the Conference Program. The request was too late for inclusion in the current program, but this will be a feature of conference programs in the future.

In addition to these new initiatives, the SIG continued to pursue programming at the regional level through having members organize SIG events and SIG related sessions at regional conferences. The SIG website also continued to see development and growth. A link was added to the website to facilitate subscribing to the LISTSERV.

Following the year in review by the co-chairs, minutes from the 2003 Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City were distributed and approved. Approval of the minutes was followed by several questions about how we might increase participation in the SIG by non-U.S. NAFSA members. One area where this

would be particularly helpful is on the advisory board. Members were encouraged to identify and nominate people to participate on the advisory board. Maintaining a representation of diverse voices within the AB was identified as an important aspect of governing the SIG.

Kathleen Sideli offered an update regarding the SIG website. The site has been housed at IU for the past nine years. In order to assist with management of the site a web content manager was appointed. Specific work has been done to make the website more student-friendly. However, more can still be done. One area that was targeted for expansion was the section devoted to international student issues. Small groups brainstormed ideas for increasing the information provided in this section.

Susan Carty provided the membership report. The SIG maintains a current mailing list of 122 people and represents 10 different countries. She typically keeps members on the list for 2 years recognizing that someone may miss a conference and not have the opportunity to renew their membership every year. She then distributed forms for membership renewal and passed an envelope to collect membership donations for this year.

The financial report was read by treasurer Rick Russo and approved by the members.

Eero Jesurun spoke about the newsletter and talked about the need for members to send in things that might be of general interest to the SIG. Specifically he asked for personal and/or student experiences for inclusion in future newsletters. We then had a brief discussion about making the newsletter electronic, or continuing to mail hard copies. The general consensus was that we would begin distributing the newsletter via e-mail with the Fall 2004 issue.

We then proceeded with the election of officers for the 2004-05 year. The available positions and nominations were:

Co-chair – *Jan Kieling*
Treasurer – *Rick Russo*
Membership Coordinator – *Susan Carty*
Newsletter Editor – *J. Scott Van Der Meid & Eero Jesurun*
Listserv Manager – *Daniel Soto*
Web Content Manager – *Jim Daniel*

Nominations were open to the floor and closed. The nominated slate was then approved by a voice vote. Following the election, Terry expressed thanks on behalf of the SIG for the work done by outgoing co-chair Jacqueline Bedard.

A call was made for individuals who would be interested in participating on the SIG advisory board. It was explained that this group served in an advisory capacity to the co-chairs and did most of its communication via e-mail discussion. Several new people volunteered to participate and others were encouraged to contact one of the SIG co-chairs if they were interested in joining this group.

Details regarding the reception time and location were announced and everyone was encouraged to attend.

A member of the Local Arrangements Committee for Seattle encouraged everyone to think about submitting proposals for pre-conference, general and poster sessions. The deadline for submissions is August 2. The application form can be found on-line. We were encouraged to make use of the thematic threads that have been established for the conference in thinking about what sessions and topics we would like to propose.

On a final note, members of the SIG gave a special thank you and recognition to former co-chair Bo Keppel who was attending her final SIG meeting as she has retired from the field. Thank you Bo for all you have helped to contribute to the Rainbow SIG!!

Minutes submitted by Kevin Morrison

The SIG is a membership driven group and depends on volunteers to get active within the SIG! Please contact one of the two co-chairs if you would like to contribute or be more involved.

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The Rainbow Special Interest Group of NAFSA:
Association of International Educators
publishes the Rainbow Newsletter periodically.



RAINBOW SIG 2005-2006 MEMBERSHIP FORM
NAFSA: Association of International Educators

All members pledge to support the goals of the Rainbow SIG: to counsel international students and study abroad students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered; to support gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered professionals in international education; and to combat homophobia, heterosexism and transphobia within NAFSA.

Name _____

Position _____

Institution _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-mail _____

I can assist the SIG by: Doing a session at a local or regional NAFSA Contributing to the newsletter
 Organizing next year's social event Assisting the co-chairs
 Outreach Other (specify) _____

Optional 2005-2006 Activity Fee Enclosed (Suggested amount: \$10 to \$20 to cover newsletter costs, etc.)

Complete and return to Susan Carty, Office of Overseas Study, Indiana University, Franklin Hall 303, Bloomington, IN 47405; E-mail: scarty@indiana.edu. Make checks payable to NAFSA Rainbow SIG.

OR

Visit the Web site <http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/membership.html> to print out a membership form and make a donation through an on-line secure site.