



From atop the Galata Tower, a centuries-old strategic position, Dr. Roy Hammerling points out Byzantine landmarks in Istanbul during a spring 2006 Exploration Seminar. Having informed faculty lead programs abroad is one of Concordia's marks of distinction in international education.

Waves of Distinction

NAFSA Honor Affirms Leadership in International Education

Sitting on the edge of Moscow's Red Square many years ago, an exhausted **Dr. Peter Hovde** wondered if the May Seminar he was leading had made the kind of impact he had hoped it would. Moments after expressing those sentiments privately to a faculty colleague, a student came up to him and said, "Dr. Hovde, I'd like to thank you for changing my life."

Such is the transformative power of Concordia's expansive study abroad programs and longstanding commitment to international education. Similar stories have been shared time

and time again for the last four decades. It's why Concordia is one of only five schools in the country to be honored with the 2006 Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization by NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

Named for the late Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois, the award recognizes innovative and creative efforts in campus internationalization. Concordia will be profiled in NAFSA's "Internationalizing the Campus 2006," a publication produced in partnership with the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.





More than 6,400 Concordia students have traveled to more than 50 countries on May Seminars alone, such as this one to India. Exploration Seminars have sent more than 600 students to 20 countries since they began four years ago.

Ahead of the Curve

It is gratifying, and certainly in the minds of Concordia's international program leaders, a well-deserved honor. "I don't want to sound arrogant, but we're so far ahead of where the leading edge appears to be right now," says Hovde, former longtime director of international education, and author of the award nomination essay submitted to NAFSA. "People at other institutions are just waking up to opportunities we created 30 years ago."

The secret to such sustained success is abundantly clear. "We have a faculty who believes in the importance of international education," says **Dr. Mark Krejci**, vice president for Academic Affairs and dean of the college. "They have been the engine. And the students coming here are more ready than ever to jump on the train."

As Hovde explains it, Concordia's commitment to international education has come in distinctive waves, beginning with the college's inception in 1891, when the focus was on teaching proper English to Norwegian immigrants. The second wave emerged following World War II, with the arrival of international students enticed by 50 percent tuition waivers. In 1968, the third wave — May Seminars Abroad — produced a tide of momentum that led to the fourth and fifth waves, semester study abroad programs in the early 1990s and the recently launched Exploration Seminars.

These waves — culminating with 20 different study abroad programs now offered — have sent a flood of students to other lands. May Seminars alone have produced 6,443 students studying in more than 50 countries on six continents. In just four years, Exploration Seminars have sent 621 students to 20 countries.

Concordia's curriculum continues to evolve toward more effectively integrated internationalization, both in campus classrooms and across the globe. Other popular offerings include World Discovery programs that allow students to design their own semester or year abroad, the international business major and career-shaping internships in cities such as Bangalore, Beijing, London, Mainz, Mexico City, Paris, Pamplona and Segovia. A new global studies major is in place, examining the complex interactions between diverse nations and cultures in an ever-flattening world, as well as each person's responsibility as a global citizen. And last fall the faculty voted on a revised core curriculum that will include required courses in international and global perspectives, and U.S. cultural diversity.

"We're moving toward a stage where international education is integral to the undergraduate experience," says **Dr. Per Anderson**, director of International Education. "It's not an extra; it's fundamental, essential to quality liberal arts. We now have a program that permeates everything and that's huge."

And it really starts with Concordia's famed pre-collegiate program, Concordia Language Villages. Approaching its 45th birthday, Concordia Language Villages annually attracts 11,000 youth to Minnesota from all 50 states and 29 countries for unique immersion learning experiences in 14 languages. Concordia Language Villages also has a strong and rapidly developing international presence with abroad programs in China, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Spain and Sweden.

Influential Impact

Concordia's prominent leadership role in global education has never been more important to its students — or the nation. To that end, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings invited **President Pamela Jolicoeur** to participate in the U.S. University Presidents Summit on International Education held in early January. One of only three Minnesota presidents — and the only Lutheran college president — in attendance, Jolicoeur joined more

than 100 university presidents in dialoguing with the nation's top leaders concerning higher education's role in critical global issues.

In connection with the summit, President Bush outlined the National Security Language Initiative designed to increase the number of people with foreign language skills and indicated he would look at easing visa and data access restrictions for international students and scholars.

"What was conveyed to us is that we are viewed as valuable partners in building the international capacity in our students and drawing (international) students here," said Jolicoeur upon her return from the summit. "The opportunities for Concordia are tremendous. We can further solidify our advantage in this area."

Setting the Standard

Echoing the concerns and opportunities discussed at the summit, the Congress-appointed Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program is pursuing a lofty goal: send one million students to study abroad annually within the next decade. That equates to roughly 50 percent of the undergraduate degrees awarded annually by accredited American colleges and universities.

The U.S. Department of Education reports that only 2 percent of all American students study abroad. Concordia, however, is already on target with 54 percent of its students participating in at least one study abroad program during their four years. In fact, Concordia ranks 10th among baccalaureate institutions in the number of students studying abroad, according to the latest Open Doors survey. Still, the college is aiming higher.

"We want to be in the echelon approaching 100 percent participation," Anderson says. "So we need to think about how we might re-envision the academic program more boldly to meet such a compelling kind of vision." Among the potential options being explored is revamping the current academic schedule to allow for more study abroad opportunities within the academic calendar.

Anderson says the Office of International Education is also creating a grant program to enable faculty to develop new abroad programs, especially in China and other regions of Asia, as well as Africa, where faculty expertise and the college's relationship with the Lutheran Church in Tanzania present continually emerging opportunities. Other areas worthy of new or continued exploration

include India, the Middle East, Latin America, the Caribbean and even Antarctica.

In addition, the ever-evolving Concordia Language Villages offers great potential to expand and integrate programming. The college is exploring new ways to more effectively utilize Concordia Language Villages' permanent site in Bemidji, Minn., as an active "second campus" that provides opportunities for faculty and curriculum development, as well as hands-on learning for undergraduate students.

"We can't be thinking merely about where we want to be in five years," Krejci says. "We have to look at how these five years will lay the groundwork for international education over the next 50 years."

For Krejci, status quo is unacceptable; turning back is out of the question. "Our students do not have the luxury of being able to think and act in a way insulated from the world. It's incumbent upon us to prepare our future citizen leaders to serve a global world. If we do not, we will be doing them a great disservice."

Concordia Language Villages is Concordia's pre-collegiate program, offering immersion learning experiences in 14 languages for thousands of youth throughout the country and around the world.

