NEWSLETTER

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From Firsts to Firsts...

This issue highlights student’s experiences with the Study Abroad program. We hope all Carolina Firsts will consider taking part in this high impact opportunity.

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Carolina Firsts Homecoming Weekend Tailgate

The Carolina Firsts Homecoming celebration on Saturday, November 9 was a great success! Over 200 people came out to enjoy the free food, 2013 t-shirt, and fun prizes. Go to the student organization’s Facebook page for me photos from the event.

Did you know that 20% of all undergraduates at UNC Chapel Hill are first generation college students? The Carolina Firsts student organization is comprised of these students and committed to helping them thrive at UNC. They sponsor several events throughout the year that allow first generation students to develop a sense of community. For more information, please visit firstgeneration.unc.edu
At the Carolina Firsts Student Organization general body meeting on Monday, October 28th, there were three speakers from Study Abroad, Global Initiatives, and Undergraduate Research.

Dr. Bickford, Associate Director of Undergraduate Research, shared information about the opportunities and resources available at the Office for Undergraduate Research. She answered questions and gave tips on how to find the appropriate research opportunity during your time at UNC. There was a presentation about the many opportunities available to Carolina students to study abroad and graduate on time. A representative from the Center of Global Initiatives discussed some of the resources available to increase students’ global competencies, learn less commonly taught foreign languages, and travel the world debt free! One important mission of the Center is to help students break through some of the cultural and financial barriers preventing them from engaging in this opportunity.

Carolina Firsts will be teaming up with UNC Dance Marathon to host a Wii Dance event on Tuesday, November 19 at 6pm in Union 3201. Remember the next meeting is Monday, November 25 at 6pm in Union 2518. Speakers TBA.
Ways to Finance a Study Abroad Experience

Financing study abroad is actually very doable! If you already receive financial aid through UNC, you can simply transfer it towards your study abroad expenses. Typically, study abroad is only slightly more expensive than the normal academic year at Carolina and oftentimes the cost is covered through the students' current financial aid package. It is important to note that for other miscellaneous costs associated with studying abroad, there are private as well as public loan opportunities. Federal Direct Loans are available for students who have not reached their annual maximum as well as the Parent PLUS Loan, available to the parents of the dependent. Lastly, there are many private scholarships that can be accessed through this UNC supported database.

The Center for Global Initiatives helps approximately 100 students each year identify funding sources such as internships and grants. In addition, the CGI offers awards ranging from $1500-$5000, for students interested in conducting an international based research project.

In order to find more information about studying abroad opportunities, make connections, and find funding sources, make sure to attend the GO! Global Engagement Fair on Nov 14th in the Great Hall from 5-7 pm.

Engaging your International Spirit

If you decide not to leave the country, there are still many opportunities to engage your international spirit. The following are some of the many campus organizations where current Carolina students can interact with international students in different settings.

Easing Abroad Students Entry (EASE)

EASE is a student-run organization assisting current exchange students’ transition into their host country by providing mentors and helpful advice. By helping others, you will be also able to learn about their culture and traditions without having to leave the country or the campus.

Preparing International Teaching Assistant Partners (PITAP)

PITAP's is an organization designed to create and foster partnerships between foreign teaching assistants and local undergraduate students. Native English speakers can serve as conversation partners for foreign students interested in improving their language skills and vice versa.

Ethnic Organizations

By participating in an ethnic and/or cultural on campus organizations such as Bhangra Elite, Carolina students can learn about different cultures and traditions without having to leave the country.
Meals with Heels

Building strong relationships with your instructors are critical to your success. Your instructors can provide you with the best insight on how to succeed in their class, at the University and beyond. They are also the people you will need to call on when its time for letters of recommendation. Make sure your instructors know you well, and get to know them! The Meals with Heels Program allows students to get to know their faculty on an individual level over coffee of lunch. Take advantage of this great opportunity and sign up here.

Academic Advising

Academic Advisors can help you develop knowledge of degree requirement, clarify General Education and major/minor requirements, provide clear explanation of university policies, and help you succeed academically. Students should prepare three or four key points they would like to discuss before coming to meet with an advisor. Students can see an advisor in the Steele Building by appointment or during walk-in hours. For more information, visit advising.unc.edu.

Learning Center

The Learning Center offers many resources to help you succeed at UNC. The staff can help you develop more effective study strategies as well as time management skills. The Center offers the following services:

- Drop-in peer tutoring in Dey Hall for over 35 subjects (We highly recommend!)
- Free tutoring by appointment
- GRE, MCAT, GMAT, and LSAT test-prep classes
- Study groups/ review sessions
- Finals Boot Camp (Date TBA)
- Place for students to prepare for midterms
- Speed reading and study skills available for sign ups to dramatically improve speed and comprehension when reading
- A quiet and productive place to study

Check the Learning Center website for detailed information on all classes and events.
Writing Center

The Writing Center is dedicated to helping students improve their writing abilities, including grammar, citations, outlining your thoughts and ways to enhance your paper. If you need help on a paper you can schedule a face-to-face or an online consultation at writingcenter.unc.edu.

Student Success Consulting

Undergraduate Retention in the Office of Undergraduate Education offers a free individual academic learning assessment and consultation service to help undergraduate students develop an action plan for success at Carolina. To make an appointment, contact Candice Powell, Retention Specialist. Please expect your appointment to run for one hour (15 minutes to take your assessment and 45 minutes for consultation).

About the Editors...

Leslie Castrejon (class of 2015/Nursing major) and Jennifer Owenby (class of 2015/Psychology major and Economics major) are first-generation undergraduate college students who work in Undergraduate Retention. Carmen Huerta-Bapat is a first generation college student earning her Ph.D. in Sociology and a Graduate Assistant in Undergraduate Retention.