

Study Abroad Essay

I believe that college is a time for learning – but not only about academics. In my opinion, it is a time for learning about ones own self. Personal growth and development are key components of the college years and I am convinced that a study abroad experience would offer endless possibilities toward accomplishing those ends.

Ever since I was a young girl, I have dreamed of living in a foreign country. I always knew that I wanted to go abroad and study in Spain while in college. Something about being independent and exploring the unknown always appealed to me. Now, although my ideal destination has changed from Europe to Latin America, I still seek to fulfill that long-awaited childhood dream. I continue to have a strong desire to explore the world around me and to learn and experience a foreign people and their culture.

Studying abroad was a thoughtful decision for me. I have reached a point in my life where I want to see beyond the walls of my own everyday lifestyle and way of thinking and experience something new. I have chosen to go to Chile for a variety of different reasons. First, I would very much like to improve my Spanish language skills. Now, in our changing and internationalizing world, it has become even more important than ever to communicate with people around the globe. And Spanish seems to be the language of choice with a great percentage of the world claiming Spanish as their native language. The Chile program would allow me so many opportunities to improve my Spanish as I would be completely immersed into the Chilean culture. This immersion into the Latin American lifestyle would also be very fascinating as I would acquire greater knowledge and understanding of a foreign culture.

While in Chile I would like to be much more than a foreign student. Although I do fit the stereotypical blonde-haired, blue-eyed American, and my Spanish is not in superb condition, I would like to attempt to become a part of Chilean society and participate in the everyday activities of a Chilean student. While in Chile I would also like to fulfill various academic goals. Along with becoming proficient in the Spanish language, I would like to complete my UNC General College requirements by taking both a philosophy and ancient history course. I also hope to take a course in Chilean culture (which is offered as a “program course”) so that I may know and understand the society to which I will become a part. As a journalism major I am also thrilled to learn that the university in Valparaiso offers courses in journalism. I think that it will be both extremely interesting and beneficial to look at journalism from a different cultural perspective.

College is absolutely a period of new discovery and adventure. My time at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has already been filled with much adventure and personal discovery and I am certain that a semester in Valparaiso, Chile would only enhance that. I look forward with great anticipation and excitement to the adventures that await me in Chile.