TRIP REPORT

Subject: Department to Department Visits to Scotland and England

To: Council on Internationalization and Global Engagement and Department of Geography and Anthropology

From: Paul Kaldjian, Chair Department of Geography and Anthropology

Date: 28 July 2014

Background
UW-Eau Claire has university-level student exchange agreements with Aberdeen University and the University of Glasgow in Scotland and the University of Winchester in England. Aberdeen and Glasgow offer complete geography programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Winchester is in the process of reconstituting its geography degree in response to rising demand. Over the past few years, three UW-Eau Claire geography students have studied geography in semester-long programs at the Scottish schools. This past academic year, we received two geography students from Aberdeen for the full year. Until now, such studies abroad have occurred in the context of university-wide student exchange programs but independent of direct departmental involvement and programming.

As part of an effort to be intentional about studies abroad — to use them to enhance our students’ geographic education, to better serve our students, to improve the effectiveness of study abroad possibilities and to incorporate study abroad into geography programming — I spent this past academic year soliciting interest from the University of Aberdeen in a department-level relationship. My hope is to develop a personal and direct relationship with Aberdeen’s geography faculty in such a way that we can purposefully endorse each other’s programs to our respective students and complement each other’s strengths. For example, UW-Eau Claire’s programs in geospatial techniques and field methods, applications and student-faculty collaborations, and regional geographies offer valuable opportunities for visiting international students. Similarly, our students’ geographic training is enhanced by the wide range of human and physical geography electives offered at Aberdeen, e.g., history of geographic thought, rural-urban issues, globalization, nature-society relationships, and European physical environments. Their study abroad experience and challenges to their world view will be integrated with geographical content, experience, and perspective. They will have a better sense of who they are as geographers and where they are in the world.
Our department wants to be able to promote such a relationship knowing that it will enhance our students’ geographic training, almost as if the courses taught at Aberdeen are an extension of the curriculum we offer. By the same token, we want to be able to be able to serve Aberdonian students in ways that complement Aberdeen’s geography programs and empower their students. The ideal outcome is that student participation in both directions grows, that the link between our departments leads to ongoing relationships between students, faculty, and our regions, and that participation in and support for each other’s programs expands into other areas such as field courses, research and faculty exchanges.

My initial intent was to build a relationship with Aberdeen, though opportunities to explore linkages with programs at Glasgow and Manchester emerged and became part of my itinerary. With support from the Council on Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE), the UW-Eau Claire Foundation, and the Department of Geography and Anthropology’s Simpson Fund, and accompanied by my wife, I visited the three universities (30 May – 10 June 2014) with the express purpose of establishing department-level collaborative relationships to enhance the learning abroad programming we offer our geography majors, geography and anthropology minors, and visiting geography students from the United Kingdom.

### Overall itinerary and personnel with whom I met

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland, 30 May – 3 June 2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jenny Fernandes</strong>, Head, International Office, Student Recruitment &amp; Admissions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brian Hussey</strong>, International Officer, North America and South America</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Douglas Mair</strong>, Senior Lecturer &amp; Head of Discipline, Department of Geography &amp; Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bill Naphy</strong>, Professor of History, School of Divinity, History and Philosophy and Dean, North American Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nick Spedding</strong>, Lecturer, Department of Geography and Environment</td>
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<td><strong>David Watts</strong>, Lecturer, Department of Geography &amp; Environment</td>
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<th>University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland, 3-5 June 2014</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Colette McGowan</strong>, Deputy Head of Admissions – Study Abroad, Recruitment &amp; International Office</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cristina Persano</strong>, Lecturer, School of Geographical and Earth Sciences</td>
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<td><strong>Jo Sharp</strong>, Professor of Geography &amp; Deputy Head, School of Geographical and Earth Sciences</td>
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<th>University of Winchester, Winchester, England, 6-9 June 2014</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>John Bentley</strong>, American Studies</td>
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<td><strong>Jude Davies</strong>, Professor, Department of English, Creative Writing and American Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tim Hall</strong>, Professor and Head, Department of Applied Social Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phil Marter</strong>, Lecturer in Applied Archaeological Techniques, Department of Archeology</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Simon Rolfe</strong>, Reader in Medieval Archaeology, Department of Archeology</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Alasdair Spark</strong>, Director of Internationalisation and Lecturer, American Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nick Thorpe</strong>, Principal Lecturer in Archaeology and Head, Department of Archaeology</td>
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### University of Aberdeen

In 2013-2014, our department hosted two second-year geography students from the University of Aberdeen. According to the students, UW-Eau Claire was the preferred geography program from among those at Aberdeen’s international partner institutions. Over the last few years, our department has also sent some of our geography students to study
abroad in Aberdeen where they have had very meaningful and professionalizing experiences. In an effort to be more intentional, collaborative, programmatic and strategic about this exchange, in September 2013, I invited faculty at the University of Aberdeen’s Department of Geography and Environment to join us in thinking about exploring a mutually beneficial department to department program. I directed my correspondence to Dr. Douglas Mair, the Department Head, and Dr. David Watts and Dr. Nick Spedding, who advise undergraduates and students who study abroad. Brian Hussey arranged an itinerary with a student-led campus tour and meetings with UW-Eau Claire students currently at Aberdeen, geography faculty members, and University administrators.

We arrived in Scotland on Friday evening 30 May 2014 and were met at the airport by Nick Spedding, who made it his responsibility to host us during our visit. Over the entire weekend, Nick introduced us to Aberdeen and its coastal & interior surroundings. It was an exceptionally intimate and informative introduction to the region and many of its people, practices, and landscapes. I cannot thank Nick enough for his time, enthusiasm, comradery, insights and support.

By the end of our meetings, it seems there is unanimous support for our efforts to increase student participation, improve the student experience, achieve common understandings (needs, desires, capacities, constraints), leverage and share resources, and identify and address issues before they become complications. Following are some details.

Meeting with UW-Eau Claire students
I met in a café with two UW-Eau Claire students finishing a semester abroad in Aberdeen; they and a third student from St. Olaf College affirmed the need for informed advising about specific courses to make sure that the courses would transfer back to their own programs fully and seamlessly. This very same concern was raised by Aberdeen students studying in Eau Claire, who also had stories of having to repeat courses that did not transfer as anticipated. Both sets of students agreed that faculty-level promotion and program understanding would likely lead to increased participation.

Meetings with administrators
With administrators, I discussed the importance of involving faculty in learning abroad. By recognizing faculty expertise and departmental needs, global learning can be transformed from a more general, university-level program to a discipline-specific and purposeful activity more immediately integrated with teaching, learning, and advising. We can also help each other identify and address administrative barriers that may be limiting participation,
including such things as application deadlines, enrollment limits, study-abroad duration, and eligibility criteria (e.g., that prevent 3rd-year students from participating).

Dr. Naphy and Ms. Fernandes recognize and agree with these and offer their assistance toward our efforts. Indeed, they have already started making changes to be more flexible with such things as application deadlines and study abroad lengths-of-stay, and are working to train and embed study abroad tutors/advisors in academic departments. They assure me that they will do everything possible to make sure that enrollment limits do not restrict any program we are able to develop. Clearly, they are anxious to support our initiative.

Meeting with faculty
Geography faculty and I explored numerous angles of collaboration. We discussed exchange possibilities, not just of single-student exchanges for 1 or 2 semesters, but of faculty exchanges, participation in each other’s research projects and field seminars. For example, I have invited Aberdeen to consider bringing the Honours Human Geography field course to Wisconsin and Minnesota; it currently goes to Boston, MA. (Aberdeen’s physical geography field course goes to Mont Blanc and the Italian Alps). Similarly, our department has begun preliminary discussions for taking one of our GEOG 368 field seminars to Scotland in 2016.

I brought a copy of UWEC’s most recent (2014-2015) catalog for Nick Spedding and we have started matching our courses. Understanding the relationship between Aberdeen’s 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level geography courses (see University of Aberdeen Undergraduate Catalogue of Courses – Geography) with our 100-, 200-, 300-, and 400-level courses is critical as we advise and serve our students. We are working toward highlighting strongly suggested classes and ensuring seats in all geography classes for each other’s students. I highlighted our special capability in geospatial technologies and the emerging programs under the geospatial education initiative. By promoting programming at other schools, we are able to provide courses that we do not actually offer at UWEC. Aberdeen, for example, offers courses such as those in the history of geographical thought, montane environments, glaciology, placemaking, rural change, transportation, and digital geographies.

Nick and I will work toward developing joint promotional materials – postcards and placards, for example – and Doug Mair, the Department Head, will announce the opportunity to study geography in Eau Claire as part of their student open days and orientations. It was suggested that returning students make testimonial podcasts or videos that we can post on our departmental web pages.
Next steps
- We will work with our students, faculty and administrators to promote each other’s programs as preferred learning abroad destinations for geography studies;
  - We will collaboratively develop promotional materials toward these ends;
- We will support and do our best to provide opportunities each other’s students;
- We will work toward supporting each other’s field seminars as explained above;
- We will explore the possibility of taking GEOG 368 students to Scotland; and
- We have invited a geography faculty from Aberdeen to visit our campus to give professional presentations and interact with students and faculty.

University of Glasgow
Because we recently had a student return from a positive experience at the University of Glasgow, an experience that helped him choose geography as his major, I thought a visit would be in order. I wanted to learn about their program and opportunities for our students. I met with Collette McGowan, who provided an overview of international exchange and study abroad programs at Glasgow, and then with Cristina Persano to learn more about the department and its undergraduate geography degree program. I met with Jo Sharp, with whom I discussed programming and the possibility of her coming to UW-Eau Claire to speak as part of a feminist geographer lecture series. She would like to be able to visit. The interactions with Glasgow were not as involved as at Aberdeen, but Cristina made it very clear that they are interested in collaborating with us.

The opportunities for our students to take geography courses that compliment UW-Eau Claire’s offerings are many. According to Cristina and the course catalog, visiting student may take most classes. Our students can take optional courses like Social Geography of Outsiders, Monstrous Geographies, Historical Geographies of Care, Conflict and Confinement, and Political Ecologies, but should be aware that some courses are offered only in alternative years. Students interested in dialogue and engagement can take tutorials with 10-15 other students. Glasgow’s week-long undergraduate field experience goes to Mallorca in groups of 80 students, subdivided into subgroups of 7-10 students. They take 10 staff. The second year course goes to York in the spring for a shorter time period.

Cristina assures us that our students will always have a place in their courses, but in some cases it may be good to inform them as soon as we know what courses our students want.
Next steps
Cristina and the department are working on page-long write-ups for their courses. These will help in course selection for our students. In the mean-time, she is interested in receiving the geography pages from our catalog and coordinating a selection of best courses for their students. The geospatial education initiative and the continued growth of our geospatial programming and the certificate may increase interest in UW-Eau Claire for University of Glasgow Students.

It is apparent that students who would go to Glasgow would have a very different experience than if they went to Aberdeen. As a major metropolitan area and world city, urban Glasgow is a notable contrast to Aberdeen, where access to the countryside, North Sea and Scottish rural traditions seem more immediate.

University of Winchester
In Winchester, we were warmly received and hosted by Alasdair Spark, who also introduced us to Hampshire and the university community. Winchester is reconstituting its geography program and Alasdair is enthusiastic about faculty collaborations in support of each other’s programs. Indeed, our departments have a history together. UW-Eau Claire has had a study abroad/exchange program with the University of Winchester since 1985 and John Bentley – head of Winchester’s Geography program at the time it was disbanded in 1997-1998 – was a visiting scholar to Eau Claire’s Department of Geography in the early 1990s and still remains in contact with some of his UWEC colleagues.

I met with John Bentley and Tim Hall, the geography program head, who explain that the reconstituted geography program will be validated this December and be available to students in 2015. Geography has seen a revival in the United Kingdom and is now a top-10 university subject. Tim explains that their geography program will emphasize globalization, applied geography, nature-society relations and emphasis on the impacts of geography on society. The geographers at Winchester are currently in the applied social
sciences and are accustomed to working across disciplines. They collaborate closely with American Studies and archaeology, especially in areas like landscape geography, and will continue to develop cross-disciplinary linkages in the new program.

Field courses will be a primary element in the new geography programming. Their first study abroad in the United States will be in 2016. In the past they have gone to Yosemite & Mojave regions – I have offered to help develop a collaborative and cost-effective, upper Midwest alternative.

Alasdair encourages Tim to design a geography program with an international program in mind. Toward that end, he will fund a trip for Tim to visit UW-Eau Claire in spring 2015 and Tim will send me the program and course outlines as they are developed. John inquired about the possibility for Winchester students, who complete their British B.A.s in three years, to spend a fourth year at UW-Eau Claire and obtain a US B.A.

I also met with Nick Thorpe, Phil Marter and Simon Roffey at an archeological field site on the outskirts of Winchester. They have been working on a medieval complex of buildings, with a 12th C. leper asylum, where they are supervising as many as 25-30 undergraduates on two and four week summer programs. They made it clear that our students would be welcome to this and other projects. As I spoke of our technologies, from GPR to UAVs and field equipment, and explained that we offer an anthropology minor with an archeology component, Nick reiterated that they collaborate closely with geography and expressed hope that we can arrange exchanges and collaborations. For example, his students could study geography field methods at Eau Claire and bring their skills back to Winchester. Phil and Simon want to take students to Istanbul/Turkey, and expressed interest in collaborating with me and our students. They are also interested in modern archeology, of sites less than 100 years old, and suggested they may like to come to the United States for that.

Next steps
- Alasdair will visit Eau Claire in September, 2014. When he is here, we will continue the conversations we started in Winchester.
- I will work with Tim Hall to identify ways of synchronizing their new geography program in ways that can draw on what UW-Eau Claire Geography has to offer.
- Tim and I will also determine the best time for him to visit our department, perhaps in conjunction with the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting in Chicago next spring.
• I will also continue correspondence with the Winchester archeologists, and bring our anthropologists into the conversation, to determine how best to create opportunities for their students and ours.

Conclusions
Based on the welcome I received by the geography departments at the Universities of Aberdeen, Glasgow and Winchester, the keenness with which they took to the department to department concept, and the specific ideas for collaboration and mutual learning we explored, my trip to Scotland and England was a success. It is apparent that colleagues at these schools are interested in finding ways to creatively develop our programs and enhance our students’ experiences by working together. For example, by strengthening faculty and departmental connections and understanding sister departments’ strengths, programs and curricula, faculty become advocates – the likelihood of student participation in global engagement increase. In this way, we model the very global networks and relationships we teach. Our students will be better geographers.

In addition to our efforts to develop the department to department programs presented above, the Department of Geography and Anthropology is taking additional steps to encourage student participation and improve our students’ experiences. We have recently allocated a portion of our Simpson Fund endowment to provide scholarships of $500 to geography and anthropology students for international study abroad. Further, we will intentionally, willfully and knowingly advise students to study abroad, generally, and direct them to the opportunities and benefits of studying at Aberdeen (or Glasgow or Winchester) specifically and, because we are developing personal relationships between departments, we are more adept at assisting our students, advocating on their behalf, preparing them before they travel and incorporating their experiences into their studies upon their return.

I wish to thank Colleen Marchwick, UWEC, Center for International Education; Brian Hussey, University of Aberdeen; Collette McGowan, University of Glasgow; and Alasdair Spark for their work in assembling a very effective itinerary, and their help in arranging the many fruitful meetings and housing and transportation logistics. Their administrative contributions and support are invaluable as we attempt to create exciting teaching and learning opportunities between the Department of Geography and Anthropology and partner departments in Scotland and England. I anticipate their continued help as we build on what we have started.