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WHY THIS NEWSLETTER

“Come and go” is the International Relations and Study-abroad newsletter which aims at keeping our readers up-to-date on the latest news and events related to our activities. It is published 4 times per year and reaches approx. 4'000 readers, in particular USI students, faculty and staff, incoming students and staff from our many partner universities and other collaborators. We do hope you will enjoy reading it!

SPRING TERM 2015: WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS!

In February, new exchange students arrived in Ticino for the start of the Spring semester at USI. All students were welcomed during the traditional Orientation Day, which started with an offered lunch at the canteen and continued in the afternoon with presentations of different USI services.

The majority of the SEMP (Swiss European Mobility Program) students comes from Central Europe (Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland) as well as from our neighbour countries Italy, France and Germany. Moreover, there are six students who have joined us from Singapore, two from Australia and one from Taiwan.

This multicultural environment is a fertile ground for learning about different cultures and traditions. This is the reason that inspired the International Relations Office. A day trip to Rabadan, the famous carnival of Bellinzona was organized. Students from both the Lugano and the Mendrisio campus had the possibility to discover this long-standing tradition on Saturday 14 February, with the Guggen Parade.

The carnival in Bellinzona is the second largest carnival of Switzerland; during a week, more than 150'000 people joyfully celebrate in the streets and tents. The name of the carnival “Rabadan” was coined officially in 1874. “Rabadan” literally means noise in Ticinese dialect. The carnival has become a very important event in Ticino: the cities and the villages transform into colorful, joyful and noisy places, where almost everybody shows up in fancy dresses.

The exchange students participated in the Guggen Parade, which consists of the parade of carnival music bands from Ticino and the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Despite the weather being freezing cold and rainy, the students appreciated the day trip, as you can see from the picture.



Niina, Virginia and Marta ready for the Rabadan

DOUBLE INTERVIEW: CHRISTINA SEOW, from NTU to USI AND NATALIA COSIC, from USI to NTU

Enjoy the double interview to Christine Seow, an exchange student from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) spending the Spring term 2015 at USI and Natalia Cosic, an USI student enrolled in the Master in Marketing, who spent the Autumn term 2014 at NTU.

Why did you decide to go on an international exchange?

Christine: “The opportunity to go on an international exchange was very precious to me as I had always dream of studying abroad. I wanted to gain a better understanding of a different culture and learn to step out of my comfort zone. Being away from my friends and family for an extensive time will teach me to be an independent young lady, giving me many opportunities for self-discovery and exploration. At the same time, I am planning to take this chance to explore and travel around different countries and cities, gaining more knowledge and first-hand experiences about all these beautiful European cities.”



Christine Seow, an exchange student from Nanyang Technological University (NTU)

Natalia: “I decided to go on an international exchange in order to experience a new life and new cultures, to meet new people and to adapt myself to a different university context. Spending a semester abroad before finishing my Master studies, was something that I wanted with all my heart. I have never lived abroad for so long before this experience, so it was for me a great opportunity to open my mind, see new things and grow personally.”

Why did you choose USI/NTU?

Christine: “I choose USI as it was a renowned partner of my faculty, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information. USI is highly regarded and it is a popular choice among the applicants. I heard many good testimonials from my seniors regarding USI’s environment and academic structure. There is also a wide range of courses available that sounds very interesting and I am eager to learn as much as I can in USI! Furthermore, with a high standard of living, beautiful scenery and good accessibility to other cities, it was an easy choice to choose Switzerland as my exchange destination. I genuinely feel that an exchange programme in USI will enrich my university experience.”

Natalia: “I primarily chose NTU, because it was located in Singapore, in the beautiful Asian world. In addition to this, I heard that NTU was a prestigious University, appreciated and known all over the world. Before applying I also read some NTU brochures and their university website, which gave me some useful information about the campus, and therefore I decided to apply for NTU. I thought that NTU would help me to enrich my academic studies and to develop a new perspective toward my education.”

“I genuinely feel that an exchange programme in USI will enrich my university experience”

What are the main differences between your home university and NTU/USI?

Christine: “USI has lessons in blocks, where lessons can span for a week long, up to 8 hours a day, after which the course will be completed. For a course in NTU, we will have a lecture and a tutorial every week for about 4 months, which is about a semester long. NTU also has a bigger campus and student population as compared to USI, so USI is definitely more homely and spacious.”

Natalia: “USI is a small university, composed of two main buildings, a big canteen, and with a lot of green areas. If you walk around the university in Lugano, you can easily see the same person three or four times per day, which will not happen at NTU, where you always see new faces. Compared



Natalia Cosic, an USI student enrolled in the Master in Marketing, who spent the Autumn term 2014 at NTU

to USI, NTU campus can be defined as a small “city”; it has 16 residence halls and several canteens, swimming pools, tennis courts, several huge green areas for the different sports and beautiful gardens for walking. Moreover, in order to get from one place to another, you have to take the free shuttles offered by NTU, because the campus is so big that you cannot reach everything by just walking. Both universities have almost the same teaching level, even if classes at NTU (20-30 students per class) are smaller than at USI. As I said, the main difference is represented by the student’s life; at NTU students live and breathe constantly the university environment, especially those who live on campus, and during the semester they rarely go out of the campus.”

What are you enjoying/did you enjoy most about your international exchange?

Christine: “I am very thankful to NTU and USI for this international exchange opportunity, as I am now able to study and live at a place so far away from home, opening my eyes to greater insights. I enjoy making friends from all around the world, and having conversations with fellow exchange students helps me to understand a little more about our different lifestyles. And the best thing about exchange is about exploring new places. I really love visiting and exploring new places, be it within the neighbourhood or in a different city, I never fail to be amazed by the beautiful scenery and architecture of this beautiful country.”

Natalia: “During my semester abroad I really enjoyed to have the opportunity to travel as much as I can. There are a lot of low cost airlines (Tigerair, Jetstar, AirAsia) that allows you to travel from Singapore to different destinations for a small amount of money. During my exchange program I have been in Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand, and from every trip I brought home memories and unforgettable experiences, that I will never forget. Basically, you get in touch with local people, you see how they live, you understand how their world is totally different from yours, and most important, you learn to adapt to a totally different culture from the one you are used to. I also enjoyed living in a city such as Singapore, which is amazing and offers a lot of things to do, to see and to visit. It’s a new way of seeing things and personally I grew a lot thanks to this experience. I also promised myself that one day, I will definitely come back to visit Singapore again.”

“It’s a new way of seeing things and personally I grew a lot thanks to this experience.”

What are the main differences between the cities, cultures, people of Singapore and Lugano?

Christine: “Singaporeans have a rather stressful and hectic lifestyle, whereas the residents here in Lugano are more laid back and relaxed. Singapore is a 24/7 city, where you can find shops and restaurants closing at late hours and mostly everything operates as per normal on Sunday, which is seldom seen in Lugano. I feel that residents in here have a greater work –life balance than in Singapore, as Singaporeans are stressed to produce high productivity and efficiency. Singaporeans are generally more conservative due to our traditional Asian values, which might result in our perceptive differences.”

Natalia: “In my opinion, the biggest difference that I experienced was the food. Asian people have a totally different culture toward it; they are used to eat in open spaces called “food courts” or “hawker centres” that are basically open-air food markets, where a dish costs around 2-5 CHF. The main dishes are soup noodles, dim sum, rice and different kinds of fish and meat. In addition to this, Asian people are really different from European one, they are quieter and sometimes also a little bit anxious if you ask them a question (e.g. street directions) and they do not exactly know the answer, whereas people in Lugano are more open and less shy. Lugano compared

to Singapore is a really a small town. Whereas, Singapore is a metropolis and if you go out, be sure that you won't be home for 3-5 hours, because it's really big and the distances are huge."

SELECTION RESULTS AND PLACEMENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2015/2016



We are very pleased to announce that the selection process of USI outgoing students who will spend next academic year abroad is completed.

The increasing interest in a mobility programme is demonstrated by the number of submitted applications: more than 120. For some destinations the competition was tough, but we finally succeed in accommodating almost all students.

Following the rules set by the selection committee, applications were evaluated based on satisfying minimum requirements, in particular the transcript of records of the past exams sessions and the certificates of language. The final result of the selection is the following: 37 students will spend a semester at another Swiss university, 59 will study at a partner university in Europe, and 18 will be hosted at international partner universities, namely 3 at Nanyang Technical University, 3 at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 6 at University of Technology in Sydney, 3 at University of Western Australia in Perth and 3 at the Peking University HSBC Business School in Shenzhen (read more about this new partner university on page 5).

We seize the opportunity to remind to students of the Lugano campus that it is still possible to apply by October 15 for Spring semester, but without any guarantee that there will still be available openings.

DISCOVER TICINO: THE 17TH EDITION OF CANTINE APERTE



A friendly moment of the 2014 Open wine cellars day (courtesy of Ticinowine)

In this issue we would like to suggest a gastronomic experience: Ticino's wine producers will open their doors and you will have the chance to taste their products.

On Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 May the "Cantine Aperte" (Open wine cellars days) will take place all around Ticino. The event, now at its 17th edition, is organized by Ticinowine, the foundation for the promotion of Viticulture in Ticino.

The aim is to offer the opportunity for wine enthusiasts to visit the cellars and vineyards, chat with the wine producers and to taste the wines on site. What's more, wineries are beautiful places to visit in their own.

Thanks to the privileged position with a Mediterranean climate, Ticino is a well-known wine growing and producing area.

The wine cultivation covers more than 1,000 hectares of the territory, and more than 80% of the surface is cultivated with Merlot vines. The introduction of this variety of wine (coming from the Bordeaux region of France) dates back to the beginning of the 20th century. Its farming was strongly promoted by the government after the Ticino vineyards were destroyed, like those of most of Europe, by the phylloxera, a tiny insect.



A Merlot grapevine (courtesy of Ticinowine)

Both hypothesis explaining the name “Merlot” derives from “merlo” (blackbird). On one hand, it is thought that it derives from the fact that the mature berry has the same colour of the bird. On the other hand, since the Merlot variety matures early on it is one of the first grapes that the blackbird eats.

In 1997, the Ticino Merlot received the DOC denomination, a quality label guarantee that contributed to strengthen the level of excellence in both the Swiss and international scenes.

The complete and detailed schedule of the “Cantine Aperte” event will be online on Ticinowine website.

A service of circular busses will tour between the various cellars adhering to the event.

Useful links:

Cantine Aperte official website: www.ticinowine.ch

Ticino Turismo website: www.ticino.ch

NEW BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH PEKING UNIVERSITY HSBC BUSINESS SCHOOL



Internal view of the new building (courtesy of Peking University HSBC Business School)

China has always been an appealing destination to European students. We are proud to announce that now USI can offer this opportunity to its students, too. An agreement for the exchange of students was signed in February. Up to 5 USI students will have the chance to study in English in the framework of the following Master programmes: Master of Management, Master of Economics or Master of Finance. From our side, we are eager to welcome in Lugano the students from this new partner university. We have asked our colleague, Ms. Nicole Chastagner, International Exchange Manager at the Peking University HSBC Business School to briefly describe her institution.



Mirror Lake (courtesy of Peking University HSBC Business School)

“For more than 100 years, Peking University has been an elite institution of learning, recognized internationally as one of China’s premier centers of academic excellence. Founded in 2004, Peking University HSBC Business School seeks not only to build on Peking University’s inspiring traditions, but also to develop its own reputation as an international leader in business education.

Located in the thriving entrepreneurial city of Shenzhen, and immediately adjacent to the financial hub of Hong Kong, the business school lies at the very heart of one of the world’s most promising metropolitan areas. Few other regions in China offer a more suitable setting for an institution destined to become this country’s foremost graduate business school. Peking University HSBC Business School aims to be a leader in international education, and has set itself apart by being one of the first Chinese schools to offer its degree programs fully in English. Current programs offered in English are the Master of Management, Master of Economics and Master of Finance. The goal of internationalization at PHBS is supported by a large international faculty base, more than half of the faculty members are international, and all faculty members have earned their PhDs at world-class universities. The student population also reflects PHBS’s internationalization efforts with 14% of the degree-seeking students coming from outside of China”.



USI President Prof. P. Martinoli with Mrs. Ru Xi, from the Embassy of China in Switzerland



USI President Prof. P. Martinoli with Ms. C. Ramosepele, South African Ambassador, an USI student (left) and the First Secretary (right)

CHINA AND SOUTH AFRICA EMBASSIES VISITS

In the month of March, representatives of two Embassies paid a visit to USI.

On March 5, USI President Prof. Dr. Piero Martinoli and Dr. Arianna Imberti Dosi, Head of the International Relations and Study-abroad office welcomed Mrs. Ru Xi, Mrs. Xiangzhen Niu and Mr. Yuebin Liu, from the Education Section of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Swiss Confederation. The guests also had the change to meet with two USI students from China.

Two weeks after, on March 17 the South African Ambassador to Switzerland, Ms. Claudinah Ramosepele, accompanied by Mr. Dawood, First Secretary came from Bern to Lugano to discuss about areas of cooperation and to express interest in strengthening relations between USI and South African Universities. During the visit, the only South African student currently enrolled at USI, Ms. Milica Vukovic joined the meeting.

The common goal of the two visits was to explore the possibilities for establishing mutually beneficial collaboration.

The President and the USI Executives were very delighted to meet with the two Embassies representatives, an excellent occasion to present USI and its development strategy for the coming years.

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