Faculty Travel Grant Report

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Program title: Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Security: The Case of Poland

Country visited: Poland

Institution visited: Center for East European Studies, Warsaw University

Dates of travel: May 27-June 13, 2011

Number of student participants: 8

Previous IP proposals submitted and grants awarded
(list titles, countries and dates):

Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Security: The Case of Poland—conducted in May 29-
June 14, 2009

Have all required reports been submitted? Yes

Other funding for this activity available/applied for: SDSU College of Extended Studies

Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum):

The program constituted an international experience for Homeland Security students.
Substantially, it was a repetition of the successful 2009 program. The program included
presentations by scholars, government officials, and former dissidents and resistance
members on such topics as regional and international security, totalitarianism (i.e.,
Communism and National Socialism), World War 2, human rights, transnational crime,
border security, European integration, political and armed resistance, and political
transformation. It also included visits to Polish Parliament and Senate, the Warsaw Rising Museum, the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, the US embassy in Warsaw (with talks by Embassy security and foreign relations personnel), Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps, the Wieliczka Salt Mines near Krakow, the “Roads to Freedom” Museum in Gdansk, Gdansk shipyard and the European Solidarity Center, and the Teutonic Castle at Malbork, as well visits to relevant cultural, political, and commemorative events and exhibits.

Travel report:

I. Opening/overview of intentions/activity

The program reported here was a summer travel program for Homeland Security graduate students enrolled in HSec 650: Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Security - The Case of Poland. The HSP has established this variable topics course (3 or 6 units) as a vehicle to provide HSP students with comparative educational experiences focusing on security-related issues.

The host institution was the Center for East European Studies at Warsaw University (http://www.studium.uw.edu.pl). The Center was established by the resolution of the Warsaw University (the most highly rated university in Poland) Senate in 1990 and is devoted to the study of regional issues, including history, culture, politics, and education. It includes a five-year MA program and a two-year PhD program, as well as a School of Eastern Languages (offering instruction in 22 languages). It maintains a scholarship program for students from the former Soviet area, conducts regular exchange and travel programs throughout the region, as well as organizes international seminars and conferences (including the annual Warsaw East European Conference, a major event with participants from all over the world) in cooperation with universities from all over Central/Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Eurasian and Asian countries such as Mongolia Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia). It also publishes a major academic journal in Eastern European Studies.

The goals of the program included:

- To familiarize students with Polish and Central/Eastern European history, esp. recent history (World War II, the resistance, Warsaw Uprising, the communist period, anti-communist resistance, and the problematic of political transformation and European integration)
- To familiarize students with Poland’s (and the region’s) geopolitical position and international policy/security issues on the eastern borders of the European union
- To familiarize students with current political and economic issues in Poland and Central/Eastern Europe, esp. as regards Poland’s relationship with the United States and the position vis-a-vis Russia and Germany

The program included lectures, presentations, experiences, and visits pertinent to the following topics:
Polish history, esp. recent history (World War 2, communism, Solidarity, transformation)
Solidarity opposition and World War II resistance
The role of the Church in Polish history, past and present
Poland’s relations with Russia, the “East,” and Germany
Poland’s position in the EU and the problematic of integration, transnationalism, regionalism, and so on.
Polish foreign policy, Polish-US relations
Problems of national and regional security (international security; border security; criminal activity, esp. transnational; organized crime; terrorism)

II. In preparation for the trip abroad

Dr. Ornatowski collaborated on the preparation of the program (lectures, itinerary, and logistics) with the administration of the Center for East European Studies and its director, Dr. Jan Malicki. Drs. Ornatowski and McIlwain also conducted presentations for potentially interested students and subsequently pre-trip briefings for actual participants. The program followed on a similar successful 2009 program.

III. Upon arrival/specific activities

Following is the abbreviated day-by-day schedule of the program:

May 27: leave San Diego
May 28: arrive in Warsaw
May 29: rest, sightsee in Warsaw
May 30: begin lectures, visit to Warsaw University library
May 31: lectures, visit to Polish Parliament and Senate
June 1: lectures, visit to Warsaw Rising Museum
June 2: lectures, leave for Krakow
June 3: visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau
June 4: visit to Wieliczka Salt Mine tour; evening sight-seeing in Krakow (Dragon Festival)
June 5: sightsee Krakow: Schindler Factory, Kazimierz (Jewish Quarter)
June 6: return to Warsaw; meeting with Zbigniew Bujak, “Underground Solidarity” activit
June 7: lectures, visit to US Embassy, talks by Embassy personnel
June 8: lectures, visit to the Institute of National Remembrance
June 9: lectures
June 10: leave for Gdansk; sightsee Gdansk
June 11: Gdansk, “Roads to Freedom” museum, Gdansk Shipyard, European Solidarity Center
June 12: leave Gdansk, visit to Malbork Teutonic Knights’ castle, return to Warsaw
June 13: leave for US
Detailed list of lectures offered:

- Pawel Swieboda, former chief negotiator of Poland EU accession, current President of DemosEUROPA—Center for European Strategy, “Poland in the EU—Seven Years After”
- Ryszard Bobrowski, Pfd., “Problems of Political, Economic, and Social Transformation in Poland and Central Europe”
- Hanryk Szlajfer, Institute of Political Science, Polish Academy of Sciences, former ambassador to the OSCE, IAEA, and other international organizations, “Russia in Geopolitics”
- Marek Madej, PhD., expert in the Polish Institute for International Affairs, “National Security Policy in Poland: Terrorism and Organized Crime”
- Aleksandra Jarczewska, PhD., Institute of International Relations, Warsaw University, “Poland’s Foreign Policy-Security Issues”
- Witild Rodkiewicz, PhD., analyst at the Center for Eastern Studies in Warsaw, “Historical and Contemporary Relations Between Poland and Russia”

IV. Conclusion, recommendation, and next step

The program was very successful and educationally intensive. Poland represents an ideal site for such a program. As a relatively new member of both NATO (since 1999) and the EU (since 2004), the largest state and economy in the region, and the closest ally of the United States among the former Warsaw Pact countries, Poland presents unique security and cooperation challenges: it is a site of intense international criminal activity (especially drug and human traffic that penetrates the EU from the east and south), it is a site of controversies over US military bases and missile sites, and it is a close partner of the US in anti-terrorism activities (the media scandal over Poland’s alleged housing of some Guantanamo prisoners erupted during our visit). As a former “frontline” Warsaw-pact state (situated between the new Russia and united Germany), Poland is also a prime site for research on geo-political transformation and a key component of the new political and economic geography. It is thus an ideal site (politically stable, safe, and economically advanced) for educational visits by SDSU students interested in transformation, geopolitics, recent history (including that of the Cold War), and a range of burgeoning international security issues.

The host institution, the Center for East European Studies, again did an outstanding job preparing both the educational and experiential aspects of the program, including hotels, a lecture schedule with prominent and appropriate figures (for instance, the talk on Poland and the EU was conducted by the chief negotiator for Poland’s accession to the EU, the talk on Poland’s security by the former national security advisor
to President Walesa and two governments, and the talk on resistance by the former leader
of Underground Solidarity, the “most-wanted” man in Poland between 1982-1985), site
visits, guides, and transportation.

We would like to continue offering the program, depending on student interest.

All information should be sent to The Office of International Programs via e mail:

oip@mail.sdsu.edu