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Project Atlantis Brings Graduate Students from Abroad to Study at CSU Stanislaus

It's hard to imagine what a trio of universities in Wales, Poland and Turlock could possibly have in common, but for 16 Welsh, Polish and American psychology students enrolled in the Project Atlantis international exchange program, the three locations represent their academic homes for the next two years.

Project Atlantis offers a dual masters degree in psychology with emphasis on Behavior Analysis, explains CSU Stanislaus psychology professor and Atlantis coordinator Bill Potter. Upon completion the student is awarded two master-level degrees – an M.A. in Psychology from CSU Stanislaus and a Master in Psychology degree from the Warsaw School of Social Studies and Humanities (SWPS). By completing the curriculum, the students will also meet the requirements for becoming a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA).

During the project period, the students will study in the U.S. for a full academic year and for a semester at each of the European universities. All of the classes are conducted in English. The students pay the normal tuition and academic fees at their home institution but tuition and fees are waived at the host universities.

The cohort of students began their studies in Warsaw during the summer and arrived at CSU Stanislaus in September. Among them is Pawel Jarmakowicz of Sopot, North Poland, who is enjoying both the beauty of the campus and its amenities. "In Poland, we

only have one big university building – no gym or swimming pool, and the dorms are in another part of the city.”

Daisy Murkin of Taunton, in Somerset, England, has worked with autistic children for 10 years. The Atlantis Program offered her the route to both a master’s degree and BCBA certification. “I want to help expand and promote the field of ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis), which is still not widely recognized in the UK,” she said.

For Richard “V.C.” Porter, from Wrexham, Wales, experiencing the culture of an American college was important. “Students and professors take studying quite seriously here,” he observed. Greek Rush Week also made an impression. “I mean, we’ve only seen stuff like that on TV so to experience the American college atmosphere was really great.” V.C. plans to put his multiple degrees to work in the field of education as a behavior analyst, researcher or teacher.

Quite naturally all three students miss their homes and friends but the American Atlantians have rallied to keep their European counterparts busy. Daytrips to Yosemite, Santa Cruz and San Francisco have all been big hits, and the group has plans for a skydiving expedition and many other weekend activities. “We keep adding more things to our to-do list,” says Murkin. “So we are going to very busy – and very broke!”

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