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### Stewart sails world on Scholar Ship

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Anthony Stewart (left) with his friend Gabriel from Mexico at the Great Wall of China.



Anthony Stewart (foreground) on Loma Chalata with his friends Patrick from Ireland and Chris from California.

Seeking adventure as a non-traditional way to earn 12 college credits, Anthony Stewart, a Clarion University sophomore liberal studies major, wanted his fall 2007 semester to be one to remember. In September, he boarded the pioneer voyage of The Scholar Ship to complete a semester at sea.

Stewart, along with 200 other students from around the globe, traveled to Greece, Portugal, Panama, Ecuador, Tahiti (French Polynesian Islands), New Zealand, Australia, Shanghai in China, and concluded their voyage in Hong Kong.

“The e-mail regarding The Scholar Ship caught my interest because I love the ocean and I love to travel,” said Stewart. “I was one of two people to apply from Clarion University. I kept up with all the deadlines and completed the application. I was the only student from Clarion University to complete the process.”

Although a student isn’t usually required to have their Passport and Visa to attend class, the experience aboard was a lot like that of a typical student.

“I shared a small room with another student and we had three buffet-style meals a day,” said Stewart. “I had classes for four days then I would get a ‘free day.’”

The ship was originally a cruise ship, but was remodeled to house classrooms.

“It was literally a floating campus,” said Stewart. “There were 49 countries represented on the ship. My roommate was from Brazil and I got to practice the Portuguese that I learned spending a year in Brazil through a Clarion Rotary Exchange Program. I had professors from Ghana, Morocco, Italy and England. Half of the people aboard were American and half were non-American. They tried to make it as diverse as possible.”

The curriculum included Academic Field Programs (AFP) in which students would have subject-specific classes for a week in different countries and experience different topics and styles of learning.

Stewart's chosen area of study was sustainable development. With this focus, he experienced how the Caba Espichel Peninsula in Portugal was being developed and the effects of the expansion on the environment.

"The stops were a mix of education, fun, and an opportunity to meet new people," said Stewart. "It showed how learning can be fun."

In Panama, Stewart studied an area which the United States used as a bombing range during the Cold War. He learned about the efforts by the Panamanians to repair the destroyed rainforests.

Stewart had the opportunity to take the week off in Ecuador. "I got to climb the mountain on Earth closest to the sun, Mount Cotopaxi," said Stewart. "I went with a group of 20-30 people and only one man made it within 50 meters from the top."

Stewart's last AFP was in New Zealand. "We visited a family that had a farm that was completely sustainable," he said. "All their power was produced through solar and wind power and they grew their own food."

During their stop in Shanghai, Stewart and a friend took a train to Beijing, China. They were able to visit the Great Wall of China and experience the city. His voyage ended in Hong Kong and he was able to make it home just in time for Christmas.

Back in Clarion, Stewart plans to bring some of what he learned to the community.

"I'm actually working on a project for my Civic Engagement course this semester, taught by Dr. Greg Goodman, assistant professor of education, in which I incorporated what I experienced in New Zealand," said Stewart, who lives in Clarion and is a graduate of Clarion High School. "I'm producing a project and writing a report on how people can improve their diet by growing their own garden foods. I will be giving presentations at the local elementary and high school."

Stewart believes that the Scholar Ship semester will be helpful to him in his pursuit of a liberal studies degree. "Liberal studies gives me the leverage to take classes that seem interesting to me and prepare me for a wide variety of career options," he said. "Clarion is also inexpensive to attend and that is a plus."

That factor also helped him with the Scholar Ship decision.

"I never thought I could take advantage of an opportunity like this because it's expensive, but they offer a lot of assistance and the large majority was paid for through grants and loans," said Stewart.

The overall cost for a semester aboard The Scholar Ship amounts to roughly \$20,000. He initially received a \$5,000 grant from the program, along with a large sum supplied through loans. Stewart ended up paying \$2,000.

The Scholar Ship is a recognized academic program hosting both undergraduate and postgraduate students on semester-long voyages around the world. Participants from diverse cultural backgrounds come together to co-create a transnational learning community that develops their intercultural competence and fosters lifelong friendships.

The experiential-based program provides students an opportunity to integrate education and travel unlike any other program. Over a 16-week semester, students live and learn in a truly dynamic environment aboard the ship. When in port (average visit is seven days), students participate in academic field study, community service, shore excursions and independent travel.

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Clarion University Of Pennsylvania  
Clarion, PA 16214  
800-672-7171 or 814-393-2000  
[info@clarion.edu](mailto:info@clarion.edu)

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