This has been a bittersweet year for EAP. One of our 2014-15 London-bound students, Chris Michaels-Martinez, was among those who lost their lives in the Isla Vista shootings during Memorial Day weekend. Chris was an extraordinary student and had hoped to pursue his studies in English literature and history all next year. Our staff joins the entire UCSB community in mourning his passing, as well as the other six students who were killed. Also, one of those seriously injured in this incident was a returnee from our South Korea program who is now recovering and looking forward to studying abroad again in our tropical biology program in Costa Rica next spring. In June we lost Bill Allaway, the visionary founder of EAP in 1962, and his wife Olivia. Both remained dedicated supporters of UCSB EAP, even after Bill’s retirement a number of years ago. They are dearly missed, but we will continue to be inspired by them for years to come.

Teamwork, Imagination, Excellence. These are the core values we strive for in all of our EAP student outreach and advising activities, collaborations with UCSB departments, relations with other UC campuses and the University wide UCEAP office, and connections with alumni friends and community supporters. This year we have seen the

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THE TEACHER IS HERE!” a little voice cries out in Mandarin. My shyness, my awkwardness and my apprehension magically lift away as a wave of little smiles rushes to keep me from walking through the front door. There’s something about first and second graders. They accept you, no matter what way, shape or form you come in. Intolerance is a learned trait. We must teach children not to talk to strangers, since—to them—this concept simply does not exist.

Although they’re excited to see me, they’re at the age where shyness has begun to assert its influence. Many just look at me and smile. I hear whispers about me amongst them. I set my things down and begin to write my name on the board, Teacher Forrest. One of the students begins to erase the “t” at the end of my name. “Your ‘t’ is missing a tail,” he says to me in Mandarin. My mistake.

Class doesn’t begin for a few minutes so I decide to mingle. It’s just like a cocktail party, except in order to speak to any of the guests, I have to get down on my knees. A girl in a pink hooded jacket strides over. Her nametag reads “wendy,” in green ink. She extends her hand and shakes my index and middle finger. “Hello!” she says, her chest puffing out with confidence. Then in Mandarin she continues, “Actually teacher, I can already speak English.”

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“I guess I’m not really needed then,” I reply, humoring her. “Sorry,” she replies in English, taking a small bow.

The hour lesson which took a day to plan goes by in a minute. I leave the classroom drenched in sweat, both from the stifling Shanghai heat and the exertion of teaching. At the top of the stairwell there’s a window which provides a view of the Shanghai metropolis. Tall buildings dot the landscape as far as the eye can see, interspersed with cranes. I’m told they are constructing a new skyscraper every week here. A brown and gray fog hangs over all this. As I walk down the stairs, I reflect upon the children left behind by this fast-paced development.

My teaching opportunity was made possible by a Free-man Foundation scholarship. While studying abroad in Shanghai last fall, I had an internship at Stepping Stones China Foundation, a non-profit providing English language classes to low-income migrant children of Shanghai. In addition to teaching in their migrant schools, I also did some research about the education system in China and interviewed some Stepping Stones families and middle-class Fudan university students.

I learned that both these groups are concerned with the current Chinese educational system overly burdening young children with a heavy and memorization-laden workload, leaving scant time for creative pursuits. One university student recalled “at least” two hours of homework a day as a third grader, but acknowledged that without this type of discipline he would not have made it into Fudan University. Another university student remembered that “in high school things did get much worse” and noted, “two of my classmates even committed suicide during my time in high school.” She described her high-school schedule: she would wake up an hour before class to study pre-emptively and study an hour after class to remain competitive. “On test days I would wake up at four in the morning to study,” she said matter-of-factly.

Programs like Stepping Stones help to even out the playing field for low-income migrant families by providing higher quality English education than even most middle-class children receive because they utilize native English speakers. My teaching experience and visits to various schools in China revealed that the English education provided by the Chinese school system has mostly Chinese natives teaching the government’s English curriculum. These teachers do not speak English as their first language and provide inaccurate English pronunciation as well as textbook-reliant classroom experiences. A teacher I met in Beijing – while studying Mandarin there myself – said she spent her entire English lesson having her students repeat words that she read (and butchered) off standard national textbooks. Parents wishing their children to obtain a better English education must pay exorbitant sums to pricey foreign schools or tutoring programs. Thus, Stepping Stones provides a highly desirable and highly effective service to their low-income migrant children.

Progress towards improving standard education in China appears on the horizon. There is a move to ban written homework for first and second graders during the summer vacation, as well as prohibit any unified exams for students in the third grade and younger. This reflects the growing national awareness of the need for improved lifestyle balance for young children. Children represent the future of China and the world. By improving their lives and education, we will improve everyone’s future.

Isla Vista Tragedy - Global Support

Gauchos around the world united in their grief over the terrible events that occurred in Isla Vista on May 23rd. Many study centers abroad held memorial events and created safe spaces for students from UCSB and other UC campuses to share their feelings and concerns. Chancellor and Mrs. Yang hosted their annual EAP Reception just days after the shooting occurred, welcoming EAP outbound, returned and reciprocal exchange students to their home. Many expressed their gratitude to the Chancellor and his wife for providing a needed safe haven at such a stressful time. “It was so nice to have a welcoming place to go to and just be together,” noted one attendee. Messages of support to Isla Vista and the UCSB community were sent from EAP students, staff and partners around the world.
Study Abroad: Transforming Hearts, Minds and Lives

Three UCSB EAP student peer advisors reflect below on their experiences abroad in Senegal, Chile and Italy.

I was nervous. How was I going to survive four months in a French-speaking African country? I was one of only two UC students heading to Senegal. Friends and family were shocked that I was studying abroad in an African country.

The first two months of living with water I could not drink, electricity that would spontaneously shut off, cockroaches that would not die, and a native language that was certainly not French made my initial adjustment challenging. Then suddenly the time came for us to say goodbye and not a single one of the constant complainers in our study abroad group wanted to leave! Yes, we wanted to escape the inconveniences, the heat and the dirt, but these were nothing in comparison to the memories we gained and the friendships we earned in Dakar.

Studying abroad changes you, especially when you venture off into a developing country. But the change does not come in one big bang; it happens in the way you yearn for certain traditions and habits such as drinking ataya tea with your host siblings in the hot evenings or getting onto a carrapide taxibus and hanging on for dear life as you hurdle down the main thoroughfare when you return to your home. You realize that you learned how to live your life in a completely different way than you were used to and now all you want to do is do it again.

Every weekend, municipal Bologna closes down the two main streets of the city to create a pedestrian zone where cars are prohibited. The honking and revving of motor engines disappear and are replaced by musical street performers and the laughter of children. Here people come for a leisurely walk, to window shop and to meet up with friends. There is something sweet and warm about Bologna; I frequently bumped into people I knew on the streets, greeted my regular grocer on my way to classes, and made almost daily visits on foot to my favorite gelateria, or gelato store.

This was the beauty of a city that is off the tourist map, a place I could make a home for myself. Instead of being a traveler, I chose to become a Chilean and lay down roots in Santiago.

Pushing us outside of the classroom, we EAPers were encouraged to find professional internships. We began interacting with extremely passionate experts in different fields, all with vast experiential knowledge and, one cannot forget, in the tricky Chilean dialect of Spanish that we all had to conquer.

I worked with a start-up English speaking publication company. Beginning as a translator, I eventually wrote my own articles, surveying popular clubs and restaurants, and interviewing pro athletes, former politicians, and the deans of Chile’s largest universities. This is now the gold star on my resume. In every job interview, I speak mostly about this internship. Nothing could have complemented my UCSB degree more than the pre-professional experience I had working in Santiago, Chile.

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Eric Uslander (EAP Chile) graduated in Global Studies and would like to continue learning about education.

Stephanie Shannon (EAP Senegal and France) graduated as a Global Studies major with a minor in Black Studies. She plans to work with a human rights organization based in Senegal and then apply to law school.

A Studio Art major in the College of Creative Studies, Jessica Chan (EAP Italy) will continue exploring through travel and work in search of a creative outlet for her current overabundance of interests.
The UC Santa Barbara EAP office wishes to thank the following for their generous donations during the 2013-2014 academic year:

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To all EAP alumni you can make a difference. Think about how transformative study abroad was for you, and help us make this a dream-come-true for an EAP Gaucho today. Contributable to the UCSB EAP Scholarship Fund and help ensure that Gauchos will continue to take advantage of the study abroad experience.

Thank you to all the generous alumni and friends who made contributions to the UCSB Education Abroad Program this past year. We welcome your continued support, and invite others to join us this year.

For more information about giving to UCSB Education Abroad Program, please contact Chris Pizzinat, 805-893-5126 or Chris.Pizzinat@ia.ucsb.edu.
Yes! Some fortunate students are now able not only to study on EAP but also to work as interns with companies, NGOs, schools and public health facilities in China, Japan, Korea and Thailand. The UCSB EAP Freeman Foundation Internship Program funded fifteen Freeman scholars in Asia this year. Internship experience is an increasingly important part of today’s undergraduate life. By combining education abroad with interning, our students are able to get international work experience and also have a way to more deeply engage with their overseas community. As one awardee stated, “Interning offered me a unique look at the broader non-profit sector in Bangkok. With my graduation quickly approaching, this was also a valuable experience to gain insights into what it is like to work in the non-profit sector in a developing country.” Read about Forrest Liu’s experience as a Freeman intern in Shanghai, China on page one.

This exciting program was made possible by a generous grant from the Freeman Foundation, founded in memory of Mansfield Freeman, co-founder of the American International Group (AIG) insurance company. Having resided in China for many years, the Freeman family is an advocate for increased awareness of East Asia and the Foundation generously supports programs which promote greater knowledge and understanding of Asia among Americans. Mansfield Freeman’s grandson Graeme Freeman is currently administering the foundation.