

Spring 2014 CIMBA Undergraduate Newsletter



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Letter from the Editor

With each word I punch into the keyboard, this “Letter from the Editor” becomes increasingly difficult to wrap up. To sum my semester up as a CIMBA student in a few hundreds words is just as tough as any wildcard Dr. Al and his talented, young adult cultivating staff can throw my way. From making our way through LIFE to paragliding from the top of Mount Grappa, our class truly has truly done it all!

My semester abroad has exceeded my expectations and then some. I had no idea coming into this how attached I would get to the students, staff, faculty, professors, and Paderno Del Grappa. At the end of these three months, I consider Paderno my “home away from home.”

Nearing the end of this experience, I realize I am leaving with more than 120 new Facebook friends; I am leaving with 120 friendships and 120 lifelong bonds. Our CIMBA experience as the Spring Class of 2014 has been nothing short of one amazing fulfillment to the next, all culminating to one life altering experience chock full of personal, professional, and intellectual growth. It’s hard to imagine leaving the PIO building and returning home, but I’m already looking forward to a Spring 14’ CIMBA Mate reunion!



By Jenny Penningroth, University of Iowa

Comparing uncertainty through running and study

By Ryan Geidner, St. Mary's University of Minnesota



A few weeks ago Cody Balogh and I ran a half marathon in Verona as a part of our offseason training for soccer. It was the first half marathon for both of us and I was definitely uncertain of what I was getting myself into by signing up for a 13.1 mile race when I have never run more than 4 or 5 miles at a time. But, we both felt it would be a good opportunity to get out of our comfort zone and experience something new and different. It was definitely a struggle at times, especially toward the end, around the 10-mile mark, but being able to see much of the city of Verona during the run and having people we didn't know cheering us on helped us keep our minds off of how tired we actually were and focus on our goal of finishing. In exciting fashion, the race finished with a run through the ancient Verona Arena in the city center and the finish line just on the other side. Looking back, it was well worth the throbbing soreness and agony our bodies experienced and I think the best part was realizing that the by putting forth the effort to actually do a race like this, instead of just talking about it, enabled us to experience something novel that we could learn from. Personally, I learned that with the right mindset I can accomplish goals I didn't think were possible before.

In another light, I can relate this running experience to my decision to study abroad. Just like signing up for the race, I was also excited about traveling to a part of the world I've never been to before, but uncertain of what experiences and obstacles I would face. In the end, I learned that in order grow, you have to get out of your comfort zone at times and face challenges with a positive attitude. Looking back, I feel extremely fortunate that I decided to take the risk and participate in both the half marathon and studying abroad and it has taught me that sometimes uncertainty is good and is worth the risk.



“Star of Change”

By Alex Aiello, University of Arkansas

I did not know what to expect going into the unique CIMBA program called LIFE. I’d just arrived to campus two days before the start of the experience and had only met a few of the students in my group before going into it, so I at least knew that whatever was about to happen was going to be an interesting challenge for me. In the end, what I came to find out was that over the period of three days I would become more connected and comfortable with my LIFE group than a good majority of my friends back in America because of the bonds and experiences we shared together.

The LIFE experience is what you choose to make of it, and it will expose certain values and characteristics about yourself that maybe you did not see before. There are common misconceptions that LIFE breaks you down and builds you back up, but on the contrary it displays what is already inside you and teaches how to utilize and apply these unpracticed assets to your everyday life. During the experience, I was tested and pushed in ways that I could not have predicted beforehand. To witness firsthand the connection of not only my LIFE group and I, but also the inner connection I had established with myself was a feeling I will never forget. Every feature of the LIFE experience is implemented for a reason based on extensive research with the intention of teaching how the brain functions and how to understand these functions to further benefit every aspect of the individual’s life.

Sharing the “City of Brotherly Love” with Italian Elementary Students

By John Villari, University of Delaware

They say it is important to embrace the culture where you are studying abroad, but how you do that is up to you. For me, I intended to embrace the Italian culture by stuffing my face with pasta, pizza, and wine...you know, like the typical American. I had some experience with the Italian language previous so I thought I may also chat with some Italian students my age to add to the experience as well. Never did I suspect that embracing the Italian culture would include preparing a powerpoint presentation to present to an Italian elementary class on my birthplace: Philadelphia. But, as it seems with much of what happens at CIMBA, opportunities arise and you end up being involved in activities you had never thought to become involved with previously. And, as always, these unplanned events turn out to be the highlights of the study abroad experience.

I was scrolling through the weekly CIMBA e-mail when I noticed a section regarding volunteering. It was now the third week of classes and I was looking for more ways to connect with the Italian culture besides the almost too often chats with the local bartenders. It mentioned helping out at the elementary school on campus which I thought did not sound too difficult. Nina and I were paired together and decided to do our presentation on the the American city we both shared and loved: Philadelphia!

The first thing I noticed when we walked into the classroom was the young Italians curiosity. Unlike the older Italians who are more nonchalant about the Americans sharing their campus, the younger students could not take their eyes of Nina and myself and were chatting excitedly with each other in hushed Italian phrases I could not comprehend. Once their teacher informed them that both Nina and I also had Italian relatives, they became even more enthused and ready to listen to whatever we had to say!

Nina and I had created many slides describing every aspect of Philadelphia including the different city areas, the sports teams, the Italian Market, and the Philly cheesesteak (of course!) because we were worried that we would not be able to fill in the entire hour class slot. Boy were we wrong! We had anticipated talking about the pictures on our slides to a half-interested audience who would not even know what we were saying. Instead, the young Italian students were determined to make sense of every slide and asked questions or made comments for each slide! One student asked about Sammy Sosa’s cork-filled bat when we mentioned the Phillies baseball team, another student mentioned Spongebob when he saw the Spongebob float on the Thanksgiving Day Parade, and they were extremely curious about the length and size of Broad Street for some reason! I remember one boy in the front-right of the class raised his hand for every slide!

We only completed half of our slides that day. Learning about Philadelphia was such a hit with the class that we are going back to finish the slides! It was really nice to teach the local kids about my heritage for a change. It put it in context that WE are not the only people experiencing a new culture, so too are the Italians when we move onto campus. I cannot wait to finish our presentation and would highly recommend for anyone to become involved and volunteer! I can tell that it has been one of my most satisfying study abroad experiences at CIMBA!





Carnevale di Venezia

By Nicole Larson, Iowa State University

Studying abroad at CIMBA, there has been an abundance of time to explore Europe. Looking back, it is difficult to pick my favorite city, though I can definitely say that Venice, not one hour from campus, was amongst my favorites. For the Valentine's Day weekend, a large group of us headed to the "City of Water" for their famous carnival celebration. Before heading to carnival, I did what any wise traveler would do – Googled "Venice Carnival." I'm not going to lie, when my search returned images of people wearing masks and extravagant costumes it scared me a bit. Once experiencing the festival though, I found my fears were unfounded and had a blast. It was suitable that our visit was on Valentine's Day because I truly "fell in love" with the city.

We arrived Friday night and made our way to our hostel. Finding it was not a simple task, it's safe to say Venice is probably the easiest place to get lost....ever. Come Saturday morning, the place was flooded with mask shops. Obviously, we had to make a stop and purchase just the right mask to fit our personalities. Though my mask ended up breaking, it's not stopping me from bringing it home as a souvenir. After walking around for what seemed like hours, we finally found San Marco's Square. I was expecting to see more people wearing masks, but it seemed as though the only people wearing masks were tourists (including us).

Despite our endless hours of walking, it was such a great experience that I decided to head back the following weekend with a different group of friends. This time, it was a lot more crowded and there were more people wearing masks, some even wearing the outrageous costumes. Carnival was not what I was expecting, but the people we were surrounded by made it two of the most memorable weekends of my life. It's hard to believe this crazy journey is coming to an end. I never want to leave my CIMBA mates!



A Slice of Eat-aly

By Brittany Rogan, University of Connecticut

A study abroad semester in Italy isn't complete without eating copious amounts of pizza, but what better way to immerse oneself in the culture than by learning how to make pizza from an authentic Italian pizzaiolo? I signed up to do an "Event With a Professor" in Asolo at Bar Pizzeria Cornaro, where I learned about the art of pizza making.

The pizza maker, Severio, was very passionate about pizza making. Through Cristina's translation, we learned about the most important ingredients of the dough – water and yeast. The amount of yeast needed and the temperature of the water depends on the season. To finish making the dough, you also need flour, salt, and extra virgin olive oil. Severio taught us all about the art of pizza making by asking us questions and having us guess what we thought the answer was. Most of our guesses were usually wrong, but by the end of the night we learned that a good pizzaiolo can turn a pile of dough into a finished pizza in anywhere from three to five minutes. Severio cooks his pizzas at 833 degrees Fahrenheit, and he knows the oven is hot enough when the stones turn a certain color.

After learning about how pizza is made, we got to make our own! Saverio had the dough ready for us, and he taught us how to flatten it out, or "open it up." Then we added sauce, cheese, and whatever toppings we wanted. Cristina recommended the zucchini, and it was so delicious. Severio formed the girls' pizzas into heart shapes, and then he put them in the oven. Dr. Al and Professor Ancona joined us for dinner as well, and we all had a great time eating our own creations!

An Italian Culinary Experience: First Formal Dinner

By Megan Rowley, The University of Iowa

Italian dining is as much of a meal for one's soul as it is for one's body. Each course takes the individual through unique and captivating sensory experiences, as well as deeper into conversation with those whom they share their table. Italy is known for its regional variation of ingredients in food, and the menu at Hotel Rino Fior in Castlefranco is notably Northern in its ingredients.

The experience began with the aperitivo and antipasti. The aperitivo was a light, pale yellow drink served as a refreshing alarm to the taste buds, helping prepare for the dishes ahead. The antipasti were a bitter-sweet love affair that tempted one's self-regulation. Each of the small dishes tempted to take you away from the idea of hunger while distracting one's mind from the fact that the meal has yet to even begin.

The primo of Risotto alla Verdi was a perfect example of classic Northern cuisine. The dish consisted of spinach, green beans, and peas creamed together with butter and Parmesan. The heavy dish complimented the light Chardonnay, which was carefully chosen by the artist behind the meal.

Before one could successfully conquer the creamy pile of rice resting on their plate, the wait staff was ready to present a sweeter dish to build upon the earthy flavors left by the risotto. A healthy serving of pasta ribbons was spooned onto the plate, the contents of which were neatly tucked away in its delicate packing. Wrapped with care inside each of the ribbons were pear, walnuts, and taleggio cheese. The simple ingredients serve as a surprisingly light dish despite the common assumption of pasta being heavy.

Before one can pour a glass of red wine, the wait staff presented the secondo, consisting of guinea fowl breast. Guinea, being much tangier than chicken, was subdued with the earthier flavors of its fragrant rosemary sauce and subtle nut glaze. This helped even out the flavor of the meat. Alongside the breast were zucchini, carrots, and mushrooms to create the full-bodied flavor of the dish. The ribbon tying the package together was a robust Cabernet Franc served to compliment the fowl. The rich, dry wine was put on display by the fowl, its deep inky color balancing the creams, greens, tans, and oranges present on the plate.

With only a few dishes left to engage the senses, the experience began to turn away from the deep, smoky, and earthy flavors of previous courses and towards the sweet and savory. After admiring the desert for a few moments, the temptation to taste it proved to be too much. The tart blackberries, savory pistachios, and sweet meringue mixed in harmony to provide the diner the perfect amount of flavor to satisfy the sweet tooth without becoming overpowering.

The artistry of the Italian meal puts the common conception of American Italian food to shame. The care of the chef, the quality and simplicity of the ingredients, and overall preparation amount to an exceptional meal that invites the individual on an exploration of the senses. The only pitfall of such an experience is the realization of how often we settle for food that deserves no appreciation and demonstrates such little care.





The Neverending Climb

By Abby Capozzo, The University of Iowa

On a beautiful, sunny, March Saturday in Paderno del Grappa, a group of around 15 students, Professor Bigolin, and I decided to embark on the traditional Mt. Grappa hike to the summit. We've been looking at the snowcapped mountains from campus all semester and decided there was no way we could leave here without seeing the view from the top. Little did we know that nine hours, 11 miles, and 26,500 steps later, this would be one of the best, but hardest experiences of our lives!

We started our journey on some rather steep paths with beautiful views of the lower valley, however those paths and views didn't even begin to compare to what was waiting for us a bit higher up. Once we cleared the tree line, we could look back and see some breathtaking views of the area below but we also ran into the remains of the winter snow. What started with a few inches of snow on the trail, deepened as we hiked up and changed the course of our journey into a bit more of an exciting challenge. For me, because it was so straight up and steep, at times it felt like I was climbing Mount Everest! Ok, that's a bit of an exaggeration, but this was definitely not the easy trek I envisioned before we left campus!

By the time we hit the top, I was beyond relieved and also completely covered in snow. Seeing the mountain refuge and flag as we approached the end of the hike up, was an indescribable feeling. I truly felt like I was on top of the world. As we sat down and refueled with some various carb-loaded dishes (lasagna, gnocchi, fettuccini, etc.), we started to think about having to hike back down and how it would be harder than coming up, especially with the slick snow and rapid decline. In the end, the hike down was definitely grueling, and a couple of times as we slid down on the snow covered parts of the trail, the snow was up to some of our waists! By the time we hit the bottom it had been nine hours of hiking and as hard as it was I am so glad I did it! I couldn't imagine doing it with any other group either ---I love my classmates here at CIMBA!

The next morning, I woke up with some sore muscles in places that I didn't even know could get sore. But it was totally worth it and this local hiking experience was definitely something I will remember for the rest of my life.



CIMBA goes Professional

By Zach Barnhill, The University of Alabama

During our time here studying at CIMBA, we were given the unique opportunity to visit local Italian businesses. My group of approximately 20 students visited a company named Gruppo Euromobil. After a bus ride of little under an hour, we arrived and walked into a large conference room, all dressed in our sharpest professional dress. After a brief presentation and complimentary refreshments, which included the strongest shot of espresso that I have ever consumed in Italy, we walked across the complex to their furniture show room.

From what I had heard from the initial presentation (and partly due to the fact that it was still very early in the morning) my expectations of what would be in the showroom were fairly insignificant. I had envisioned a showcase of typical furniture that would be unable to hold my attention for more than a few minutes. However, I was pleasantly surprised at the uniqueness and innovative qualities of the furniture, and I believe that most of us would say that we were genuinely interested and intrigued by the items that this company produces. After enjoying the wide variation of couches, kitchen furniture, and even unique bunk-beds, I presented our tour-guide with a small gift of appreciation as we filed out of the showroom.

Our last stop on the morning's tour was a short bus ride away to the production and manufacturing factory. Here we witnessed a large factory with countless modern processes and storage units that all came together to produce the bases for the furniture, which were ultimately shipped out in trucks from the back of the building. The automated machinery ranged from forklifts to assembly lines to storage mechanisms, and as we toured around the building for approximately half an hour we were fascinated by the complex methodology that was completed so efficiently and easily through these machines. Through the translation of our teacher Simone, we were able to communicate with the factory manager and described the functions of the factory to us thoroughly. This was a unique experience that would not be available in many study abroad programs, and we were all thankful and excited for the rare opportunity to see the inner workings of an Italian manufacturer.

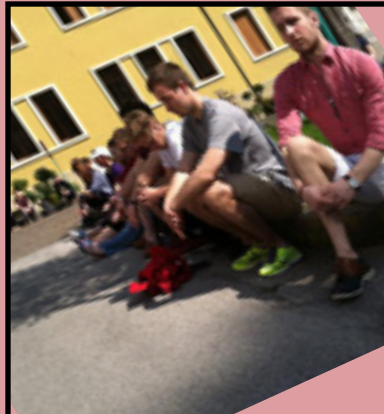
Mindfulness from a CIMBA coach's perspective

By Kevin Zakorchemny , CLC and LEAP Coach

During the Spring 2014 semester I was lucky enough to work one-on-one with students as a coach as part of CIMBA's Leadership and Personal Development program, LEAP. In the previous three semesters that I've been around the program, students had been introduced to the core concepts and benefits of mindfulness as they related to personal development and we even began daily practice of a mindful breathing exercise on campus during the Fall 2013 semester. However, this semester was the first where mindfulness was fully integrated into the LEAP coaching program and from my perspective its impact was very positive in the support of student personal development and awareness.

From the start of this semester, students were exposed multiple times conceptually to mindfulness and then prior to their first coaching sessions the practice of mindful breathing was introduced as a daily activity after lunch. The staff led breathing exercise started out at 5 minutes and gradually increased to 12 minutes as the semester moved along. Additionally, as part of the coaching process, all participants signed the CIMBA Personal Commitment Form, which highlighted the importance of mindfulness as an exercise toward the strengthening of weak brain circuitry and overall support toward meaningful behavioral change (changing habits related to developmental goals). As part of the process, coachees committed to how often they would participate in mindful exercises, not only through the CIMBA led practice on campus, but also while traveling and in any additional opportunities as they saw fit.

At first, many of my coachees were skeptical of the practice and benefits of mindfulness. For them it was viewed as just another chore, no different than their accounting homework. Students felt the practice was very difficult and their inability to control their focus extremely frustrating. However, as the semester went on, those committed to regular practice in and out of CIMBA had much more positive and open comments toward the benefits they were seeing and feeling in themselves. Some of the feedback I received was that it helped them calm down and control anxiety. Others saw an improved focus in class and an increased awareness of when they were not being in the present. In a significant number of cases, the increased awareness of thoughts and emotions favorably supported the coachees behavioral change as it related to their LEAP goal. Overall, I'm excited about the recent implementation of mindfulness exercises as a core feature and commitment of the LEAP Personal Development program and I hope that future students of the program continue to find value in the practice!



CIMBAIN' ALL OVER THE WORLD



"It's GOING DOWN... I'M YELLIN' CimbAAAA!"

CIMBA QUANTIFIED

1 20 Students from 20 Universities
A ge range of 18 - 24
5 2% Female, 48% Male
M ost visited city: Florence
1 100% LIFE GRADUATION

Top 5 Schools with highest attendance



Number of students per University

