

NEWS

The Evergreen State College

Olympia, Washington 98505

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For Immediate Release
December 6, 1972

For Further Information
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College students have been making trips to Europe since the dawn of American universities, but for 22 young scholars at The Evergreen State College their trip across the seas has meant one quarter of intensive language training and a lot of preparation.

"We'll all be in Europe by the first of January to begin accomplishing several academic goals," Faculty Member Eric Larson, coordinator of the Evergreen Study Abroad group contract, said. "We've been reading background materials and immersing ourselves in foreign dialogue since September. Now, we're ready to move to Europe for six months.

The main goal of the year-long academic program is to "break into the cultural scene of another land, to become a participant/observer in the culture, not just a tourist," Larson said.

"This will require a lot of student independence," he added. "The students will have to endure the throes of cultural shock and a certain amount of alienation. They will experience 'strangerhood', perhaps for the first time, and will need to work at re-establishing roots in a new land."

Larson said half of the students would be spending most of their time in southern Spain, one-fourth will live in France, the remainder in Greece, Italy and Austria.

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Dick Nichols, Director
Information Services

"All of the students are interested in learning to speak a foreign language fluently," he said. "Some are also very interested in art and art history and they are the ones who've chosen France and Italy for their European base. The others are more interested in anthropology and sociology and they'll be living in Spain for the most part."

Together the students will compile an ethnographic slide show, Larson explained. "They'll all take color slides which will describe the social life and culture of the peoples they've come to know."

To penetrate different cultures, several students will serve internships in local schools teaching children English, will work in stores or libraries, or "any place where they have frequent interaction with the people and can exchange information," Larson said.

Cost of the trip will be borne by the students, "but it won't cost them much more than living in Olympia because food and rent are so much less expensive over there," he added.

Responsible for supervising the 22 students, Larson will be based in Jarez de la Fronteara, Spain. He expects to exchange numerous letters with those in other parts of Europe during the next six months.

"I'll also make at least two complete circuit trips to see them," he said. The trips will take him from Seville, Spain to Florence, Italy; Athens, Greece; Innsbruck, Austria; Paris, France, and back to Seville.

Traveling with the Evergreen professor will be his wife, Patricia, and their two children, Christine, 7, and Neal, 5, plus Mrs. Larson's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Branch of Olympia.

Experienced travelers, Larson and his wife spent a year on an isolated south Pacific island in 1964 where he completed his doctoral research in anthropology for the University of Oregon.

Research will also be a part of this trip, he said. "I'll be studying the sherry industry of Spain since I believe it to be an important element of Spanish culture. I am particularly interested in secular aspects of the culture and the economic system of the country."

Like their professor, most of the students will also conduct individual research projects which they hope to share during at least two large group meetings in Europe before they return home next June.