

# CCI Global Communications Scholars

## Semester in Australia

How the Study Abroad Program has changed and could change you.



**D**eranged toddlers strangling ducklings: this was the story thrown on my desk at *Peninsula Living* magazine one blazing afternoon in Sydney, Australia, after several park rangers issued complaints concerning negligent mothers. Attempting to find a lead, I called the police station where I was promptly chastised with a “don’t bloody prank call me, mate!”

After a rather unsuccessful morning at my internship, I happily boarded the bus and commuted to Australian Catholic University, where I attended a class with Laura Miller, the faculty advisor of the CCI Global Scholars Study Abroad Australia. The next day I attended a weekend surf camp and pet a kangaroo. This was my life for a full semester and I enjoyed every minute of it.

The College of Communication and Information started a semester-long study abroad program in Sydney in 2015. The program includes one course taught by a UT faculty member and one course taught by a faculty member at the University of Sydney, followed by a credit-bearing internship matched to each student in the program. Students receive a total of 13 credit hours for the experience.

For me, my time abroad definitely shaped me as a person. Not only do I now refer to my boxed wine as “goon,” but I also gained valuable experience at a magazine and made a lot of friends along the way.

“Studying abroad has a lot of positive effects on students,” said Sam Swan, director of internationalization and outreach for CCI. “For one thing, it helps a student develop a broader view of the world. You begin to see the world through the eyes of others instead of your own.”

By January 2016, I was there with 14 other CCI students living it up in the land down under. There were, however, a few bumps along the way.

“I got an email before I left that said they were putting me at this community radio station, and I wanted to be in TV,” said program participant Kaitlin Lambert. “I emailed CAPA [the internship program] and they emailed back that TV stations in Australia only took Australian interns.”



Sydney Opera House, just minutes away from student housing

Many students felt misled about what they thought their internship would be. Kaitlin added that she felt the program did not look at the individual person’s dreams and aspirations, and rather stuck us at any place that needed free labor.

Fortunately, Laura Miller, who just completed her second year teaching a three-week communications class in Sydney, says the kinks in the first year of the program seem to have been worked out after switching to the International Study Abroad program.

“It’s changed quite a bit since [the inaugural trip],” Miller said. “Students learn a lot at their internships and have something to put on their résumé, but I also think there’s a lot of personal growth, too. One of the things I noticed is that their confidence goes up. They feel more confident talking to locals, asking questions, and they feel more comfortable in their surroundings. People will just say, ‘I’m kind of at home here.’”