IU-Seville Exchange Program Flourishing

Victor Childers first conceived the idea for an institutional linkage between Indiana University and the University of Seville during a visit to Spain in 1981. Further talks between Antonio Garnica Silva, head of the Department of English Language at Seville, faculty members of Bloomington's Department of Spanish & Portuguese, and IU administrators led to a formal agreement of exchange and cooperation signed in June 1983.

The agreement calls for the exchange of students and faculty from both institutions. Graduate students spend a whole academic year at the respective host university, as assistant instructors of Spanish and Portuguese (for Seville students) or of English (for Indiana students), while enrolled in graduate courses usually leading to a Masters degree in their own academic programs. The short-term professorial exchange is for one month for research, lectures, or consultation. Faculty from any discipline may participate.

This past fall, Professor Garnica visited Bloomington for the second time as Seville's faculty exchangee. Garnica said, "Both times I have arrived in Bloomington at the same time in the year, just in time for the first snowfall on the still-green grass. I still find this campus as beautiful as ever."

Professor Garnica visited various IU colleagues on this trip and spent time with two current Seville exchange students, Maria Luisa Perez Ojeda, an assistant instructor of Portuguese who is a graduate student in the Department of Linguistics, and Manuel Triano Lopez, in the department of Spanish & Portuguese.

Maria Luisa Perez is in her second year on the exchange program. She recently shared her thoughts about the value of cultural exchange and being an international student:

> "I decided my education could only be completed by experiencing firsthand the culture that was so interesting to me."

I've been studying English since the sixth grade and was planning to get a degree in English literature and linguistics at the University of Seville, but I felt that something was really missing. I knew little or nothing about American students, about their different teaching and learning styles, and could never have imagined the possibilities of an excellent university library and its round-the-clock access via technology. I decided that my education could only be completed by experiencing firsthand the many ways of living and working in the culture that was so interesting to me. This is why I applied for an international graduate grant with one of the exchange programs that the University of Seville maintains with American institutions and how I came to be a student at IU.

When I arrived in Bloomington in the fall of 1994, I didn't know I was going to be staying for the following year as well. As soon as you are in another country, so much is new to you that you can never stop learning, even if you try to relax by going to a movie. Every minute enriches your life in one way or another.

In Star Trek jargon, you have been "beamed up" to another galaxy at the speed of light! All of the members of the exchange whom I have spoken to have wanted to stay on longer. It is not hard to imagine why this should be so. You cannot tell from reading, or from talking face-to-face with someone, what it is like to live in another culture. I have one piece of advice to give: You simply have to go and find out for yourself!

For more information on international exchange programs, contact Susan Carty, tel: (812) 855-7557; e-mail: scarty@indiana.edu.

— R. N.