IU Administrators Participate in Selection of “la Caixa” Fellows

For the past 15 years, Indiana University’s Office of International Programs has administered the U.S. component of the “la Caixa” Fellowship Program, which sends some of Spain’s brightest students abroad for graduate study at prestigious colleges and universities. The “la Caixa” Foundation, Spain’s largest savings institution, devotes a substantial portion of its profits to funding social, educational, and cultural endeavors. The fellowship program is one of its most far-sighted educational endeavors, aimed at developing and training Spain’s next generation of leaders in all academic fields as well as the professions.

Students are sent to the United States, France, Great Britain, and Germany for a two-year period of study, with the U.S.-bound group being the largest at 50 students per year. They are typically accepted into prestigious institutions such as Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Chicago, Stanford, and IU’s School of Music.

Every September, IU’s dean for international programs leads a delegation of other high-level administrators to participate in the program’s selection process. This year, Patrick O’Meara traveled to Spain with IUB Dean of the Faculties and Vice Chancellor Moya Andrews; Professor of Anthropology Anya Royce; Vice Chancellor and Dean for Budgetary Administration Maynard Thompson; and IUPUI’s Dean of the School of Liberal Arts Herbert Saatkamp.

For two days in Madrid and two days in Barcelona, they each joined one of five teams of leading Spanish academics and “la Caixa” administrators to interview some 350 students out of a total of 430 applicants. From these, the teams made their ultimate choice of fellows for the year 2001, with 25 finalists being chosen from Madrid, and 25 from Barcelona. On the completion of the interviews, there was a meeting with “la Caixa’s” President and CEO, José Vilarasau, to formally approve the list of final candidates for the fellowships. Vilarasau received an honorary Doctor of Laws from IU Bloomington in 1997.

In mid-August, the 2000–01 group of U.S.-bound students, chosen the preceding year, arrived at the Bloomington campus for a week of orientation before beginning their two-year fellowships. After a tour of the campus and other landmarks, they heard lectures about the U.S. graduate experience from O’Meara, Eugene Kintgen of the Graduate School, and Bruce Jaffee of the Kelley School of Business. They were officially welcomed at a luncheon by President Myles Brand and heard Christopher Anderson of the Department of Communication and Culture speak on contemporary life in the United States. They then spent the weekend touring Chicago before leaving for their respective universities.

—RMN