

RAMAPO

UNPACKED



EVERY
PICTURE
TELLS A
STORY



FALL 2018

RAMAPO UNPACKED

FALL 2018

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National Park in Altai Republic, Siberia, Russia

ROUKEMA CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MEET THE TEAM



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YEAR OF ASIA



2018-2019 RAMAPO COLLEGE CELEBRATES A YEAR OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGIONS. JOIN US FOR ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE REGIONS, BUILD CULTURAL AND GEOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE, TRY NEW FOODS AND HAVE FUN!

QUICK FACTS

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS | FALL 2017 - SUMMER 2018

Asia and Pacific Regions are the second highest with 76 participants traveling to this region, or 37 percent of annual total.

Top three countries: China (41), Japan (16) and South Korea (10)



INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS | FALL 2016 - SUMMER 2017

Asia and Pacific Regions are the second highest with 68 participants traveling to this region, or 37 percent of annual total.

Top three countries: China (42), India (7) and South Korea (7)



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Out of the 112 current degree seeking international students at Ramapo College, 78 percent of the total number are from the Asia and the Pacific Regions.

The top 3 countries of origin are: Nepal (70), India (5) and Burma-Myanmar (4)





AND THE PACIFIC

FEATURED PROGRAMS

China: Business Immersion Experience

Spring Break
Four undergraduate credits
Deadline: Early November

India: Culture & Sustainability

Summer
Six undergraduate credits
Deadline: Early April

Internships in New Zealand

Summer Eight-Week Program
Six undergraduate transfer credits
Deadlines: Mid-January & Mid-February

China: Community Health and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

Summer
Four undergraduate credits
Deadline: Early March

Japan & South Korea: Exploring the Harmony of Traditional and Modern Societies

Summer
Four undergraduate credits
Deadline: Early March

Internships in Australia

Summer Eight-Week Program
Six undergraduate transfer credits
Deadlines: Mid-January & Mid-February

BOOK CLUB

The George T. Potter Library will be hosting a book club with a focus on the Asia and the Pacific region.

Fall Semester: Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri
Spring Semester: Tiare in Bloom: A Novel by Célestine Vaite

The first 30 students to sign up at the Potter Library Circulation Desk will receive a free copy of the novel. Contact Sam Wittenberg switten1@ramapo.edu and Katie Cohen kcohen1@ramapo.edu to join and for additional information. Refreshments will be served.

LANGUAGE HAPPY HOURS (EVERY WEEK)

Chinese: Wednesday, 3-5 p.m. | B-127
Hindi: Thursday, 1-2 p.m. | ASB-123
Japanese: Wednesday, 2-3 p.m. | ASB-123

BEAUTIFUL COPENHAGEN



BRIELLE OLSHAN

Class of 2018
Copenhagen, Denmark
DIS: Study Abroad in Scandinavia
Fall 2017



Me and a seal in Skagen



Nyhavn



Skagen (northernmost town in Denmark)

I spent the fall 2017 semester in Copenhagen, Denmark. I chose the DIS program because I needed to complete my psychology major and environmental studies minor—this program had the options to fulfill these requirements. I ended up taking seven classes that semester (some via correspondence, and one one-credit class) because they all sounded so interesting. My classes in Denmark were: Positive Psychology, Renewable Energy, Environmental Impacts of Humans, Danish Language and Culture I, European Art of the 19th Century, and Classical Music (with a study tour to Vienna).

One of the best parts of the DIS program is that travel is built into the cost and the planning of the program. For instance, with my Positive Psychology class (as my main class), I traveled for about a week throughout Denmark, and then another week to Prague. Depending on which core class you choose, the location and theme of the trip changes. No matter which trip you select, it is a professionally-planned, free trip around Europe—and it's amazing. The Classical Music course was an optional one-credit class which included a four-day trip to Vienna, where we ate at famous cafes and restaurants, went to the opera and symphony, and visited

Christmas markets and museums. I also went to Paris, the City of Light. I was fortunate to be accepted into the Outdoors Living and Learning Community (LLC) at DIS, where I was able to participate in various activities (including biking along the coast, kayaking in the canals, rock climbing, slack lining, ice skating, winter bathing, acroyoga, attending a film festival, and participating in a weekend-long survival retreat) every week. I had a community of wonderful people surrounding me throughout my time in Denmark. Friends in other living arrangements had good experiences as well, either living with a Danish host family, in the DIS dorms, or in another LLC.

I absolutely fell in love with Copenhagen. The architecture is superb, and the winding streets felt safe, clean, and magical. There are always things to do, excellent restaurants and bars to visit, great transportation throughout the city, wonderful access to the International Airport (and therefore the rest of Europe), quaint cafes and coffee shops, and lovely people who only yell if you block the bike lane (seriously—don't do it). I had the most amazing four months of my life in Copenhagen, and I am truly grateful that I had the opportunity to study abroad.



Biking along the Danish coast



Christmas markets at Nyhavn



Skagen, Denmark



Nyhavn



Ice skating in Copenhagen



Skagen Beach—Most Northern point in Denmark

SCIENCE IN SCOTLAND



CATHERINE CLINTON

Class of 2019
Glasgow, United Kingdom
University of Glasgow
Summer 2018



Went to Loch Ness and wore green for Nessie

During Summer 2018, I performed microbiological research at the university of Glasgow in Scotland. My completed research was titled “Mesophiles and Thermophiles in the Urban Environment,” and I had the opportunity to present my findings for professors, colleagues, and graduate students at the university. While there, I worked in a research lab under the supervision and guidance of Drs. Sonya Taylor and Stephanie Holt. There was a guidebook for me to access for ideas on how I wanted to go about my research, as well as many resources and lab equipment which were available to Life Science researchers from 9 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. During my time at the University, I formed bonds with my professors as well as the other research students in my lab.

Outside of the academic setting, there were many new and exciting cultural experiences to explore. It’s so beautiful and so green, even in the cities. With famous landmarks and museums just down the street from our flat, there was always something exciting, quite literally around the corner. We visited beautiful isles over the weekend, went to a traditional Scottish community dance called Ceilidh, and spent the evening learning new dances alongside the locals. It was all such a wonderful time! It was an honor to be able to participate in this research over the summer, and I will always be thankful for this opportunity.



It really does look like Hogwarts



We had a bit of a photo shoot right after our research presentations

HALF OF MY HEART IS IN HAVANA



VICTORIA RIVARA

Class of 2020
Havana, Cuba
RCNJ: Revolution and Evolution
Summer 2018



Havana

I had never thought that I would have had the opportunity to wander down the streets of Old Havana. As soon as I saw that Ramapo College offered a study abroad program to Cuba I seized my moment to travel to this city I had only dreamed of visiting. Only through film and photography was I able to visualize this beautiful city stuck in a time from the effects of the Cuban Revolution. While I knew beforehand that the political relations between Cuba and the United States were stringent, I had always wanted to venture into this land that the United States restricts citizens from visiting. What I desired the most from this journey was to learn and gain knowledge of both perspectives each nation has towards one another.

I can now say looking back on my trip that traveling to Havana, Cuba was possibly one of the best decisions I have ever made. Through this expedition I have gained a newly formed insight and perspective of a different culture and more of an open perspective of my own nation as well. My adventure began during the summer of 2018; the primary focus of the course "Cuba: Revolution and Evolution" was for students to gain an understanding of the Cuban

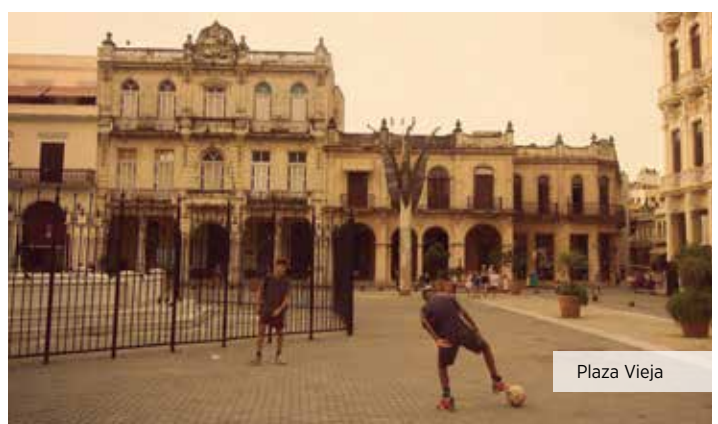
Revolution and how it affects Cuba today and how the United States is affected as well. Staying in Cuba for two weeks, I was able to interact and speak with the Cuban people.

I found that through my short stay in this country, getting to know the people was the most noteworthy and prominent experience of this program. Cubans are the most open hearted and friendly people. My interactions with the Cuban people gave me the best insight. I was able to learn the history of Cuba and the political opinions of the people. Through these interactions I was able to learn the other half of the story as to why Cuba and the United States diverged from one another.

From this newly inquired insight and open perspective, half my love currently remains in Havana and the other half back home in the United States. With each passing day staying in Cuba, the more I admired and fell in love with the city. Each day I dream to return back to this city that is forever in my heart.



Cityscape of Havana



Plaza Vieja

AT HOME IN ATHENS



ALYSSA RABINOWITZ
SCOTT YUNKER

Class of 2019
Athens, Greece
The American College of Greece
Spring 2018

Our semester abroad in Greece enriched our college careers immeasurably. We studied under an exchange program between Ramapo and the American College of Greece, which kept costs down and made a seemingly impossible opportunity a reality.

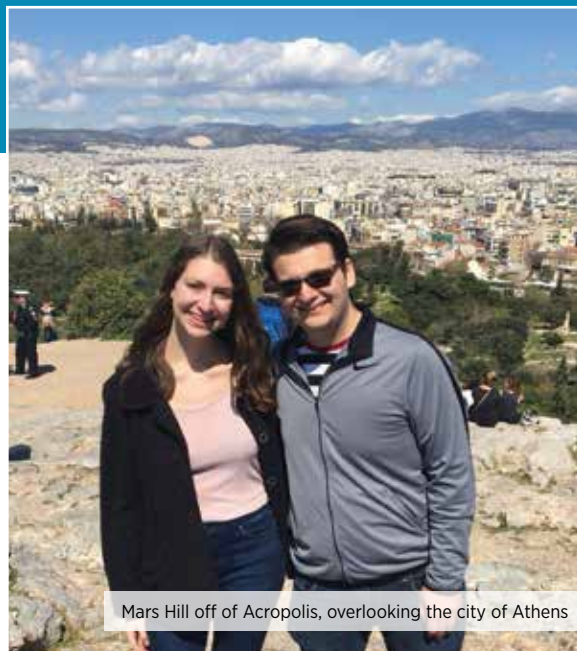
ACG's wide selection of courses meant we were both able to take classes relevant to our respective majors. We both found it rewarding to study with Greek students with the same interests and hear their perspectives.

The school organized several day trips to sites across Greece, with one of our favorites being the island of Hydra, a small and hilly place with rocky beaches and a beautiful harbor. Another favorite location proved to be Naxos, the largest island in the Peloponnese.

Although we witnessed breathtaking scenery and ancient ruins throughout our host country, we especially enjoyed getting to know the small Athenian neighborhood where we lived - the rhythms of daily life, the cats, the shopkeepers, and the friends we made in that community. It was wonderful to feel at home in a place that once felt so foreign.



Church tower on island of Santorini



Mars Hill off of Acropolis, overlooking the city of Athens



One of many happy cats on the island of Naxos

CHI CHI CHI LE LE LE: UN PAÍS SUPER BACÁN!



ALEJANDRA SANCHEZ

Class of 2019

Santiago, Chile

CIEE: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Spring 2018

Growing up, my father would always encourage my sisters and me to save our money so that one day we might travel and see the world. He would tell us to take advantage of our younger years because it is those memories that will last a lifetime. So I enrolled in the CIEE's Liberal Arts Program in Santiago, Chile, packed my bags and headed south.

I have always had a deep interest in exploring South America. As a Latina and a student who minors in Latin American studies, it was very important to me to learn about the culture and history of these beautiful countries. I chose Chile because I was intrigued with its social and political evolution, and I wanted to see for myself what defined the country. (Also, "chile" translates to chili pepper, so I wanted to see if Chileans actually eat spicy food like their country's name would suggest. They don't).

In Chile, I lived in a beautiful home filled with many plants. My host mom's home gave off very hippie vibes--I loved it! I was not in walking distance to the nearest metro stop, but the impeccable view outside my window made up for it. In Santiago, I had a closer view of the cordillera Andes (the Andes mountain range), which was also a great place to go hiking.

I attended Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, where I took three history classes: Chile and Indigenous America, Popular Music in Latin America, and Women and Society in Chile. I really loved the classes because each presented eye-opening and important political and cultural concepts that reflect the transformation of the country's history, revealing a new Chile. Although each class was difficult in its own way, I learned a lot and managed to overcome any academic struggles in order to excel.

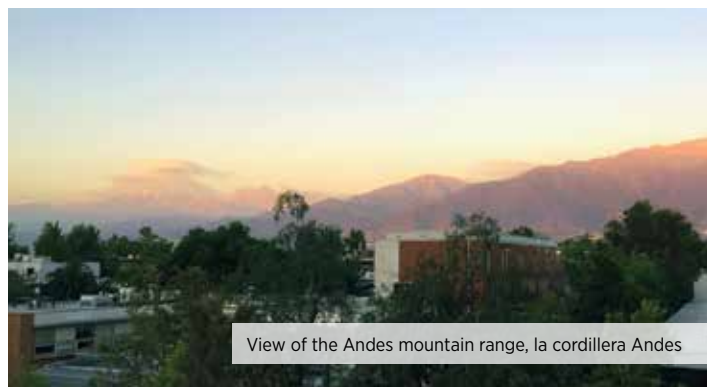
During my stay in Chile, I saw a lot of new faces, meet amazing people, and challenged myself to step outside of my comfort zone.



At the Valley of the Moon in San Pedro Atacama, Chile



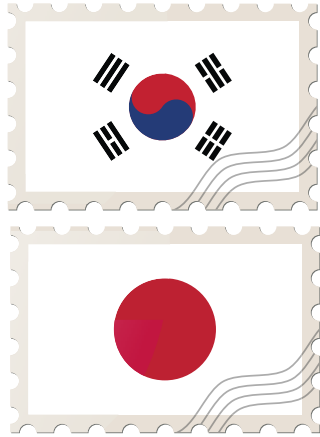
We always stick together #latinos



View of the Andes mountain range, la cordillera Andes

It was definitely worth it. I loved Santiago; its scenery, the great coffee shops and restaurants, the empanada stands on every corner, its many musical performances in the metro, the daily cultural events throughout the city, parks and forests, and especially the people! There are still more places and things left that I need to discover in Chile and I can't wait to go back. Until next time Chile, Chao!

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE ON "US"



SERENE RAHMAN

Class of 2021
 Japan and South Korea
 RCNJ: Exploring the Harmony
 of Traditional and Modern
 Societies
 Summer 2018



Asia is frequently seen as another world beyond our understanding (and I mean, how else would most think when most of K12 education only focuses on Western society, and when media portrays it as some kind of weird, martial arts, master-filled society of monks). However, I was determined to understand how these societies, that we receive so little exposure to, function. As someone of South Asian descent, and someone who did a fair amount of research beforehand, I thought I would at least have a better starting point from which I could see things from the perspective of these other cultures. However, I did not anticipate the cultures of Japan and South Korea to be as different as they were.

The trip, though short and very structured, was an amazing experience that combined both cultural experiences and professional visits, allowing us to get a good view of the old (their traditions and history) and the new (very Westernized economies). We visited temples and folk villages, shopping districts, schools, and businesses in a whirlwind tour through Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, and Seoul, absorbing as much as we could in the little time we had. I didn't think it was possible to fall in love with a country so quickly (or to have my feet hurt so much), but before I knew it, I was head over heels.

The words that came up over and over again were "collectivism" and "individualism." In short, individualism is when one goes about their life with their own best interest in mind, whereas collectivism involves living your life to make things as pleasant for the people around you as possible. America is immensely individualistic, all the way down to the American dream itself. We and our capitalistic society value competing with those around us to be the best we

can be so that we may find success in our lives. Now I'm sure some may be thinking, "Aren't Japan and South Korea infamous for their competitiveness? Aren't people there striving so hard to be the best they can that the suicide rate is immensely high?" Well, the answer, of course, is yes, but they are competitive in a different way.

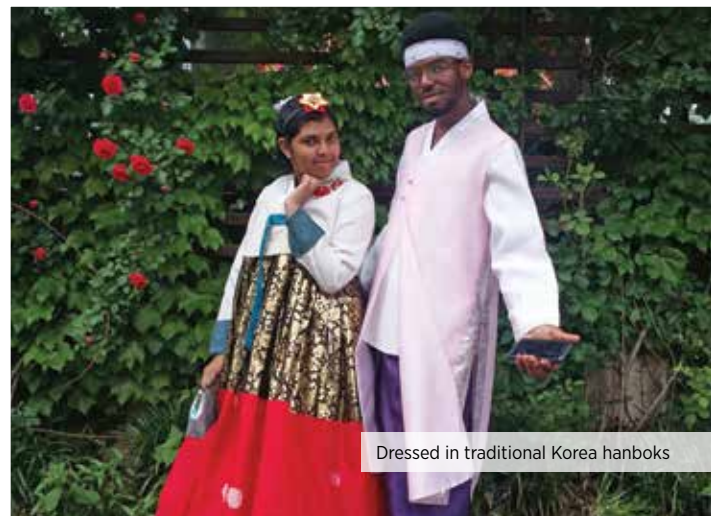
As we learned during a visit to the 7-11 headquarters and in a Musashi University talk, Japanese businesses do not focus on competitiveness within their individual workplaces. In fact, the job process as a whole is immensely unique and fascinating. During high school and university, students apply for companies rather than positions, and their major does not matter. Rather, they are interviewed, and if seen as a good fit, the company hires them, and assigns them to a position they believe they would be good for, and all the new employees are brought into the company together in the spring. Once in the company, they value cooperation with your coworkers, not competition which would allow you to get ahead with promotions in the U.S. Instead, all power in Japanese companies correlates directly to age.



In the eyes of most Westerners, this does not seem like a system that should work. "People won't have the motivation to work well," some may claim, as without the drive of a promotion, and with a job almost always guaranteed, people may not feel the need to work hard. However, the fact is that people in these collectivist societies are driven by needs outside of their own. They seek to be useful to the people of their company, community, and country, and if they are not useful, they ruin the reputation of their family something far more important when families must work together to create as strong a society as possible.

Collectivist societies make life more pleasant even outside of work. Because of the desire to make the world as comfortable as possible for everyone, the streets were always completely litter-free (despite a perplexing lack of trash cans in public), and people are always extremely kind. I even had one instance where my friend Brendon and I got lost, and luckily, thanks to my mediocre skills in Japanese, we were able to explain our situation to a very kind bus driver who went out of his way to take us to a convenience store where we could call a taxi. On top of that, he gave us an umbrella (as it was pouring) which are often kept in public places and returned so that anyone can stay dry if needed. There were also kind men and women in Korea as well, who even without knowing us went out of their way to make sure we were comfortable-- one woman even arranged a little set in her shop so she could take a nice picture for me and Brendon.

However, as kind as the people in these lovely countries are, I am almost certain I would hate living there. Collectivism means living your life for other people, and putting up good appearances that don't reflect who you are or want to be. Even if nothing is said, you can be looked down upon simply for not being dressed nicely in public that means no sweats, people. Likewise, there is little to no sense of self-- you are what others need and want you to be, no buts about it. At the same time though, collectivism encourages so many attitudes that we in the west should embrace more: consideration, selflessness, cooperation. It will be interesting going forward in life with this knowledge, and I hope to encourage an environment in the future where we can work and live in a world that balances the self and others. Until then, well, let's just say I'm looking forward for my next chance to head back to the Far East.



Dressed in traditional Korea hanboks

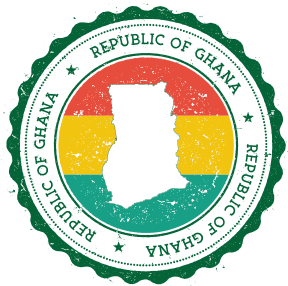


Group photo of everyone outside the Ryokan Matsubaya in Kyoto, Japan



Our group at a cooking lesson near "The Blue House" in Seoul

AKWAABA! TO GHANA



KIMBERLY LANHOLM

Class of 2020
Ghana, Africa
RCNJ: Public Health in West Africa
Summer 2018



Bringing balloons and smiles to the villages

“AKWAABA!” is a phrase used commonly in Ghana to signify a greeting to all entering a space, showing that you are welcome there. Although this was the first word I heard upon entering the country, I was initially apprehensive about entering a culture completely foreign to me. Little did I know, Ghana would become the most welcoming and comforting place I had ever come to know and love in the span of being there for only a few weeks.

Upon applying, I saw this study abroad experience as the perfect introduction to clinicals. I had the opportunity to learn from the Ghanaian medical staff, the Ramapo professors, and the upper classmen attending the trip with me. The clinical rotations we attended allowed me to give tetanus vaccinations, observe cesarean section and vaginal births, take blood pressure, perform urinalysis tests, chart patients’ vitals, weigh babies, and listen to fetal hearts, all first-time experiences for me. This greatly enhanced my nursing knowledge and skill set. I am very lucky to have been able to do all of these things in the Ghanaian hospitals to show me the differences and similarities between healthcare systems between Ghana and America. I achieved my clinical goals far beyond expectation, and that was not the only goal I was able to accomplish.



Scrubbing in for the cesarean sections

During this study abroad, I aspired to discover the similarities between American and Ghanaian cultures through connecting with the people there. This task ended up being much easier than I had ever expected. The nursing students from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), the university that hosted us while in Ghana, had the same motivation, aspirations, and goals as our students from Ramapo College. The people in the villages were some of the happiest and most fun-loving people I have ever met, despite their less fortunate means of living. Between hard work, the importance of family, and the strong sense of community, it was not hard to see the values and ways of life we shared. This trip helped me realize the importance of taking nothing for granted and taking pride in who you are and where you come from.

Working in the hospitals and villages in Ghana and getting the chance to interact with the patients by providing them basic healthcare was the most inspiring thing I have ever gotten to experience. Everyone we encountered was highly grateful and appreciative for not only our help, but even just for our presence. To this day, I keep in contact with those I have the ability to and feel that I have made bonds to last a lifetime. By the time I left, I felt the true essence of the welcoming message of “Akwaaba” and am thankful everyday for this once in a lifetime study abroad experience.



Ramapo College students and staff with Ghanaian medical staff

WHEN IN PATAGONIA



AMANDA MAYER

Class of 2019
Argentina
ISA: Universidad de Belgrano
Fall 2017

First, you have to decide to study abroad in Argentina. Once you're there, you have to find friends who are arguably as crazy as you for wanting to hike in Patagonia during the off-season. Upon realizing the volatility of the weather, you all collectively choose to go the week before the summer season starts (as it's much cheaper than going in November and safer than going in the middle of September). After some research about the vastness of the region, you decide on El Calafate and El Chaltén. Once all your flights and hostels are booked, you start packing your bag only to realize that you are wildly under prepared in terms of gear- but you go anyway. When you're gripping the edge of a boat and staring at Perito Moreno Glacier, completely dumbfounded and at a loss for words, you realize that the world really is a magical place after all. A few days later, you're all getting ready to go to bed early to hike Laguna de los Tres in the morning. You'll get to the boot rental shop early, around 7 a.m., and be frustrated that they don't open until 11 a.m. Go anyway. You'll be in awe of Fitz Roy poking its way through the clouds.



Unparalleled beauty of Perito Moreno Glacier



Finally at the top!

At some point, you'll get a little nervous that maybe you didn't bring enough water, but the nerves will evaporate when you encounter the fresh water stream that is safe to drink from.

When you finally reach the last stretch, you'll be literally kicking, screaming, and crawling up to the summit. It's all worth it though, because when you reach the top, time stops for a moment. A thousand volumes of National Geographic can't compare to the beauty you see with your own eyes. You know pictures won't do it justice, but you take some anyway to send to your parents.

On the way back down, you make a solemn promise to yourself to consult REI before your next major trip. Above all else, you swear that you'll inquire about the duration and difficulty of the trek before you commit to it, as the "40 minute hike" turned into 13 miles and seven and a half hours. Over the next few days, the intensity of pain in your legs will have you questioning if you've actually injured something. But when you're hypnotized by the beauty in Patagonia, you won't seem to mind.



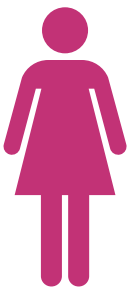
Back when we thought the hike was only 40 minutes

2018 BY THE NUMBERS



228 students studied abroad

171 female students studied abroad



57 male students studied abroad

174 undergraduate students studied abroad



54 graduate students studied abroad

23 students participated in winter programs



40 students participated in fall programs



22 students studied abroad in Central America



11 students studied abroad in the Caribbean



9 students studied abroad in South America





80 students studied abroad in Europe



76 students studied abroad in Asia



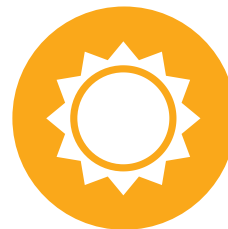
49 students studied abroad in Africa



2 students studied abroad in the Pacific



90 students participated in spring programs



75 students participated in summer programs

BETTER ALPACA YOUR BAGS



MARISSA MEYER

Class of 2019

Cusco and Lima, Peru

RCNJ: International Business Experience

Summer 2018



Just a little alpaca admiration

An author by the name of Ursula K. Le Guin once said, “It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters in the end.” This means that even though many work towards completing a goal, with a desire of reaching a specific, positive outcome, they may not realize that they are gaining much more knowledge and experience by actually completing the goal itself. In my opinion this quote could not be more true, especially when describing my Peru trip. While I first initiated attending the Peru trip simply to fulfill a class and acquire credits for my minor, I quickly fell in love with all the country and my fellow classmates had to offer. I went to historical places, tried amazing food, met some new friends, and really pushed myself out of my comfort zone, like never before.

As I stated previously, I initially attended this trip as a means to get credits and fulfill one of my minor requirements. There were many times throughout the application process, I made a pros and cons lists and battled with myself about if I should attend this trip or simply just take another course at Ramapo or online. The big thing holding me back was my anxiety, as I had never left the country without my parents before. There were a thousand worries going through my head such as whether or not I would get sick, if I would like the food, if I would like the people I was traveling with and so on. While my nerves did not die down, once accepted into the program, I found myself paying the \$100 fee at random one day to hold my spot. Even though the unknown still scared me, by that point I had done all I could do to preplan for the trip, and decided to push the trip out of my mind until a few days before we departed from JFK International Airport.

When I first got to the airport, I tried to hide my nerves as I said goodbye to my father and headed for the ticket counter and the

gate. I am not sure if others could tell how worried I was, as I was able to hold up a brave face. Once I boarded the plane, sitting next to my two good friends, the Briannas, some of my anxiety died down. I slept through most of the eight and half-hour plane ride, and woke up in Lima, Peru. By this time, my anxiety decreased much more, realizing I only had a short one-hour plane ride to go before I would be in Cusco, Peru. In addition, we met our program director Christy, who seemed very interested in our group, and very knowledgeable about the country overall. Once we landed in Cusco we got off the plane and headed for a lecture on sustainable tourism. At this point, I was so tired from the constant movement from here to there, that the place we went to and the lecture felt like a dream. As the trip continued I felt my anxiety coming and going as we entered new places, making me sick to my stomach, but once again I tried to hide my fear as I believed the feeling would soon go away, which I was correct about.

Some of the new significant destinations I was exposed to and fascinated with while in Peru were Machu Picchu, the markets in Cusco, The Real Plaza Shopping Mall, and the Phantasia Wunderman Ad Agency. This group of places held my attention so much that I honestly did not even worry much about my anxiety, and was able to enjoy the experience completely. In Machu Picchu, my group and I were able to walk around the site, with our tour guide Saul, and learn the history behind the Inca ruins. Being at Machu Picchu, looking down at the architecture absolutely took my breath away, as I had never seen a site so historic and beautiful. It made me feel like I was on top of the world. In addition, the markets in Cusco were especially fun for me as they taught me that I have a special knack for bargain hunting and gave me the ability to acquire some really interesting handmade goods such as a stuffed alpaca,

jewelry, handbag, and a blanket made of alpaca, which were all very cheap in comparison to American prices. It still astounds me how these men and women put in so much time and effort into making and selling their goods. As for the shopping mall, I was very impressed at the mall's similar structure to what I was used to and stores that occupied it, which could easily be seen in an American shopping mall, as well. This was the first moment on the trip I was easily able to compare the similarities and differences between being a consumer in the United States and Peru, as I was able to compare the goods available and pricing. Lastly, I was very fascinated with the ad agency we went to, because the men that presented to us about the company were so welcoming, offering us beverages and food, showing us clips of their work, and allowing us to ask any questions we had, during the visit. In addition, within the few hours I was visiting, I was able to notice what a calm, and fun working environment existed there, as there was a napping room, white boards, games, and desks with balloons and other personal items all over the building.

I thought that was very neat, as most working environments I have seen, both in and out of America and Peru, are less exciting, with no personal touches like this one had. This made me realize that I would love to work somewhere in between both places, as this

place was fun and informal, I would much rather be somewhere a little more formal, but not too uptight either.

By the end of the trip, I almost completely forgot about all of the anxiety I was holding in at the beginning of the trip and really let loose, letting myself have a great time. I went out with my new friends I made on the trip, and made the best memories possible as we danced, played games, saw new exciting sites, and tried some great food. My fellow classmates, Professor Gladys, Christy, and I, became so close at the end of the trip, leaving each other was very difficult. Not only did everyone on the trip become great friends, but a family as well, which led to a lot of crying come departure time.

On the flight back to America, I noticed myself thinking over and over again about how blessed I was to be able to go on such an amazing program, with such great people. At that point, I was amazed that I even doubted going on the trip for one second. While I originally went on the trip to satisfy a requirement and get credits, studying abroad in Peru gave me more than I could have ever asked for and that was the experiences themselves. Going to Peru is a trip that not only gave me knowledge and unforgettable memories, but also helped me to combat my anxiety and really push myself out of my comfort zone, and for that I will be forever thankful.



My classmates and I on top of Machu Pichu



One of our best International Business Trip Visits: Cervceria Del Valle Sagrado- The Brewery of the Sacred Valley

WHY NOT GERMANY?



DOMENICA LAROCCO

Class of 2019
Heidelberg, Germany
European Study Center
Spring 2018

When I made the decision to study abroad in Heidelberg, I was often asked, “Why Germany?” It isn’t the most popular place for a study abroad destination, but I felt a pull towards Germany. I had studied the language for three semesters and loved the language and what we learned about German culture, so when the opportunity arose to study abroad there, I knew I had to take the chance.

From the beginning, I had the feeling my experience would be one of a kind. And it was. I chose Heidelberg because it was rich in history, culturally diverse, a small, modern city nestled in a valley on the Neckar River. It felt so connected to the past but so far in the future simultaneously. The oldest buildings in the Altstadt - literally, the ‘old city’ - were from the late 1400s and on the building next door they would have solar panels.

I was surrounded by beautiful architecture, incredible food, and good people. I’m already planning my trip back. A heads up when you’re in town, go for the local cuisine, find the places you see the locals eat at and enjoy. I still dream of the Turkish food I ate while I was there. Heidelberg gave me everything I could ever have wanted and more. It really became a second home for me, when my world felt so small beforehand. So when they asked me why Germany, I replied, “Why not?”



At the Branderburger Tor, or the Brandenbug Gate in Berlin



View from Heidelberg Castle



View of Heidelberg Castle from the banks of the Neckar River



This is Spätzle, a traditional German pasta meal

JUST GO!



PAIGE COLDITZ

Class of 2019
Havana, Cuba
RCNJ: Revolution and Evolution
Summer 2018

Bienvenido a Cuba. A land that's full of song and dance, bathed in tropical warmth, bursting with life and color, and, to many Americans, shrouded in mystery. It's a country with so many contradictions it can be hard to wrap your head around it. It's a place where everyone has access to education and healthcare but still struggles to put food on the table. A house is guaranteed but it may not come with electricity or running water. The government will cover any medical expenses-both mental and physical required for a complete sex change, but still hasn't legalized same-sex marriage. Trying to understand Cuba requires an open mind and an extreme avoidance to oversimplification. If someone is looking for a place that will challenge and change their perspective on the world, Cuba is the place to do it.

Earlier this summer I traveled to Cuba for two weeks in May through Ramapo College. I chose to visit Cuba for many reasons, but admittedly, I was drawn to Cuba primarily because of its intense and complex historical relations with our own nation. In high school we learn about the Cold War, the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Fidel Castro and the Embargo. The thing that separates the United States and Cuba is like a 40 mile long wall. Or at least that's how it



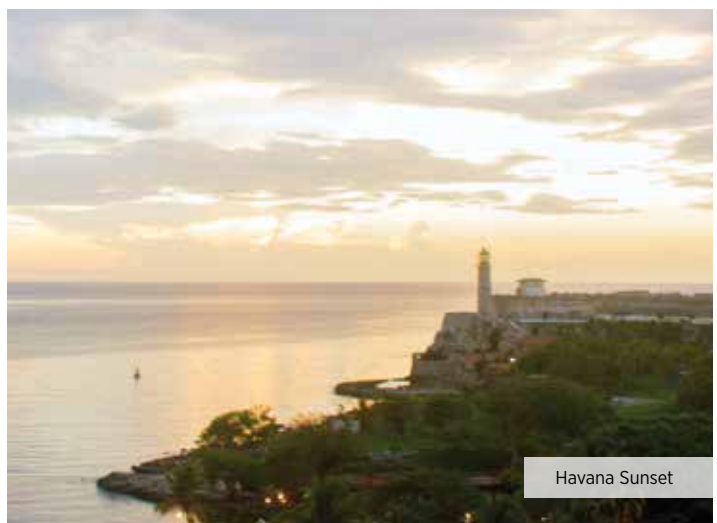
Happy in Havana

felt to me, and so when I realized I had the opportunity to cross that wall, I ran for it. And I am so glad I did. I struggle to find the right words for what Cuba means to me and just how special it is, but as cliché as it may be, my trip to Cuba really was life-changing and I encourage anyone considering visiting Cuba to just go, and go with your eyes and mind wide open!

I want to end by sharing how unprepared I was for how the trip might change me. Traveling has been a part of my life for years now, so I know how traveling can change a person; you grow and become more open, more adventurous, more confident. But Cuba is the first place I've visited that has made me kinder and more compassionate to the people I interact with on a daily basis. It is a country filled with kind and warm humans and I unknowingly brought some of that warmth back with me. And this is why we travel, not just so we as individuals can grow, but so that we can grow and then through that growth, change the world around us. So just go!



Lost in Viñales



Havana Sunset

REFLECTION ON MY STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE



LAURA BAKELAAR

Class of 2011
London
Kingston University
Spring 2010

Back in the fall of 2009, I made a choice that would forever change my life; I decided to study abroad. The idea of going overseas was something that felt out of reach for me. It was too challenging, too nerve wracking or too uncomfortable of an experience for me to handle. I worried that leaving the comfort of my school, my family and my friends would be too difficult. I worried that maybe I would feel too out of place and would want to come home. I couldn't have been more wrong. In January of 2010, I set off for my semester abroad in London and never looked back.

London was an amazing place to study. Kingston University offered a variety of classes that fit my major and was situated in a beautiful part of the city. I lived with a family who was warm, welcoming and friendly and to this day, are still a part of my life. The city of London offers so many places to explore and learn. The friends I made in London and through my study abroad program are like family to me. There's something to say about the bond that's built between people when they travel together and that bond is something that can never be broken.

Studying abroad changed me. It built my confidence, encouraged my curiosity and taught me that I could overcome any challenge. It allowed me to meet people from all over the world and opened my eyes to the good that resides within human beings. It built my trust in people and in humanity. I had never thought of myself as much of a traveler, but my semester abroad would forever change that notion.



Me next to the Thames River near Borough Market



The great friends I made during study abroad: Carolyn, Allie, me, Maura, Sierra, Kim and Ariel

Studying abroad also opened doors for my career. Through travel, I've learned that being a part of something bigger than myself and my own home was something I knew I had to be a part of. After graduating from Ramapo with a B.A. in psychology and an elementary teaching certification, I went on to obtain my master's in TESOL and spent a summer teaching English in Spain. I'm now an ESL teacher and spend my time helping children from all over the globe.

During my semester abroad and in the years since, I've traveled to more than 30 different cities, made even more friends and have had countless experiences. For me, going to London didn't just give me a semester overseas; it opened my eyes to travel and taught me how adventure and exploration can allow me to continually grow as an individual. It's an experience that will forever be a part of who I am today.



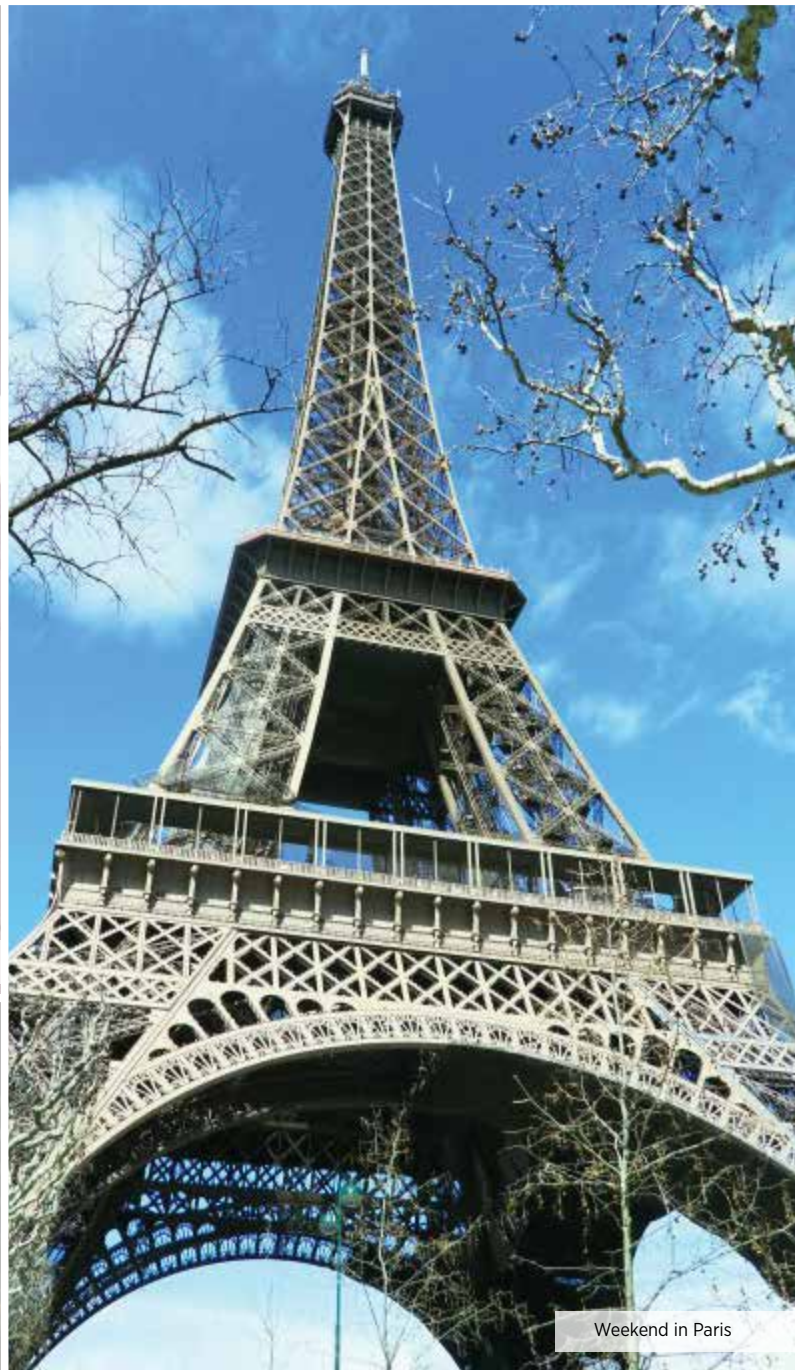
Tower Bridge



My London family who I stayed with during study abroad: Dave, me, Chloe and Anne



German fare in a Berlin biergarten



Weekend in Paris



Carolyn, Allie and me in The Shannon Pub in Paris

GRADUATE SCHOOL ABROAD



ASHLEY WOOD

Class of 2013
Brisbane, Australia
Queensland University of Technology
Graduate School



Brisbane, Australia 2017

Before I even started classes at Ramapo College, I knew I wanted to study abroad. I envisioned myself as a global citizen, going abroad for at least a semester, maybe a year. But I found myself finishing my sophomore year with a part-time job, a boyfriend, friends, and college clubs I just couldn't leave behind for half a year. In the end, I committed to a summer course at East China Normal University in Shanghai, China, for a six-week program – just enough time for me to have an incredible life-changing experience, but not enough time to completely unravel the life I was building at home.

By no means am I discounting a summer semester abroad – and it was the perfect decision for the person I was at the time. I had never traveled on my own before, nor had I ever been that far from home. It challenged me in ways I was not prepared for, and the experience left me with not only better Mandarin and a basic knowledge of Chinese current affairs, but also with a sense of independence and a worsening bite from that little travel bug we all know so well.

I have been very fortunate to have found a partner that was bit by that same travel bug, and after my experience in China, we traveled for short vacations to Netherlands, Iceland, Finland, Ireland, France, Abu Dhabi (for a weekend – you would too if you found a round trip flight this cheap!) and then back to Iceland for a music festival. My travel bug seemed to be satisfied, and I had a nice safe and comfortable life in New Jersey, but something deep inside me felt unfulfilled.

Then one day my partner and I started talking about graduate schools in Australia- just about as far from home as we could possibly be without being in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Talk about pushing me to my limits! How could I possibly think about

moving to a city in a country I have never visited, with spiders and snakes and magpies (they are the worst- Google “swooping season”) waiting for me around every corner? He eventually found a medical school in Brisbane, and I found a program in creative production and arts management – which combined my love of music, event management, and future thinking. We applied, were accepted, booked our plane tickets, and committed to packing up our wonderful life and shipping off to a strange country on the other side of the globe for two years.

To say I was nervous was an understatement. There were days I couldn't believe I was actually doing this, days I was so excited for my new life to start, and other days I dreaded the unknown. But I was empowered by the support of my partner, not to mention the overwhelming encouragement from my amazing friends and family that I was soon leaving behind. Two plane rides later, and what felt like weeks later, I landed in Brisbane in the middle of summer.

I'm going to be honest with you guys, strangers and friends currently reading this edition of *Ramapo Unpacked*; the adjustment to life abroad was rough. I missed my people in New Jersey, and I felt lonely more often than I expected, even though I was making new friends. I felt direction-less with so much free time and had difficulty finding a job with my student visa restrictions. But through all that struggle, I realized how strong and resilient I really am. Living so far from home, I've learned to fend for myself, and know when to ask for help when I need it. I have made a home in a place I never could have even dreamed of and have met people who have inspired me and changed me into who I am today. I had the opportunity to discover who I really am, what I value most, and how I want to live my life.

I eventually found a job in fundraising for the Cancer Council Queensland, who let me work part-time throughout the rest of my studies, and I had several internships and volunteer opportunities to enhance my studies and experience. After two years, I graduated with a Master's in Creative Industries from Queensland University of Technology, and through a series of events, my partner and I decided to stay in Brisbane for a few years longer than planned. As a graduate, I was eligible for a graduate work visa that allows me to stay in Brisbane for two more years, and I am still working full-time in fundraising. If I wanted to, I could search for work sponsorship opportunities to stay in Australia permanently.

While I feel that my journey in Australia is not quite over yet, I have set a date for myself to return to the states next year and continue to build my career a bit closer to home. In the end, I will have spent four years in Brisbane, and I am grateful for every day of it. I have had the opportunity to meet many study abroad students throughout my time in Brisbane, and I notice so many of them start to understand the city and the culture right before they have to leave. Studying my full graduate program abroad has allowed me to deepen my understanding of Australian culture, and I continue to learn new things every day. There are sacrifices I make to live abroad, namely in the people I miss terribly and celebrations I experience through photos and video chats. But that all comes with the territory of taking a leap into the unknown, and I wouldn't have changed a single step.



Longreach, Australia 2018

If anyone is thinking about attending graduate school abroad, here's some advice for you.

1. Look for programs that are eligible for federal loans – my program was not, so I ended up taking out private loans which have much higher interest rates and less flexible payment options.
2. Depending on how long you will be abroad for, consider investing in furniture and a car. This flexibility will allow you to live in cheaper areas outside the city and you will pay less in the long term. Just remember what side of the road your country drives on!
3. Think about things from home you cannot live without. If you really like your soap or deodorant, just bring a year's supply with you.
4. Join school clubs or other local organizations to not only make friends with people with similar interests, but to immerse yourself in the culture.
5. And don't get discouraged if you feel lonely at times. You don't need to immediately find a new best friend in your new home; you still have your amazing people back home and can call them anytime you need. Use this time abroad to start those projects you've been putting off and let yourself grow and learn something new. Friends will come with time.
6. It will never be the perfect time to uproot your life and move abroad. If you want to go, just do it. Follow your heart wherever it goes.
7. P.S.: If you're going to eat vegemite, you toast some bread with butter, and put a VERY THIN layer of vegemite on it. It's not so bad.



Beijing, China 2010

SAVE THE DATES



WORLD EXPO

Wednesday, April 3
Noon - 3 p.m.
Grove (or Friends Hall)



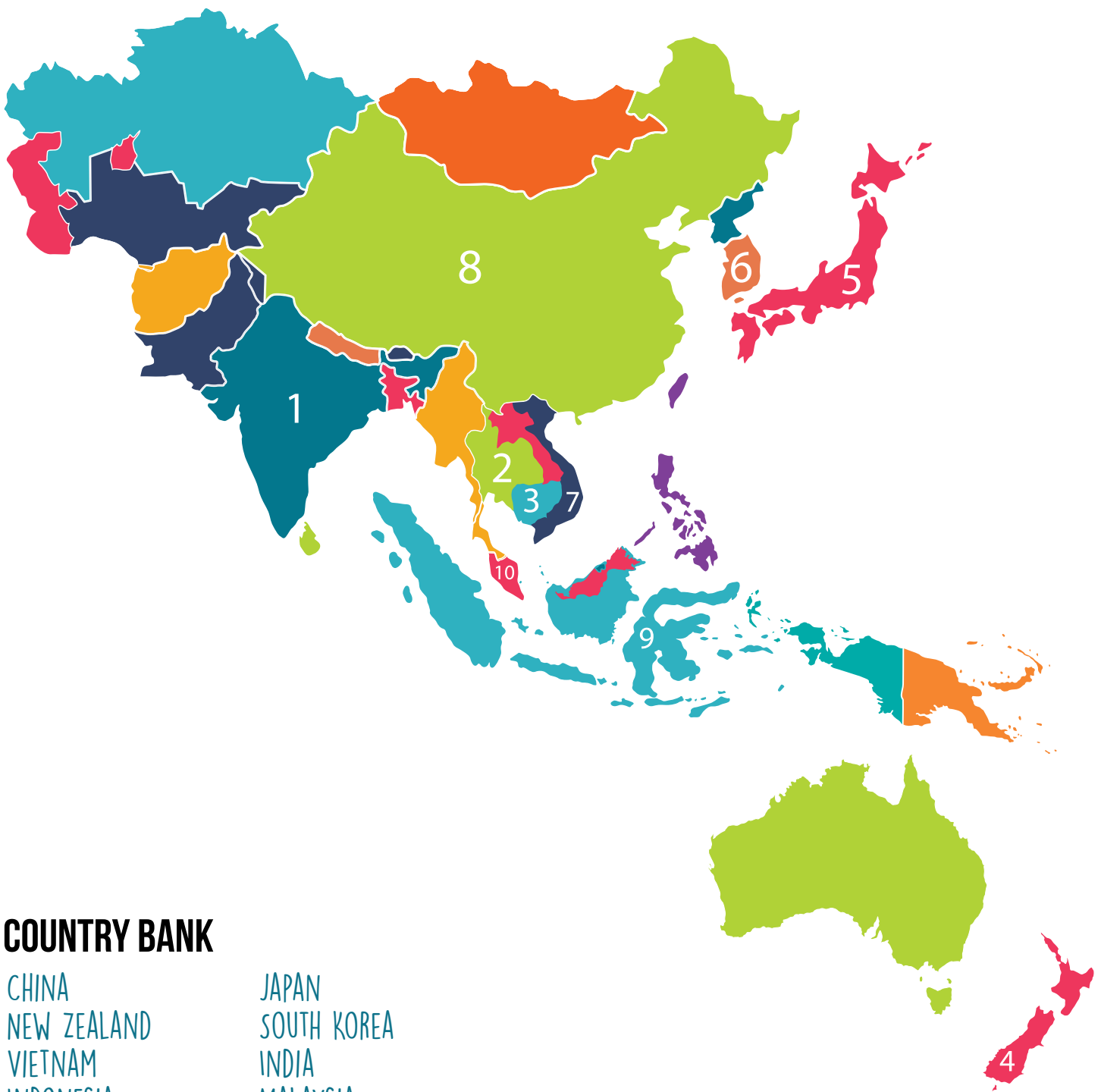
RAMAPO COLLEGE CELEBRATES



2019 Closing Ceremony of the Year
of Asia and the Pacific
Wednesday, April 24
4 - 6 p.m.
Pavilion #1



GEOGRAPHY QUIZ : ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



COUNTRY BANK

CHINA
NEW ZEALAND
VIETNAM
INDONESIA
CAMBODIA

JAPAN
SOUTH KOREA
INDIA
MALAYSIA
THAILAND

ANSWER KEY
1. India | 2. Thailand | 3. Cambodia | 4. New Zealand | 5. Japan
6. South Korea | 7. Vietnam | 8. China | 9. Indonesia | 10. Malaysia



Would you like to be featured in our next edition of **RAMAPO UNPACKED?**

Share your international experience with the Ramapo College community. Submit an article, photos and captions for our next edition. Spring submissions due January 15 and fall submissions due August 15. Use the link below to submit your story. ramapo.edu/international/multimedia/magazine

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Roukema Center for International Education, at (201) 684-7533 or goabroad@ramapo.edu