STEP Signature Project Proposal

Rachel Cooper

**Project Summary**

My project is a six-week study abroad program in Paris, France. I will be taking a French language course and one French-taught area studies course at a local university. I will stay with a host family in or around Paris. This program includes trips to significant cultural places, like art museums and famous buildings.

**Project Description**

The primary objective of my project is to spend six weeks in Paris France, where I will be immersed in the language and culture of the country.

I will participate in the study abroad category of the STEP signature projects. My study abroad program is six weeks, living and studying in Paris, France as part of the advanced language program. This program takes place during the summer, specifically from late May until mid-July, so it doesn’t affect the courses that I will take during the academic year. It does allow me to earn credit towards my French minor here at Ohio State. There are two courses offered in this program: an intensive French language class and a class of one’s choosing. The options for the courses include several choices ranging from French art to Parisian history. The language class will allow me to become more proficient in both writing and speaking French and is a direct continuation of the courses that I have been taking at Ohio State. For my second class, I plan on taking a course on the History of Paris. Since I will be spending six weeks in the “City of Lights”, I would like to learn more about the history and people who live there. In my high school French and history classes, we learned a lot about the French revolution, but I would like to know more about the founding of the city, its early history, and what happened after the revolution up to modern day Paris. I hope to learn more about the important names in the history of the city and what effect has Parisians had on the world.

Both classes will also be a chance to experience a different style of education both in and out of the classroom. By attending classes at a university in another country, I will see how other countries conduct the classrooms and courses. It will give me the opportunity to compare and contrast instruction and content. While in Paris, I will be living with a host family instead of on a campus with other exchange students. While living in campus housing would mean more opportunities to meet students from France and other countries, it would also place some limitations on immersion in French life. Living with native residents gives me a one of a kind experience to learn the ins and outs of daily Parisian life. I will have the opportunity to live in close proximity to the city of Paris. Opportunities like using local transportation like subways, eating local foods, attending entertainment events, and everyday conversations with my host family, students and other French citizens. Instead of just seeing the tourist side of the city, I hope to learn what life is like for the everyday citizen.

In the program, I have numerous opportunities to travel throughout the city and the surrounding areas. I can visit museums and historical sites, like the renowned Louvre and the historical Île Saint-Louis. I can experience the cuisine of France, learn about the fashion industry and see how the political climate of France compares to the United States and to the world. The primary objective of my project is to experience and learn more about French language and culture through immersion. Living in Paris and studying at a local university will let me to fully engage myself in French culture.

My project takes place in the summer of 2016. I will leave on May 25th and return on July 9th. When I first arrive, my first three days will be an orientation given by IES abroad, my program provider. After orientation, classes will begin. I will attend my classes Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, the IES staff plans excursions and course-related visits. Some trips will take place on the weekend, like a day trip to Monet’s home and garden in Giverny. My project is within the feasibility range of time and resources that I possess.

Here is a tentative timeline for my project:

April 2016: Complete and submit all required forms; arrange round-trip transportation

May 24-25: Leave from Columbus, Ohio; arrive in Paris on May 25; Check in with IES and host family

May 26-28: Attend orientation given by IES abroad

May 30 – July 8: Attend classes in Paris; immersion in French language and culture

July 9: Leave Paris to return to the United States

There are many things that influenced my decision to study abroad: my family, books, and movies but one person had the greatest effect: my French teacher of three years, Madame Loar. I had Madame from my sophomore year of high school until I graduated. She was always very encouraging and pushed her students to go the extra mile. She taught every lesson with enthusiasm and a love of the French language and culture. She took a group of students including me to Europe for eight days when I was a junior. We traveled to several places including Barcelona, Toulouse and Paris. The Madame shared her knowledge and passion for the French with us and made me want to learn more. She changed my perspective on learning a second language and helped nurture my curiosity about the world.

The professional development co-curriculars that I completed for the STEP program do not relate directly to my program. They were on a range of topics including conducting research and a last lecture series. The program on conducting research included information that is useful both in my academics and on a personal level. As a student, I write lots of papers and conduct research in many of my classes. On a personal level, I research things I want to purchase, events in the news and places that I want to visit like Paris. Learning about conducting research helps me learn more about Paris and France, including the geography, history, and people. One PDC I completed could help with one aspect of my trip. It was about beating anxiety. In this PDC, I learned about the causes and effects of anxiety and how anxiety symptoms can lead to other disorders. I also learned ways to cope with anxiety. I can take what I learned and use it to help me deal with the anxiety I will experience in my program. I will most likely get anxiety about traveling to another country, living with a stranger, and starting new classes in a foreign language.

**Personal Statement:**

I am a Health Sciences Major with a pre-medical focus and a double minor in Biology and French. I have been studying French since my freshman year of high school, making this my sixth year of classes. I have a great interest in French language and culture and look forward to an opportunity to study abroad in Paris.I am thankful that this opportunity is made possible through STEP and that I will later be able to share my experience with others. Studying abroad will increase my understanding and knowledge of the French language, allow me to experience French culture more in depth, and to have a once in a lifetime opportunity to explore the famous landmarks and museums in and surrounding Paris.

My decision to study abroad was influenced by many things, but the most important inspiration was a trip I took to Europe with my classmates. In the summer between my junior and senior year, my French teacher took 20 of my classmates and myself on a trip to France and Spain. This was the first time I left the country and it was a wonderful experience. I wandered the cobblestoned streets of Spain and fell in love with the romantic architecture of France. We ended the trip with one day in Paris. As we rushed around to see as much as possible, I knew I wanted to come back to this city but I didn’t want to come back with a bunch of my friends and a tour guide. I wanted to come to learn. I wanted to study the rich French culture and language that surrounds Paris and I knew I could do this through study abroad.

My STEP project will be personally challenging in several ways. A significant challenge for my project will be adjusting to life in another country. I will have to overcome culture shock and adapt to the many differences between France and the United States. This includes differences in cuisine, transportation, currency, clothing, and attitudes. Another major challenge I will face is speaking French everyday. This will be incredibly exhausting and the most intellectually stimulating parts of the trip. Although I have spent the past five and half years learning French, I have not experienced many opportunities to speak the language on a regular basis. My hope is that I will become proficient in the oral language and become comfortable switching between French and English. My project will include meeting new people from different places around the world. My study abroad program is from a third party provider, so a lot of the students who will be in the program with me will not be from Ohio State. This is a great opportunity to meet new people from different universities in the US and expand socially. I will also be able to meet native French students since I will be attending a local university. My academic work abroad will be the most intellectually developing aspect of my trip. I will be taking two courses at a Parisian university, both will be taught in French by native French speakers. One of the courses that I am taking is an intensive French language course. This class will help me further expand my language and grammar skills. The second class is the History of Paris, which will be taught to non-foreign students as well. This program will also allow me to earn credit for half of my French minor. Completing credit for my minor now allows me to focus on my other studies for the remainder of my undergraduate career.

Studying abroad in Paris will further my education in a way that cannot be offered by a class in the United States. The opportunity to study abroad gives me the chance to observe everyday Parisian life and to have first- hand experience with French food, dress, and behavior. Most of all it gives me a chance to see the world in a chance of a lifetime opportunity and to explore a whole new world.

**Budget:**

There are many financial considerations that are included in my decision to spend six weeks studying abroad in Paris, France. Since I will be taking two courses that are equivalent to six semester hours, there is the matter of tuition. The cost of $5745.00 is a little more expensive than that of OSU for the number of hours, but it is a fixed expense.

I will be living with a host family in Paris rather than university housing, which decreases my housing cost slightly. The housing cost is a fixed expense also at $1825. The rest of my expenses have been estimated. I took prices that my study aboard provider used and some from online research. I have listed an approximate cost for the round-trip airfare from Columbus to Paris. For many expenses, I will not know the real cost until I arrive or until the end of the trip. This includes luggage fees, textbooks, local transportation, meals that are not included in the program, and personal or miscellaneous expenses. My personal and miscellaneous expenses may be slightly lower or higher than the estimates provided. My cell phone costs are mostly covered in my current provider plan, including text and data. The cost of a call is 20 cents per minute. I will most likely use phone calls minimally, and instead rely on text and Skype for communication.

I hope to use the STEP scholarship to cover housing and most of my local transportation expenses. My local transportation costs are currently unknown, though I have estimated an expense of $200. This expense includes taxi rides to and from the airport and metro ticket costs for the duration of my trip. Other than the STEP scholarship, my family and myself will cover the remaining costs of my program from savings.

Expenses:

* Tuition: $5,745
* Housing: $1,825
* Round-trip Airfare: $1,700 (est.)
* Luggage Fees: $75 (est.)
* Textbooks: $150 (est.)
* Meals (not included in program): $800 (est.)
* Cell Phone Plan: $ .20 per minute; data and text are free as a part of the global roaming plan from my cell phone provider
* Local Transportation: $200 (est.)
* Personal Expenses: $800 (est.)
* Miscellaneous Expenses: $300 (est.)

Funding Sources:

* STEP: $2000
* Personal Finances: all other expenses

**Reporting Back:**

The first method of reporting back is a reflection essay. In this essay, I will discuss my experience abroad and how it changed me. I will write about the challenges I faced living in a foreign country and speaking another language day after day. Other challenges include living with a host family, meeting new people, and taking classes in a foreign language. I will also include the positives, like how my fluency in French has improved and the new things I have taken away from this program. The second method of reporting back is a public presentation. I plan to present at the STEP Expo in the next autumn semester. I will make a poster for the expo that discusses what my program is, what I learned, and how I was transformed by the experience.