

New student experience, culture with the same price

by Audralynn See - Thursday, April 07, 2011

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/10882/new-student-experience-culture-with-the-same-price/>

Through the National Student Exchange Program (NSE) at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Lisabeth Kotenberg has been able to experience a different culture and relaxed life by the shores of Hilo, Hawaii.

“I decided to take part in the NSE program because I have lived in Oshkosh my whole life, and I decided that I had enough of it and needed a change,” Kotenberg said. “A goal of mine was to go to Hawaii. I never thought I would actually live there for a year until I learned about the NSE program.”

NSE is a program which makes it easy for students to enroll in different colleges and universities, while still paying their home campus tuition. Students can study at campuses across the U.S., Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The program allows students to explore new environments, meet new people and take special classes that might not be offered at their home campus.

William Baurecht, coordinator of the UW Oshkosh NSE program, explained that there are about 200 campuses involved this year and usually around 12 to 24 students are placed each semester.

“My job is to promote the program and work with perspective students,” Baurecht said. “I really believe in the program.”

Baurecht went on to explain that one of the greatest benefits to the NSE program is the way students learn to grow and become more independent. “Students grow academically and personally,” Baurecht said. “They gain a sense of self-confidence and communication growth. And there is excitement in the travel.”

When traveling to a host campus, the students usually stay in residence hall accommodations where they can interact with other students on a daily basis. For students, it’s a way to make friends, connect with the culture and become familiar with the campus environment.

“The greatest benefit was being able to live in a culture and state that is so different than any other campus in the United States, especially Wisconsin,” Kotenberg said. “I went to one of the most ethnically diverse campuses in the country and for the first time in my life, I was able to experience what it is like to be the minority.”

Kotenberg also learned a lot about the way of life in Hilo, Hawaii. She described the area as being calm and relaxing, where there was no such thing as time and no one ever got angry. Kotenberg said it was easy to be stress free, no matter how much work needed to be done.

“There are way too many memories to list just one,” Kotenberg said. “But waking up every morning to

the view of palm trees and the sun rising over Mauna Kea (a volcano on the Big Island), and walking to class everyday wearing flip flops (or 'slippahs' as they are called in Hawaii) are a few."

Students interested in learning more about the NSE program are suggested to stop into the Office of International Education, Dempsey 146, and pick up a "National Student Exchange Directory" and an application.

"I invite them to come talk with me," Baurecht said. "They are not guaranteed their first choice of schools, so we can talk and make sure they have a good second or third choice."

Placement for the 2011-2012 academic year is still available. If interested, students should stop by the Office of International Education or go to www.nse.org for more information.

"Of course I would recommend this program," Kottenberg said. "There's a big, wide, beautiful world out there. For those who want it, it's out there."