Emerald Isle Offers Unique Study Abroad Experience for WCCCD Students

Trip to Dublin, Ireland is an “eye-opener” for students.

By David C. Butty

Easter break is the time when most students embark on their journeys of leisure to places that take them away from the homework and other assignments. But for 18 diverse students from the Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD), this Easter break was time to shut down their laptops, switch off their iPhones, and kick in the old school habit of using a pen and notebook to jot down whatever they wanted to remember. It was a week to experience new things, enjoying new meals or making new friends. One of their ultimate experiences was to study abroad in Dublin, Ireland. The week of intensive programs were in partnership with Arcadia University. While in Dublin, the students experienced the country’s renowned literary, artistic, and musical heritage. They embarked on educational and cultural excursion tours of Dublin, the capital of the Republic of Ireland. They received instruction on the rich Irish cultural heritage and its own distinctive language (Gaelic), and experienced first-hand the hospitality of the people of the Emerald Isle. Perhaps, one of the memorable experiences that will remain with students for a very long time will be the travel through the Irish countryside to the Celtic Boyne Valley and the Cliffs of Moher. Here, the landscape is intriguing and has a mythic resonance. The soft rainfall makes the Isle green all the time.

Here in this article, we let the students tell their own stories and relate their experiences. As the saying goes, Ireland, once visited, is never forgotten.

Dublin Castle

John Green / Belleville
“It was an exceptional experience to travel to Ireland as part of the Study Abroad Program at WCCCD. On our trip I visited several pubs/breweries and tasted many Craft Beer products, which encourages me to continue with the WCCCD Craft Brewing Program.”

Sonia Hernandez / Allen Park
“This trip gave me a little sneak peek of what is out there. We have to be adventurous and willing to have open minds. The world around us has so much diversity and so many adventures waiting for us to enjoy. Thanks to WCCCD for this remarkable experience that I will never forget.”

Patrick D. McNally / Garden City
“I can easily say that this was the opportunity of a lifetime and I am so glad that I was given the chance to go. I experienced so much and changed my outlook on life more than I have yet to comprehend. My family moved to America from that country almost one hundred years ago and being there made me feel like I belonged, like we never left.”

Rita Nichols / Taylor
“The Study Abroad Program allows students to go and see other places and walking through the streets in Dublin want me to learn more of the history and culture of this country. I want to say go naith maith agat which (in Gaelic) means thank you.”

Natalie Taylor / Detroit

While in Dublin, Ireland during our Study Abroad trip, and while taking classes at Arcadia University, I learned a cupla focal (a few words) such as Natalie is ainm dom is as Meirica, taim 25.

Translation: My name is Natalie and I am from America, I am 25. I am proud to say I participated in this once in a life time opportunity. I wanted to share my favorite experiences.”
Karen Dancey / Allen Park
“Our lecturer did a fabulous job of educating us on the history of Ireland. He was knowledgeable, funny and patient. The lectures were by far my favorite part of the trip. I feel honored and privileged to have been given this opportunity and representing my school. It has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

Emily Gorkiewicz / Browns-town
“I learned so much about this country within a week’s stay! Everything about this trip was awesome and inspiring. What I found most fascinating is that instead of mowing the lawn, a farmer would just put his cattle in the front yard and have them mow it for them.”

Amanda Mychenberg / Detroit
“The study abroad trip to Ireland provides a window to the world as I experienced the rich Celtic history and culture. I met people from all walks of life, and learned about the country and its culture from the new friends I made during the trip. This helped me to gain a different perspective on life.”

John Holmquist / Detroit
“I love traveling and learning about other cultures and history. This experience has instilled in me a desire to travel more in my future. I just can’t wait to explore more of the world. My advice when you are planning to visit Ireland: Learn the rules of hurling and rugby. And appreciate the game! The Irish love to make jokes, so laugh!”

Crystal Cary / Clinton Township
“I didn’t really have a bucket list of things I wanted to see or do while I was in Ireland like some people. My whole plan was to go, experience the culture and take in all the sites I could in a week’s time. All in all, Ireland was a lovely place to visit and I hope to someday return…cheers!”

Alvera Smith / Detroit
“One of the greatest things I learned and still remembered from this trip is that people are people no matter where you go in this world. There was a lot of positive energy, sharing and camaraderie. Strangers were quick to answer questions and assist whenever needed. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have made this visit to Ireland.”

Jason Lorenz / Taylor
“Before going on this trip, all I knew about Ireland was from Irish-American’s stories of Saint Patrick, leprechauns, and corned beef and cabbage. But being a part of the brewing program, I also knew they were rich in beer culture. This trip to Ireland for the Study Abroad program taught me a couple of interesting things about Ireland.”

Bobbie Hardacre / Taylor
“Because of the study abroad trip to Ireland, my life will never be the same as it was. This trip changed my views, and my perspective on life. It opened my eyes to the world, and it made it seem infinitely larger. I could never give thanks enough for that.”

Jabed Khan / Fraser
“The trip to Dublin, Ireland, is very special to me because of the opportunity and the adventure. I got to make friends with the diverse students from WCCCD. The trip made me to gain confidence in myself, and I did not only gain friends for life, but also amazing stories about Dublin.”

Helen Starks / Detroit
“This study abroad trip to Dublin, Ireland was a great opportunity for me as a college student. It gave me the chance to gain new cultural insight and personal development. I will always remember this quote from one of my lecturers because it summed up my experiences: ‘You do not get to pick where you come from but you always have control of where you are going.’”

Betty Robinson / Detroit
“From the Study Abroad trip to Ireland, I am committed to making this experience a central part of my education and everyday life by sharing with other students, friends, and families that exposing one’s self to other cultures and history is a phenomenal experience and gift.”

Charles Paddock / Allen Park
“This trip meant a few things to me. It was a way to celebrate doing well enough in my classes that I could be considered to go. And because of that, I was able to experience something amazing.”