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Proposal title Liberal Studies in England
Country/ies visited England, Wales (Littrell & her students)
Institution(s) visited Keele University, England
Dates of travel May 20, June 13, June 15-July 9
Number of SDSU student participants 49 (16, 13, and 20)
Number of non-student participants Three faculty, one family member
Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum)
This 3.5 week study abroad program is designed for Liberal Studies majors, who are required to study abroad, and for others interested in teaching. Keele University, our exchange partner, lies in the English midlands. Students live in a dormitory and take classes with SDSU faculty members. A field experience lets students observe England’s school system. Field trips (including three days in London) along with cultural activities will complement the academic program.

Travel report:

I. Overview of intentions/activity
The intention of the Keele University program was for SDSU students to complete a rigorous three-unit course while also learning about English culture and, especially, the English school system. Thirteen students took Introduction to Liberal Studies, LS 300, from Jarleen Littrell, who integrated the four days of field observations of English schools into the content of her course. Twenty students took The Teaching of Math, Math 313, with Susan Nickerson, who included creative techniques like a math trail and baking pies for pi. Sixteen
students took Women in Literature, WS 352, with Jeanette Shumaker, who emphasized English authors and gave assignments concerning English women in art, ceramics and music during the Liverpool and Emma Bridgewater field trips.

II. In preparation for the trip abroad
Before the trip, orientation meetings were held with students, faculty and Liberal Studies staff Phoebe Roeder and Chris Kjonaas. Shumaker required her students to read two novels before trip. Littrell had dinner with her students before the trip.

III. Upon arrival/specific activities
Keele U gave campus tours and orientations. Faculty shared a meal cooked in the dorms with their students. During the first week, Keele U provided excellent classrooms for our academic courses, drove students and faculty to the nearest grocery store, sponsored several talks on the UK’s school system by a Keele professor of education, arranged a speaker in each of the three SDSU courses, took students to a local amusement park called Alton Towers, and arranged two tasty group dinners per week at the campus pub. A fascinating half-day field trip to the Emma Bridgewater Pottery included a tour and hands-on decorating of a plate or mug that students and faculty were allowed to take home. In the later weeks Keele took students on day trips to Chester and Liverpool, as well as a final trip to Oxford and then London for several days.

Keele U placed all SDSU students at local schools with excellent reputations for four days of valuable observations. Faculty completed some school observations, as well. A Keele staff taught some students how to play Quidditch. Littrell arranged a tea party at historic Keele Hall which students from all three courses very much appreciated. Students at one school were given a tea party by their school, too. The WS 352 students were invited to skit day by some Keele students: Keele U graduates in teacher education presented hilarious skits about teaching their academic fields. In their spare time, many students went for walks in the woods near the dorm and followed the world cup games at the campus pub. Some students spent the weekends traveling, including Littrell and her students’ trip to Wales. In London students were pleased by the hop on, hop off tour bus that Keele U had arranged for them, as well as by the play that Keele U had bought tickets for. We were lucky to have unusually sunny weather during our three and a half weeks in the UK.

IV. Conclusion, recommendation, and next steps
The Keele U Program provides a great opportunity for students to learn about England’s school system and culture while completing academic coursework in a beautiful, tranquil wooded campus. The program’s benefits aren’t limited to
SDSU students and faculty, however. Several SDSU students reported that teachers at the English schools where they observed said that their young students had never met an American before; many of these English children had never left the county of Staffordshire. We strongly recommend the Keele U program be offered again in the future.

V. Additional Information
The three SDSU faculty enjoyed working together at Keele U, supported by the terrific SDSU liberal studies department staff, Phoebe Roeder and Chris Kjonaas. At Keele U, staff members Martin Rogers and Rebecca McLaughlin provided pleasant, invaluable support for the program.