

UW College of Agriculture and Natural Resources  
**Global Perspectives Grant Program**  
Project Report Instructions

A brief written report must be submitted electronically to the AES office **within one month of returning from your trip**. Photographs supplementing the report are encouraged and are appreciated by the donor. Failure to submit a report may jeopardize future funding from AES.

In addition to forwarding these reports to our benefactor, reports will also be published on the AES website—do not include any photos that require permission to post our webpage. Reports must be written in a style **understandable by the lay person** and may be edited for readability before being published to the AES website or the University of Wyoming Foundation report.

**Format:** Use 12 point type, single line spacing, and one inch margins. Submit your report to [aes@uwyo.edu](mailto:aes@uwyo.edu) as a single PDF file.

**Include the following information:**

---

**1. COVER PAGE**

**Award Period** (e.g. Spring 2012): Fall, 2015

**Principle Investigator(s)** Thomas Foulke **Department:** Ag Econ

**Email:** Foulke@uwyo.edu

**Project Title from Application:** Development of a New Study Abroad Program at the University of New England, New South Wales, Australia

**Amount spent:** \$4,749.32 (had to come up with some extra)

**Non-technical summary (max 1500 characters plus spaces):** Provide a one paragraph non-technical summary that most people can understand.

---

**2. REPORT:** Maximum of two pages of text; in addition, please also include **photos**. Must be written in a style understandable by a general audience.

**Include:**

1. Main results of activities planned in the proposal.
  2. Describe any future plans
  3. Outline potential impacts to a) the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, b) the University of Wyoming, and c) the State of Wyoming
  4. Photos
- 

**QUESTIONS?** Contact Joanne Newcomb in the Agricultural Experiment Station office at [aes@uwyo.edu](mailto:aes@uwyo.edu) or (307) 766-3667.

### Non-technical Summary:

This award was used to travel to the University of New England (UNE) in Armidale, NSW Australia. The purpose was to investigate the potential of creating a new study abroad program for the College. Dr. Ballenger and I laid the ground work with a series of emails and Dr. Ballenger's research contacts with UNE.

We were warmly received by UNE faculty and had a series of productive meetings. The result is that we will try and recruit and bring a group of about 10 students to UNE for a three week trip in August, 2017. The focus will be to give students perspective on Australia's export-led agricultural sector and introduce them to a more international perspective. UNE will try and send a group of about 9 students and a couple of faculty through UW for about a week in June on their way to a student management competition.

### Report on activities:

The purpose of my proposal was to travel to the University of New England (UNE), located in Armidale, NSW, Australia to research the potential to set up a new study abroad program with UNE. The focus of this program would be to give students some international perspective via Australia's export-led agricultural sector. Dr. Ballenger and I submitted proposals (hers was with International Programs) together so we could travel together. Dr. Ballenger has research contacts at UNE that helped make introductions for us. Our trip was completed in August, 2016.

Dr. Ballenger and her colleague, Dr. Griffith of UNE have been working on a cattle genomics economics project for several years now and had been talking about the potential for student and faculty exchanges between our institutions. I was asked to be involved due to my experience with Ag & Applied Economics' France program. After we received our grant awards, Dr. Ballenger and I began email discussions with faculty at UNE to gauge their interest in our initiative. With Dr. Griffith's help with introductions, we received a positive response. But it remained to be seen if we could really get going with the details of a program. For that we needed to travel to UNE.

We timed our travel so that we would be traveling at the same time as our proposed trip. We wanted to see conditions as they might be for our students. This is UNE's winter break. Dorm rooms are vacant at this time of year and faculty available. It will also be cooler this time of year as opposed to their summer (our winter...we originally thought that this trip might fit with our winter break).

We arrived early on a Sunday morning (0700) in Sydney (14 August) and spent a day getting acclimated and seeing what might be of interest to our students. Central Sydney is a very modern "hip" city. The older parts date from the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, but the Darling harbor area is undergoing a massive multi-billion dollar modernization scheme with a new landscaped shoreline and water taxi berths. It has a modern international flavor.

The next day, we picked up our car and headed north to Armidale. It was a seven-hour drive to UNE from Sydney. We passed through the Hunter valley, which is wine country, and Scone, which is horse country. This is also coal country and we saw signs for the "Ravenworth Cut". Australia is a major international thermal coal producer and thus faces economic, environmental and natural resource issues that are similar to Wyoming.

Faculty at the UNE Business School provided us with an extremely warm reception. We were greeted by Dr. Allison Sherman, Head of School (Dean) and a contingent of dignitaries at a

meet-and-greet (coffee, scones and cream). It was good that we had the “swag” along, provided by the Dean’s office.

After our meet-and-greet we got down to business. We met all of that day and most of the next. Our discussions centered on our proposal and were favorably met. We got fairly detailed in the level of services provided by each institution, length of travel and even individuals involved. We also discussed reciprocal arrangements, that is, students coming from UNE, to UW.

One of UNE’s faculty (Dr. Derek Baker) leads UNE’s IFAMA student competition group. The competition is held in North America every other year. It will be in Miami in 2017. We discussed the potential for this group to come to UW in June, 2017 on their way to the competition (9 students, 2 to 3 faculty) for a week to be introduced to Wyoming agriculture and culture. I will be the logistics support planner for this initiative if we can make it work, but the timing of their visit is such that I will be in France with our France program during their actual visit and thus need to get more Ag Econ faculty involved.

Another outcome of our discussions is that we will try and recruit about 10 students to come to UNE for a three week study abroad program in August, 2017. We propose to start in Sydney and have a couple of days to sightsee and get acclimated, then spend a few days getting to Armidale via the Hunter Valley to see some viticulture and horse breeding facilities. Then we would be based out of Armidale for some classes and local visits. Finally, we will work our way north to Brisbane, visiting the rain forest and some tropical agriculture sites along the way. We will end the trip with a day on the Gold Coast (south of Brisbane) to let students get their beach fix. I will be the lead for that initiative on the UW end. Dr. Ballenger has retired, but agreed to come along as well. All this is contingent on costs, logistics and recruiting factors.

It should be noted that Australia is not cheap, by our standards. Currently, the Australian dollar trades at about a 20 percent discount to the US dollar, but even after currency conversion, I noticed that prices were about 20 percent higher than we encounter here for similar purchases (e.g. the unofficial “Big Mac Index”, a Big Mac meal costs \$AU10.00 vs. about \$6.50 here).

Cost is likely the major challenge to implementing this program. I was able to get a cheap flight, \$1,290 from Denver, but that may not be the case for our students when the time comes. We should expect that higher petroleum/commodity prices in the future will mean that about \$1,800 will be the norm. Scholarship support for our students will be critical to the success of this initiative.

After our technical discussions, Dr. Ballenger and Dr. Griffith and I set out to see some of the natural surroundings to see what our students might like to see. Armidale is Australia’s highest city at about 3,400 feet. There was frost every morning that we were there and it can snow this time of year. But the climate is still rather dry. We visited several national parks. Armidale is on table lands in the Great Dividing Range. The land forms an escarpment to the east and there are a number of spectacular water falls. As the land drops off, the climate changes dramatically to tropical rainforest. We visited the Dorrigo national park to see this first hand.

Dr. Ballenger and I returned to Sydney on 23 August. She returned to the States the following day. I spent an additional 10 days in Australia (at my own expense) for some scuba diving on the Great Barrier Reef.

If the goal of an international study abroad program is to provide students with an international experience that broadens and changes perspectives, then I think this will be a superb additional offering for our students. Australia offers a good first step for many of our students who do not

have international exposure and are reticent to make that move because of perceived differences in culture and language. As I have tried to point out, there are similarities and differences between Australia, and Armidale in particular, and Wyoming that will intrigue and yet not repel our students (i.e. different but not too different).

I would like to thank those who reviewed my proposal and the college administration for funding my work. I believe that this initiative could provide important and life-changing educational opportunities for our students. Thank you. Now the work begins!

Our seminar on Wyoming was videoed by UNE and is available online at:

<http://www.une.edu.au/about-une/academic-schools/unebs/research/seminar-series/unebs-seminar-series-2016>

Dr. Ballenger and I will be giving a brown-bag seminar on our trip to faculty on **Wednesday, 21 September, 2016 at noon in room 137, Ag C.**



Koala at the Koala “hospital” in Port Macquarie. This little guy is blind and cannot be released into the wild.



Winter sunset on Sydney harbor and the Circular Quay.



Australian bush, tablelands region near Armidale, NSW.



Dangar falls, near Armidale, NSW.



Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby in the wild, Dangar's Gorge near Armidale, NSW.



Tropical bush, Dorrigo National Park, NSW.



Pacific sunrise, Port Macquarie, NSW.



Flying fox (fruit bat) colony, Port Macquarie, NSW.



Early morning street scene, Armidale, NSW.



Dr. Griffith, Dr. Ballenger and Mr. Foulke at UNE, Armidale, NSW.