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Illinois Wesleyan Students Studying in Madrid Featured in Spanish Newspaper

February 21, 2006

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan students traveling recently to San Sebastian in Spain were enamored with the city--and their reactions left a fair impression of their own.

The group of 17 students, who traveled to the Basque region with three faculty guides during their participation in the University's Study Abroad program in Madrid, were featured in the Basque newspaper, *Diario Vasco*.



Illinois Wesleyan students studying in Spain toured sites in the Basque region.

Read the [Diario Vasco article](#)

Or an [English translation](#) by Carolyn Nadeau, IWU professor of Hispanic Studies

"The students spent three days in our city and left delighted, promising to return," reporter Joti Díaz wrote. "They took a few hours to walk from one end of San Sebastian to the other. They were impressed with the clean beaches, the bathers, in spite of the winter weather, and the beauty of the bay and new promenade. They were also taken by the amount of pedestrians, uncommon in their own hometowns. On the morning walk they took note of the clean streets and the peacefulness they were breathing in."

The students' tour included a visit to the Basque parliament in Vitoria, the San Sebastian cider house Zelaia, and the Chillada-Leku Museum. The students convinced their professors to delay their return to Madrid so they could see Eduardo Chillida's "Comb of the Winds" sculpture series in Ondarreta.

One of the students, junior Pamela Solowski, told Díaz, "I'll remember most the promenades, the beach and the easy-going nature of its citizens. It's like they have a different life rhythm here. The street is where you meet everyone. In our country that's not the norm." Solowski is a biology and Hispanic Studies major from Lemont, Ill.

Junior Prianka Sharma was quoted, "Our culture is very different, nothing like yours here. It seems that here, people interact more, live more closely together. I loved the visit to the cider house where we ate from the same platters; (it had a) great atmosphere and cider pouring ritual." Sharma, of Burr Ridge, Ill., is majoring in Hispanic Studies and International Studies/Western European Studies at Illinois Wesleyan.

Offered during the spring semester each year, the Madrid program allows Illinois Wesleyan students to study with an IWU faculty director and professors from the Fundación José Ortega y Gasset, and to live with host families in Madrid. This year's IWU faculty director is Mauricio Parra, associate professor of Hispanic Studies.

On-site coordinator Maria Romero from Ortega & Gasset said her goal in the Basque excursion was to give the students a "wider point of view about the cultural identity of this part of Spain considering institutional, arts and gastronomical visits on a whole as a different way of living, feeling and thinking in our country. Professor Parra is doing the great work with the students to introduce them step by step in the different identities of the Spanish character and culture, so I would say that this trip (is) being really helpful to facilitate a better understanding of us."

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