

Kelly Egan
End of Program Report

During the Spring 2015 semester I had the incredible opportunity to study abroad in the city I'd dreamed of visiting since I was a child - St. Petersburg, Russia. The opportunity was in large part thanks to the generous study abroad scholarship I was awarded through the Department of Languages and Cultures. This award covered over a third of my tuition abroad, which I am so thankful for. Without the scholarship I may not have been able to spend a semester studying abroad.

My semester in Russia was the most educational and fulfilling time of my academic career. West Chester University prepared me so well for my four months there and my experience abroad solidified and expanded upon the education I have received here. While in Russia I studied at the St. Petersburg State University of Economics and Finance (my host institution) where I studied Russian language intensively - I had six hours of one on one instruction a week, along with nine hours of small group classes. Outside of the classroom and in, my language skills were greatly improved.

I had so many unforgettable and invaluable experiences during my time abroad. I worked as a volunteer in the famous Hermitage Museum in the beautiful Winter Palace, and toured numerous other palaces of the tsars. I also got the chance to experience the Russian ballet. I visited over half a dozen museums as well as preserved churches and cities built as early as 859 a.d. The lessons in Russian culture and history were as numerous as those in the language itself.

I can truly say the experience changed me and put the vastness of the world in a new perspective. The cultural differences were many, but I quickly felt so immersed in it and so well versed in the history of both St. Petersburg and Russia as a whole, that I somehow didn't feel like an outsider. Before the experience, I was shy and self conscious of my language skills, but Russia made me brave and made me step out of my comfort zone. For that, I am grateful to all that made my time there possible.