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## A Competitive Edge

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When student Marie-Claire Tuzeneu traveled abroad to study for the first time, she says she "grew into herself" and gained self-confidence.

"The experience makes you more marketable when you're looking for a job," said the 20-year-old Nashville native, who's traveling to Togo for two months this summer.

Enrollment in overseas experiences at the UD is up 5 percent over last year's record pace — in the wake of a nationwide decline in applications to study-abroad programs during the global economic downturn.

"It shows that students understand the importance of international education," said Amy Anderson, director of the Center for International Programs.

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* April 3 reported that more than half of the colleges and education-abroad providers who responded to a new survey say applications for summer programs are down from the previous year. The survey, published by the Institute of International Education, is believed to be the first to quantify the recession's impact on overseas study.

At UD, a record 658 students have applied to study overseas or embark on service projects in other countries. Among their experiences: studying Spanish in Segovia, Spain, and improving the efficiency of wood-burning stoves in India.

Tuzeneu is traveling to a small village in the West African nation of Togo with two engineering students who are collecting data and performing topographical mapping for a proposed irrigation system for the village's agricultural center.

"I'm thinking about going to graduate school and concentrating on African studies," said Tuzeneu, a junior double majoring in French and international studies with a concentration in human rights. "I need to experience what Africa is like before making that decision."

A pro at overseas travel, she's already spent a semester studying French in Angers in the Loire Valley of France. As a student worker in the Center for International Programs, Tuzeneu advises her fellow students on the value of going overseas.

"Going abroad on an exchange is really very affordable," she said. "All of your scholarship money and financial aid transfer with you. In some cases, it may even be cheaper to study abroad. It's an investment in your own personal growth and future."

The experience also gives graduates a competitive edge in an increasingly global world.

"America is such a huge country, but we tend to live in our own world," Tuzeneu said. "We need to be able to engage with and be in dialogue with the rest of the world. With this current economic crisis, globalization is becoming even more apparent. I think it's so important to study abroad."

**For more information, contact Amy Anderson, director of the University of Dayton's Center for International Programs, at 937-229-3514.**