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## An international view of Furman

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CHARLIE REGISTER

and correcting pronunciation for oral presentations.

**T**he impact of the Furman Language House extends far beyond the students who live there; it has enriched campus life in general. For years the university's study abroad programs have sent students around the world. Now the world is coming to roost in North Village, creating a true foreign exchange.

Some of the LHAs who have worked in the Language House in its first two years were recruited using contacts established through Furman's study abroad programs. The happy result is that friendships formed on one side of the world may continue in succeeding years on the other.

For instance, Betti Rösser was delighted when a friend she had made in Bonn, Cornelia Graebner, became the 1999-2000 German assistant. And Gaëlle de Carmantrand, whose family has served as host to several Furman students in Versailles, enjoyed seeing some of them again when she came to live in the French House. This fall, back in France, she'll be looking forward to greeting many of the friends she made in Greenville when they come to her hometown for the term.

The only problem: everybody going to France wants to live with the de Carmantrands! 🍷

*William Allen, who has taught French at Furman since 1987, earned his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina.*



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**The Language House Assistants, who live in the residence halls and serve as teaching aides, are considered the heart and soul of the program. In 1999-2000, they were (from left): Gaëlle de Carmantrand, Jorge Jiménez Ramirez, Cornelia Graebner, Yanhong Zhu and Masakiyo Fujita.**

## An international view of Furman

What's it like to come to a small, private American college when you're accustomed to large, public universities in Europe or Asia? The Language House Assistants from the 1999-2000 session offer their impressions:

### **Gaëlle de Carmantrand (Versailles, France)**

Gaëlle was surprised by the electronic equipment American students have: a television, a VCR and a computer with Internet connection in every room! She was also amazed by the working conditions for students compared to France, where, she says, "You have to stand in line for two hours to get into the library, then stand in line for two more to get a book, only to find out it's not the one you need." She was also impressed that American students were willing to speak to her and to each other in a foreign language. "They have great motivation. In France even our English teacher never spoke English with us outside of class."

### **Masakiyo Fujita (Hiroshima, Japan)**

"Massa" was struck by the beauty and small size of Furman's campus. He found it an easy place to make friends and to meet people, noting that at his university in Japan no students live on campus, because there are no residence halls. In his free time, Massa enjoyed playing soccer and traveling to points as distant as Washington, D.C., Key West, Fla., and New Orleans. Because he was the only LHA who owned a car, he was much in demand. "Massa is our lifesaver!" proclaimed one of his colleagues.

### **Cornelia Graebner (Bonn, Germany)**

Perhaps because Cornelia had already spent a year abroad in England, she was surprised by Americans' reactions to her. "Americans are not really used to foreigners," she says. "If you are a foreigner, people think you're from another planet." But she found ways of breaking down barriers, particularly by helping to organize such well-received extracurricular activities as the International Student Association poetry reading and a program on current issues facing the European Union. Like all LHAs, she was

somewhat taken aback by the lack of public transportation in Greenville and by Furman's dry campus. But she's looking forward to seeing many of her Furman friends when they come to Bonn for fall term.

### **Jorge Jiménez Ramirez (Madrid, Spain)**

"This was a very good year," says Jorge, beaming as usual. Although, as he says, "I came to another world, another country, another culture," living with Americans was much easier than he thought it would be. Of course, there were differences to discover. He was surprised, for example, by American attitudes toward energy use. He says that for the first month he was constantly walking around the apartment after his roommates had left, turning off the lights, the television and the CD player. But he enjoyed the opportunity to work and interact with American students in preparation for a career teaching Spanish to foreigners.

### **Yanhong Zhu (Shanghai, China)**

The opportunity to take classes alongside Furman students enabled Yanhong to discover that some of her preconceptions about Americans were not quite accurate. "I thought the States would be like 'Growing Pains,' that the students would never study and only party and have fun." She found that professors do indeed give lectures and plan their syllabi in advance, and she was "amazed" by the library: "The books are so well-ordered, interlibrary loan is so neat, and the library Web pages connect to so many other sources of information." So pleased is Yanhong with American education that she has decided to prolong her studies abroad by enrolling in the East Asian Studies program at the University of Southern California.

— William Allen