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at CHAPEL HILL

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

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Administrative Boards of the College of Arts and Sciences  
Office of General Education  
UNC-CH

### University of Helsinki, Finland- Student Exchange Program

Dear Colleagues:

The Department of American Studies and the Study Abroad Office are submitting for your approval a proposal to establish a student exchange program with the University of Helsinki (UH), located in Finland, to begin in Spring 2017.

Further information about UH can be reviewed at <https://www.helsinki.fi/en>

#### Rationale and Support

Currently, UNC-CH's study abroad portfolio in Scandinavia includes student exchange partnerships with Lund University, University of Copenhagen, and University of Oslo. After the Spring 2016 term, the University of North Carolina Exchange Program (UNCEP) is discontinuing the exchange consortium with the four participating universities in Finland.

Student demand for exchange programs in Scandinavia has significantly increased in the past few years, and we have not been able to meet the demand with our current offerings. For instance, for the Spring 2016 semester, seven students applied for two exchange spots at Lund University, and ten students applied for seven exchange spots at University of Copenhagen. For the Fall 2015 semester, 12 students applied for five exchange spots at University of Copenhagen. Without the options in Finland via UNCEP, we will have even fewer exchange places available for UNC-CH students in this region. It is important to establish a new exchange partner to fill this void.

UH is a high ranking university with an extensive catalog of courses offered in English, and they are in need of a new exchange partner in the United States to satisfy their growth in outbound mobility.

The program proposal is supported by the Department of American Studies. In addition to being made available to American Studies students, the exchange program will be available to all students in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Daniel M. Cobb, Director of Undergraduate Studies and Coordinator of American Indian and Indigenous Studies for UNC-CH's Department of American Studies, has visited UH several times through his involvement in the biennial Maple Leaf and Eagle Conference in North American Studies (MLE). Dan's most recent visit was in May 2014 when he traveled to participate in his third consecutive MLE conference. Over the years, he has formed relationships with professors affiliated with the North American Studies program, including Markku Henriksson (McDonnell Douglas Chair for American Studies, emeritus) and Rani-Henrik Andersson (Docent, Academy of Finland Research Fellow, McDonnell Douglas Chair, Professor for American Studies). He will be attending MLE again in May 2016 and will take the opportunity to engage in further conversation with staff affiliated with the University of Helsinki's North American Studies program, as well as faculty in other relevant Area and Cultural Studies in the Department of World Cultures.

The Department of American Studies at UNC-CH features five major concentrations, American Studies, American Indian and Indigenous Studies, Folklore, Global American Studies, and Southern Studies. The department promotes study abroad no matter what major concentration students may be in, and all AMST students would have a tremendous opportunity to broaden their intellectual horizons by virtue of studying at UH. Given the availability of a wide variety of courses taught in English, the University of Helsinki is particularly attractive. The Department of World Cultures, like the Department of American Studies at UNC-CH, has a strong undergraduate program with sufficient course matches to make an exchange feasible.

Emily Marlton, Northern Europe and Oceania Programs Director in the UNC-CH Study Abroad Office, will conduct a site visit to UH in Spring 2016.

### The University of Helsinki

Established in 1640 and enrolling 36,000 degree students, UH is the oldest and largest university in Finland. It also has the widest range of disciplines of any university in Finland. UH is consistently ranked in the top 100 universities in the world. UH is a bilingual university. The languages of instruction are Finnish and Swedish. Additionally, the university offers a wide variety of courses in English.

The university is divided into 11 faculties:

1. Agriculture and Forestry
2. Arts
3. Behavioral Sciences
4. Biological and Environmental Sciences
5. Law
6. Medicine
7. Pharmacy
8. Science
9. Social Sciences
10. Theology
11. Veterinary Medicine

UH has four campuses, all within six miles of each other: City Center Campus for Arts and Social Sciences, Kumpula Science Campus, Meilahti Campus for Medicine, and Viiki Campus for Life Sciences. Students will use public transportation to travel between campuses as needed.

## The Program

The program will be a two-way exchange, with semester and year-long options.

UH will nominate students to study in UNC-CH's College of Arts and Sciences. UNC-CH will nominate students from the College of Arts and Sciences to take courses across UH's relevant Faculties, taking a majority of courses from one Faculty.

The minimum GPA requirement for admission to this exchange program will be 2.75, and students must have completed at least one year of university study at the time of application. Students must enroll in a minimum of the equivalent of 12 credit hours and will receive transfer credit for courses taken at UH. The equivalent of a "C" or above is required for credits to transfer.

As UNC-CH students will take all coursework in English, and English is widely spoken in Finland, there is no language requirement for this program. Finnish language courses and Finnish society and culture courses are available during the semester.

As with our other programs in Scandinavia, we will encourage students to take a language and/or culture course, but it will not be required. Though the courses will be of interest to some students, they are not necessary for the experience. With English as a de facto third language, it is commonly used both in and out of the classroom among students, faculty, and staff at UH. There are roughly 3,000 international degree-seeking and exchange students at UH every year, and the common language is typically English.

Exchange students have access to student support services, facilities, and student life just as the degree-seeking students do.

Exchange students at UH will receive support from the International Exchange Services Offices. There is a comprehensive orientation session at the beginning of each term. Each exchange student is also assigned a student tutor who will introduce them to Finnish university life and help them with practical matters.

Exchange students at UH can secure apartment-style housing through HOAS, a Foundation for student housing in the Helsinki region.

## Helsinki, Finland

Helsinki, located in southern Finland, is the capital of Finland. With a population around one million, it is the largest city in Finland. In 2011, Helsinki was named the most livable city in the world.

## Health and Safety

Students will be enrolled in international accident and health insurance through HTH Worldwide ([www.hthstudents.com](http://www.hthstudents.com)) for the duration of the program. There are no immediate health concerns in Helsinki. Modern medical facilities and highly skilled medical practitioners are available in Finland.

According to the State Department website: "Finland remains largely free of terrorist incidents. However, like other countries in the Schengen area, Finland's open borders with its Western European

neighbors allow the possibility of terrorist groups anonymously entering and exiting the country. Elements of organized crime groups operating in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are present in Finland, but do not represent a specific danger to U.S. citizen residents or tourists. U.S. citizens are reminded to remain vigilant with regard to their personal security and to exercise caution.

“With an excellent police force and a stable political and economic environment, Finland is a safe and secure environment for business, tourism, and living. Crime statistics remain low compared to the United States and other developed countries.

“Violent crime is rare in Finland and U.S. citizens are seldom the victims of violent criminal acts. As in other large cities, sexual assaults do occur, and U.S. citizens should remain vigilant about their surroundings at all times. Non-violent crimes, such as petty theft and pick-pocketing, are the most typical type of crime to occur in Finland, and reports of such incidents double during the summer months. U.S. citizens should pay attention to their personal safety and avoid leaving any personal possessions unattended.”

We are happy to provide any further information that you may need to evaluate this proposal.

Yours sincerely:



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Bernie Herman  
Department Chair, Department of American Studies



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Robert Miles  
Associate Dean, Study Abroad and International Exchanges