

The Sixth Friday - Have Vision Will Travel

What is vision? What does it mean when we speak of someone having ‘vision’? Vision comes from the root word *visio* (Latin), from *vidēre* (Italian) meaning ‘to see’. Veni, vici, vinci... I came, I saw, I conquered. In this meaning we are not speaking of the literal interpretation of ‘seeing’ through eyes, but to see into the future. Vision is the ability to see into the future. Left brain... right brain.... remember?

It is a terrible thing to see and have no vision. - Helen Keller

How does one see into the future? We gain the ability of predicting or looking into the future through experience. Yet, some of us can view further than others. Some of us have an intrinsic ability to look into the future. Those that can look further often accomplish much more. And, as human beings, we all have the desire to accomplish. We have a past, a present, and a future. This is what separates us from other animals.

The problem that many of us have is that we have experienced only minimal exposure to the world around us. This is particularly true in the Great Plains States where our exposure to large cities, large populations, diversity of culture and thought, and a multi-varied approach to problems and solutions are limited. Conservatism, fear of the unknown, fear of change, leads to a quest of security in our very limited surroundings.

Take the average student at a small engineering and science school located in a relatively small city surrounded by rural America (read South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City, South Dakota) perhaps from a rural area somewhere nearby (South Dakota, Wyoming, North Dakota, Nebraska, western Minnesota). SDSMT is a fine technical university; but exposure to others with different views, much different views is limited by the sheer definition of whom and where we are located.

No doubt you, a student here at this fine institution, will be exposed to the real world when you depart the safety of this campus and the security of your homeland to seek employment opportunities elsewhere. Where do you want to go when you ‘grow-up’? What do you want to be? The hope is that you will rocket (rapid transition) into the future and acclimate to your new surroundings with success. How do you, as a bright, relatively young scholar, soar with confidence into the world? What can you do to inject yourself with a dose of culture, of different views, of diversity, while your brain is still absorbing the world (Rapid City)?

Ideals are like stars, choose them as your guides, following them, reach your destiny. – Charles Schurz

Enter, stage right, **international education**. There are several ways to treat yourself to a worthwhile experience that will absolutely be of benefit to your career, your life, and your whole being. You might attend, for a semester, another university, say in Chicago, Minneapolis, or New York. You might hitch-hike across the plains during the summer and find yourself in San Francisco, Seattle, or New Orleans. Yet you might take advantage of many opportunities to study abroad, outside of the United States, outside of North America where most of us think alike.

The gem cannot be polished without friction, or a person without trials – Chinese Proverb

Engineering students, like engineers, are mobile. This is a great gift. Travel now before you have a family, a mortgage, a house with a white picket fence, and 2.3 children (the average family size). Be a risk taker. (There are, actually, very little risks). Search ‘international engineering education exchange programs’ on the Internet.

European Project Semester, EPS, is one such program. There are many others. SDSMT has exchange agreements with many international engineering institutions. Often the cost is about the same except for, of course, an airplane ticket to and from your destination. You will learn that people much like yourselves, approach problems, engineering problems, life's problems, differently with great success. What you will gain is the ability to see into the future; you will have improved your vision of the world around you.

I have never heard of a single student that has attended an international semester say that the experience was a poor one. I am the international engineering coordinator for SDSMT with frequent travel to Europe to foster exchange programs, primarily with EPS but with others as well:

European Project Semester allows you the mobility to study abroad in the following countries:

Europe ↔ SDSMT

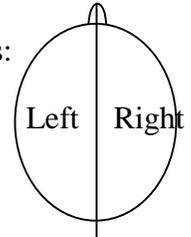
EPS

Do your engineering design coursework in Europe



European Project Semester

Denmark, Norway, Finland
Germany, France, Spain
Netherlands, Belgium



Tuition is paid to SDSMT. There may be small fees at the recipient institution. The exchange rate (Euro, Danish Kroner, etc.) is within reason but it does fluctuate with market. Airline tickets to Europe run about \$1000 round trip. Lodging is arranged by the recipient institution and costs about the same to a little more in Europe depending upon the destination. Classes are in English. Some credit transfer is possible depending upon your department here at SDSMT.

EPS is not the only exchange program. There are many others. Students tend to shy away from international experience because of language. Almost everyone in Europe speaks English as it is now recognized as an international language (except France?... a little humor here).

Broaden your outlook. Improve your vision of the real world.

Think little goals and expect little achievements. Think big goals and win big success. - David Joseph Schwartz

Check one or more and Save for Future Reference When You're Old and Gray

- I don't have any money.
- I am afraid.
- I don't think the experience will be valuable.
- I can't afford the time; I want to graduate.
- I don't speak any foreign language.
- I don't want to learn about how other engineering students approach problems.
- My girlfriend (or boyfriend) wouldn't like the idea.
- Hey, this is not a bad idea!