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Ask the Abbot

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### **Who was the first SNC student to study abroad, and where did they go?**

Stephen Lin '18

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## September 2019

### Question:

Dear Abbot Pennings,

Who was the first SNC student to study abroad, and where did they go?

Stephen Lin '18

### Answer:

My dearest Stephen,

Ah, what a delightful question – and a timely one, too, as our intrepid young students who are studying abroad this year are just embarking on their exciting new journeys. Studying abroad is a fundamental part of the St. Norbert experience for many students these days, but it wasn't as prevalent in the early years. Indeed, the college didn't send a student abroad until 1962.

That trailblazing student was Meg (Perkins) Vander Zanden '64. Oh, what a superb student she was! Meg majored in French at St. Norbert and wanted to spend her junior year immersed in French culture. The Rev. Rowland C. De Peaux, O. Praem., '48, one of Meg's French professors and a passionate advocate of study abroad during its beginning stages at St. Norbert, supported her interest. Meg applied to the University of Aix-en-Provence in the South of France and was later accepted. With the help of Father Jolicoeur, the department chair at the time who assured Meg her French study credits would be accepted by St. Norbert upon her return, she was ready to begin her adventure abroad!



### Ask the Abbot

As the founder of St. Norbert College, and having a prime seat in the center of campus throughout the years, I, Abbot Bernard Pennings, hold the answers to many of your burning questions about the college.

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Once Meg arrived in France, she was enrolled at the Institut pour les Étrangers. Because she travelled before the fancy gadgets and gizmos you use to communicate with loved ones were created, she relied on 3-minute telephone calls by transatlantic cable and letters to keep in touch with her friends and family back home. Meg recalls her splendid year abroad as “the most beneficial experience.”

Father De Peaux tells me that studying abroad became more and more common at St. Norbert after Meg returned from France. While it was initially directed toward students studying foreign languages, soon students from all disciplines were traveling around the globe, as is the case today.

Oh, how wonderful it is to see St. Norbert students traveling to foreign lands, becoming ethical global citizens who embrace the diversity of our world!

*Responses to “Ask the Abbot” questions are penned by St. Norbert College staff in the name of Abbot Bernard Pennings, who founded St. Norbert College in 1898.*

## St. Norbert College

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