

Reflections from WT with Carolina Galloway

- Randy Ray: Welcome back to Reflections from WT. This is the podcast that we do once a month. My name is Randy Ray. I'm the director of Broadcast Engineering, and I'm joined by my co-host, Dr. Walter Wendler. Today's a topic that I'm really passionate about, are you?
- President Wendler: Yeah. Yeah. International programs. I took 75 Texas Aggies to a place in Figline Valdarno about 40 miles or 35 miles south of, actually kilometers, south of Florence on the Arno river, a monastery. We stayed there for the whole semester living in a monastery, and the monastery was never the same. The Aggies were never the same. The priests that were in there, there were still priests running the monastery, they were never the same. Nobody was ever the same after that.
- Randy Ray: Yeah.
- President Wendler: It was good.
- Randy Ray: Well I'm glad you said that because I believe that too. I believe that once you study abroad, you're never the same and that's why I'm excited about our guest today, Miss Carolina Galloway. Carolina, welcome.
- Carolina Galloway: Thank you Randy. Thank you Dr. Wendler. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and talk to you and everybody about Study Abroad.
- Randy Ray: Yeah, so tell me why you are so passionate about Study Abroad?
- Carolina Galloway: Wow! That can go on for a while, let me just tell you. I've always loved traveling and I believe that I've experienced myself the positive effects and the benefits of traveling and being immersed in a different culture. All the opportunities that have come up for me personally, everything has shaped who I am today, both professionally, personally. Based on my personal experience is that I want other people to experience the same. I want other people to venture and travel so that they can also take advantage of all the benefits of traveling, being immersed in a new country, in a new place, somewhere that they can be a little bit challenged, but also they experience the personal and professional growth that it can bring.
- Randy Ray: Where were you raised?
- Carolina Galloway: I was born and raised in Ecuador.
- Randy Ray: How old were you when you traveled for the first time?
- Carolina Galloway: Internationally, 14.

Randy Ray: Fourteen, so you were pretty young.

Carolina Galloway: Yes.

Randy Ray: Yeah, and how did that change you?

Carolina Galloway: Well, okay, first of all, just for context, I'm from a coastal city in Ecuador, close to Colombia in the north, close to the border with Colombia. I was 14 years old, my biggest culture shock when I came to United States, that was my first international trip, was donuts for breakfast.

Randy Ray: I've heard that.

As a kid, here I am with a load of fried sugary bread and I could eat as many as I wanted to and of course that is not something that I was used to before. That was my first experience with culture shock. I just thought, wow, people eat you know fried bread, topped with sugar and all this thing for breakfast. I think at that point I started learning how different things are in other places and assimilating, even though it was a very young age. That people are different and their customs in other places can be very different but enriching at the same time.

Randy Ray: Yeah.

President Wendler: That's exactly true. Every place has its own customs and people really are different. But when you scratch at the surface a little bit and get below the surface, there are some common conditions of the human existence, the human condition, that are the same everywhere. I've always gotten a kick wherever I've traveled and I've traveled all over, wherever I've traveled if you tell a mother-in-law joke, everybody laughs.

Carolina Galloway: That is right.

President Wendler: It's just the way it is.

Carolina Galloway: That is so true.

President Wendler: And it's part of, it's almost in the DNA of people and how things work. It's really interesting and that's, to me, was a lesson the first time I traveled. I traveled all over the US but I'd never been overseas until I took these Texas Aggies to Italy.

Randy Ray: Yeah, I like how you put that. I also really, really like this quote from Mark Twain that says, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one's little corner of the earth all one's lifetime". I like that quote.

President Wendler: Yeah.

Randy Ray: And I've used that in class too and if you are ever in any of my classes for any length of time, you will hear me say, "If it was up to me, every student that comes to West Texas A&M, would be required to study abroad". I know you do.

Carolina Galloway: Yes, definitely.

Randy Ray: I just think about how it changed me and not only did I get to see other cultures and other people and like Dr. Wendler said, I got to see how we are similar, but I also came home more appreciative of my home.

Carolina Galloway: And that is something I see a lot in students as well. Yes, the majority of students, as soon as they come back from Study Abroad, the first thing they tell me is I want to go somewhere else. They are already planning their next adventure and I love that. But there is a percentage of students also that comes back thinking, "I appreciate my own country much more now".

Randy Ray: Right.

Carolina Galloway: Because they probably discovered certain things that they were taking for granted before and now they became more aware of how things are different in other places, therefore, they appreciate what they have here. So that's another benefit, another positive of travel.

Randy Ray: Yeah. I love, in my intro to media com class, talking about culture because culture makes us who we are and when you talk about the Texas Panhandle culture or American culture, it really defines who we are. But also I think it's great to get to go other places because I think a lot of students have grown up in Texas Panhandle and really don't realize how different people can be and similar too. I love that. I love that part. Carolina, let me ask you, you've traveled a lot, tell me about one of your trips, someplace that really resonated with you.

Carolina Galloway: Many years ago, I traveled to Argentina. This was a family vacation and I was still relatively young, with my mom, my siblings. We went to Buenos Aires and I was just captivated by the culture honestly, in Buenos Aires, there was so much history. I remember we went to see a tango show and that was so, so unique. I mean it was not only the dance itself, but I remember my grandfather used to listen to tango music when he was still alive and I was a little kid so I think it connected me to Sundays, listening to Tango with my grandfather and I think that was a very special moment.

Randy Ray: Yeah, can you dance to Tango?

Carolina Galloway: I took some lessons, but I can't truly say that I do dance.

Randy Ray: Dr. Wendler, how about you?

President Wendler: No, I'm not a Tango guy.

Carolina Galloway: No, it was just fascinating to see that.

Randy Ray: Yeah, Dr. Wendler, you have talked in our many conversations through the years, you've talked about your trip to Vietnam. I thought that was really intriguing.

President Wendler: Yeah, well we went over there to look at starting a private university built on the sort of western model of education. It was interesting and this was now, was how long ago? This was, well, it was at the turn of the century. That makes it sound like a long time ago, but it was 20 years ago. We were in South Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City, Saigon, and looked at universities there and met a lot of people, industrialists and all kinds of people, and traveled to North Vietnam to Hanoi and also saw just a lot of different things. It was an intriguing place to me, and the energy -

Randy Ray: Does the war still resonate over there?

President Wendler: Yeah, it's interesting. It does. And one of the things that was remarkable to me that John McCain was seen as a tremendous hero in Vietnam. Not just South Vietnam, but in North Vietnam. We actually saw the prison where he was held. We stayed in the Hanoi Hilton for a few days. The real Hanoi Hilton where the service and everything was just remarkable. I've never seen anything like it at any U.S. hotel. It would be the equivalent of the best hotels in New York or Chicago or San Francisco. It's right on par with them. But the Hanoi Hilton where McCain stayed, was literally right across the street. It was a prison, it was right in downtown Hanoi. We went there and toured that and it was remarkable but the people there admired him even though he was bombing North Vietnam because he was a brave man and would not turn back from his commitment to doing his job and so on and so forth which I thought spoke in some ways strongly about the character and nature of Vietnamese people to me.

Randy Ray: Yeah.

President Wendler: Hardworking, very diligent. Everybody, it seemed like millions, I know it was on these little motor scooters just buzzing in and out of traffic. No traffic lights on the corners. You think people are going to get killed and they just don't. I saw a family one time on a Vespa, a step through motor scooter basically, it was a father with a girl, a little daughter between his legs, a mother on the back holding another child. He was smoking a cigarette and he was texting and driving that motorcycle, weaving in and out of traffic. I was on a bus, but I watched him. I watched him and it was just amazing to me, the level of concentration and focus and so on. And here, maybe appropriately, he probably would've been arrested for child endangerment, you're not supposed to text and drive. It was a remarkable place. A lot of energy and intensity in it and a

strong commitment to, especially in South Vietnam to free enterprise. Very strong commitment.

Randy Ray: Yeah. Well that's, we're going to take a break. We're going to be gone for about 60 seconds. When we come back, I want to talk about some places I visited and then I want to talk Carolina to you about if students are interested in studying abroad, what scholarships and help they can get.

Carolina Galloway: Sounds great.

Randy Ray: And we'll be back in 60 seconds.

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Randy Ray: Welcome back to episode number 43, Reflections from WT. Today we're talking about study abroad, travel abroad, and we're talking to Carolina Galloway, the Study Abroad Director. Carolina, you were really helpful. I have led a couple of study abroads. In 2017, I took a group to England where we got to go to see, and still this has got to be the coolest study abroad class that's ever happened. We went and looked at the Beatles and the influence of the Beatles.

Carolina Galloway: Right. Yes.

Randy Ray: We also looked at the influence of CS Lewis so that was really interesting. We got to meet the Secretary of the Beatles. We got to meet the Secretary of CS Lewis so that was really a cool trip.

Carolina Galloway: What a unique thing to do.

Randy Ray: And then in 2018, I took a group of grad students along with our engineer, Dane Glenn, our new engineer, Dane Glenn. We went to Israel and we made a film for Texas for Israel over there. We got to be on the West Bank. We got to be on the Golan Heights. Again, I came home both trips, more appreciative of not only being able to go over there but coming home and I think sometimes we get lax in our appreciation of our home. And so I think students felt that same way too. Carolina, tell me, if there are students that want to study abroad but they need help, how can you help?

Carolina Galloway: Okay, first of all, WT is wonderful in the sense that we actually have a scholarship specifically for students who study abroad or intern abroad. My office can fund anywhere from \$500 to \$5,000 depending on the Study Abroad program they are going to. Typically, a student going for a summer program, let's say somewhere between two and four weeks, will receive between \$500 to a \$1,000. Student going for a long semester abroad can receive up to \$5,000

depending on their financial need, depending on their GPA, certain factors that we look at when we are making that decision. Students studying abroad take advantage of the International Education Fees Scholarship because we really want to help you. The funding is available there. We just need you to apply for it. So come.

Randy Ray: Just apply.

Carolina Galloway: Yes, come to our office, talk to us about it. Once you are approved for your study abroad program, we will guide you through the process of applying. It's very simple, but we definitely want you to take advantage of that initial scholarship. In addition, we also allow you to use financial aid so any grants, loans or scholarships that you receive on campus, departmental scholarships or some other academic need based scholarships can be also used to study abroad. And we can also help you identify any scholarships outside of WT. Say for example, Gilman, the Fund for Education abroad, the Boren Scholarship, there is a number of competitive scholarships outside of WT that we can also help you identify and apply for. Now, it's important to mention those are competitive, so-

Randy Ray: Yeah, a lot of people.

Carolina Galloway: Yes, students will have to apply and compete against hundreds or thousands, thousands of students across the US, but if they receive it, that's another financial help that they can get that goes towards that program.

Randy Ray: Dr. Wendler, we were talking over the break and you mentioned maybe there's a single parent that has kids that just can't travel abroad. What is there on campus for people like that?

President Wendler: Well, I think the intercultural experience, getting to meet people from other cultures and other societies provides, it's not the same thing obviously as traveling abroad, but it does acquaint people with people from different parts of the world and so on and so forth. And it's one of the great benefits to me of having international students. Obviously, the international student comes to the U.S. and gets what I consider to be a good quality education at a very reasonable price right here at WT. But they also in coming, bring an experience to our students who possibly can't travel for one reason or another and more and more. For example, you mentioned single parents. Our average age now is over 26 for our students and 20 years ago it was 20 or 21 or 22. The world is changing and more and more we're seeing demographics shift and people are coming back to school later in life.

Maybe when they graduated high school wasn't the right time to study. Maybe they have a job and they see the opportunity to get a promotion or advancement in their careers is coupled to a college education so they find, and it's one of the reasons why distance education is so important and by the way, we educate a large number of internationals via digital education because they

can stay home and that doesn't bring the benefit that I'd like to see when they come to the states and come here to Canyon, Texas. But it's still a benefit I think, of expanding everyone's horizons.

Randy Ray: We've have international students from how many countries?

President Wendler: I think about 30 or something like that, maybe a little bit more, might be 40 and it vacillates because we may have one from one country and when they graduate we don't get another one. But it's in the thirties, somewhere in the thirties. I don't track that carefully, but I always hear about it at graduation, because the provost always announces how many different countries are represented. I think a lot of people are surprised to see that at West Texas A&M University right here in the Panhandle, that we have so many international students. And they do, they add a very important measure of experience to the campus that people benefit from.

Randy Ray: I agree with you. Well, I always throw our guest a curveball and this one's an easy one. I'm going to lob this one.

President Wendler: We'll see.

Randy Ray: This is easy.

Carolina Galloway: Yes. Let's see.

Randy Ray: Just we're talking about international travel. I would like to ask both of you, where's the place that you would like to visit?

Carolina Galloway: One of the places on my bucket list next is going to be Iceland.

Randy Ray: I have a student from Iceland this semester, in fact,

Carolina Galloway: Really?

Randy Ray: I advised her yesterday.

Carolina Galloway: Okay.

Randy Ray: Yeah.

Carolina Galloway: I'm going to have to contact her. There is something about Iceland that I feel like it's such a unique place-

Randy Ray: It is.

Carolina Galloway: That I would love to visit one day. Yeah.

Randy Ray: Yeah. Dr. Wendler, what about you?

President Wendler: I really don't have a particular place that I would like to go now. I've been to a lot of places and I find them all of interest, but I might like to go to a desert region for some reason. I feel like I'm close to one now. I want to see what one of the real one looks like. It's just how important it is. I just think it would be interesting to be in a place that I haven't been before.

Randy Ray: Yeah.

President Wendler: It reminds me of this TS Elliott quote that I was going to mention before, and it's from the Little Gidding. It says, "We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time". It's powerful. It's powerful in terms of our own journeys. It's powerful in personal relationships. That idea of coming and seeing something fresh.

Randy Ray: I like it.

President Wendler: It's very important. Very important.

Randy Ray: So we will leave on that note. Carolina, are there any current trips that are coming up?

Carolina Galloway: Yes, I'm excited to announce that we have a good number of programs for next May and summer sessions. First of all, we have the South Africa program that most people have heard about over the Thanksgiving break. But we are also very excited about six other programs that will be happening over May and summer.

Randy Ray: Wow!.

Carolina Galloway: We have, for example, the culture of education and social sciences will be continuing their program in Mexico, Las Cabanillas. The Spanish department will be traveling to the Dominican Republic. The art, theater and dance program will be going to Scotland. We have the history department will be going to four different places in Eastern Europe. We have the culture business will be traveling to Austria, Switzerland, and Germany. And environmental sciences traveling to Japan also in the summer next year so we are very excited about all of these new opportunities for students.

Randy Ray: Lots of buffs abroad.

Carolina Galloway: Absolutely.

Randy Ray: Yeah.

Carolina Galloway: Yes. This is going to be a great year.

Randy Ray: All right. Well, let's leave with that TS Elliott thought and never stop exploring.

Carolina Galloway: Love that.

Randy Ray: All right. We will see you next time on Reflections from WT.

Carolina Galloway: Thank you so much.