

To the Class of 1955:

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to take an art program in the Netherlands. The scholarship you've been thoughtful enough to establish really helped make study abroad possible for me. In return, I'd like to illustrate for you why I selected this program and what it was like.

I chose to go through Central College in Pella, Iowa because their study abroad department is well-established. I actually first looked into them because a Cornell newsletter included an application deadline, so I thought I'd see what they had to offer. Their program costs tended to include more than merely tuition and housing. For instance, my program's cost included reduced train travel and a card that got me into most museums at a reduced price or for free.

I wasn't sure where I wanted to go or what I wanted to study, but when I saw Central College's art program in Leiden, I knew I'd get a lot out of it. The program's inclusion of graphic design also drew me to it: there are no graphic design courses at Cornell and I use graphic design as Focus Editor for the Cornellian. I had not yet taken a studio art class at Cornell; this program let me take three different studio art classes and introduced me to many museums and galleries in Holland. In addition to program-led excursions, I was able to visit many museums and historical sites on my own. One day in Amsterdam, for instance, I made a point to see Rembrandt's house and studio. This experience is influencing my studies at Cornell: for my final paper in an art history class, I am looking at Rembrandt's *Lucretia*.

The program was wonderful. My professors and program director were qualified and experienced and also compassionate and profoundly helpful. They clearly cared about their students and really gave each of us personalized attention. It was also a wonderful experience for me simply because it was abroad: I found ways to solve problems not only by myself, but in an unfamiliar country. I grew from a confused and scared train traveler to one who was comfortable enough to scoff at the plan the ticket agent told me and to create my own based on a working map inside my head. I learned a lot about the Netherlands, its contributions to art, and to the world at large. For all of this, I thank you.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Williamson

