

search, public service, or term-time or summer-school studies abroad—more than double the number four years earlier.

DRCLAS placed 128 students, mostly undergraduates, in study-abroad and “experiential-learning” programs in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, and Peru in the 2006-2007 academic year. Several dozen now visit those countries each summer for eight-week internships. Assisted by resident staff in Santiago and, more recently, São Paulo, and in Cambridge, they have found appropriate placements and local families to live with, gaining the sort of cultural immersion the College intends (see “Tying Knots: Glimpsing Global Harvard in Chile,” May-June 2004, page 65, and on Brazil, “Global Gains,” January-February, page 64.)

Thesis-research fellowships and University grants support some of this travel, but many of the programs cost up to several thousand dollars, even as participants lose earnings from summer jobs that might help defray other expenses. Rockefeller’s new gift makes international experience need blind, as are College admissions and financial aid during the academic year, supporting as many as several hundred international student experiences annually.

Other elements of the Rockefeller gift will help fund professors in developing courses that meld students’ classwork with travel to relevant international sites, and support the infrastructure—the Office of International Programs (www.fas.harvard.edu/-oip) and the Office of Career Services—that undergirds productive international opportunities, and the placement and care of students pursuing them.

ROCKEFELLER HAS also written of his immersion in art. During a 1935 summer auto tour of Europe, he and a classmate took in 30 museums in six countries. Reflecting on a life of increasingly bold collecting, and of administrative and financial leadership at an ever-expanding MoMA, he recalled how his mother taught him and his siblings how works of art “might provide a challenging or reassuring glimpse of the world around us. It was often a deeply enthralling experience.” He also detailed how he recoiled

HARVARD PORTRAIT



Joanna Aizenberg

When Joanna Aizenberg looks at the skeleton of a sea sponge lying on her desk, she sees more than an oddly shaped tube. “The sponge makes this nearly perfect glass structure,” she says. “Almost every construction principle that we use is used by nature here, but on a scale 1,000 times smaller.” Aizenberg, who is Gordon McKay professor of materials science and Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach professor at the Radcliffe Institute, where she will be a fellow this fall, puts the design principles she sees in nature—in sponges, rocks, and sea urchins—to human ends. For instance, the brittle star (a relative of the starfish) can change the pigment of its crystal optical lens like a pair of light-sensitive sunglasses. By mimicking its design, Aizenberg invented a synthetic lens that she could tune to certain wavelengths of light. Her research draws on chemistry, biology, engineering, and math, the last of which she has excelled at since childhood. While growing up in Russia, she won mathematical Olympiads and precociously sent problems of her own devising to a popular science magazine. Unfortunately, the Russian educational system discouraged exploration beyond her chosen field of physical chemistry. She found more freedom while earning her Ph.D. in structural biology at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel—where her fascination with crystalline structures in sea life began—and as a postdoctoral student at Harvard. She returned to Harvard in 2007 after several years at Bell Labs, where working with students serving summer fellowships convinced her that she wanted to teach full time. She has also lectured at the New York School of Design, where she tells students that they can find everything they study in nature. Even in a sea sponge.