Summer Study Abroad in LAOS (SAIL)

ຮຽນພາສາລາວທີ່ເມືອງລາວໃນລະດູຮ້ອນນີ້

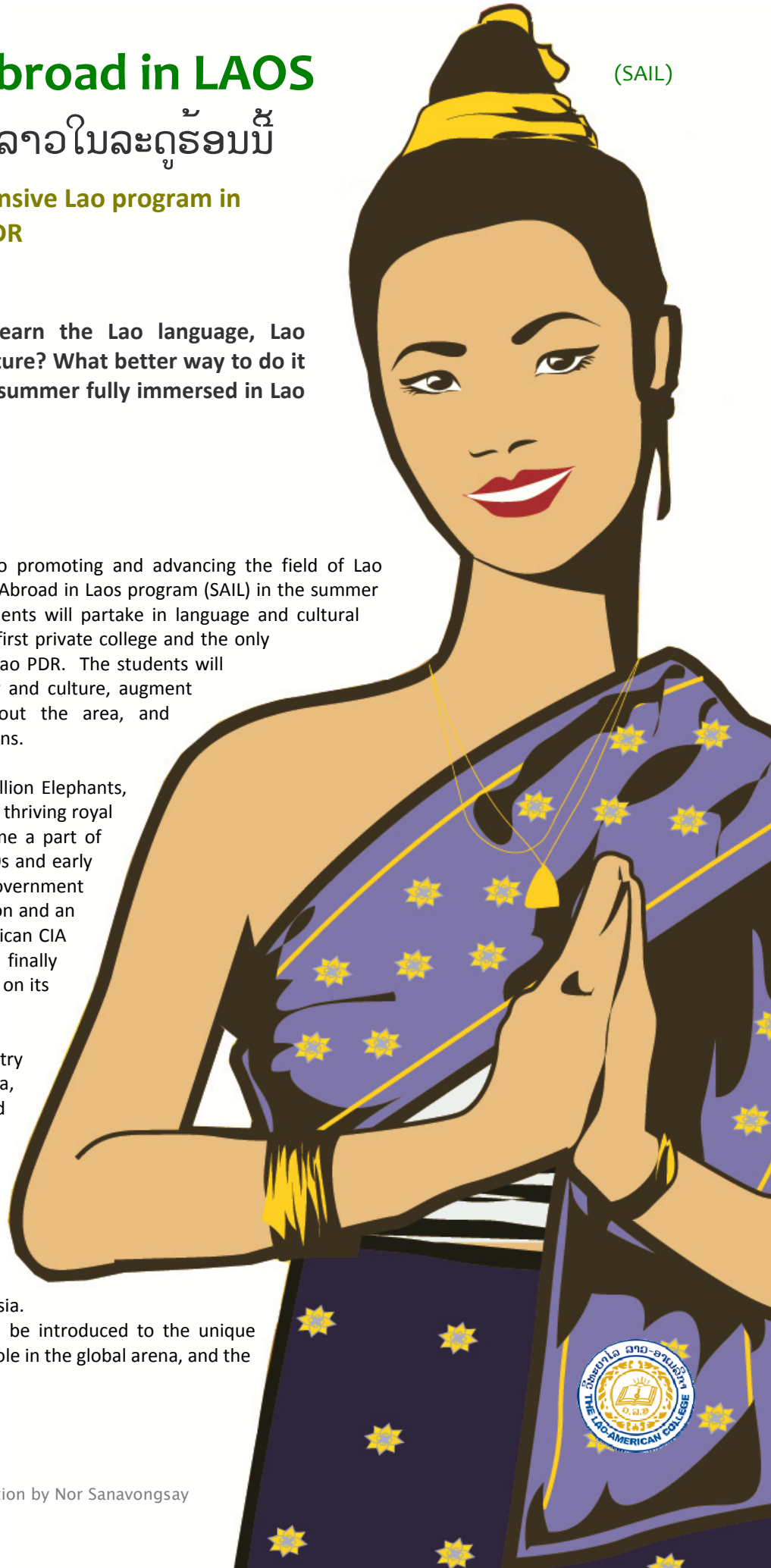
CENTER FOR LAO STUDIES

A four-week intensive Lao program in Vientiane, Lao PDR
July 1-31, 2012

SAIL

Connecting People and Cultures

Do you want to learn the Lao language, Lao history, and Lao culture? What better way to do it than to spend your summer fully immersed in Lao society in Laos!



The Center for Lao Studies (CLS), dedicated to promoting and advancing the field of Lao Studies, is sponsoring its annual Summer Study Abroad in Laos program (SAIL) in the summer of 2012. During the month-long program, students will partake in language and cultural lessons at the Lao-American College (LAC), the first private college and the only school founded by an American citizen in the Lao PDR. The students will also have the opportunity to study Lao history and culture, augment their academics with cultural trips throughout the area, and experience volunteering with various organizations.

Laos, once known as *Lan Xang* or Land of a Million Elephants, has had both a prosperous and turbulent past. A thriving royal history for many centuries, the kingdom became a part of French Indochina in the late 1800s. In the 1960s and early 1970s, civil war broke out between the Royal government and the Pathet Lao, which led to U.S. intervention and an unprecedented bombing campaign by the American CIA as part of its "Secret War." Today Laos is finally experiencing peace and stability, and is focusing on its economic and social development.

Geographically, Laos is the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia and is bordered by China, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. Laos boasts a varied landscape with primary tropical rain-forests, abundant rice fields, rare wildlife and one of the most ethnically diverse populations in Southeast Asia. The country has increasingly become a popular tourist destination for its rugged beauty, rich culture, and some of the friendliest, most welcoming people in Asia. Throughout the program, SAIL participants will be introduced to the unique characteristics of the country itself, its growing role in the global arena, and the history that has made it what it is today.

WWW.LAOSTUDIES.ORG

Illustration by Nor Sanavongsay

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the Summer Study Abroad in Laos program are:

1). To provide an opportunity for students to learn Lao in-country and increase their language competency, thus building a strong foundation for further academic development and research in Lao Studies;

2). To provide the opportunity for Lao-American and American participants to live closely with the Lao, experiencing firsthand the cultural differences and similarities, and developing a better understanding of the country and its peoples; and

3). To promote dialogue and collaboration between American and Lao scholars, artists, teachers, students, and others in an effort to raise public awareness of a broad range of Lao-related issues.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

SAIL students will be participating in a Lao language program tailored specifically to the group's needs at one of the country's most acclaimed (and popular) language institutions – the Lao-American College (http://www.lac.edu.la). Located in the heart of Vientiane, Lao-American College offers a unique instructional and service program in the effective teaching of Lao. Intensive courses combined with individual language tutorials, diversified field trips, and an experienced on-site staff, make Lao-American an incredible place to study Lao and learn cross-cultural skills.

SAIL participants spend three to four hours a day in classroom training and pair up with Lao students to further improve their speaking and listening comprehension. Classroom time is split between language lessons and an elective course (in English) on a Lao-specific topic such as Lao history and culture, the environment, philosophy, or world cultures.

COLLEGE CREDITS

SAIL students who have successfully completed their Lao language, history and culture courses may be able to earn up to 3 academic credits. The Lao-American College will issue a transcript to students; and SAIL will offer the student a certificate upon program completion. Credit transfers are subject to prior approval from the student's home institution. Please check with your advisor, professors, and the study abroad program department at your college or university first.

LAO LANGUAGE TRAINING

Lao Language Class (1-3 semesters of course credit): Language classes are held five times a week for 2.5 hours. Classroom trainings are taught by teachers from the Lao-American College or the National University of Laos and include lessons in reading and writing Lao as well as speaking and listening comprehension. Based on the language placement test, SAIL students are enrolled in beginning, intermediate, or advanced (heritage) class. A heritage class is designated for Lao Americans and those who already know how to speak Lao. Aside from classroom trainings, students may also request a private lesson with LAC teachers.

Language Partner: Each SAIL participant is matched with a Lao partner who can assist them in resolving any problems they encounter while studying Lao. It is a wonderful opportunity to practice conversational Lao, to help the Lao student improve their English skills, and to make new friends. You and your partner will have the flexibility to determine your own meeting schedules.

ELECTIVE COURSES

SAIL students will choose one elective course in which to participate three times a week for two hours. Sample courses include:

- *Lao History & Cultures*: Religion, literature, lifestyle, and ethnic groups in past and present-day Laos
- *World Cultures*: Examination of economic, political & social developments that evolved into 21st century nation-states
- *Environmental Studies*: Exploration of impact of man-made and natural phenomena on the planet, with a focus on Southeast Asia & Laos
- *ASEAN Economic Development*: Includes discussion of social & cultural relationships of members

All courses will be taught in English. Students may also take other classes offered by the LAC, but will need to arrange with CLS and LAC ahead of time.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (Optional)

SAIL participants will have the option to spend between four and ten hours a week volunteering at one of a number of cooperating international (or national) NGOs or local organizations. Students will work side-by-side with a development professional to learn firsthand the valuable work these organizations are doing throughout Laos. Opportunities could be in the field of income generation and economic development, natural resources, agriculture, education, health care, wildlife conservation or human resource development. Internship placements will be dependant on the needs of the organization, as well as on the skills and interests of the program

participants. CLS will do its best to ensure an appropriate and equally beneficial match to both parties. For a list of NGOs operating in Laos please visit: http://www.directoryofngos.org.

CULTURAL PROGRAM

LAO IN DAILY LIFE

There will be ample opportunities for SAIL students to practice their Lao, such as speaking with young monks, vendors and shopkeepers, and with high school and college students who will be eager to speak English. These exchanges will improve speaking and listening skills and teach useful expressions!

LAO TABLE

"Lao Table" is another informal way to learn Lao with the Lao themselves. Students will have lunch with their teachers or language partner to learn how to order a meal, discuss different topics, make new friends and enjoy the real Lao culture outside the classroom. Students will also be invited to make Lao specialty dishes such as *Tam Mak Huung* (green papaya salad) or *Laab* and have lunch with a Lao family in their home. This often develops lasting friendships and is an activity highly praised by students.

CULTURAL EXPOSURE

Students will be exposed to a wide variety of topics pertaining to Lao society, business and tradition. They will gain personal insight into the culture through interactions with local artisans and teachers, and will have an opportunity to practice their language skills. Examples of class subjects are textile weaving, agriculture, Lao dance, art and music, Buddhism and Animism, rural development, and gender roles.

TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

Upon your arrival in the capital, the Program Leader will familiarize you with the area, including how to take a *tuk-tuk* or Jumbo, where to find the best iced-coffee, navigating the *Talat Xao* or "Morning Market" and locating services such as the post office and money exchangers. Tours and excursions to many of Laos' most important places are included as part of your experience to help you gain a deeper understanding of Lao culture and history. Sample activities in and around Vientiane include: visit to the quirky and mystical Buddha park; tour of the *Phra That Luang* Stupa and *Ho Phrakeo* (Emerald Buddha temple); picnic along the Nam Ngum (River); participation in a customary *Sukhwan* or *Baci* ceremony; and attending performances and concerts at the National Cultural Hall. Weekend trips include a tour of the former royal capital and UNESCO World Heritage City, Luang Prabang, visits to local villages, and kayaking down one of Laos' many rivers. An optional trip to Northwest or Southern Laos is also available at the end of the program for an additional cost. Please consult the Program Leader.

PROGRAM DETAILS

July 1-31, 2012. All SAIL participants must partake in the phone orientation with the Program Coordinator and attend a one-day orientation in San Francisco. For those who wish to stay longer than four weeks, SAIL will assist in the arrangement.

ELIGIBILITY

SAIL is open to both undergraduate and graduate students, educators, and education administrators as well as those interested in Lao, Lao American, Southeast Asian, and Asian cultures and society. Must be 18 years or older. It is recommended that you discuss your participation in the Lao program with the CLS SAIL coordinator prior to enrollment. Completion of a pre-departure orientation meeting is mandatory. Students must complete enrollment forms for CLS and Lao-American College. An on-site orientation and a Lao language placement exam will take place at the LAC upon arrival.

PROGRAM COST: $3,250

Cost is per person for the month long program. The price is based on a minimum of 6 students and is subject to change.

Program Price Includes:

- Roundtrip air transportation between San Francisco and Vientiane. SAIL will pay up to $1,300 for airfares
- Hotel stay in San Francisco (during SAIL orientation)
- Hotel stay en route to Laos
- Transportation to and from the airport to accommodations
- Occupancy at a hotel, guesthouse, or homestay
- Selected excursions and activities
- Tuition at Lao-American College
- Academic and cultural program, including language classes, workshops, lectures and cultural tours
- Pre-departure and on-site orientations
- Services of CLS SAIL program

Price does not Include:

- Domestic flights to and from San Francisco
- Personal expenses, passport and visa fees, and anything not listed above
- Optional weekend tours not specified above
- Single accommodations are an additional cost of approximately $150 per month
- Wi-fi internet access at the Lao-American College

($8/month if students wish to purchase)

- School uniforms or sports uniforms (if students wish to join a sports team at the LAC)
- Meals
- Additional travel and medical insurance

SCHOLARSHIP

SAIL students may qualify for an outside grant to subsidize the program cost. You would need to apply for the grant directly. You also might want to contact your local Lao organization or the financial aide office for support. For further information and a list of funding sources, please visit CLS webpage or contact the SAIL office.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

A $100 fee is due with the application by **April 16, 2012***

First payment due May 07, 2012:	$500
Final payment due May 21, 2012:	$2,650

*If the student is accepted into SAIL, the application fee will apply toward the program cost.

CANCELLATION / REFUND POLICY

All cancellations must be made in writing and are effective when received by CLS:

May 14 - 20	$200 penalty
May 21 - 31	30% penalty
June 1 - 14	50% penalty + airfares + any unrecoverable amounts
June 15	No refund

HOUSING

SAIL students will stay in single or double-occupancy rooms at the Lao American College dormitory or in a basic hotel or "guesthouse" accommodations convenient to the school or the center of town. Single occupancy rooms (if available) are $150 extra per month. Home-stay may be available. Laundry service is usually not included, but many laundry facilities are within walking distance of hotels. Most guesthouses do not have internet service on site, but access to the internet is available at the LAC or at many of the internet shops and cafes in the capital.

INSURANCE

All SAIL participants must hold a health insurance policy that covers overseas travels. You may use your existing health insurance policy if it covers overseas incidents. A proof of overseas insurance coverage must be submitted to CLS prior to departure. CLS can also provide information on obtaining more extensive insurance.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

A visa is required for the program. U.S. citizens are required to show a valid passport and visa for entry into Laos. SAIL participants are responsible for obtaining their own Lao visa. A one-month visa is $50 and can be obtained at the Lao embassy in Washington D.C. and renewed at the immigration office in Laos. You may also obtain an on-arrival visa at Wattay International Airport in Vientiane. If you are a Lao American, a two-month visa is usually granted by the Lao immigration upon arrival. CLS will send you a packet of instructions and a visa application form upon your acceptance. Non-U.S. citizens should contact their local Consulate regarding visa and entry requirements.

PROGRAM LEADER

In the summer of 2012, SAIL participants will work with an in-country Program Leader with extensive knowledge of Laos, the Lao language and Lao culture. The Program Leader will be your guide, trip coordinator, and resource for understanding the many aspects of the people and the country. Most importantly, your leader will assist you in accessing those activities and personal experiences that are most meaningful to you.

APPLICATION & MORE INFO

The deadline for the application is **April 16, 2012.** Applications are available at CLS' webpage. For more information please contact the Center for Lao Studies at:

65 Ninth Street | San Francisco, CA 94103
tel: 1.415.874.5578 | email: studylao@laostudies.org
website: www.laostudies.org

SAILers' BLOG

Each SAILer has been blogging about their SAIL experience at least. To read the blog, please visit:
http://www.laostudies.org/sailers-blog-floater-143.