I am Taylor Bauer. I am a lover of cheese, cartoons and having a great time with my friends. It is my second year at Longwood studying to obtain my masters in special education (after I finish my bachelors of course) and although I am far away now I still cannot wait to return. This semester I am studying abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina at the University of Torcuato Di Tella. I chose to study abroad in Argentina because I wanted to diversify my cultural understanding and speaking abilities is Spanish so one day I might also add a Spanish endorsement to my teaching license. I chose a semester abroad so that I could really integrate into the city, make friends and truly see what it is like to live life in a different way. Although at first I feel more like a tourist by the end I hope to feel more like a local. For now I hope to continue making friends like Kai from Japan who I can only speak to in Spanish.

Hello Everyone,

I hope you are all doing well as the semester continues. I have sent a few smaller updates to a few of you, but now I want to send you all the awesome events I have been attending since my last update.

Since then I have been enjoying some of the many sights Buenos Aires has to offer while exploring Argentine culture. The first event was the Chinese New Year Festival. It is a new event organized by the barrio chino or China Town or Buenos Aires where the whole community came out to celebrate. It was a wild blur of colors and breathtaking performances from porteños (citizens of Buenos Aires) and Chinese citizens who had traveled thousands of miles to share the celebration with the city. Attached are three videos of different acts and shows. In addition to the singers, dancers, acrobats and DJs there were dozens of booths exhibiting traditional food and a variety of special Chinese traditions. I ate a huge bowl of Chaufa rice a mix of Peruvian and Chinese cuisine and watched as red and gold rope decorations were woven and hung for sale. The best part was going with a friend. Kai explained that in Japan he and his friends express their passion by making fists and smiling at the camera for pictures...well I am here to experience different cultures so enjoy the photo!

The next night I attended the summer tradition of a drive in movie. If you were curious Wonder Woman or Mujer Maravilla is just as impressive in Spanish as in English. I also got my first chance to try food from an Argentine food truck. I thought I would take it easy since I had to walk home so I ordered a hamburger and fries. It turns out that a typical Argentine hamburger has a fried egg, several layers of ham (like lunch meat but better), and a range of sauces and relishes. It is also the size of my face. I ate well that night and the cheese sauce I put on it tasted great too.

Last Thursday I had the best time learning how to cook empanadas and alfajores. I learned to fold the edges of the empanada depending on the contents which has sense made ordering empanadas a lot easier. The folded-over edges most people are used to seeing denote a filling that includes meat as part of the base. An empanada folded into a crown shape where the edges of the half circle come together denotes a cheese and onion base that is almost always vegetarian. This type was especially exciting due to my love of cheese. I even found out that different bakeries specialize in different folding techniques and empanada varieties denoted by more complex folds. I cannot wait to try them all! After eating eight empanadas we continued to make Argentine cookies called alfajores. We started by making a special version of shortbread type rounds and after baking we broke out the dulce de leche. To make a proper alfajor you basically make a filling cookie sandwich and sometimes dipping it in chocolate. By the end of the night I had eaten five dulce de leche alfajores and will be bringing all the recipes back with me so hopefully one day I can share them with everyone back home.

The last major event I have for you this time is my Tango class in a notable cafe (a cafe noted for a special historic or cultural significance). I listened closely to the two instructors explain how different movements worked while thinking that they must be really difficult because they made them look really easy. After three different partners and almost two hours of help from a variety of sources I was able to learn how to side step, move diagonally and two different versions of turns. I even managed a triple turn by the end of the night. I hope that by the end of the semester I can take a few more classes and become at least proficient.

Of course I am not going to a new event every second of the day though it sometimes feels that way. I also take the time to enjoy the little things like flowers on the trees in the park, the parrots by the Rio de Plata and finally taking photos with my host family over my 20th birthday. We had a torta brownie with a layer of dulce de leche and covered in a vanilla meringue with rich chocolate drizzle. It was so tasty Federico, my host dad, could not stop licking his fingers to take the picture after helping me hold up the candle.

Well that was a lot at once, I hope next time I can send you all an update sooner. Speaking of which, the next update will have pictures from my tour of the Cemetery of Recoleta where Evita Peron is buried. I will have visited the park of memory and attended the Fiesta of Bienvenida for the rest of the students in my program at the University. Buenos Aires has been a wonderful city to explore and discover. There is still so much I have not seen and I cannot wait to share it all with you for now over email and later in person. Thank you all for your support and interest in my journey. You encourage and challenge me to become better every day, so hopefully one day I can use what I am learning to make our world a better place. I look forward to hearing back from you when you get the chance!

Sincerely,

**Taylor Bauer**

Liberal Studies Major

Class of 2020

Hola a todos,

I hope all of you had a wonderful Spring Break. I have missed all of you at Longwood immensely. It has been about two weeks or so since I last sent you all anything on my travels and activities, so I have a lot to share. These past two weeks have been amazing with many great highs and a few lows in between. To put this into context, I had a conversation in Spanish with Kai explaining my little knowledge of Italian pastas upon the discovery that we had chosen a great Italian/Argentine restaurant to eat in and he did not recognize a thing on the menu. I was so proud of myself especially since I do not know how well I could even do in English with his questions. However two days later I did not understand when a man asked for my name to put on an order of empanadas and I answered "no." I hope you are laughing at this too because I still cannot believe I did that and it was hilarious! I only wish I could have gotten a picture of his face when I told him the name for the order was no.

After that excitement I did some more exploring and discovered the Recoleta Garden. I had no idea it was so close to my apartment and the plants were gorgeous. The first time walking through I was so interested in everything that I had to take pictures on my way out. Although not very large Recoleta Garden contained hundreds of flowers, a variety of shrubbery and unbelievably large trees. In the midst of everything I managed to find a hummingbird flying all over the flowering bushes of which I have a series of photos. I also found several varieties of butterflies and a few birds I had not seen before.

The weekend after that adventure was back up in the nineties, so I made my way to the National Museum of Art. Although I would like to think of myself as a cultured person who would enjoy all kinds of artistic statements I must admit that if the works were meant to make a statement it was lost on me. However I still thoroughly enjoyed strolling down the corridors stopping to read descriptions titles and artists which did offer some assistance. It was also great practice for getting back into reading academic style Spanish pieces as I have begun reading *Cien Años de Soledad* by Gabriel García Marquez for my Latin American Literature course. My favorite pieces at the museum were found in what they called a 4 dimensional exhibition. These pieces incorporated movement, sound, light, and illusions which literally brought the works to life. The works in the 4 dimensional exhibits were also almost entirely created by local artists incorporating common themes and materials from the region that one could typically find in the open air markets that populated the city's parks and plazas every weekend.

This past Friday I took a subway, train, boat trip (it was a lot of public transportation) to the island of Tigre in the Rio Tigre and Delta Paraná . After a little over three hours of travel we spent the day at a small adventure center on the river. For lunch we ate a traditional Argentine asado which is more or less like an American barbecue but with different sauce and a lot more meat. Although many stuck to what they could identify as chicken or ribs, I devoured just about everything including a hefty portion of blood sausage and what I was told was intestine. It was delicious! Afterwards, we went on an hour long canoe ride down the river and even had a small race to see which three person canoe was fastest. Mine came in second behind out guide in a kayak and we did so well that later he even made a point to compliment me and my fellow rowers on how well we steered and rowed our vessel. We even got to go for a short swim in the river before merienda. A merienda is more or less like tea time or in Argentina coffee time around five in the afternoon.

Then the most recent development was only Saturday night when I invited two of my friends Justin and Kai to dinner. During our trip to Tigre Justin and I discussed how we would surprise homesick Kai over the meal. Kai could not even speak when he heard Justin begin speaking Japanese. I have even sent you a photo highlighting the moment. The rest of the night we engaged in a cross lingual conversation in which Kai and Justin spoke Japanese Kai and I spoke Spanish and Justin and I spoke English. Trust me when I say it was just as awesome as it sounds. By the end of the night we had dubbed our trifecta Japospanglish (I came up with the name!) and honestly had trouble saying an entire sentence in a single language since we had been switching between them so much. We ended the evening by walking to the park where we all stared up at the stars and Justin gave us a lesson on constellations. While some people may understandably think a party or a bar is the best place to have an awesome time, I would take that night over any party or bar in the city. There is truly nothing better than spending a great time with friends no matter where you are or what language(s) you may speak.

I look forward to hearing back from you when you get the chance.

Sincerely,

**Taylor Bauer**

Liberal Studies Major

Class of 2020

Hola ustedes,

I cannot believe the semester at Longwood is nearly over. I wish you all well for taking and grading all of the final exams. I have officially passed the three month mark and am finishing up my last midterm. The weather here finally seems to have decided what it wants to do, so I can look forward to a wet and cool Argentine Fall. Before the weather finally settled, I went on a few more adventures. I took a day trip to Colonia, Uruguay, a weekend visit to the northern provinces of Salta and Jujuy, as well as exploring la Boca a famous neighborhood right here in Buenos Aires.

I know I promised you all more on my trip to Colonia, Uruguay and I would hate to disappoint. I started the day taking a ferry across the Rio de Plata and over the border into Uruguay. Once there I enjoyed a bus tour around the city. We saw the coastline, the countryside and a bullfighting ring. Colonia was originally built by the Portuguese but the colony was placed in the hands of the Spanish after the treaty of Tordesillas. The influence of the original Portuguese settlers can be seen in the design of the parish and the large walls built to keep out invaders and later fortified by the Spanish. The Portuguese also built the oldest street in Uruguay which still stands intact as part of the historic district. In the early 1900s the bullring was built under Spanish influence; however, the Uruguayans were quick to see the cruelty and mistreatment of the bulls within the ring. After only two years, bullfighting was banned throughout the country and the ring was abandoned. This is why the ring in Colonia is the only one to be found in the country and is currently in disrepair. Now, the city is working to restore it as a historic monument and venue for outdoor shows of the music and street fair variety. After the bus tour I went to lunch conquering the famous chivito sandwich of Uruguay. I say conquer since I am not sure how I was supposed to eat a sandwich the size of my outstretched hand with lettuce, tomato, a fried egg, a serving of ham, bacon, special sauce, and a hamburger patty using a fork and knife which the waiter specifically supplied me with. While I did manage to finish this tower of deliciousness I did require Justin's help finishing off the fries that came with it. After lunch I climbed to the top of the lighthouse built in the ruins of the Jesuit monastery that was destroyed in an attack and never rebuilt. I finished off the day by taking a long walk along the coast admiring how gorgeous it was even if the river was a sickly brown.

My next adventure took me to the northernmost provinces of Argentina, Salta and Jujuy. Before even getting off the bus, the view of the Andes Mountains was stunning. (I have lots of photos) The way the rolling deserts faded into lush forested valleys and then dispersed into ragged cliffed mountains bound by scenic ridges high enough to slice the clouds, it was breathtaking. Honestly my humble photographs do not do it justice at all. There was also plenty to explore once I exited the bus. The first stop was at a vineyard where I got a quick history of wine making in the region influenced predominantly by France and Spain. The tour of the facility detailed how that specific winery grew and changed down to details like the kind of wood used to make the barrels. Then I found out during the tasting that I do not like wine, but I guess that leaves more for all of you. Next were the Salinas an ancient deposit of salt left from what were once great seas and maybe even prehistoric oceans. Now the salt flats are over 11000 feet or more than 2 miles above sea level in the middle of great mountain ridges. There is so much salt that natives used to cut bricks from the ground using them to build their homes and the people their today pay homage to their ancestors by making salt carvings and statues. There is even a small group of homes built to demonstrate the technique with a llama statue in the middle.  Next I got to see the highest point in the subrange of the Andes my tour went through at 4170 meters on El Morado Mountain in Jujuy, I could see for miles. I also found out what being lightheaded from thin air felt like after trying to race to the top at an all-out sprint before the tour guide stopped the group of us from going too far for fear we would faint. Thankfully I missed the part where another member of the group came down with altitude sickness and instead had a conversation with a man from the indigenous tribes who explained the Inca calendar convincing me to buy a memento celebrating the altitude and knowledge I had gained.  After showering off the thin layer of salt I still had stuck to my person I traveled to the final destination las Montañas de Siete Colores in Puramaca. Due to great geologic activity and diversity over millions of years the mountains in Puramaca display several successive bands of colors down the side of the slope that simply do not exist in most of the mountain range. In the town beneath the mountain's shadow I devoured the local specialty tamales. They were the best tamales I have ever eaten in my entire life, not that I have eaten a lot of them, but these were excellent. Then I spent time wandering through the central plaza overrun with brilliant colors from the many products the locals sold in the open air market. I even have a llama magnet to bring home with me showing just a fraction of the knitting and weaving abilities on display. Even just stopping to eat or stretch our legs was amazing there as every stop had new music, friendly people, great views and spectacular food. Then I took the twenty hour bus ride back to Buenos Aires, but clearly all that time being cramped in a bus was definitely worth it.

Of course after five days of adventuring like that I decided to take a little time to relax and discover more local wonders. For that I took a tour of the street art in La Boca so named for its shape and being the first port in Buenos Aires or the metaphorical mouth of the city. The district has since shut the port and become a popular tourist location famous for the birth of the Tango and the site of manufacturing plants inhabiting the old warehouses. La caminata a street created to honor a local now famous artist is the height of tourism in the area. The one block road is painted a wide variety of colors in the style that Benito Quinquela Martín used in all his paintings which he made using a spatula originally unable to afford brushes. Since the neighborhood was incredibly poor, many of the workers could not afford paint for their homes so they used left over paint from ship building which gave the homes a crazy collage of colors that the place is now known for. Behind the rainbow exterior lay other artists as well and during the street tour I had the rare opportunity to see just a few of the many murals collages and mosaics the neighborhood has to offer which expands every year when the area hosts the annual art festival for the city. Unfortunately due to the high poverty rate and shanty towns known as villas exploring the area solo can be dangerous so most of the amazing art cannot be seen regularly by the public. Lucky for all of you, I took many pictures, so you do not have to worry.

Well I know that I could continue writing for hours, but I think this is a big enough summary as it is especially for finals week.

Again I hope all of you are doing well back in Farmville and I look forward to hearing back from you whenever you have the time.

Sincerely,

**Taylor Bauer**

Liberal Studies Major

Class of 2020