History of the Senegal Program

The Beloit College program to Senegal was created in 1995 to respond to the growing demand among Beloit students for the opportunity to study in francophone Africa. L'Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD), Senegal’s oldest institution of higher learning and an important center of higher learning in the region, served as the host for the Senegal program. For a number of years, Beloit College was able to host UCAD students as exchange students, with Beloit College students enrolling in UCAD courses in the spring semester. Beloit College last hosted a UCAD student in 2007 because of rising costs associated with sending Beloit students to Dakar. However, as seen below, some reciprocity has been maintained through the enrollment of Dakar residents in courses taught in Dakar.

From the beginning of its involvement with Senegal, the Baobab Center, operated by Africa Consultants International, has been an important partner for the delivery of curriculum, orientation, and other support services for Beloit College students studying in Dakar. The Baobab Center also offers Wolof language instruction, and today is the location for most of the coursework Beloit College students take.

In spring 2006, the Baobab Center and Beloit College launched a course on Dakar in Transition that uses the “living laboratory” of the city to explore a myriad of Senegalese social, economic, cultural and political realities. The following year, the Baobab Center and Beloit initiated a course on health policy and advocacy, drawing on the Baobab Center’s rich history as an NGO working the field of public health. The two courses both have enrolled local students and other residents in addition to Beloit College students.

In 2008 the Senegal program joined with the Kalamazoo College program to offer a joint program resident both in Dakar and St. Louis. Students enrolled in a sustainable development class in addition to their other coursework and lived with host families in both cities.

Beginning in 2011, Beloit College students studying in Senegal will again do so in the spring semester.