Shared Futures

*Divya McMillin, Executive Director*

Drones to deliver medical supplies, cryptocurrencies to prevent financial crises, increased enrollment of underrepresented students to revitalize learning, and a state-funded plan to counter antibiotic resistance—these are just some of the student-led solutions in the Global Honors seminars this quarter. The orientation to solutions is a signature of the Global Honors Program. The Institute for Global Engagement (IGE) moves this signature externally, providing a networking and collaboration hub for community partners, faculty, and students to work on creative solutions to our most pressing global challenges. We've created a new way to accelerate this process, a recurring networking social called "Shared Futures." Our Winter 2018 theme is "Crosstraining for Success"--watch for our announcement!

The integration of academic majors into the curricular pathways of Global Honors brings more students into the direct benefits of this hub, connecting them to dynamic mentors, funded research opportunities, and innovative institutions in our global port city. At the end of this calendar year, we are reminded of the richness of our collaborations; our community engaged model of learning supports students all the way from enrollment through graduation to careers.

We began Fall quarter with the bold theme of “Design Learning,” with design as an imperative for the self-directed learner. Our October 6 Orientation keynote speaker Drew Bamford (Vice President of HTC Creative Labs and IGE Community Advisory Board member) described the design and testing process, aligning it with the low-risk, high-learning environment of the IGE. Bringing students in close contact with professionals allows them to test their ideas and receive crucial feedback in a supportive space. Integrated academic and experiential learning is prioritized and well-funded overseas, as I learned in my partnership-building summer trip to India with a team from the Center for Global Studies and Center for South Asia Studies of the UW Jackson School. The IGE model sparked a lot of interest. Our open classrooms, where lessons move out into the city and are enriched with guest speakers and real-world case studies, led to requests for further collaboration from the five universities we visited. The model is gaining national recognition through our presentations and consulting at the National Collegiate Honors Council and Association of American Colleges and Universities Global Learning Conferences.

Use inspired research and community engagement that are pillars of an urban serving university connect to the purpose of honors education as well, as powerfully described by Bryan Stevenson, keynote speaker at the 2017 National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) Best Print-Edition Newsletter Competition at the NCHC “Just Honors” conference in Atlanta, GA, November 2017. From left to right: NCHC Publications Co-Chair Rusty Rushton, Executive Director Divya McMillin, Assistant Director Paul Carrington, and NCHC President Art Spisak.

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Honors Council conference in Atlanta. Stevenson is a public interest attorney, and founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative. We had the privilege of hearing his inspiring speech on “being in proximity to the people you want to serve,” and on facing the toughest issues head on, together. We made time to visit the Center for Civil and Human Rights and felt a sense of renewed purpose in our mission to emphasize the ethical practice, not just credentials, of honors education. And yes, we picked up our newsletter award! We are proud of the teamwork that brought us this recognition.

We count this quarter as a success story in collaboration. Whether it is with the World Affairs Council of Tacoma, with whom we hosted the Consular Reception and the Global Classroom Interactive Speaker Series (the latter with the PPPA Division as well), or such partners as Moss Adams, LaborWorks, MOD Pizza, JBLM, and the Center for Urban Waters who hosted us for site visits (to name a few), we see the strength in shared work in promoting our mission of a globally engaged campus. Our collaborations with the UW Center for Global Studies and Center for South Asia Studies deepened beyond the India trip. We are in conversation on how to move to the next level with international as well as cross-campus partnerships. Within Global Honors, we are in active collaboration with all academic units and with the Offices of Admissions and Enrollment, Financial Services, and Advising, as well as the Office of the Registrar, as we build the most efficient and financially viable structure for students desiring the challenges of global learning and honors. We are partners in and by design, checking left and right before each step, making sure we are all linked for our shared future. Happy holidays, everyone!

2017 Global Honors Study Abroad:
Promoting Global Engagement, Citizenship & Leadership

They said you must study abroad at least once in college. They said it will change your life. They were right! Studying abroad is an experience unlike any other. I spent a month studying public health in Uganda. Looking back, I can honestly say it was one of the most challenging yet enriching experiences I’ve had.

Going into the study abroad program as the recipient of an IGE Study Abroad Award ($1,000) and a Bamford Fellowship in Global Engagement ($2,000), I conducted guided research on top of the course work, which meant I didn’t have much free time. Days were busy with studying, lectures, hospital visits, and meetings. In spite of my packed schedule, I incorporated as much fun as I could with my work. From evening walks to getting a Rolex (rolled eggs in Chapatti) at the street-side market on Kampala’s crowded Gayaza Road, to enjoying a freshly brewed drink at Endiro Coffee shop, all the little experiences were unforgettable. My time there was rewarding as I immersed myself with the locals and gained insight into their way of life while challenging my preconceived perceptions of cultures different from mine. It imparted a sense of responsibility to me, encouraging me to work with others to develop solutions for local and global issues.

In light of my background as an Ethiopian and as an aspiring physician, I hope to work in some capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa, a region that faces many health problems. Thanks to this study abroad opportunity, I have built friendships with medical students and young physicians in Uganda that I hope to collaborate with in the future. Ugandans say, “He who doesn’t like you, doesn’t visit you.” I love Uganda and my friends over there, hence I will return soon. Thank you to the Bamford Family Foundation and UW Tacoma Institute for Global Engagement for making this travel experience possible for me.

- Bereket Anshebo

My study abroad opportunity in Brazil was the most life-changing and meaningful experience of my life. I was able to get out of my comfort zone and explore an entirely new country. During the course of the trip, I found out many things about myself and how I viewed the world. I met new people, engaged with members of communities, visited tourist sites and tried new food every single day. Before visiting Brazil, I had a somewhat stereotypical view of what the country might be like; however, after studying there for four weeks, I was amazed at the country’s diversity. The study abroad program focused on social movements and intersections across Latin American culture, and I was able to discover and analyze many social issues in Brazil, while comparing them to social issues in the United States.

I am very grateful that I was awarded the IGE Study Abroad Award, which helped me pursue my long-standing educational goal to study abroad. Thanks in part to that financial support, I had the privilege to travel and study in a foreign country and learn things about myself that I had not yet discovered. My enhanced ability to adapt to new environments and make connections that will last a lifetime will forever be cherished, and I hope that I will continue to grow as a person and build on this wonderful experience in the future.

- Preety Taya
There is something so powerful about being immersed in a foreign place where the culture and customs are so unique from anything experienced before. I can say with certainty that I never expected to take so much away from the short two weeks that I spent in Keta, Ghana, this past summer. I initially applied for the trip because volunteering in a developing country sounded appealing, and working in healthcare abroad is something I have always aspired to do in the future.

I was naïve, however, in thinking that I would be going to Ghana simply to offer my service to people in need. The fact of the matter is I took much more home from Ghana than any amount of service I could have provided in that short time. Not only was I able to volunteer and learn about healthcare in Ghana, but I also had the opportunity to strengthen my cross-cultural communication skills, discredit uneducated stereotypes I had about West Africa, and, most importantly, build life-lasting relationships.

This invaluable trip would not have been possible without the Bamford Study Abroad Award, which was awarded to me by the Institute for Global Engagement. For anyone who is considering study abroad, I would argue that there is no better way to learn about a new culture than to immerse yourself in it, and, more importantly, no better way to become a better global citizen. It can be challenging at first, but that initial challenge is minuscule in comparison to the life-changing experience to be had.

Claire Posadas

The opportunity to study abroad for three weeks in Cape Town, South Africa, during my junior year was an enriching experience. The ability to interact with others from around the world and hear their perspectives and life experiences was fascinating and vital to my personal growth. This experience confirmed my goals and aspirations for my future career as an attorney specializing in criminal law.

This trip was made financially possible by the Bamford Fellowship in Global Engagement, a competitive $2,000 award available to Global Honors students interested in pursuing year-long, globally-themed research projects. The BFGE allowed me to conduct guided research and observation while in Cape Town with my research partner. This field research will inform our comparative analysis between South Africa and the United States on issues of racism, class disparities, resource accessibility, and crime within the education systems.

Working with individuals in South Africa who have maintained positivity and resilience, despite living amidst endemic racism and class disparities, made me rethink my privileges and reposition myself at home and as a global citizen. I think it is crucial to try to educate those around us about the disparities these individuals face in an effort to bring awareness to the issues that people struggle with in many places around the world. The graphic images and deep conversations our group had daily were exhausting and emotionally draining, but vital to our growth and learning experience. Furthermore, the relationships built and the ability to stay in contact with people in another country while being back home is amazing. I recommend embracing the culture and learning from the customs!

Nicole Carbone

For three weeks prior to Fall quarter, I got to call Cape Town, South Africa home – an experience that has changed my life! What I experienced there was much more eye-opening than I could have ever gotten from just reading and watching films about South Africa. I, along with eleven other students, got the opportunity to learn about and witness the continued struggle of racial disparities in a country that only recognized the rights of all its citizens 23 years ago.

As a part of the trip, I was placed at a township school. I had the utmost pleasure of getting to spend six days at Sinethemba Senior Secondary School, observing and assisting a Mathematics educator. During my time there, I was able to witness the astounding efforts that the educators put in, given the school is under-resourced and under-staffed. I was blown away by their abilities to continue to empower their learners and help transform their community in the process. While everything that I took away from my trip has and will enrich my life, I will particularly cherish the friendships I made and with the amazing individuals I met while in South Africa, whether with people from the hostel in which I stayed or from the township of Philippi in which I volunteered. I can say that I got way more out of this trip than I could have possibly ever anticipated.

Crystal Kennemer

- Claire Posadas

- Nicole Carbone

- Crystal Kennemer

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IGE Student Engagement Program: Connecting Classroom to World
- Alexis Wheeler, Program Coordinator

Passion for excellence, Integrity, Lifetime learning, Leading by example, Accountability, and Respect. On Tuesday, December 5, Global Honors students attended the last IGE Student Engagement Program (SEP) site visit of the quarter to learn more about how these values move into action. They did that and more. They explored career options, developed professional contacts, and discovered how lessons learned in Global Honors classrooms connect to practices and PILLAR Values at Moss Adams, a homegrown global accounting firm.

As technological advancements diminish the value of "hard" skills in accounting and other professions, the soft skills and personal strengths promoted by Moss Adams’ PILLAR Values have assumed ever greater importance. The professional of tomorrow, according to the speakers, is a true consultant, advisor, and counselor, who must effectively communicate with diverse clients and appreciate the range of unique yet interconnected local, national, and international jurisdictions within which those clients operate. Students left the visit having gained a deeper understanding of how globally-themed, cross-disciplinary study can prepare them for future success in an interdependent world.

This lesson of this site visit, combined with an October visit to Tacoma’s Center for Urban Waters, underscored the vital significance of the Institute for Global Engagement and its Student Engagement Program. Through the SEP and other community engagement opportunities, the IGE opens up UW Tacoma classrooms to a wealth of collaborative innovation, enriches students’ practical understanding of real world dynamics, and promotes the development of a globally engaged university.

Cape Town, South Africa - a place I never thought I’d find myself, but when the opportunity arose to study in a foreign city, I jumped on it! Cape Town is beautiful - the beaches are perfect and the CBD is always bustling with life. In my hostel, I awoke each morning to the sound of merchants preparing for the daily market below, where I’d grab coffee and breakfast at a nearby bakery or cafe, before starting my daily activities.

What one doesn’t see while in the CBD is the blatant racial disparities present in the surrounding townships. As a 2017-18 participant of the IGE Bamford Fellowship in Global Engagement, an important aspect of my study abroad was speaking to township residents about their experiences in post-apartheid South Africa, while also volunteering with a local NGO called CESVI.

Interacting with locals was essential to my learning - without those experiences, I would not understand their culture or history as I do now. Studying in Cape Town has changed my perspective on the world. The opportunity to experience and learn from a new culture firsthand allowed me to grow as a person more than sitting in a lecture ever could.

Studying abroad was something I knew I wanted to do in college, but I wasn’t sure how I could afford the opportunity. Thanks to the generous support of the Bamford Foundation through the IGE Study Abroad Award and the Bamford Fellowship in Global Engagement, my dream became a reality. As I reflect on my time in Cape Town, I am reminded of how fortunate I am to have had this opportunity and for the support I received from family, friends, and the UWT community at large - I cannot express my gratitude enough!

- Ashley Richards