Happy New Year in Innovation and Global Engagement!

The turquoise popped against the grey—rows of Yulu bikes on my morning run in Bangalore, India. December 2019. Quite a different city from summer 2017 when I was creating institutional partnerships with UW Jackson School colleagues. During that trip, we had to budget at least 90 minutes per 10 mile commute. Traffic still snarled this time around, but commute times were significantly less with Yuluses and bright yellow Vogo scooters alleviating the rush hour glut. Family meals were supplemented with gourmet items delivered through Dunzo from favorite restaurants, and clothes tailored and groceries paid for through PayTM. City store fronts, whether in rural outskirts or in the heart of downtown, had QR codes to connect teeming millions to services, quickly and efficiently circumventing a bureaucracy that had started and stalled a zillion initiatives. While globalization and innovation in Bangalore has provided a point of entry to my research on media audiences and consumerism around the world since the late 1990s, my recent visit brought a fresh perspective on a revived buzz word at UW Tacoma: innovation.

Innovation is usually seen as the outcome of a process, something tangible. To me, what’s far more interesting is what remains hidden: the conditions and the human spirit that drive it. For innovation to be truly inclusive, the conditions in which it is produced matter. The examples of innovations in Bangalore are responses to the overcrowding and pollution that plague global cities. Private spaces and the delivery of services to those spaces are a premium in the gig economy. The human spirit needs some attention in our mediated landscapes where stories of conflict usually rise to the top. How do we encourage students to remain resilient and innovative while rightly problematizing inequitable conditions? One way is to recognize we have the privilege to create the positive conditions for innovation. Critique can and should produce solutions.

So here we are, at the dawn of a new decade with some significant strides towards opening up vibrant conditions for innovation across campus. We launched the Global Innovation and Design Lab in January 2019, through tremendous community support, most notably from the Bamford family. Almost immediately the Lab hosted student design teams problem solving food insecurity campus, local area school faculty reimagining pedagogy, and human centered design classes innovating in healthcare and criminal justice, to name just a few. A core team of faculty created a Minor in Innovation and Design (currently under review) and we took on design thinking projects on affordable housing and global leadership for the community (featured in this newsletter). The Institute for Global Engagement Advisory Board embraced this new venture with new members signing on to build an Innovation Action Network.

In the Global Honors Program, our solution framework received a boost with increased funding for experiential learning opportunities (including study abroad, examples in this newsletter). Students, both honors and non honors, were funded in their overseas work with organizations effecting change, allowing them to bring new insights and practical solutions home. GH alumna Zandria Michaud’s column is one shining example of how classroom learning moves into community leadership. Our increased funding also allowed us to host internationally renowned speakers. The 2019 Global Engagement Conference featured Dr. Dawn Whitehead, AAC&U Vice President for Global Citizenship who delivered an outstanding keynote on “Sparkling Solutions to Today’s and Tomorrow’s Challenges.” We’re thrilled to announce that the 2020 May 19-20 Global Engagement Conference will feature Dr. Anna Meroni, Professor of Design in the Politecnico di Milano, one of the best speakers and practitioners I know on social innovation.

Most rewarding is the team work that make milestones and new ventures possible. We have three new team members and I am so delighted to welcome them all: Dr. Christine Stevens, Associate Director for Global Honors (joining Dr. Joanne Clarke Dillman); Sally Murphy, Assistant Director (IGE and Global Honors), and Krissy Kimura, Program Coordinator (Global Innovation and Design Lab). Happy New Year and a warm welcome to all things IGE!

—Dr. Divya McMillin, Professor and Executive Director
To me, taking Global Honors was important to developing a more open and critical mind. I knew this goal wouldn’t be fulfilled if I didn’t take the opportunity to study abroad. This has always been difficult to pursue because of my economic background. However, through financial aid and scholarships like the 2019 IGE Study Abroad Award, I was able to finance my dream.

The experience developed my sense of identity, independence, and global mind. I gained valuable knowledge, perspective, and relationships that gave me a better understanding of global issues that affect people today. In my program we looked at challenges in contemporary Spain, through sociological and interdisciplinary perspectives. We went to Madrid, Segovia, Leon, and Barcelona to learn about the history, politics, and culture of the people of Spain. We studied primarily at the UW Leon center; a building that proudly serves UW students and provided resources and housing for this program.

Seeing castles, cathedrals, and old architectures reminded me that we exist within a global history, one that continues to affect and shape the modern world. I saw this when learning about the Spanish Civil War and how that affected modern politics and social inequality. In my program, we had the opportunity to talk to politicians and advocacy groups about these issues and found passionate people who are working hard in trying to create solutions for modern day issues. Similarly, challenges in immigration, housing, employment, and nationalism are issues we in the United States still struggle with today. This experience has given me insights into how history constructs the present and how we should move forward in this world.

—Reno Zeta

When I started my doctoral journey in June 2018, I was hoping I would have the chance to be confronted by different ways of understanding the world and education. I hoped to reflect on what my role could be within education – either in formal school settings or outside of them – such that I would have new ideas of how I could have an impact on equity issues at a systemic level.

On August 23, 2019, I boarded a plane to Cape Town, South Africa. The three weeks I spent in South Africa definitely contributed to my journey to challenge how I think about the impact of racism and violence on systems of education. Having the chance to be in a system completely outside of my context forced me to think about education critically. Knowing I would only be there for three weeks, I had to consider how to be present in a vastly different context without trying to compare or judge.

During the trip, we were divided into groups to work with one particular site for the duration of the trip. I had the privilege of working with Chrysalis Academy, a youth development program with three-month residential programs to build resilience and skills for youth of color from around South Africa. The group working with Chrysalis Academy helped to develop an in-take survey for the new cohort of youth to better understand some of their experiences coming into the program and to determine who might need additional support. We helped analyze the data from the survey and put together a report and recommendations. This study abroad experience gave me the chance to meet wonderful and resilient folks of color in South Africa who are trying to change how those who are often most marginalized can have a chance to not just survive, but also better understand themselves and their chances for employment and their futures.

—Sue Ann Huang

Global Engagement Conference
May 19-20, 2020

The Institute for Global Engagement (IGE) proudly announces the 2020 Global Engagement Conference, featuring keynote speaker, Dr. Anna Meroni, Associate Professor of Design at Politecnico di Milano, Italy. We invite student participation in various formats—including paper or poster presentations, short films, and performance or spoken word art—that align with this year’s conference themes, which include global innovation and design; climate and environment; globalism; health and human rights; and media and security.

Titles and abstracts are due February 1, 2020.

The link for abstract submission is: catalyst.uw.edu/webq/survey/wheela/380707
A few years ago, the city of Kent quietly sold a 10-acre public park to a housing developer. A group of activists, myself included, did everything in our power to successfully stop the sale. That experience with the Kent city government stuck with me, and from that moment on, I paid more attention to what was going on at city hall. I questioned how and why something like this could happen without anyone in the public knowing. It didn’t seem right for this to occur in a representative democracy. These questions and uneasiness led to my Global Honors capstone, “They Sold Our Park! How Local Governments Fail Democracy.”

My favorite thing about the Global Honors Program is the pervasive idea and challenge that our research should have a real world impact. The GH capstone is our moment to focus on something that is personally meaningful and can assist with future goals. Last year, I had no idea that my capstone would so quickly lead me to a Kent City Council position. I didn’t feel ready for the rigors of running a political campaign while also finishing up my capstone. But I got over my self-doubt and did it anyway, and it turns out that no one is really ready to run an election race.

Yet, spending hours researching civic engagement and Kent’s history regarding city parkland sale processes gave me a significant advantage over my opponents. I already knew how things worked in Kent city governance, why certain decisions are made and how things could work differently. With understanding from my research, I was able to address certain issues clearly, citing possible solutions from other cities. And now as an elected official, representing the residents of Kent, I’m finding that the challenges facing our democracy are real and difficult to navigate.

Currently, I’m learning the ins and outs of being a councilmember. At heart, I’m an environmentalist and I’m considering policies that will have the most positive impact on environmental issues. While my councilmembers and I can agree on the significance of homelessness and crime, I think climate change gets overshadowed by those more visible concerns, despite its extensive impact.

The Global Honors program gave me an opportunity to explore ideas and create a tangible difference in what matters to me. Being able to apply research in real situations is invaluable and I am thankful for the opportunity and for the professors who helped along the way.

As a first generation college student, champion for student success and advocate for inclusive education, I am proud of the work we are doing at UW Tacoma and I am thrilled to work alongside passionate and dedicated colleagues both within the IGE and in other offices on this campus to support students. At the close of Fall quarter I had the opportunity to reflect on my first term in this role, and I have come away in awe of the incredible things our students are doing and the many ways they remain deeply involved with and connected to our UW Tacoma community. I have witnessed deep engagement with our course content, passionate and lively interaction between peers and incredibly nuanced perspectives influenced by both lived experiences as well as varying academic backgrounds.

All of this to say—Global Honors consists of a unique community of people who share in wanting to creatively and strategically problem solve to make positive changes in the world—this is not just evident in our solution based curriculum, but in the actions and resilience of our students. It is impressive to see students from such different backgrounds come together with the common goal of achieving academic excellence. It is inspiring to see the various ways they use the Global Honors curriculum to continue to push their sense of responsibility and understanding of global citizenship. Through advising I have learned a tremendous amount about honors advising and unique challenges faced by high achieving students such as those in the Global Honors program.

In the coming Winter quarter I intend to focus my advising sessions on ensuring our students in the upper cohort are well informed and supported through the capstone thesis process while ensuring that students in the lower cohort are continuing to think about what they will focus on during this phase of their program. I look forward to continuing to support students through Global Honors and to serve as a point of reference for resources available to them on campus. It is going to be a great quarter—I just know it!

As we leave behind the lessons of last year and embark on the New Year and Winter quarter, I want students to remember: my door is always open, you have a seat at the table and I encourage you to continue to use your voice!

- Sally Murphy, Assistant Director
Welcome from the GID Lab Program Coordinator

Hello, my name is Krissy Kimura and I joined the GID Lab as Program Coordinator last fall. I am thrilled to be part of the IGE team and look forward to building a community of inclusive innovation at UW Tacoma.

I began my professional career in Washington, DC working for an international public health organization after serving in the Peace Corps in Tanzania. A desire to leverage technology for social impact led me to the General Assembly’s User Experience Design Immersive, where I changed career paths and became a UX designer contractor for the Department of Energy and later, the General Services Administration. As Program Coordinator for the GID Lab, I’m excited to continue leveraging design thinking for social impact in our local community.

Looking forward to Winter 2020 (and beyond), the GID Lab continues to create and sustain partnerships and collaborations on community projects – including United Way of Pierce County. We also look forward to the Minor in Innovation and Design, which is currently under review with an expected rollout in Winter 2021. Lastly, I would like to celebrate our two Fall 2019 inaugural GID awardees, Lan Allison and Christopher Sim, and thank them for all their hard work and contributions.

If you have any questions or are interested in learning more about the GID Lab, please feel free to stop by TPS 016 and say ‘hi!’

— Krissy Kimura, GID Lab Program Coordinator

Fall 2019 Inaugural GID Awardees

Lan Allison is a senior majoring in Technical Communications graduating in Winter 2020. She hopes to continue her education at UW Seattle in the Master of Science in Human Centered Design and Engineering. Lan is the president of the User Experience and Design Association (UXDA) club on campus and enjoys bringing new members into the world of design thinking and human centered design.

“This has been an amazing opportunity to get first-hand, real-world experience in the field of global learning and design thinking. I am thankful to have gained new skills and knowledge of the work that can be accomplished in the GIDL.”

Christopher Sim is a Communication and Applied Computing senior. He’s currently an undergraduate design research assistant at the Human-Centered Design and Engineering Department at the University of Washington Seattle, leading the Teen Design Lab Web team.

“My favorite part of the award is being provided the opportunity to learn by doing from industry professionals to solve local and global scale problems.”

Community Engagement

Banner events have paved the way for a high volume of requests for design thinking workshops and keynote presentations. Some examples of Fall 2019 engagements include:

United Way of Pierce County Poverty to Possibilities Summit design thinking workshops to address affordable housing for United Way executive team and 250+ people led by Executive Director Divya McMillin (October 16 and November 12, 2019)

Global Engagement and Leadership workshops for Pacific Lutheran University Act Six scholars (October 19 and November 16, 2019).

South Sound Summit Innovation Panel, moderated by Executive Director Divya McMillin (November 13, 2019), discussed solving the right problem in the gig economy and building a culture of inclusive innovation.

ASPIRE Pittsburgh Innovation Trip with Tacoma Pierce County Chamber of Commerce including Pierce County executives and business and community leaders on September 22-25, 2019. Visits to Carnegie Mellon Robotics Lab, University of Pittsburgh Innovation Center, Children’s Museum, and Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce (to name a few) led to deeper community connections and resources.

YPO Gold Forum Four Workshop a brief introduction of design thinking for leaders of organizations in the Puget Sound area (September 17, 2019).

In addition, the GID Lab is in high use by UWT academic units, administrative offices and the student DubUXDA design group. Sign up here!

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