Vira I. Heinz Program for Women in Global Leadership

2019 Experience Report Newsletter

Preparing Women Leaders for Tomorrow's Global Challenges

Think Globally. Act Locally

About the 2019 Cohort:

This year's cohort boasts **46** young women from across the region. This summer, they visited **5** continents and **25** different countries.

They took over **75** different classes.

Over **20** of them learned a language.

While abroad, **9** of them were able to complete internships or research.

And **7** donated their time and volunteered in the communities in which they immersed themselves.

And all of them were exposed to new thoughts, ideas, and experiences during their program. They met new people, saw new things, and used their time abroad as a way to develop their own global awareness in order to become more effective leaders in their communities.

What follows are their stories.

ARCADIA UNIVERSITY

Christa McDowell spent eight weeks this summer working at a law internship with Bark & Co Solicitors. Through the CIEE Global Internship Program, Christa acquired an internship with Bark & Co Solicitors which began at the end of June. Throughout the eight-week internship and program with CIEE, Christa was able to attend meetings with clients, assisting in administrative work in the office, and shadowing the solicitors and barristers in court proceedings. Even though she was put in situations outside of her comfort zone by having to go into prisons to meet with clients and dealing with wardens and police, she still gained hands-on knowledge that she would not have gotten elsewhere. Through CIEE and different networking programs, she was able to expand her professional network from just inside of the United States to globally.

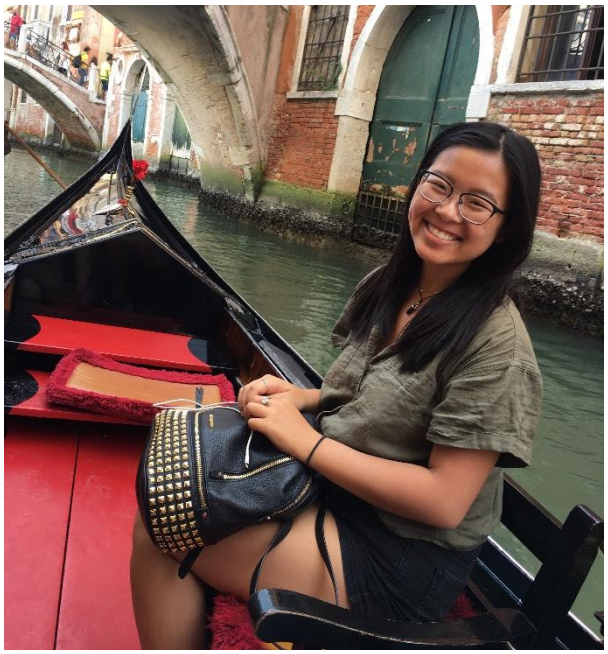
When she wasn't in the office, Christa immersed herself in the culture of her host city of London. Whether it was visiting the Tate Modern to experience art and culture or taking a stroll around the river bank at King's Cross, she made sure that she made the most out of her opportunity to explore London. Christa's internship and time in London not only nurtured her growth professionally, but also personally. She had to reflect often about how she could do things differently and live her life in a way that was conducive to her growth and beneficial to others in her life.

ARCADIA UNIVERSITY

GodisPerfect Eadric spent eight weeks studying in Alicante, Spain studying Spanish grammar, conversation, and pop culture at the CIEE Study Center based in the University of Alicante. During her time in Spain, GodisPerfect closely studied Spain's history and culture, from religion to politics. She learned of the long-lived religious tussle between Christians and Muslims over the sovereignty of Spain, even visiting El Castillo de Santa Barbara once used as holding center for prisoners of war. She learned the significance of Spanish holidays, what they entail, and the parts of history or society they reflect, such as Moros y Cristianos. GodisPerfect was fortunate enough to experience Spain during and after mayoral elections. She learned about the major political parties, like PP and PSOE, and their stances on staple matters. In person, she witnessed a rally of supporters of the newly elected mayor of Madrid at Madrid's city hall, while opponents gathered in protest across the street. The Spanish colloquialisms learned from Spanish locals and professors helped GodisPerfect build confidence in her Spanish speaking and understanding abilities and helped her reach her goal of fluency.

She immersed herself in the culture by asking questions, holding interviews with locals, and participating in popular activities, such as watching a soccer game at a sports bar, going to a fish market, and taking a Flamenco class. In her free time, she visited monuments such as El Museo del Prado en Madrid, El Palacio Real, Temple of Debod, Almudena Cathedral, and Puerta De Alcala. She embraced cultural exchange through the long-lasting connections she made with her host family, fellow students in her program, and frequent tram users, as she became one herself. She exposed herself to ideas and sentiments about America in hopes to verify their degree of truth. With this, she was able to shape her own views on Spain and take on the world with an open mind.

ARCADIA UNIVERSITY



Michelle Qu had the opportunity this past summer to take a comparative program on the topic of public health systems in England and the Netherlands offered by CIEE. By living relatively close to the central city in both countries, she was able to see first-hand, as well as learn, how the social determinants of health impact the overall health of individuals. Through her classes, she got the chance to learn and hear first-hand from drug users, sex workers, immigrants, and immigrants on how current policies affect them and how they feel regarding said policies. And such policies are mainly the reason as to why the Netherlands is leading in the health sector. They have more socialistic views and regulations of the policies, but she also learned and discovered that there are still major improvements to be made and even have questioning traditions. She started off with the mindset that the American system is severely skewed and needs a lot of work. Since taking this course she learned that just because many countries look up to the Dutch system it does not mean that they are without flaws. On more of a cultural experience, Michelle has learned that being more collectivistic is not a negative and shameful thing. Admitting the need for help, working together, relying on others makes room for self-growth and is a form of self-care. She should not live in a state of mind in which vulnerability means weakness. As an independent person immersing herself into countries who are far more collectivistic than the US, she had to adjust accordingly and quickly.

During her free time, she actively went out by herself and explored areas close to her, to experience the surrounding culture in its raw form, with no outside influence on her perception of the new environments. By doing such, she was able to appreciate as well as partake in the culture. This experience has allowed Michelle to expand her knowledge and develop and learn more about herself on a deeper level.

CARLOW UNIVERSITY

Olivia Trevenen spent 4 weeks living in the center city of Rome, Italy, in an apartment in the neighborhood of Prati. Olivia was surrounded by a strong presence of history in almost every aspect of her time in Italy. She studied Italian language, culture, and style in Italy and was able to visit places like the botanical garden, Eataly, and Sorelle Fontana. Olivia also was able to partake in hands-on courses including wine-tasting classes and a four-course cooking class. Through these she was able to learn the history and importance of food and drink in Italian life. She learned that Italian meals are meant to prioritize time with family and friends, and that the purpose of wine is to serve the taste of the meal. Everything regarding Italian cooking and meals is very particular, as well as very simple. Cooking in Italy is based on the diet of a "poor kitchen," which means only a few ingredients per course are used. This essentially translates to making the most of what you have, a lesson for the kitchen and everyday life. It also means the cooking is often fresher and healthier than cooking in America. Olivia's focus was becoming familiar with Italian language in order to improve her professional writing at her home university. She was able to become somewhat conversationally fluent and was able to share some of what she learned once returning home.

While abroad, Olivia stayed centralized in Rome but also had the opportunity to visit the beautiful city of Florence, as well as Sorrento and Naples. Additionally, she spent time on the island of Capri. Olivia's exposure to Italian values, traditions, and language have helped to show her how she would like to move forward in both her personal life and her career. Her experience beginning to learn a new language has inspired her to continue to study languages in the future as well as possibly teaching English to students in other countries. Olivia will take this experience with her throughout graduate school and beyond, and hopes to have the possibility to travel abroad again, possibly as a member of the Peace Corps.

CARLOW UNIVERSITY

Olivia Kissell spent five weeks immersed in the culture of Western Australia. She studied Research Methods and Marine Ecology of Western Australia, which focused on the unique marine environment that is present on the Western Coast. Her studies were centered at Murdoch University, located between the cities of Fremantle and Perth. Between these two places, Olivia lived in a flat with other CIEE members where the sustainable and health-conscious culture challenged her thinking and her "normal." Because of this, Olivia was able to make connections to her major in nursing while also gaining new knowledge. Olivia spent her first week in Murdoch collecting the basic knowledge of Marine Ecology with her peers in preparation for the future research. Then, Olivia stayed at Yardie Homestead, located in the Ningaloo National Heritage Site. There she would perform research on Giant Clams. When Olivia wasn't researching in Ningaloo, she was either snorkeling in reefs or hiking in the outback. These opportunities let her see a variety of wildlife: sharks, reef sharks, reef fish, green turtles, dugongs, manta rays, rock wallabies, kangaroos, dingoes, cockatoos, and even more.

After a long and adventurous week, she returned to Murdoch where she was able to explore the contrasts between Perth and Fremantle while she continued her studies. Upon her return, she decided to attend a seminar about the reduction of plastic in her personal and professional life. During the final week, Olivia conducted two different research studies on vertical zonation of sea life and sand dunes in which improved her statistical analysis skills. From this experience, Olivia's knowledge of the environment grew, and now she strongly advocates for the conservation of the oceans. However, her communication skills and love for understanding new cultures, both vital for her career, grew even stronger. This new knowledge helps Olivia with making connections with patients, and her new cultural knowledge inspires her to think about implementing green initiatives in healthcare. Olivia's learning in Australia exposed her to the very attainable possibilities that would help her implement healthier and sustainable options in her career and in life.

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY

Terra Teets spent four weeks studying German language as well as modern German philosophy at the Freie Universitat Berlin International Summer University (FUBiS). She focused much of her time working to achieve more fluency in written and spoken German and had the opportunity to speak German on a daily basis. She was also able to build international connections and participate in intellectual community through her philosophy class. She absorbed philosophical perspectives from around the world and built confidence in sharing her own. She soon realized the importance of feminism in the field of philosophy as one of four (out of fourteen) non-men in the class. She led a course-period dialogue titled "A Feminist Retrospective on German Philosophy" as her final project.

She also had the opportunity to continue her self-study of poetics, writing a paper on objectivity as a theme in German poetics and producing poems influenced both by structures in German analytical philosophy and grammatical structures not common in contemporary English. The FUBiS program attracted students from over forty different countries, so she was able to participate in cross-cultural exchange with new friends from France, Brazil, India, South Africa, Slovakia, China, the United Kingdom, and South Korea. She found Berlin to be a vibrant, accessible, and ultimately global city which challenged her previous conceptions surrounding cultural relations.

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY

Skylar Houck spent two months in the historic town of Boudha, Nepal learning about Buddhism at the Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery. Her Buddhist Studies class was split into four parts: A Western-style lecture session on Buddhist history, lectures from a Buddhist monk on traditional texts, guided meditation sessions with a Buddhist Khenpo, and a twelve-day meditation retreat at the holy site of the Asura Cave. The course allowed Skylar to recognize differences between Western perceptions of Buddhism and traditional Buddhist thought. While studying Buddhist literature and putting her studies into practice, she realized how Western society has morphed the arts of yoga and meditation into something that separates them from their Buddhist roots.

In Nepal, Skylar also visited many historical landmarks and Buddhist holy sites such as Swayambhunath (Monkey Temple), Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Namo Buddha, Kopan Monastery, and so much more. Originally knowing nothing about these sites or Buddhism in general, Skylar was able to take a deep dive into the history and importance of the holy landmarks and learn from monks and nuns about what Buddhism means to them. Her studies also enabled Skylar to meet the famous Buddhist figure Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche and learn about the cultural formalities of introducing oneself to such a high-ranking teacher. Being in Nepal also made Skylar much more aware of the extent of the poverty plaguing the nation; she would like to implore others to use their privilege to advocate for the homeless street children in developing nations such as Nepal.

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY

Sierra McCullough spent the summer in Madrid, Spain, studying the Spanish language and intercultural communications. The Spanish language course aided her in her continued development and understanding of the language. In intercultural communications, she learned how to successfully identify and overcome cultural barriers. As a woman who has never experienced the world at all while growing up, this scholarship and study abroad trip was a completely life-changing experience. She immersed herself in the culture by attending various cultural places such as Plaza del Sol, Museo de Reina Sofia, El Prado, Parque del Retiro, and many more. These displayed various forms of Spanish art and culture.

Upon arrival in Spain, she immediately felt at home due to the kindness and attentiveness of her peers, host family, and ISA staff. At first, she was very taken aback by the large city life, but it quickly became easy and even fun to navigate and explore. As time continued, she created more and more friendships with locals and fellow American students which made the experience exponentially better.

As for her classes, the host university was very similar to her home university which made becoming acclimated much easier, not only this but the professors were wonderful and helpful also. Her mind was completely molded and changed to become more eager to learn and experience. To conclude, this experience has changed her into an adverse, adaptable, and confident woman.

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

Ericka DaMaris Correa spent the first half of her summer travelling to Brazil and studying abroad at the CIEE Institute for one month, where she took a Communicative Portuguese class and an Understanding Brazil through Intercultural Engagement class. While in Brazil, Ericka learned about the prominent African and Indigenous heritage surrounding Brazil, including history, present issues such as racism and colorism, and African-derived Brazilian culture. In her free time, Ericka took capoeira classes, or dance fighting classes, as well as a Passinho class. Her favorite extracurricular activity that she participated in was taking Afro-Brazilian percussion classes Wednesday nights. Through this experience, Ericka was able to gain knowledge of how Brazilian culture is derived from African heritage and the great connection the people of Brazil have with their African roots. Since the percussion classes were all in Portuguese, she was also able to practice her fluency in listening and communicating to those around her.

One of the highlights of Ericka's aboard experience was the day she visited "Little Africa." There, she saw the first favela ever made in Brazil and their symbol of rebellion towards the Brazilian government, stood next to a now-made monument where the enslaved peoples were buried when they were forced to come to Brazil during the slave trade, and representation of the Black and Brown community throughout street art and music. On days off, Ericka took advantage of the city and explored its many wonderous sites, such as Christ the Redeemer, Sugarloaf Mountain, and its beautiful beaches along the coast.

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

Clare Craven spent five weeks in Rome, Italy studying baroque art and cultural applications to clinical practice. At Duquesne University's Italian campus, Clare learned about how different cultures receive and react to health care and ventured out into the city and all over Italy to learn of the rich baroque history. After visiting countless churches and museums in Florence, Rome and Naples, her class ventured down to Sicily. The highlight of her time abroad was visiting UPMC's transplant floor at ISMETT hospital in Palermo. Through this experience with her class she was able to tour the entire hospital and learn about their policies and beliefs in how to take care of patients. It was eye opening to hear of different perspectives. Some key differences were how comfortable the rooms were and that the patients were able to wear their own clothes in order to have more positive outcomes.

Coming back to the united states and starting her junior year of nursing school Clare knows she can bring what she learned into her practice back in Pittsburgh. Excited as she is to apply her newfound knowledge, she will deeply miss the friends she made and the city she called home for a month.

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

Megan Toomer spent one month studying in Ghana through Duquesne University's Maymester Program. She studied traditional African religions and the history of human trafficking in a Ghanaian context. Through her studies, Megan gained a greater understanding of the role of religion in the daily lives, rites of passage, and common practices in Ghana. To supplement her studies, Megan attended a Ghanaian funeral, spoke with and watched the practices of a traditional priest, attended a Catholic mass every Sunday, spoke with the Archbishop of Kumasi, and met the Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II. Through these opportunities, Megan learned how religion is interwoven into the practices and customs of Ghanaians and why having knowledge of these practices are critical when understanding Ghanaian culture. Her human trafficking class deepened her knowledge regarding the effects of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and key differences between American chattel slavery and indigenous Ghanaian slavery. During her course, Megan visited several slave dungeons and had the opportunity to participate in rituals that helped emotionally and spiritually reconnect her with her ancestors who died during the Transatlantic slave trade.

She also worked with and taught students at The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth school in Sunyani. This experience was incredibly rewarding because she developed new methods of teaching students despite language barriers. Furthermore, she learned a lot from the students, who shared their personal stories and future goals with her. In her free time Megan explored the University of Ghana where she met students, made new friends, and expanded her Twi vocabulary.

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

Shaniece Brown had the opportunity to study abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina for an eight-week Intensive Spanish-Language Program through the provider CIEE. Shaniece took three courses comprised of Oral Communication, Intermediate Language, and Reading and Writing Workshop. These courses focused on oral presentations and occasional written assignments spoken and written solely in Spanish, allowing her to become more comfortable learning to speak the language. Shaniece completely immersed herself in the culture of Argentina by living with a host family. Although her host family did not know much English, it granted her an opportunity to learn Spanish, as well as to teach them English. It was a cultural exchange that helped her learn about economic and political issues that Argentina was currently facing such as unemployment, inflation, and the ongoing presidential election.

Regarding extracurricular activities, Shaniece often navigated around the city with her fellow classmates. She often would find herself walking into a street fair, finding a free art museum or gallery, and experimenting with different types of food. In order to become more associated with the language, she would often speak it while walking around the city and visiting different stores and restaurants. She gained a deeper perspective on the European roots that have been embedded in the culture of Argentina through architecture, clothing, and cuisine. She also had chances to visit places like the Palacio Barolo, where she was able to climb to the highest peak that showed the entire city of Buenos Aires and walked through the neighborhood of La Boca; seeing beautiful murals representing their intense love for soccer. She also spent a weekend tour in the province of Jujuy during her eight-week experience, and even managed to learn different types of dances like the tango and Chacarera. Ultimately, this experience has shaped her as both an independent woman and student, giving her a stronger commitment to pursue her passion in writing.

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

Christene Harris was given the opportunity to travel abroad to the South American country of Ecuador. During her eight weeks abroad Christene learned about the culture and society of Ecuador and also improved upon her knowledge of the Spanish language by taking classes on the subjects. Living with a host family in the city of Guayaquil, visiting local establishments, and meeting new people provided Christene with ample chances to practice her Spanish conversational skills. Harris interned at Centro Ecuatoriano Norteamericano (CEN) which is a cultural center that aims to make Ecuadorian citizens global citizens by introducing them to American culture and offering English language courses.

Christene taught a 4-week course on American History at CEN and in her free time volunteered tutoring students struggling with the English language. While teaching Ecuadorian students around her age, she was able to challenge her students views and beliefs as well as her own by holding open discussions on prevalent topics in both Ecuador and America such as abortion rights, racism and discrimination, and more. Christene visited all four regions of the extremely bio-diverse country which includes the Coast, the Andes Mountains, the Amazon Rainforest, and the Galapagos Islands and even experienced the traditional lifestyles of indigenous Ecuadorians living in the Andes and Amazon. By fully immersing herself into the culture of Ecuador, she learned a lot about the country and created many meaningful relationships with people she met along her journey.

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

Khanina Stanford spent a little over a month in Greece this summer. She studied Finance at the American College of Thessaloniki located in the second largest city in Greece. Khanina lived and did her everyday activities amongst locals, lived with locals, ate with locals, and shopped with locals. It didn't take long for her feet to get wet in the culture. While taking Financial management at ACT, Khanina was able to connect with other Greek students. She was the only American in her class, and therefore was able to network with other students from the host country. Although Khanina took a Finance class, she got to learn much about the history of Greece and Thessaloniki through some of the field trips offered in the classes, in addition to field trips offered by the college.

Khanina used public transportation every day to get home from school and she describes this as one of the scariest things at first during her time abroad. Coming from a rural suburban area at home in America, the city life, let alone a foreign city life, was totally new for her. However, Khanina immediately had to adapt to figuring out her way around, without speaking or reading the language successfully. Khanina says the best thing about Greece was how nice the people were. In her spare time, Khanina explored the city with friends and studied her finance notes because in her words, "It was the most difficult class ever!"

ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY

Sara Chernicky was able to complete an academic internship abroad in Santiago, Chile. She had an active intern role in the Laboratorio Neurosistemas at the University of Chile. During her 8-week experience, Sara had the opportunity to work in a neurobiology lab, observing and assisting with cell culturing. She was able to learn valuable techniques in microscopic dissection, precision pipetting, cell culturing protocols, and microfluidic chamber fabrication. In addition, she observed other trials occurring in the lab that used eye tracker technology. Due to Sara's interest in medical device design, Sara interviewed the inventor of a medical device to assess challenges that arise in that process. Sara was granted the opportunity to live with a host family, an experience that allowed her to practice and learn Spanish while observing the impact of family values in the Chilean culture. Her dinner time was spent every night learning about food and speaking Spanish to her host mother.

During her time in Santiago, she was able to visit the museum of human rights and the Pre-Columbian museum to investigate the history of the country's demographic, past government oppression, and the importance of the indigenous Mapuche people. She visited some of the various landscapes Chile has to offer including the Andes mountains, the spanning coastline of beach towns filled with street art and handmade pieces, and the desert in the north. Sara is grateful for this experience that pushed her boundaries and taught her so much about herself and her home culture.

ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY

Mia Krolczyk spent her summer studying renewable energy, technology, and resource economics in Iceland through the School for International Training. She traveled around the island with 19 other students as the program faculty led intensive courses including Icelandic language, energy seminar, and energy project. The students stayed in hostels, at farms, at universities, and with homestay families. Mia stayed at Brunalaug, a farm in Northern Iceland with another student. They were hosted by an older couple who gave them an amazing and authentic Icelandic experience. Mia eagerly listened to all of the wisdom and information that her homestay mother offered about life, Icelandic culture, and geothermal farming. For example, she showed Mia around the countryside of Iceland and her geothermal greenhouses where she grew peppers for the local grocery stores.

As the program traveled from Reykjavik to the West Fjords to Akureyri to the East Fjords to the highlands and back to the southern shore of Iceland, the students visited hydropower, geothermal power, and wind power plants. The students and faculty also worked with local experts to learn about Iceland's sustainability efforts and partnered with a company to plant over 220 trees in Northern Iceland, making the study abroad program carbon neutral. Mia appreciated Iceland's beautiful landscape and culture, as well as the country's efforts to preserve the land and history She also enjoyed her time in nature, hiking and running, and her time visiting historical sites, such as turf roof houses, fishing villages, and museums. Mia left Iceland with a strong understanding of Icelandic culture, renewable energy, technology, and resource economics.

ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY

Jessica Sales spent eight weeks in Costa Rica studying the intersections of food systems, conservation, tourism, and sustainability. Whether taking orientation hikes through the cloud forest or speaking to local family owned businesses about their sustainable practices, sustainability was at the forefront of her conversations. These conversations broadened Jessica's view of sustainability and environmental issues. Jessica had hands on experience investigating sustainable tourism practices such as ecotourism and agrotourism. One very impactful business that she spoke with was the family owned coffee plantation El Toledo that challenged the way she viewed coffee. From learning about the coffee making process, Jessica learned that so much effort, time, and care go into producing coffee and every cup is a luxury.

Additionally, through her coursework, Jessica learned that sustainability is a complex issue and sustainable practices are ever evolving and changing. She was able to further examine this idea through her research project that took place in Mastatal. Jessica's research group focused on the lack of waste and how tourism impacts waste generated at the ecolodges. As a result, several waste management solutions were presented and potential waste management solutions for the town. Furthermore, traveling with the Center for Sustainable Development strengthened her commitment to the environment through living and being immersed in sustainable living practices. Jessica found that making "sacrifices" for sustainable living such as cold showers, compost toilets, and limiting electricity consumption do not actually have to be sacrifices at all.

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Lindsay Allen was given the opportunity to take her studies abroad in Prague, Czech Republic for four weeks through an extension program of Charles University, one of the oldest universities in central Europe. While in Prague, Lindsay took two courses, one to learn about the Czech language and the other to debunk the notion that European and Hollywood films are two separate entities, but rather one. The language course was a great introduction into the Czech language as it is one of the worlds hardest languages to learn. This class allowed Lindsay the opportunity to learn survival words and phrases to get by in the city and the chance to go out into the community with the support of her classmates and professor to practice in real time. Attempting to learn Czech was one of her goals before traveling abroad, and she is very excited she has a solid foundation that she can continue to build off of. The film course she took opened her world view on the film industry and allowed for an interest to pursue a career in the European film industry. Her professor was even able to connect Lindsay with a successful film distributor, and she was able to conduct an informational interview to learn more about the film industry in Prague.

Outside of the classroom, Lindsay was able to learn about the rich history of the Czech Republic by traveling to neighboring towns and cities that were more traditional and rural, showcasing a different side of the country. On a planned excursion with her classmates, they hiked a beautiful mountain in Bohemian Switzerland in the northern part of Czech Republic called Děčín, and as they stood at the top of the mountain and could see Germany on one side and Czech on the other. Lindsay also made a point to use her central location in Europe to travel to other countries, which allowed her to learn about more cultures. She visited France, Germany, Austria, and Croatia, and which has broadened her world view, but has only scratched the surface of her travel itch.

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Lydia Brewer had the opportunity to study abroad in Havana, Cuba for a month in the summer of 2019. She went through CIEE, a provider which coordinated multiple different experiences in and around Cuba -- trips to schools, clinics and museums, cooking and dancing classes, visits to community projects and different neighborhoods and many other excursions. Lydia was able to experience many parts of Cuba through the opportunities this program had, which only enriched her time there in ways that wasn't spent sitting in a classroom. The course she took was called *Cuba in tres tiempos: pasado, presente y futuro.* This course detailed what it means to be a Cuban in every aspect of life: politics, socialism, music, Cuban history, everyday life and more. It was taught by a Cuaban professor of sociology at el Centro de Estudios Martianos, an educational center on the estate once owned by Jose Marti, a Cuban national hero. Assignments in the class were experiential based more than anything else; they were sent to marketplaces to practice negotiation skills, guide to the campus of la Universidad de la Habana to learn what a college student's life is like, among other things.

While in Cuba she lived with a host family, which gave her the opportunity to interact with Cuban people each day in Spanish. Her interpersonal and language skills directly benefited from this. The opportunity to study abroad in Havana was one that has changed Lydia for the better, one that will always have a special place in her heart.

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Nyjilah Webb had the pleasure of studying in Oviedo, Spain for five weeks. While in Spain, Nyjilah took courses on the Hispanic culture and language. She had the ability to become culturally self- aware while improving her fluency and proficiency speaking the Spanish language. Being a Criminal Justice major, she discovered that issues of crime, law, and justice place a great emphasis on cultural context. She learned that Spain's criminal justice system is heavily based on Roman law, an offers certain safeguards to the accused person, such as the abolishment of the death penalty-- which is vastly different than that of the United States.

Throughout her experience of cultural immersion, Nyjilah was able to identify cultural disparities, and the impacts they have on criminology. This experience helped her conduct criminological research, which allowed her to effectively achieve her goals, action plans, and can be used for her Capstone course here in the United States.

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Pamela Jackson spent two months in Ghana studying at the University of Ghana at Legon. I'm her course work Pamela was able to engage in many areas of interest such as history, sustainability and social conditions. In a Social Service Delivery Systems course, she was able to engage with Ghanaian residents and learn about their experiences and the resources available that contribute to the culture. In addition to taking these courses she was able to explore various areas of Ghana such as Accra, Kumasi, and the Volta Region and learn about the areas not only from a modern perspective but gain an understanding of the historical significance of these places as well. She was able to do this by taking tours of slave castles and visiting museums to further her knowledge on the different social groups that exist across the country.

Pamela had the opportunity to engage in learning through the experiential method by visiting and interacting with people across the country. She was able to travel to the Eastern Region of Ghana and interview the elders of communities and learn about the ways in which they have been able to provide for their communities. During daily travel by tro-tro and visiting markets she was able to analyze social differences and the ways in which her presence was received in various spaces. Although, she had a difficult time adjusting to different social customs such as not being able to use her left hand, as a left-handed person she found ways to overcome and ensure that she was being respectful of the culture. Pamela's life changed forever during her time in Ghana, as she was able to learn more about who she is as a person, by challenging herself to try new things and learning about the world around her and structures as well. She has gained a better so much knowledge by studying abroad and is excited about sharing her experiences with others and encouraging them to embrace the little moments; because they can be the most impactful.

THIEL COLLEGE

Chase Gifford traveled to Athens, Greece and spent five weeks studying at The American College of Greece in Aghia Paraskevi. While in Greece, she took classes in oceanography and the Greek language. She gained immense knowledge on the chemistry of sea water and how different marine organisms are affected by pollution and the geography of coastlines. She visited the nearby island of Salamina and performed field tests in two areas on the nutrients in the water, the salinity, the pH, the transparency of the water, and collected phytoplankton to identify in the lab. Firsthand, she saw the impact of the geography of the coastline on the pollution and quality of life for marine organisms.

Chase actively participated in sustainability through the #ACGgoesplasticfree campaign and continued her pledge when returning home. While traveling throughout Greece and its many islands, Chase was able to observe and appreciate Greek culture and history through their archaeological landmarks. During her travels she was able to swim in the crystal-clear water of the Aegean sea, climb to the Parthenon, and visit the oracle in Delphi. In her free time, she learned how to use the public transportation to explore downtown Athens and learned more about Greek culture through food. This experience in Greece allowed Chase to improve her Greek language skills, connect with her Greek heritage, and expand her knowledge on environments around the world.

THIEL COLLEGE

Jessica Peters

THIEL COLLEGE

Marissa Ramirez is a senior at Thiel College studying secondary education with a focus in history; she will be graduating within the next few semesters with the hopes of being a high school teacher. During her time with Vira Heinz, Marissa decided to travel to the continent of Africa and explore the Greater Accra region of Ghana. She enrolled at the University of Ghana Legon and took several classes such as African History and Cultures along with African Dance. Marissa learned a variety of information about the western part of African and learned three social dances that the Ghanaian people perform. Although she was taking classes, there were other activities that the university had offered the international students to do while being abroad. Marissa was able to go to the Volta region of Ghana where she climbed the tallest mountain in Ghana, fed monkeys in the forests, and learned about the culture. Another trip that Marissa took involved the Eastern region where the slave castles were located. Exploring the historical side of the country was one of her favorite parts of the trip.

Marissa was also able to make time for community service for the community that was outside of the university. She helped with the program Play and Learn. This was a program focused on helping children by tutoring them with their academics and teaching them soccer. It was a lot of fun for her since she plays soccer at her home college and the children were excited a lot because they all want to play soccer when they go to college. It was a fun experience to learn about the local children around the university and Marissa was able to help raise money for their program during her time there. Marissa is excited to take what she learned from her travels and bring them back to her students when she becomes a teacher. She would like to teach her students about the importance of college and the opportunities of studying abroad to learn about cultures outside of their own.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | BRADFORD

Nicolette Simon had the opportunity to spend five weeks studying healthcare and culture in the beautiful countries of Austria and Slovenia. She took two courses: History of Medicine and Healthcare, as well as World Comparative Healthcare Systems. She specifically studied how a national healthcare plan affects the wellbeing of communities and what makes these systems run efficiently. That knowledge was reinforced through interacting with patients using this system at hospitals and nursing homes. She also spoke with the leaders who help to create healthcare laws. While she travelled, she found herself challenging her own thoughts and belief systems. She felt found similarities between herself and European students, but also marveled at the differences in culture and nationalism.

She formed close bonds with the university students she met along the way who questioned her perspective in a constructive way. Taking part in a Stammtisch, which is a special time to talk with friends about social or political issues made her feel welcome and at home in Austria. The awe and beauty of the local history in each country and the community's dedication to these sites was incredible. She left with a new understanding of healthcare, but also with pieces of a culture different than her own. One that has made her slow down and enjoy life but has lit a fire within her to discover more of this amazing world.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | BRADFORD

Renee Taylor traveled to Cape Town, South Africa and completed two courses at the University of Cape Town. The main course was Afro-politanism, which covered the history of the apartheid, the effects of slavery on South Africa, and the political systems historically and currently in place in South Africa. Additionally, Renee learned about HIV/AIDS in the second class. This course was especially important, as it applies to her Nursing major, as well as her minor of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies. The HIV/AIDS course reviewed the history of the disease, the barriers to treating the epidemic in South Africa, and a review of studies which have been completed. Throughout her studies, Renee had the opportunity to visit many museums and attractions which pertained to her studies, including Robben Island which houses the jail cell of Nelson Mandela, Groote Schuur Hospital where the Heart of Cape Town Museum is located and the first heart transplant was completed, and the District 6 Museum.

At the end of the 3-week study, Renee's abroad experience included a Garden Route Tour along the coast, staying at a different Backpackers location each night. Some amazing opportunities Renee had during this adventure included feeding and hugging elephants, bungee jumping from the world's highest bungee jump, ziplining over a waterfall, and horseback riding on the beach.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | BRADFORD

Hailee Weader spent five weeks in Austria comparing their healthcare system to America's. She enhanced her understanding of how Austrians believed healthcare should work and who should receive it. She learned about the history of Austria and how and when insurance was brought into their system. By taking taxes out of the paychecks of everyone, all Austrians were able to receive healthcare, along with immigrants and people seeking asylum there. She was able to visit nursing homes, hospitals, and homeless shelters to seek how they differ from American versions. She found that nursing homes that were accessible to most Austrians were only accessible to the richest of Americans. The care also provided for the elderly was different and more effective there. Hailee found that typically, the elderly did not suffer as much from depression and hopelessness as they do in America when they are in nursing homes. She found that in hospitals, nurses rarely were allowed to touch needles, and that they were there more to be a doctor's ear and scribe, whereas in America, nurses do so much more.

When she had the chance, Hailee went exploring and trying traditional Austrian meals such as schnitzel and apple strudel. She had the opportunity to see traditional and historical Austrian garments and learn more about the history of Austria while in Vienna for the weekend. Hailee spent a lot of her time trying to immerse herself in the culture by learning a bit of German. Although she speaks it quite poorly, she tried and found that the citizens of Austria merely just appreciated that she was trying to learn and speak it. Hailee's favorite part of the trip was creating strong friendships with Austrian students that she still is in contact with. She is very excited to return and reconnect with them all in person again.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | GREENSBURG

Aaron Forbes spent seven weeks in Iceland studying renewable energy, technology, and resource economics. He travelled around the entirety of the island and stayed in several cities including Reykjavík, Ísafjörður, and Akureyri. In Ísafjörður, he studied engineering and Icelandic in a classroom setting. He had the opportunity to live with a host family for two weeks in the northern farmlands of Akureyri where he learned about renewable technologies in action, practiced his Icelandic language by speaking to the locals, and participated in a 24-hour Carbon Hackathon. Aaron was so impressed by their methane biofuel implementation that he wrote a paper on it called "The Feasibility of Upscaling Compressed Biofuel Gas Implementation as Fuel in Domestic Usage in Akureyri" and presented his findings to the group he studied with.

Throughout the program, Aaron visited several sites including the Kárahnjúkar Hydropower Plant, Krafla Geothermal Powerplant, and the Burfell wind farm. He found that Iceland's reliance on renewable energies allows for a cleaner environment that enhances the quality of life of the people and showcases the beauty of raw nature. Aaron believes that other countries must change their practices drastically in order to stop and reverse the damage done by climate change. He hopes to get his Master's in Environmental Engineering in order to help meet this goal and push for change and plans to attend university in Iceland to do it!

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | GREENSBURG

Aniya Haley chose to travel to Ecuador, a South American country, to study the Public Health of the Kichwa community as well as Kichwa traditional arts. Aniya chose this program not only because she wanted to be immersed in a Spanish speaking environment, but also to learn more about the health of the Kichwa people and their culture. She didn't know much about Public Health at the beginning of her trip but by the end she learned strategies on how to create public policies. She had the pleasure of creating pottery with the indigenous elders, bonding with them and her peers alike. She learned the meaning behind each *Tinaja* and *Mukawa,* which are Kichwan serving bowls. Each work of art was inspired by the surrounding rainforest and its inhabitants. In learning Kichwa culture, Aniya learned that humans are interconnected with their environment.

She participated in many field trips to different health care facilities where she compared each institution and their inclusion of indigenous communities. Aniya also conducted a few interviews of indigenous residents to ask for personal accounts of treatment in each facility. She learned that in spite of Ecuador's constitution, indigenous people were receiving slightly unfair treatment. Aniya had lots of free time on the weekends so her and her classmates traveled to many other parts of Ecuador. During her stay she visited the mountains where she went horseback riding and sightseeing. She often caught the local bus to the nearest town called Tena to shop and get groceries. Only once did she get so worn out from the week that she stayed at the field school she was living at, and even then, she had a blast! Days at the field school always included fun dinner times, movie nights, and canoe rides. Aniya spent 4 weeks in total in the rainforest at Iyarina field school and had great Spanish strengthening conversations.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | GREENSBURG

Courteney Weinell spent seven weeks of her summer in Florence, Italy as a Vira I. Heinz scholarship recipient. While in Italy, Courteney took a course in Wine Marketing where she learned not only how to market and sell wine to multiple demographics, but the course aimed to analyze the cultural significance that wine plays in different regions of the world, specifically Italy and the United States. Through multiple winery tours in the Tuscan countryside and walking tours of Florence, she was able to indulge herself in the history of wine and learn of the significance it has on the economic and environmental states of the country. Courteney also had the privilege to immerse herself into the culture of Florence as she worked for ASAP, a leading shoe distribution company in Italy. ASAP brings brands into Italy that do not have any representation in the country, such as Steve Madden, Doc Martens, and UGG. As a marketing intern, Courteney was responsible for updating the company's multiple social media platforms and spreadsheets, as well as maintaining the company's websites. Courteney was fortunate enough to attend work events, one being a Doc Martens launch party, and the other being the Pitti Uomo, one of the largest men's fashion trade shows in the world.

Courteney spent the remainder of her time walking the cobblestone streets of Florence and enjoying her afternoons at Piazza Santa Croce. Through her program, she had the opportunity to learn about the history and beauty that embodies Florence, including the many famous museums and the secret gardens and cafes hidden within the city walls. Courteney also took advantage of the train system in Italy and spent her weekends traveling to other cities such as the Amalfi Coast, Verona, Lake Garda, and Milan. Whilst falling in love with traveling, Courteney advanced her professional skills in a unique setting and it gave her the confidence to step outside of her comfort zone. She is eager to share her experience and encourage others to travel and go beyond their natural boundaries.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | JOHNSTOWN

Gabrielle Barclay spent five weeks in Florence, Italy and one week in Venice, Italy studying the Engineering of the Renaissance and Sustainability in Venice. The courses covered the topics of Italian art history, engineering during the Renaissance, and Venetian history and modern engineering techniques used there. During this experience Gabrielle was living in an apartment with three other girls from the program in an authentic Italian neighborhood. The first week the students had a few "survival Italian" courses to help them learn important or useful phrases in Italian. Gabrielle did her best to use Italian as much as possible even though most the locals could speak English well. Throughout the rest of the program, Gabrielle was able to get an intimate education about the Renaissance and the amazing feats that people accomplished without modern technology. For example, the dome of the Santa Maria del Fiore was the largest of its time and is still the largest brick and mortar dome ever to exist; today people still do not know for sure how it was designed and built with the technology available at that time.

In Venice, Gabrielle was able to learn about the sustainability efforts there and the engineering methods being implemented within the city. This was extremely interesting due to the crisis Venice is facing as sea levels rise and the islands are sinking. The threat of losing precious history, architecture, art, and culture in Venice is more present than ever, with tourism being much to blame. Aside from potentially losing the "floating city", the surrounding lagoon ecosystem is suffering from years of pollution of residual and industrial waste. Seeing these problems in person really opened Gabrielle's eyes to the issues in Venice which are also apparent in many other countries of the world. All of these experiences inspired Gabrielle to focus not only her Community Engagement Experience, but also her future career in sustainability. Sustainable engineering practices are necessary to improve the health and wellbeing of people and the environment.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | JOHNSTOWN

Hannah Brown was able to experience the indigenous culture of the Kichwa Amazonian community for one month in the country of Ecuador. At Estación Científica Iyarina, she was studying the topic of Anthropology in the forms of health, population and nutrition, while also studying traditional Amazonian arts making and meaning. Hannah was able to connect with the community through learning basic Kichwa language and speaking basic Spanish, while learning from other peers who had more experience with these languages. In Ecuador, Hannah was able to learn about how the indigenous people in this area thought of themselves and their environment as a whole. She learned how emotions, health and the production of crops was highly important to a Kichwa person's relationship to the land. Hannah was introduced to the concept of having multiple selves inside of oneself that connect a person to their land, family, and the animals around them, and was able to take the journey in finding this connection within herself.

While in Ecuador, she was able to travel to neighboring communities and facilities to learn about the intercultural healthcare system and how each community member uses traditional forest medicines in combination with biomedical practices. Hannah was also able to accomplish this by going to local hospitals and traditional midwife facilities to compare and contrast the availability of intercultural care, while also interviewing two local women on these topics. She was able to connect with the people and the nature that surrounded her throughout her experiences.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | JOHNSTOWN

Raychel Wertz spent 5 weeks in the Himalayan mountains of Northern India at the Woodstock School and Hanifl Center studying the culture, life, and customs of the Himalayas and their people. She also became a certified Wilderness First Responder after many long hours of studying and practicing in realistic scenarios, as well as two extended mountain rescue scenarios. She spent her time hiking through the Himalayan mountains, as well as her first ever camping experience on a 3-day trek where she hiked to the top of a mountain. Raychel experienced many new foods, animals, and people in her time in Uttarakhand. She was able to learn about the area by spending a clinical day in the local hospital, where she saw the differences between American and Indian healthcare. As a nursing student, she spends time in different American hospitals, but this experience opened her eyes to the health disparity in India, as well as the difference between the patient-provider relationship in the two countries. She also was taught about the different government policies that allowed for the low-cost healthcare that hospitals in India provide, which in turn attracts many people from different countries and increases the income from medical tourism. Raychel was also lucky to get to spend a day at a clinic and help give over 80 local villagers a check-up and the medicine they needed.

In her free time, Raychel would walk into the nearby town and experience the everyday life of many people; she met children in school, talked to shopkeepers, and was able to purchase many beautiful hand-made items. While trying to maintain her own mental health and wellness while away from family and friends, Raychel learned from instructors and locals about the treatment of patients with mental health issues in India. She learned about the stigma against those with mental health issues and the lack of access to proper mental health management due to that stigma. She learned that while there is a disparity between American and Indian healthcare, the trend is improving and that there will soon be change for the better.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | OAKLAND

Elizabeth Pinto studied history and environmental social change this summer in South Africa. Throughout her classes, Libby was able to learn the history of the country she was living in and the role South Africa plays globally in environmental impact. Her primary goal of study was to first, contrast previous segregated political legislation to the United States, and second, analyze and understand the remaining social contrasts and promises of reparations. As a student majoring in political science, she improved her understanding of racism and privilege throughout her interactions with locals and her work with South African students. With her excursion in George, Libby connected with Nelson Mandela University students, discuss the decolonization of education, and learn different characteristics of South African culture. During her time here, she was able to enjoy braai with both cultures and learn new words in Xhosa and Afrikaans.

Although unplanned, Libby also saw the variance in interactions between the different races of students and started to grasp the idea of lasting impacts of previous country's legislation. Another highlight of Libby's time abroad was meeting with different women leaders from the surrounding communities of Cape Town. Here, she met with the women of the Victoria Mxenge Community who have built over 5,000 houses for people living in informal settlements. Libby saw that these women were able to empower their surrounding community without the help of the government and with the predispositions working against them. Feeling inspired, Libby was able to better grasp the ways community leaders work to improve human rights. As she continues her future into the careers of politics and law, Libby realized that when it comes to improving the livelihood of the people around her, it is important to understand the impact either her actions or legislation has on human rights.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | OAKLAND

Christina Toval studied seven weeks in Rome, Italy living near the center of the city in an area called Campo de' Fiori. She lived an apartment amongst other Italian families and made a home there. She spent her time there volunteering with the Caritas Roma at two of their food kitchens. The first three weeks of her time in Rome she volunteered at a day cantina right by the Colosseum. She was able to have a complete immersion in the culture and learn the Italian language for the first time through hands on experience. Through her time at the cantina, she saw up close how the economic and migration issues presented in the Italian community. The cantinas served not only Italians, but migrants from countries in Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Central America. Despite the language barrier, she spent her time learning about the people from all different backgrounds. Migration in recent years has been a controversial topic in Italy, but her work with the Caritas Roma allowed her to hear the perspective of native Italians and migrants.

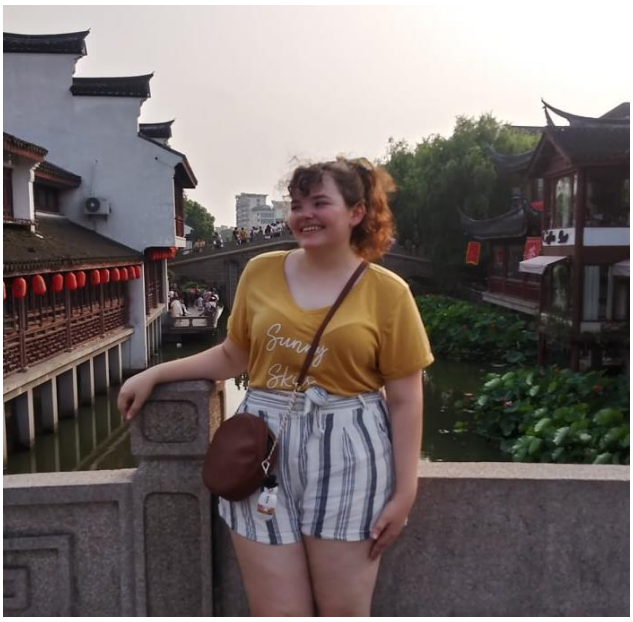
During the last four weeks, she volunteered at a nighttime cantina in the center city behind the major train station in Rome. There she saw many of the same people from the previous cantina and built meaningful relationship with them. She became a constant figure that people in that community counted on seeing. In her free time, she was able to see the cultural sites of Rome. One of them being the Scala Sancta, the stairs Jesus climbed during persecution, which were unveiled for the time in hundreds of years for people to pray on and climb.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | OAKLAND

Joyce Zhang studied community health in China, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), and Mandarin Chinese at the intermediate level in Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China for six weeks through the School for International Training (SIT). By the end of this international experience, Joyce achieved an understanding of the fundamental differences between Chinese and Western medical systems. She observed doctors in local TCM hospitals and was able to practice TCM treatment methods with these doctors on herself in the classroom environment. Treatments for symptoms both physical and mental included herbal medicine preparation, Chinese tuina massage, cupping, acupuncture and moxibustion. She also learned that the philosophy behind TCM treatments are based on Daoist, Buddhist and Confucianist principles involving rebalance with the environment and within oneself to be healthy in mind, body and spirit; a whole different perspective than western medical thought. Through discussions about this philosophy and her first excursions to Buddhist monasteries and temples, Joyce rediscovered her religious roots in Buddhism. Additionally, she visited various minority villages to observe how these smaller village communities handled illness and disease in their respective county- or township-level hospitals despite having less funding from the Chinese government.

During her stay in Kunming, Joyce improved her Chinese fluency by practicing with friends for class, taking the initiative to order while dining, and translating for non-Chinese speakers on the program. The other students with her on the program came from all over the world, each with differing levels of proficiency in Chinese language and culture. Therefore, it was a wonderful experience to be exposed to their respective walks of life and for them to learn about her culture as a Chinese American. From this opportunity, Joyce gained a new perspective on health care, friends for a lifetime, and a better grasp of her identity.

WASHINGTON & JEFFERSON COLLEGE



Brianna Billingsley spent eight weeks in Shanghai, China. She enrolled in two accelerated intensive Chinese language courses at East China Normal University for her time there. Brianna spent the entirety of the trip under a strict language commitment to speak and write in only Chinese with her friends, teachers and host family. As a part of her class, she interviewed local Chinese people on campus to learn about their perspective of what it's like to live in China, and they visited a local tea shop to learn more about the process of tea making. Brianna accompanied her program to Beijing for a weekend to explore the capital, Great Wall, and Forbidden City. She continued to learn about Chinese culture through playing Shanghai-style mahjong with her classmates and through art as she navigated calligraphy exhibits and a ballet performance.

On the weekends, she and her friends would take the initiative to explore lesser-known parts of the city to get to know a more authentic Shanghai. While on a trip to Suzhou, she and her friends danced with strangers at sunset, and she defines this as her revelation of the major difference between American and Chinese people. Through her entire time abroad, while analyzing the cultural experiences, she inadvertently learned more about the underlying presence of community between people, and the diversity that highlights our individuality. Along with this sense of community, the recent environmental laws that currently affect China were a sign of how a group of people working together can bring about change. In addition to living with a host family, to increase her understanding of the culture, she took the time to talk with locals about their interpretation of the recycling process. In China, Brianna learned a lot about a culture entirely different from her own, but along with that, she learned a lot about what it means to interact with strangers in a positive way, and the impact that people can have when they work together. She hopes that in her life and future career in physics, she'll be able to have meaningful relationships with people through advocacy for diversity in thought and action to broaden the ideas that are brought to research in her field.

WASHINGTON & JEFFERSON COLLEGE

Amanda Fitzpatrick traveled to Rome, Italy for four weeks, studying at Richmond University. In Rome, Amanda successfully completed courses in ancient Roman history, Italian art history, and cross-cultural psychology. Through her psychology class, she had the opportunity to research the Italian view on mental health and treatment plans for substance abuse. By speaking to a psychoanalyst, Amanda enhanced her understanding of the use of therapy as a potential treatment. Based on her knowledge gained and extensive literature reviews, Amanda conducted research comparing Italy and the United States in regard to approaches of drug treatment plans for opioid abuse. Her research revealed a similar approach across these cultures – the use of medication-assisted therapy. She hopes to utilize the knowledge gained in this research as she works towards her future goal of becoming a psychiatrist as she treats patients who may have substance abuse disorders.

Amanda was also able to study the history of those living in Rome from the mythological tale of its beginning in 753 BCE through the Roman Empire until Constantine's rule ending in 337 AD. She then compared this to the very different history of cities such as Florence and Venice through weekend excursions. Speaking to historians and archaeologists along the way and visiting the ancient ruins of Pompeii, this culminated into research exploring the everyday life of the people of Pompeii, one of the most significant proofs of Roman civilization, finding many similarities to life today. In her free time, Amanda took the opportunity to explore modern Italian culture by attending the opera at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, exploring the beaches of Capri, paddle boarding across Lake Bracciano, hiking Mount Vesuvius, and eating gelato throughout Italy.

WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY

Kara Compton spent four weeks in London, England, studying Wrongful Convictions and Human Rights at the CAPA London Centre with professors from the Innocence Project and British Parliament. Her studies led her to visit various UK law schools, courts, prisons, and police stations to discover the current global policies and practices leading to wrongful convictions and learn first-hand alternative rehabilitation programs for an inmate's re-entry into society. After critically assessing how human rights are determined, and how they are protected within the Courts of the European Union, and the US Constitution, as interpreted by the US Supreme Court, Kara completed her program with the challenge of writing a paper comparing the UK & US justice systems.

While commuting by "the Underground" to her class from an apartment in a minority neighborhood, Kara lived like a Londoner, reading the daily newspaper, having coffee or tea in a cafe, visiting nearby markets, museums, churches, historic sites, and occasionally dining out at the local community center—known as the "English Pub"—where she discussed the election of Boris Johnson as Prime Minister, the future of Britain with a "No-deal Brexit" from the European Union, and the policies of President Trump. All the while knowing that she was also roaming the streets of her ancestors.

WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY

Rebecca Fremd travelled to Bengaluru, India this summer for seven weeks. In India Rebecca took three courses at Christ University. Bollywood dance: Indian Culture and Traditions, and Health Care Services. Rebecca's interest of study is in nursing, so she was very excited to learn about the Indian healthcare system and how to care for patients of a vastly different culture/religion with which she has no experience. In class, Rebecca learned about the Hindu religion, festivals of India, the status of women, and the health care system of India. When not in class, Rebecca ventured around her home city and explored the cultural aspects it had to offer such as temples, mountains, and even palaces. Rebecca went on excursions to Coorg, Mysore, Japiur, Abhaneri, Agar, and New Delhi. At each of these destinations Rebecca experienced different aspects of the Indian culture and the beauties that each city had to offer.

On this journey, Rebecca had been challenged in a way she had never been before. She learned to embrace change and accept that everything would not go according to plan, like she wanted. Rebecca even gained some patience. Rebecca learned to be more comfortable in the skin she was given and love herself more. The biggest thing Rebecca learned while in India was to let go of the grief she was holding onto of her eldest sister who had passed away in May of 2018. This journey had helped heal her heart and become a more accepting person of others. She wants more out of life now than what she originally planned for herself. She also wants to explore more and take what the world has to offer and not settle for anything. She no longer will accept that she should be satisfied with what she has when she knows she can learn and grow forever and change her path.

WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY

Elena McDermott went to Australia where she spent time in Sydney, Perth, and Coral Bay for four weeks. She got the opportunity to tour Sydney and visit Blue Mountains National Park, where she learned about the city's eco-friendly lifestyle. She studied tropical marine biology and learned about the marine environments of Western Australia and their human impacts. The class entailed lectures at Murdoch University in Perth, WA as well as field work at Ningaloo Reef in Coral Bay, WA. The field work contained two mini projects where a wet suit and snorkel were needed to survey areas of the coral reef. She, and other Aussie students, helped complete two mini projects (stingray and coral health surveys) alongside actual PhD certified scientists and professors. Elena also operated underwater video equipment and tools in order to gather research. She was completely immersed into an environment of positive and passionate people that cared deeply for marine life. She was informed of the heavy conservation of Ningaloo Marine Park and its famous "no-take zones". She was able to explore the reef and enjoy encounters with tiger sharks, white and black-tip reef sharks, wobbegong sharks, sea turtles, dugongs, dolphins, sea slugs, octopuses, and a wide variety of colorful fish. She also had an unbelievable encounter in the open ocean with humpback whales.

The residents of the marine park taught her the beauty of enjoying wildlife in a safe and protective way. She got to experience an ocean paradise almost untouched by humans. While abroad, Elena realized that the U.S. can and should do better when it comes to being more environmentally conscious. She hopes to apply what she learned about conservation techniques in Australia to her own environment in Pennsylvania. Australia opened her eyes to a whole new world that brings hope to her scientific background and passion for nature.

WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY

Alexandra Reineck traveled to San Ignacio, Belize for her wonderful international experience. Her first two-week course explored indigenous culture and medicinal plants. She discovered a new perspective on indigenous people and their practices by learning first-hand from Maya and Garifuna people. While there, she was a part of a ceremony put on by a Maya healer to give thanks to the earth that we take pleasure in every day. Hand-picked flowers were separated into four color sections that all represented the connections between earth's strongest forces. "Everything in this world is intertwined", she learned. The methodology behind Maya ceremonies was used centuries ago in the building of the holy sights sometimes referred to as "Mayan ruins." Ruins are not the only misnomer made by westernized culture and put onto indigenous peoples' culture, but it is one of the most incorrect. Although Belize has put a ban on indigenous people doing ceremonies at holy sites like Xunantunich and Lubaantun, these sites are still full of energy, and many Mayan people consider them to be sacred. Lexi was fortunate enough to explore these holy sites and view the intricate architecture and gorgeous vegetation. She felt the importance of women in these cultures due to many healers being women and midwives.

Her second course dove into public health in the tropics. She spoke to many local organizations that protect communities from large outbreaks of disease, including malaria and dengue. Scientists in the area studied the migration of certain mosquitos that cause outbreaks of these diseases, as well as ways to kill off these critters without hurting the surrounding environment at the same time. All together Belize changed her outlook on medicine and what healing truly entails. She came to find that there are many other things besides chemically made medicine that she believes should be considered medicine, like community. She now knows that even the small things we take for granted are connected to our health.

WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY

Nia Shuler traveled to Cape Town, South Africa for two months. In Cape Town, Nia took courses in Poverty and Development and Community Partnership. Through these courses she learned about the history of South Africa including the Apartheid. She also learned about the history of poverty in South Africa, types of poverty, types of Justice and decolonizing education. In addition to this she spent three days a week serving at Philippi Village which is a local non-profit organization, that served the Cape Flat communities. Through this she had the opportunity to work closely with ten members from Siyangena informal settlement. During her time at Philippi Village she worked to create an Art Exhibition that took place during her last week. The Art Exhibition was centered around the idea of making mountains of change in the Siyangena community.

The art exhibition consisted of upcycled art made of trash. All the pieces, including the canvases, were made by the Siyangena community members. The art pieces were sold at the exhibition, and those proceeds went directly towards the community members. They were taught that they could create something of value out of trash and sell it to be able to sustain themselves and to help provide for their families. Through serving with the Siyangena community Nia was able to directly immerse herself into the Xhosa culture and community. The struggles she learned about and witnessed herself were lack of running water inside their homes, no bathroom facilities, and no trash disposal. She learned about the lack of support from the City of Cape Town government that informal settlements receive. Through cultural immersion Nia was able to gain an understanding of the deep political, economic and racial history of South Africa. She was also able to understand how that history currently effects the lives of many South African people including the Siyagena community.

WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY

Briana Zaharko traveled to San Jose, Costa Rica for five weeks where she had the amazing opportunity to study holistic healthcare and the Spanish language with a focus for healthcare professionals. Briana learned some of the many different holistic health approaches and compared them to Western Medicine; focusing on comparing the healthcare systems of the United States and Costa Rica. She also got to attend a workshop with her class to learn about multiple types of herbal medicine, how to make them, and conditions they help cure. Briana got to learn the basics of the Spanish language applied specifically for a healthcare professional. The class was taught only in Spanish, so Briana was forced to learn fast and fully dedicate herself to the class. Throughout her time in the class she went from knowing only a few Spanish words to being able to give presentations in Spanish, perform a scripted simulation without the script, and perform a nurse simulation with a local Costa Rican.

Not only did Briana expand her knowledge, but she also got to expand her confidence and her appreciation of nature and relationships; which occurred outside of the classroom. Briana had the amazing opportunity to live with a host family for the five weeks, which gave her the ability to be fully immersed in the culture. With her family, she formed a close relationship, conversed in Spanish, ate homemade Costa Rican cuisine every day for breakfast and dinner, and learned the traditions of her Costa Rican family. Briana also made close friendships with the other students and locals. She made friendships that will last a lifetime. She also had the opportunity to explore the beautiful mountains, rainforests, and beaches of Costa Rica, which gave her a greater appreciation for nature. Briana fell in love with the country and hopes to return in the future to visit her host family and explore more of their culture.