ACM’s 5th Annual Student Symposium on Off-Campus Study
April 12-13, 2013
The photos on the front cover were among the photos submitted for the 2012-13 ACM Off-Campus Study Photo Contest. View other photos at www.acm.edu/photocontest.

Is it real? Elizabeth Laferriere, Luther College (top left)
My host brother and I found this chameleon in a bush on my host dad’s family farm. When we pulled him out of the bush, the color change was instantaneous. He went from the browns and greens of his surroundings to the bright blues and greens in the picture. I love the vibrancy of the colors and the intricacy of the chameleon’s skin. He hardly looks real.

At the Van Gujjar Camp, Luke Hanson, Luther College (top right)
SIT – Jaipur, India: Sustainable Development and Social Change – Fall 2012
The Van Gujjars are a nomadic tribe who herd goats in the forests of North India. A large group of Van Gujjars had set up camp by a wide river bed near the base of the Himalayas following their customary route during the changing season. I had the good fortune to sit with this family for a few minutes as the mother happily went about her tasks.

Fjoridan Theories, Lila Pickus, Colorado College (bottom left)
Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS) – Spring 2012
Taken in Flåm, Norway, this image captures the serenity of the moment preceding a kayak journey on the longest fjord in Norway, the Sognefjord. A town of 450 residents, Flåm offers spectacular mountain views to travelers on ferry, foot, kayak, and bike. I was fortunate enough to have the chance to spend five days in Flåm, utilizing each of these modes of exploration. Our visit provided a glimpse into the lives of rural Norwegians, allowing us to experience the local cuisine, witness the interworking of a privately owned goat-cheese farm, and understand the incredible appreciation for nature held by the residents.

Anna’s First Ganesh Festival, Cori Lin, Lawrence University (bottom right)
ACM India: Culture, Traditions, & Globalization – Fall 2012
This photo was taken on the last day of Pune’s Ganesh Festival. Each household or housing society parades down the streets of the city bringing their Ganesh idols to the river to be immersed in the river. The processions are accompanied by traditional drummers, giant sound systems, people shouting the traditional “Gunpati bappa!” and of course, dancing.
April 2013

Dear ACM Symposium Participants,

Welcome to the 5th annual Student Symposium on Off-Campus Study!

You have spent a good deal of time preparing to present and discuss your off-campus study experiences in this Symposium. My guess is that in doing so you understand your experience better and perhaps even discovered new aspects of your experience. Telling others about your off-campus study and engaging them with the stories that illustrate its significance for you is a very important part of study away.

Returning to campus after studying away is never an easy process. It’s a time when you figure out how your studies on and off campus are related, how to raise the unwieldy questions you came back with, where to test out big insights you gained, and how to deploy far-reaching skills you developed. This can be uncomfortable because sometimes the fit between on and off campus studies seems elusive and because there seems to be so much to explain to people who didn’t have your experience. But persisting to find the connections back on your campus will help you draw creatively upon your study away experience throughout your life.

We think you’ll find this Symposium a congenial and welcoming forum for making the connections between your life before, during and after studying off-campus. This Symposium is a chance for you, a select group of outstanding students from ACM colleges, to share reflections about your off-campus study experience—especially independent research, internships or other individual projects—both in the U.S. and abroad.

In 2009 the first Symposium helped to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the ACM, a consortium that is owned and operated by your colleges. It was so successful that the participants—both students and faculty—urged the ACM office to make this Symposium an annual event because they were so enthusiastic about the experience. The participants in the years since have endorsed that recommendation.

Like you, Lindsey Wolf and other ACM staff have spent many hours preparing for this event. Since we work all year to help students study off-campus we find it especially gratifying to talk with you about the experience. We look forward to hearing from you and to talking with you about your experiences and the ideas they generated.

Sincere regards,

Christopher Welna
President
College Participants, Faculty, and Staff

Beloit College
   Valmai Hanson
   Addie Washington
   Anna Bryan, International Education Intern

Carleton College
   Mallory Guinee
   Sarah Olson
   Nathaniel Van Wienen
   Marika Xydes-Smith
   George Shuffelton, Associate Professor of English

Colorado College
   Anna McCready
   Johnny Reed
   Ibrahima Wade, Associate Professor of French, Italian and Arabic

Cornell College
   Maria Davis
   Kara Middleton
   Craig Tepper, Professor of Biology

Grinnell College
   Gregory Brookins Hinton
   Eleanor Stevens
   Marlene Jacks, Intercultural Affairs Associate

Knox College
   Kelli Kleitsch
   Benjamin Yoder-Henley
   Mike Schneider, Professor of History and Associate Dean

Lake Forest College
   John Guen-Murray
   Carliann Pentz
   Samantha Sekulich
   Jill Van Newenhizen, Associate Professor of Mathematics

Lawrence University
   Xavier Al-Mateen
   Shea Love
   Jennifer Roesch
   Jason Brozek, Assistant Professor of Government and Environmental Studies
Luther College
  Matthew Christensen
  Elizabeth Laferriere
  Megan Benzschawel, Center for Global Learning Intern

Macalester College
  June Ban
  Michelle Einstein
  Suresh Mudragada, Assistant Director of Campus Programs

Monmouth College
  Chase Mowery
  Taylor Shelton
  Nick Dobson, Assistant Professor of Classics

Ripon College
  Elizabeth Brown
  Nick Zupan
  Diane Beres, Associate Professor of Mathematics, Computer Science and Environmental Studies

St. Olaf College
  Sudip Bhandari
  Leah Svingen
  Eric Lund, Director of International and Off-Campus Studies and Professor of Religion
Schedule of Events

Friday, April 12, 2013

12:30–1:30 p.m. Optional lunch

1:30–1:45 p.m. Welcome by Kevin Dostal Dauer, ACM Associate Director of Off-Campus Study Programs

1:45–3:15 p.m. Presentation Group 1: Exploring New Places & Perspectives
Moderator: Eric Lund, Director of International and Off-Campus Studies and Professor of Religion, St. Olaf College
Timekeeper: Jason Brozek, Assistant Professor of Government, Lawrence University

Shea Love
*Story Mapping Within A Concrete Jungle*

Mallory Guinee
*Dans le Metro: Growing Up in the Paris Subway*

Anna McCreedy
*Language and Learning*

Jennifer Roesch
*From Foreign to the Familiar: My Internship Experience at the Freiburger City Hall*

Johnny Reed
*Transforming Identities: Cultural Hybridity and Liminality in the Francophone World*

Elizabeth Brown
*Constructs of Time: Manifestations of Art, Architecture, and Attitudes*

John Guen-Murray
*Magnanimity in Neimenggu*

Group 1 Discussion and Q&A

3:15–3:30 p.m. Break

3:30–5:00 p.m. Presentation Group 2: Research & the Cultural Context
Moderator: Nick Dobson, Assistant Professor of Classics, Monmouth College
Timekeeper: George Shuffelton, Associate Professor of English, Carleton College

Nathaniel Van Wienen
*Absent Voices? Unpacking the Debate Over Belgium’s “Burqa Ban”*

Michelle Einstein
*Fashioning Identities: A Study of Secondhand Clothes among the Maasai*

Nick Zupan
*Learning How to Do Anthropology in Central Costa Rica*
June Ban
*European Efforts in Development: Bilateral and Multilateral Aid*

Leah Svingen
*Hygiene Education in India*

Matthew Christensen
*Vitamin A Intake of Maasai Women in Northern Tanzania*

Carliann Pentz
*Personal Happiness: Do Health and Family Communication Have More Influence than Quantity of Money and Material Goods?*

**Group 2 Discussion and Q&A**

5:00–5:15 p.m. **Group Photo**

5:15–6:15 p.m. **Dinner**

6:15–8:00 p.m. **Events**

**Award for 2012-13 ACM Off-Campus Study Photo Contest**
Winner: Xavier Al-Mateen, Lawrence University
Presented by Scott Ozaroski, ACM Director of Marketing and Recruiting

**Award for 2013 Nick Adams Short Story Contest**
Winner: Sarah Olson, Carleton College
Presented by Scott Ozaroski, ACM Director of Marketing and Recruiting

**Guest speaker: Mary Scott-Boria, ACM Chicago Program Faculty & Internship Coordinator**
*Roller Coasters, Bridges and Parachutes: A Journey of Learning through Calculated Accidents*
Introduction by Robyne Hart, ACM Chicago Program Director

Saturday, April 13, 2013

9:00–9:30 a.m. **Coffee ½ Hour**

9:30–11:30 a.m. **Presentation Group 3: Awareness, Connection & Action**
Moderator: Marlene Jacks, Intercultural Affairs Associate, Grinnell College
Timekeeper: Kevin Dostal Dauer, ACM Associate Director of Off-Campus Study Programs

Marika Xydes-Smith
*Explorations in a Brave New World*

Gregory Brookins Hinton
*GIL Internship Phase – A Life-Changing Experience*

Maria Davis and Kara Middleton
*Insights into Peruvian Healthcare*
Kelli Kleitsch  
*Recovering from the Recovery: The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Both Creating and Rectifying Gender Divisions in Northern Uganda*

Sudip Bhandari  
*I Boxed Inequality in My Memory Card*

Elizabeth Laferriere  
*Madagascar: An Island of Potential*

Taylor Shelton  
*Here Is Where I Opened My Eyes*

Group 3 Discussion and Q&A  
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. **Lunch**

12:30–2:00 p.m. **Presentation Group 4: Journeys & Evolving Mindsets**  
Moderator: Diane Beres, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, Mathematics and Computer Science, Ripon College  
Timekeeper: Cara Pickett, ACM Project Manager

Valmai Hanson and Addie Washington  
*Nungi Fii Rekk*: Encountering Sense and Self in Dakar, Senegal

Eleanor Stevens  
*“Nos besamos en la mejilla”: Greeting with a Kiss in México*

Ben Yoder-Henley  
*Eat, Pray, Love (A Bald-Headed Man’s Search for Enlightenment)*

Xavier Al-Mateen  
*Teranga: How Senegalese Hospitality Shaped My Experience and Identity*

Sam Sekulich  
*Finding Yourself through the Eyes of a Big City*

Chase Mowery  
*Thrust into the World: A Small Town Boy’s Experience in India*

Group 4 Discussion and Q&A  
2:00–2:30 p.m. **Closing Discussion**  
Moderator: Scott Ozaroski, ACM Director of Marketing and Recruiting
Presentation Group 1: Exploring New Places & Perspectives

Story Mapping Within A Concrete Jungle

Each day that I lived in Chicago I was able to snatch a piece of an entirely new perspective: that of Fred Hampton Jr., the son of the Black Panther member and activist who was murdered by Chicago Police in 1969; the high school student who thrives on spoken word, using each open-mic to keep her interested in life; the Latino man in his late 20’s, paralyzed by gun violence from his involvement in a gang. This program helped me learn about the complex identities that help to create the city, both academically and experientially, in ways I never would have within a book’s pages or the walls of a classroom. Simultaneously, I learned about my own story and the responsibility I have to all of these identities. The power of real experiential learning became clear to me in everyday interactions with community members and organizational leaders alike. I was able to truly engage with many communities while mapping the city, not only by its structural flaws but also by its incredible assets. And within the vast and beautifully diverse streets of Chicago, I had the opportunity to explore and discover the need for creative expression and restorative justice; to discover a place where I can belong after school that marries my passions with my continued education and growth.

Post graduation plans: After graduation, I hope to do my student teaching in Chicago and simultaneously participate in spoken word/slam poetry programming for youth. Beyond that, I plan to travel with the wind.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Immerse myself in the revolutionary community of artists at Young Chicago Authors, a local slam poetry organization. Never have I found a more diverse, powerfully talented, loving group of people.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Expansive.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. I have been entranced with urban communities and the social inequities that exist there for a long time. This was a way to better understand the people and structures that make up Chicago.
2. ACM Chicago Urban Studies was a program which focused on restorative justice and human rights, all within a Chicago context. I craved to learn more about my place within these issues.
3. It would allow me to test the waters; to see if the fast-paced life of this city was something I enjoy later in life.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Beirut, Lebanon, Palestine, Bolivia, or Argentina.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Arabic. I have only begun to dip into this beautiful and ancient language.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Chicken and Waffles...from Chicken and Waffles on S King Dr. in Bronzeville.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? También la lluvia (Even the Rain).
Dans le Metro: Growing Up in the Paris Subway

One of the most integral and overlooked parts of urban culture is their public transportation system. Having spent four months in Paris, I used the metro at least twice every day to commute to classes, rendezvous with friends, go to the museum, etc. Thus, the metro formed an integral part of my life, serving as a cultural hub, wherein I had many adventures, learned many lessons, and had regular interactions with others. In learning to navigate the metro, I also learned to navigate Paris. The independence and strength I discovered while walking its halls represented the independence that became a keystone of my abroad experience. Moreover, I had many incredible and memorable encounters with people in its tunnels. I believe that my daily trips through the metro represent not only my experience in Paris but even the general experience abroad. The challenges to integrate, communicate, and navigate were ever present as were the moments of communication and independence that positively defined my entire term abroad. I hope in this presentation to share stories from my hours in the metro and reflect how these daily journeys contributed to an incredible odyssey.

Post graduation plans: Either to head back to France and teach English for a few years in the public school system OR to begin working with a news or travel publication.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Interact with the locals. In Mali that meant saying hello to everyone on the street and spending a lot of time with my family. In Paris it translated to spending time with my professors and fellow students, and volunteering as an assistant English teacher at a middle school in the 16th arrondissement.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Exhilarating

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. I wanted to learn.
2. I wanted to see other parts of the world and (hopefully) be profoundly changed by those insights.
3. I wanted to become more fluent in French.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? India. I have been entranced by that country since high school - the colors, the people, the culture, the religion and the diversity all have captured my imagination. I want to explore a country that seems so rich and beautiful. I also have not been to Asia before and want to experience another country that is totally different from anything I have seen before. I also really want to go to Ireland and Mexico. My family is all from the UK and Mexico. I want to go to those countries and explore my personal heritage, meet relatives, and learn Gaelic and Spanish.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? As I said above, I really want to learn Gaelic and Spanish. I also am intrigued by German, Hindi, Arabic, and Japanese. And I’ve been curious about Portuguese for a long time.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Steak with pepper sauce in one of the oldest bistros in Paris.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Beasts of the Southern Wild - hauntingly beautiful and it touched me to my core.
When I first stepped off the plane in China, I was immediately intimidated by the seemingly endless barriers between my culture and theirs. Not only did my appearance mark me as an obvious foreigner, but also my speech, expectations, style of dress, and even my body language singled me out. Nevertheless, I quickly found that after crossing that first and most important barrier of language, the others quickly fell away, or had only ever existed in my own head.

Using a shared language as that initial and important link across cultures is the basis of CET Academic Programs’ teaching style. The Intensive Language course in Beijing gave me the tools I needed to bargain at market places, make plans to sing karaoke with new friends, and eventually travel on my own throughout China and navigate through entirely foreign cities.

In my presentation, I would like to focus on language as the most important step towards understanding and immersing yourself in a culture. I would like to share what I myself have learned about the Chinese culture with Mandarin as my foundation, and stress the importance of language in fully experiencing your country of study.

Post graduation plans: Teaching English in China with the Colorado China Council.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Travel. And I don’t mean just from America to China, but also within China once I was there. By branching out beyond my language program in Beijing, I enabled myself to not only just learn the language, but also to learn survival skills, deductive reasoning, group dynamics, independent thinking, and patience, along with so much more. I also saw so many more amazing sights, and had so many more amazing experiences than I would have if I had just stayed put in Beijing.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. I love to travel.
2. I wanted to improve my Chinese, and studying a language in its “natural habitat” is the most efficient method of doing that.
3. I LOVE to travel.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? To outer space. I’m not joking; it’s been my dream since I was little. But if we’re limiting it to within our atmosphere, probably Egypt, Greece, or Scotland.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Arabic, Gaelic, Greek, French, Japanese, and Korean. In that order.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Any meal with Chinese eggplant was amazing. Although American eggplant is my absolute least favorite vegetable, it didn’t take me very long to figure out that Chinese eggplant was my favorite one. It has a completely different texture and taste. Just thinking about it makes my mouth water!

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? *The Iron Giant*. I watch this movie whenever I’m under the weather...it’s my sick day movie. And every time, it makes me cry. Every time.
From Foreign to the Familiar: My Internship Experience at the Freiburg City Hall

Instead of a relaxing summer, I decided to spend my last months studying abroad interning full-time at the Freiburg City Hall for the Department of Environment, Forestry, Children, Youth, and Family. I had numerous tasks while interning there. As I got accustomed to the dialect and the political language, it became my job to read the newspapers every morning and then report to my advisor if anything was on the city hall. I even had the responsibility to write letters to citizens that the mayor herself signed, helping me learn how to write proper professional letters in German. Every week, there were multiple meetings that my advisor and I attended. My favorite meeting was when I traveled around Freiburg with my advisor and the mayor herself on bikes. I got to meet heads of schools, district social workers, and at-risk families. Listening to their endless discussions was a huge learning experience for me and I realized how much more involved the city is when it came to their youth and families. Being able to attend all of the meetings, have direct conversations with working professionals and politicians, learn about various environmental and sustainability programs first-hand, and actually doing work for my advisor, all helped me truly learn more about Germany and its government system, in ways that a classroom is unable to teach. I hope to present these wonderful and meaningful experiences and explain that I was able to see Freiburg, my home for six months, behind the scenes and how the community really ticked, and how those experiences changed my life.

Post graduation plans: Finding internships for a year and then hopefully going to grad school either in public history or environmental policy. I hope to incorporate my German language skills in either field.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Being able to visit the Friedrichshafen Zeppelin Airship Museum and do research at the archives there. I have been researching zeppelin airships for my senior project, so being able to actually see the sites and deal with primary sources first-hand was an amazing experience.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Unforgettable.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus: 1. Experience and learn the German language and culture outside of the conventional classroom. 2. Live completely on my own. 3. To learn outside of the Lawrence "bubble."

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Italy. I am just fascinated with people, the romantic language, the culture, the food, and so much German history stems from Italy.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Learning to speak Italian would help me, since I love wine and Italian food so much, but I really want to perfect my German first.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Flammkuchen from Freiburg’s Uni Cafe. It’s basically pizza bread with sour cream, onions, and bacon that’s really popular in southern Germany and the Alsace region from France. I always ordered that with a small salad with the best light salad dressing and black currant juice.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Embarrassingly, the movie Lincoln. I knew that he was going to die in the end, but Steven Spielberg definitely created a tear-jerker!

Jennifer Roesch
Lawrence University ’13

Hometown: Cedarburg, WI

Majors: History and German

Program: IES Abroad

Freiburg: Language & Area Studies—Spring 2012
Transforming Identities: Cultural Hybridity and Liminality in the Francophone World

My off-campus experience in Dakar, Senegal and France revealed to me the implicit downfalls of a society based on capitalism and materialism and how these elements affect personal and social growth. Yet, my experience also re-introduced me to the significance of family, and as a result, I expanded my notion of family to include much more than people I have known my entire life. Surprisingly, I discovered the power of education; I became a global citizen where education enabled me to understand more about my personal journey—who I was and who I am becoming—and how I am connected to the world. The key features of the program that led to my personal, educational and societal discoveries were living with a host family who barely spoke English, traveling throughout Europe to various castles, and studying African Philosophy and French Colonial History.

Interestingly, studying African Philosophy led me to discover a variety of historical movements and events—those that seem to be nonexistent and omitted from the history books I have read—that is essential to understanding African-American culture. Thus, this academic discovery fostered my personal growth because I became knowledgeable of history’s missing links.

Post graduation plans: My long-term goal is to attend Northwestern’s Law School in two years. My immediate post-graduation plan is to transition into a paralegal position in the Chicagoland area at an international law firm to establish a professional network. Above all, my primary post-graduation plan is to have options!

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Attend wine tasting courses in addition to learning the geological elements present in the entire wine-making process.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Transformative.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. I personally wanted to leave the United States so that I would have a reason to miss it. Most importantly, I was in need of an adventure and I just wanted to start over: I simply wanted to become a different person and live a completely different lifestyle far away from my own cultural norms.
2. Secondly, I wanted to travel off-campus to experience the life of a young intellectual in France.
3. Finally, I wanted to visit the African continent—no particular country in mind—before the age of twenty-one and I am proud to say that I have completed this objective.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Saudi Arabia to delve deep into the culture and further develop a stronger sense of Saudi Arabian culture.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Arabic!

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Homemade lasagna that my uncle, who lives in Germany, made from scratch! I could taste every single ingredient and the meal was simply explosive!

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Finding Forrester, which was an absolutely inspirational film!

Johnny Reed
Colorado College ’13

Hometown: Chicago, IL
Majors: French and International Law
Program: Colorado College’s French Department Tours, France Semester Program—Spring 2012
Time. The essence of time, the overlap of time, and the illusion of time were one of the biggest things that influenced me on my trip abroad. In Europe there are so many manifestations of previous times, eras, and perspectives that it creates this struggle between change and stagnation. In order to move forward, there’s a certain amount of history that you have to let go of. This creates a push and pull between tradition and progress. But it’s not just people that have this battle. It’s an architectural battle, and the ancient buildings everywhere are a constant reminder of the past. I hope to share examples of how this sense of history is manifest into the scenery and how this influences attitudes. I would also like to compare how American culture experiences this from a different angle.

Post graduation plans: I plan to attend graduate school in library science in the fall and hope to pursue a career in information dissemination related fields. However, being able to introduce people to resources that can help them find ways to help themselves is something I really enjoy doing and I would be happy working in any area that allowed me to do that.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Saw so much incredible art!!

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Thrilling.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. To visit and understand the base from which Western art and literature came from.
2. To challenge myself and my values.
3. To participate in another culture.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? New Zealand.
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? German.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Italian lasagna with my host family on Easter. Although the minestrone soup came in a close second…

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Little Women.
Magnanimity in Neimenggu

Those intrepid beings who study in China seek to challenge uncertainty. In the midst of its rapid development, China is surely not the place for wine and roses. Such romanticism lies elsewhere. During my four months in China, I encountered over fifty cities on thirteen separate excursions. Pictures are misleading; travel in China is tough. I saw the majestic Southwestern mountains, barren Siberian North, rainy Southern tropical lands, shores with white sand, and desert dunes stretching the horizon, but nothing prepared me for magnanimity of the ethnic Chinese-Mongolian people. While crossing the border from China to Mongolia, my travel mates and I, all of us experienced travelers, got stranded. We were sitting in legal no man’s land between borders for two hours until a group of Mongolian women and children saved us. After three more hours, while the guard wasn’t looking, I ended up hopping into a moving gravel truck with a family of four which took us into Mongolia. After this experience, the frigid cynicism I had brought from the U.S. had dissipated. The experiences that whittle at your soul are the ones that matter. It just so happens generosity can be the blade.

Post graduation plans: The Peace Corps has scheduled my departure for July. I will be working in Youth Development, hopefully in youth and community development. My site location is still undetermined. If my Peace Corps plans fall through, then I plan on packing up and moving to Shanghai to do work in economic development. Afterwards I plan on getting a doctorate in East Asian Studies.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Just prior to an extended weekend, four students from American University and I decided to take a trip to Inner Mongolia [editor’s note: ask John for the full story].

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Icarian.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. I don’t really know why I chose to go off-campus. I just felt the urge to move - like dancing.
2. This reason is academic. I am double majoring in Philosophy and Asian Studies. The year before I left for Beijing I had been doing voluntary research for a professor on ancient Chinese philosophy. Seeing cultural “electrics” such as the Puritan, Jeffersonian, Platonist, Kingian, Utilitarian, and Teddy Rooseveltian influences in America are not as easy for us to see as we would assume. I think that one can only observe one’s own culture clearly after traveling to an entirely different place and then return home with fresh vision for fair observation.
3. We Americans are losing our urge for wonder, curiosity, and adventure. We are starting to accept that experiencing a summer in Alaska on TV is better than going to Alaska and experiencing it for ourselves. Where has our courage gone? Teddy Roosevelt would tear up and walk off with a hung head if he were to see us. I went to travel.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Honestly, my answer is space. I would go on a space voyage. But, I suppose a more realistic answer would be someplace like the Nepali or Tibetan Himalayas. Bhutan perhaps.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Mongolian. It has the warm, hallow depth of Russian, tonal elegance of Mandarin, and the timbre and sounds of South and West Asia. Mongolian is a very beautiful language.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? In China I ate street food most of the time. One food you can’t pass up is ‘sour yogurt.’ They only have the brand I am referring to in Beijing. It is served in a little tan ceramic jar covered with blue tinfoil. You drink it through a straw. It is sweet and smooth. It has a creamy viscosity. Don’t let the taste deceive you; it is very healthy.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? I don’t remember crying during a movie, but one of my friends cried at the end of Cool Runnings. And, I would like to note that Korean Cinema is by far the best in the world at the moment.
Presentation Group 2: Research & the Cultural Context

Absent Voices? Unpacking the Debate Over Belgium’s “Burqa Ban”

In Brussels, I investigated the national debate over face-coverings worn by certain Muslim women. While these women number around 200—a minority within a minority—the polemic surrounding the phenomenon escalated such that Belgian Parliament voted overwhelmingly for a public ban of such coverings in 2011, in spite of unanimous opposition from the human rights community.

As research associate at Belgium’s Centre for Equal Opportunity, I spoke with members of another community ignored by Parliament: that of Belgian Muslims. Five appeals were brought before the Constitutional Court (all five were rejected as I was finishing my research), yet most Muslims remained silent in the debate. Although many agree that law stigmatizes the entire religious community, politically-oriented Muslim organizations in Belgium are few, and hesitate to advocate on behalf of such an extreme minority. Their reluctance is understandable: even parliamentarians who spoke out against the ban were ostracized; the few Muslims who did take a position were summarily dismissed as extremists. My research sought out both the voices that were ignored and those that were missing altogether in an effort to understand why, in a debate that inevitably impacts the Muslim image, Muslim perspectives themselves were all but invisible.

Post graduation plans: Undecided, though I think teaching and civil rights advocacy would be very fulfilling careers. I would be thrilled if I could make either of those a reality at some point down the road, but I will be happy after graduating with anything that allows me to serve the community meaningfully and meet new and different people.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Meet people who are dissatisfied with injustice and wholly committed to fighting it.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Life-changingly out of my comfort zone.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. To experience what I've been studying.
2. To become fluent in French.
3. To escape academia!

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Egypt, or Turkey, or India—or back to Belgium!

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Arabic.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Either boulets-frites (meatballs with a tomato sauce and Belgian fries) in Liège or moules-frites (Belgian mussels, also with fries) in Brugge.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Wreck-It Ralph—not a joke.
Fashioning Identities: A Study of Secondhand Clothes among the Maasai

When I first arrived in Tanzania, I was struck by the prevalence of used clothes—I wondered why Tanzanians were wearing secondhand clothes and how their understanding of the garments differed from my own. I’ve donated unwanted clothes many times, but never really thought about their social implications for future wearers. I spent four weeks researching these social implications, conducting interviews and participant observations with the Maasai ethnic group. I camped with my group in a rural village in Northern Tanzania, which was definitely an unfamiliar setting to do a research project. I found that participants choose to wear used clothes mainly because of its availability, affordability, and its connection to development. Although secondhand clothing has a past of its own, the Maasai construct new, present, and local meanings for the clothing.

Post graduation plans: Still unknown!

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Hike a volcano in the middle of the night. It was also the worst thing that I did while abroad.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? A learning experience.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. I wanted to be pushed outside of my comfort zone.
2. I wanted to learn about a culture that is very different from my own.
3. I hoped to grow personally from the experience.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Great Barrier Reef!

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? American Sign Language.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Chispi mayai. It’s kind of like a french-fry omelet—so greasy, but so good.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? 50/50. It gets me every time.
Learning How to Do Anthropology in Central Costa Rica

My presentation will cover the research project I completed in Costa Rica. My research site was located in Llano Bonito, which lies in the mountains of the central region of the country. I spent eight weeks at this field site using anthropological data-collection techniques to explore the role social capital plays in the community. I also sought to understand the perspectives of the community members regarding the population migration that was occurring among the younger generations of the community. I will present the background, methodology, and results of this research.

Post graduation plans: I am planning to go to grad school to obtain a Master of Public Health degree.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? I took advantage of every opportunity to become a part of both of my host families, which left me with two new sets of parents and siblings, and the ability to work towards Spanish fluency.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Unforgettable.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. Gain experience in creating and implementing my own research project.
2. Learn to communicate fluently in Spanish.
3. Become immersed in another culture.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Back to Costa Rica to visit my host families.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? French.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? My host mom’s Italian cooking or matured fried plantains.

Nick Zupan
Ripon College ’13

Hometown: Monona, WI
Major: Anthropology
Minors: Spanish and Mathematics
European Efforts in Development: Bilateral and Multilateral Aid

With my interest in international development and global governance, my presentation discusses European efforts in development through providing aid and analyzes whether they have been effective or not. I’ve always been curious about the relationship between member states of the EU. I decided to study this more in-depth by analyzing development policies of EU member states. By evaluating each country’s policy through two indices, I found that the most effective way to deliver aid is development. Living in Europe provided me an insight to understand why countries would make certain policies. I discovered that this is the area I want to further study and provided a pathway to finding possible career options in my future.

June Ban
Macalester College ’14

Hometown: Madison, WI
Majors: International Studies and Political Science
Minors: Educational Studies and International Development
Program: Macalester College, Perspectives of Globalization in The Hague, Netherlands—Fall 2012

Post graduation plans: Peace Corps volunteer then grad school.
What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Traveling and interacting with Dutch people.
What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Independence.
Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. The country/region.
2. The program (more rigorous than most programs being Macalester’s own program).
3. It was time to live in a new place and meet new people in my life.
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Southeast Asia or Scandinavia.
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Dutch or Norwegian.
What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Zuurkool, a typical Dutch dish.
What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Amour.
Hygiene Education in India

I conducted research at Aikyam School, in rural Tamil Nadu, India, on the behaviors, knowledge and attitudes of hygiene practices and the effectiveness of hygiene education programs. I surveyed 74 students on demographic factors, health indicators, and frequency of performing hygienic behaviors. After gathering data, I created a two-week hygiene education program using interactive discussions and promoting practical understanding of the benefits of good hygiene. Following the educational program, I surveyed the children and found high success rates; 97% answered correctly to questions about hygiene compared to 70% before the educational component.

What I learned about sanitation and hygiene in India goes far beyond my data set. During my study, I was invited into the homes of several of the students and began to understand some of the cultural factors resulting in inadequate sanitation in India. I learned that the construction of an expensive wooden door is more highly valued than a toilet and diarrheal disease in children often results in temple prayers rather than doctor visits.

As a pre-med student, this study provided invaluable insight to the importance of understanding background knowledge of patients, including cultural and socioeconomic factors, and how this shapes treatment specific for each person.

Post graduation plans: I plan to work for a year as a CNA in Minneapolis and start medical school fall of 2014.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? I went to McLeod Ganj and spent three days trekking in the Himalayan Mountains. On the last day, I rushed down the mountain just in time to see the Dalai Lama give a teaching at his home temple.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Acceptance.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. Experience a way of life and culture that is unlike anything I have ever known.
2. Learn how to explore out of my comfort zone while still being true to who I am.
3. Understand my own strengths and weaknesses in a context that challenges me in completely different ways than my American college experience.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Southern Africa.
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Tamil.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Onion rava dosa with coconut chutney.
What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? The Pianist.

Leah Svingen
St. Olaf College ’13

Hometown: Omaha, NE
Major: Biology
Program: St. Olaf College, Biology in South India, Tamil Nadu, India—Fall 2012
Vitamin A Intake of Maasai Women in Northern Tanzania

Last fall I designed an Anthropology research project that focused primarily on measuring the current dietary diversity of individuals in a population of eighteen Maasai women living near Tarangire National Park, Tanzania. Dietary diversity is a measure of the number of food groups eaten by a population. This idea was sparked after reading about their current marginalization as a people, which has caused them to move away from their traditional dietary ideals that offered a food base plentiful with vitamin A. I conducted interviews focused on learning about the contemporary diets and activities of these women and utilized a questionnaire developed by the Food and Drug Administration to measure their dietary diversity, focusing specifically on nutritious food items. I also utilized participant observation by cooking a contemporary meal with a Maasai woman. This research connected to my ongoing academic work because it provided ideas for my senior thesis (which I am writing this spring) about the physiological effects of dietary change, specifically when a population, such as the Maasai, moves away from a diet high in dietary vitamin A to one with little to no consumption of vitamin A. I really loved my entire experience in Tanzania!

Post graduation plans: I'll be a director at Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp in the southern mountains of Colorado for the summer. Then I am hoping to get an internship or a job for the next year.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Volunteered at a primary school in rural Tanzania for a week.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Uplifting.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. To experience a culture that is completely different from my own.
2. I thought it would be fun and I had the means to do so.
3. It was going to be my senior year and doing so was one of my goals for college.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Northern Pakistan or Nepal because I hear that the mountains there are unreal.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Arabic because it is so smooth. Words and phrases have a nice flow in that language.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? A variety of fresh, locally grown vegetables and quality dishes (like cheese and onion mini quesadillas) at Gibb’s Farm near Karatu, Tanzania. Amazing banana coffee and banana walnut crisp, too.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Shawshank Redemption.

Matthew Christensen
Luther College ’13

Hometown: Luverne, MN
Major: Biology
Minor: Religion
My research experience in the Costa Rica program is an excellent example of how conducting research in a new culture cultivates both cultural awareness and personal growth. Briefly, I collected data in San Ramon, Costa Rica, where I designed a psychological research project on levels of happiness and satisfaction. Questionnaires measuring happiness levels were distributed to 197 participants, varying in all ages, and the main results showed that participants valued health and family communication over material possessions and wealth. These types of results not only supported my hypothesis, but they helped me connect certain aspects of the Costa Rican culture to my study.

This research project became a gateway to understanding and connecting with Costa Ricans. Through their responses, I gained a better understanding on their strong emphasis on family support and the insignificance of wealth, which was such a drastic change to the life I know in America. More importantly, through my results, I recognized the lack of support, funds, and overall opportunities for education in Costa Rica. These observations completely changed my career path to studying international education systems, reassessing my perspective on human relationships, and my perspective on gender roles in other countries.

Overall, my experience furthered my knowledge in research, cultural, and personal growth, which shows the importance and wonderful results of pushing outside one’s comfort zone to study in a completely different culture for a semester.

Post graduation plans: I plan to get more experience in education systems both in the United States and in another country (i.e. Spain or a country in South America). My overall plan is to obtain my Ph.D., but I need to narrow down what exactly I want to study with Psychology and Education (language programs, cultural barriers, test design, familial influences, etc.). My ideal career path is to do international research on education systems.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Connect with the people in the communities I lived in. They gave me a different (and better) perspective of their daily lives than I could get from reading a textbook on the culture.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Pura Vida.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. Conduct research in an international setting.
2. Improve my language skills in Spanish.
3. Place myself in a situation outside of my comfort zone.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? All of South America or New Zealand.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Norwegian, Polish, or German (my heritage).

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Everything! Maybe a typical lunch—fried plantains, rice and beans (gallo pinto) with natilla (a different texture of sour cream), fresh tortillas with a thick cheese, a fruit smoothie (especially guanábana), and a special root found down there (yucca).

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Les Misérables.
Evening Events

2012-13 Award for ACM Off-Campus Study Photo Contest

The ACM colleges have been pioneers in off-campus study and have collaborated since the early 1960s to provide consortial off-campus study opportunities in the U.S. and around the world. The ACM Off-Campus Study Photo Contest celebrates this history and the important role that off-campus study plays in liberal arts education.

A picture giving a glimpse into the daily working life of a group of Senegalese women was awarded Grand Prize in the fifth annual ACM Off-Campus Study Photo Contest. The Grand Prize photo, "Couscous" by Xavier Al-Mateen from Lawrence University, was selected for the honor from among 95 photos entered in the contest through the ACM colleges' off-campus study offices. All the photos were taken by current students at ACM colleges while they were studying on off-campus programs around the world.

Xavier snapped this photograph while studying off-campus in Senegal during the spring of 2012. “What strikes me about it is the lighting, which brings out the vibrant colors of the couscous and the patterns on the center woman’s clothing,” he said. Xavier will be speaking about his semester off-campus in the “Journeys & Evolving Mindsets” group.
2013 Award for Nick Adams Short Story Contest

ACM sponsors the Nick Adams Short Story Contest every spring. Named for the young protagonist of many Hemingway stories, the contest was established in 1973 with funds from an anonymous donor to encourage fiction writers at ACM colleges. The author of the winning story receives a prize of $1,000.

Sarah Olson, a sophomore English major at Carleton College, was named the winner of the 2013 Nick Adams Short Story Contest. Her story "Truth in Lies" was selected by novelist Peter Geye, the final judge for the competition. Geye wrote that it is "a story that's as beautifully and as carefully written as the paintings the author describes.... I only wish the story went on for the length of a novel, so I could relish the author’s prose for days instead of hours. Bravo!"

Professors Steven Hayward from Colorado College and Robert Archambeau from Lake Forest College served as initial faculty readers for the contest, considering 37 stories written by students at ACM colleges before deciding on the six finalists from which Geye made his choice.

Post graduation plans: Undecided.
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? I would really love to go to the Galapagos Islands. The "untouched by time" quality of the animals there makes it fascinating for me.
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? I think being able to read and understand Dostoevsky and Tolstoy in the original Russian would be amazing.
What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Amélie.

A note from the author:

I was inspired to write this story in the Introduction to Creative Writing class I took last term. My classmates and I were given a prompt encouraging us to place characters in the wrong place at the right time or in the right place at the wrong time: any situation where the plot could have gone in one direction, but instead veers onto a completely different path. As I mulled over the prompt, I began thinking about putting a character in the right place at the right time - but having the character himself be the wrong person for the right situation. I found myself then very much inhabiting the head of the main character, trying to figure out what could make him so unsuitable for the circumstances in which he finds himself.
Mary Scott-Boria is a lifelong resident of Chicago, (transplanted from Michigan), having witnessed Chicago, “the city that works,” from many interesting perspectives; from a young teenager experiencing Chicago as a place of many uprising and social movements, to an activist and professional deeply committed to social justice and ensuring that the city works for everyone.

Mary has over 30 years of experience and knowledge of Chicago’s communities, having worked as a professional social worker and human services administrator in several not-for-profit organizations. Her work and interests have been in women and youth issues and in community organizing and politics. She served as the founding executive director of the Chicago Sexual Assault Services Network, director of Youth Services Project (YSP), and a founding executive member of the Cook County Democratic Women. As director of Women’s Services for the Metropolitan YWCA, she became interested in global issues of violence against women and visited women’s anti-violence projects in Ghana and South Africa, as well as leading delegations to Israel and Palestine. Her background in anti-racism education and organizing has kept her involved in issues of racial justice since the late 60s. Mary spent a brief time as an adjunct faculty member for the Chicago Urban Studies Program from 1987-88 and later joined the faculty fulltime in 1999, becoming director in 2001.

Mary holds a master’s degree in Social Work from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a Masters of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary. She currently serves on the board of the MIKVA Challenge and works with several other organizations in the city including, the Christian Peacemakers Teams (CPT), The Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers, CLAIM and the Chicago Freedom School. She lives with her husband Rafael in the Humboldt Park community and enjoys camping, crafting, genealogy and spending as much time as possible with her children and grandchildren.
Greenland is one of the most isolated, unique and amazing places on earth, but what is more amazing is that native Greenlanders have lived there for thousands of years in relative peace and prosperity. However, global climate change is changing their land and source of livelihoods at a more rapid pace than ever before imagined. Melting sea ice, decreased macro faunal populations, and increased glacial runoff are threatening one of the last truly autonomous and unchanged cultures in the northern hemisphere.

My trip to Kangerlussuaq, Greenland was originally planned as a study of arctic ecology and glaciations. But during my stay I was able to see and experience the unique challenges these enduring people face every day such as caribou hunting with reduced snow cover and how to avoid polar bears. Through these experiences I gained a new, complex understanding of climate change from a multi-cultural perspective and learned from the example of the native Greenlanders how to rise up against an impossibly large foe in order to protect one’s cultural history.

Post graduation plans: Fulbright in Helsinki, Finland studying microbial genomics and lateral gene transfer.
What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Walk/slide around on the Greenland ice sheet.
What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? I am starstuff.
Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. I wanted to experience new cultures.
2. I wanted to visit new places.
3. I wanted to learn new things.
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Amazon Rainforest, Brazil.
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Spanish.
What was the best meal that you had while on your program? The most interesting was whale blubber. But it actually was disgusting. The best food was the cake.
What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? The Hunchback of Notre Dame.
GIL Internship Phase—A Life-Changing Experience

St. Augustine once said, “The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.” Traveling is a way for one to learn about the world in its entirety. Grinnell-in-London afforded me an opportunity to travel abroad and become immersed in a new culture and even work environment. I was able to learn from others firsthand as opposed to learning via textbooks. Working and traveling abroad forced me to grow up and increase my level of independence, all of which are characteristics of a well-rounded individual.

For six weeks I worked as an intern for YH (Young Hackney) World. While Young Hackney targets the youth of Hackney, it is not exclusive to Hackney residents but designed for Londoners in general. YH World is a free, online non-profit magazine for young Londoners, letting young people know about free events, workshops, training and places to volunteer in different parts of London.

While at YH World, I wrote a number of articles about various events and experiences around London. I also have had my photos displayed on YH World’s website and viewed by thousands each week. It has been nice working in the office with editors, journalists, photographers and many more people from London. I have learned more about different styles of writing, catering to different groups of people, and even more about photography. I have also learned more about London in general from local students, interns and my supervisors. It truly has been a wonderful experience as I was able to do something meaningful. Working at YH World allowed me to be immersed in the English culture and be surrounded by some of the local British citizens. It helped me to see a different side of London economically, ethnically and culturally. Studying abroad is an excellent opportunity that everyone should take advantage of.

Post graduation plans: Law school and possibly doing something to further my photography and journalism skills.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Traveling around and always being active. London was so lively that I always had something to do.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Life changing!

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. I never had the opportunity to go and experience another culture outside of the United States. I thought it would be nice to experience the culture of a lively city.
2. I also chose to go off-campus as I did not know when another opportunity would arise. I feel college is the perfect time to travel and study abroad prior to working and forming a family.
3. Finally I chose to go off-campus because I was constantly hearing about how it was a life-changing experience that one will only understand after traveling abroad for themselves.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Somewhere in Africa. I would really like the opportunity to get back to my roots as I am constantly learning about Africa which is another foreign territory to me.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Either Spanish or Mandarin as I feel they are and will be two dominant languages in and outside of the United States.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Either the "bangers and mash," which is a traditional English meal or the roasted duck meal I had in Prague.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Django. Laughed so hard it made me cry!
Insights into Peruvian Healthcare

Background
Through International Volunteer Headquarters (IVHQ) and their partner organization, Maximo Nivel, we had the amazing opportunity to participate in a healthcare volunteer program in Cusco, Peru for three weeks this past November. The medical placement program we took part in was one of four programs specifically designed for pre-medical students. Maximo Nivel, IVHQ’s partner organization in Peru, selected a clinic for us to volunteer in for the duration of our fellowship and arranged for lodging and meals.

Our experience
During our fellowship, we volunteered at the Health Post Chocco Clinic, an under-funded clinic on the outskirts of Cusco that caters to low-income families. The clinic is extremely small and only has five rooms, each of which represents a different department: the pharmacy, laboratory, obstetrics, dentistry, and pediatrics. Throughout our three weeks at the clinic we had the opportunity to spend time in each of these departments; however, since we are interested in pursuing a career in women’s health we spent the majority of our time observing and helping Isabel, the obstetrician in the clinic.

Impact of our experience
Overall traveling to Peru was an extremely valuable hands-on learning experience, from which we honed practical skills and values that we could not glean from simply reading a textbook or attending lectures in a classroom setting. We noted several differences between healthcare between the United States and Peru such as the patient-doctor dynamic and sanitation standards; however, in most instances the diagnosis and treatment of patients in Peru is not completely different from healthcare in the United States.

We found the experience of working in a different country to be exhilarating and very rewarding. Even though our contributions to the program may have been small, the knowledge and practical experience we gained from this opportunity will be extremely valuable with regards to our professional aspirations. By working in healthcare clinics in Peru, we gained more of an appreciation and understanding of medicine in a completely different cultural context.

Maria Davis  
Cornell College ’13

Hometown: Washington, IA  
Major: Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
Minor: Religion  
Program: International Volunteer HQ—Cusco, Peru — Fall 2012

Kara Middleton  
Cornell College ’13

Hometown: Wausau, WI  
Major: Biology  
Program: International Volunteer HQ—Cusco, Peru — Fall 2012
**Post graduation plans:** Take a year or two to work in a scientific research setting and then attend medical school.

**What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program?**
Experience the culture and take time to compare it to my own. This has allowed me to gain a greater understanding of the world around me and apply my knowledge to other life experiences.

**What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus?** Marvelous.

**Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:**
1. Learn about a new culture.
2. Explore the medical world outside of a textbook and the United States of America.
3. Step outside of my comfort zone and explore a new place.

**If you could travel anywhere where would you go?** New Zealand.
**If you could learn to speak any language what would it be?** Spanish.
**What was the best meal that you had while on your program?** Ceviche.
**What was the last movie you saw that made you cry?** No idea! :)

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**Post graduation plans:** Find a clinical research position, work as a bartender, and travel everywhere.

**What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program?**
Shadowing and assisting an OB/GYN in a clinic in Cusco. With my minimal Spanish skills I was able to learn so much about women’s health in Peru through interactions with patients. From a non-educational standpoint, climbing Machu Picchu was definitely another highlight of my trip.

**What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus?** Indescribable.

**Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:**
1. I believe that off-campus programs provide valuable hands-on experiences that cannot be learned in any classroom setting.
2. As someone who is interested in pursuing a healthcare profession, I wanted to learn about different cultural practices with regards to medicine and provide assistance in an under-funded clinic.
3. I truly enjoy the excitement and adventure that comes along with traveling somewhere completely foreign.

**If you could travel anywhere where would you go?** Thailand.
**If you could learn to speak any language what would it be?** Japanese.
**What was the best meal that you had while on your program?** It’s a toss-up between alpaca, a Peruvian delicacy, and ceviche, raw seafood marinated in citrus juices.
**What was the last movie you saw that made you cry?** *Up.*
Recovering from the Recovery: The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Both Creating and Rectifying Gender Divisions in Northern Uganda

I studied the role NGOs played in creating the large gender gap now present in northern Uganda, and how these organizations viewed their responsibilities to men and women after the conflict. The outcome of this project completely revolutionized my way of thinking about the structures of international aid, and the importance of understanding culture and gender relations in first-wave aid distribution. This project is now informing a significant portion of my senior research, and I intend to use my knowledge from this experience to make a career in sustainable development possible.

Post graduation plans: I’m looking to break into the field of international human rights advocacy or international development.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Climb a mountain to stand under Sipi Falls.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? TIA - This is Africa.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. To live and experience life abroad.
2. To become more independent.
3. Why not?

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Backpacking through South America.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Urdu.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? A Rolex. Every morning, I would stop at the same street vendor before class and have him make me one. Basically, he mixes two eggs, tomatoes, peppers, and onions together, pours the whole thing into a pan, lets it sit and cook like an omelet, and then rolls the whole thing together with a chipate when it’s done. Delicious!

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Dead Poets Society—gets me every time.
I Boxed Inequality in My Memory Card

There were more than two hundred dhobis\(^1\) lined up against rows of open-air concrete wash pens; they hit their clothes against the flogging stones which almost made harmonious sounds. But to the sides were extremely poor looking huts. Half-naked children were running around. The site was fascinating for me, so I hurried to take my camera out. As I was reaching for it, and not trying to miss any of the action, I saw something in the backdrop. There were a few really tall sky scrapers that started at the end of the dhobi ghat\(^2\). I saw inequality, and I realized I had become a part of it. I felt bad instantly for I could do nothing about it—I was a mere spectator trying to take a picture, and box the reality in my memory card.

Global Semester was a trip that led us to different parts of the world but everywhere we went, we saw inequality. Even having come from a third world country, I had not realized how much I was privileged. Was my study abroad a guilt trip? I would not say so—but the entire experience has made me realize that I want to work in reducing the inequality that exists, not become a mere spectator.

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1. dhobi: a caste group found in India who specialize in washing clothes
2. dhobi ghat: place were dhobis wash clothes

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Sudip Bhandari
St. Olaf College ‘14

Hometown: Kathmandu, Nepal
Major: CIS Public Health
Minor: Statistics
Program: St. Olaf College, Global Semester:
Switzerland, Turkey, Egypt, India, Thailand, Hong Kong, China, South Korea—Fall 2012-January 2013

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Post graduation plans: I want to work with a small public health organization in a developing country before I head off to graduate school.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Flew on a hot air balloon in Egypt.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Symbolic.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. To see what it is like out there.
2. To understand other cultures.
3. Appreciate differences.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Any country in South America. We did not go there on our trip.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Spanish.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Bulgogi – Korean.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Into the Wild.
Madagascar: An Island of Potential

In order to fulfill the language immersion credit for my French major, last summer I spent 8 weeks in Madagascar. I was on a program that studied the traditional medical practices and healthcare system of the country. One of the main ideas that we looked at was the integration of traditional and Western medicine. For my final paper, I decided to concentrate on healthcare integration by adding the idea that integration of traditional medicine into Western medicine would reduce the number of antibiotic resistant bacteria. Throughout the program we visited traditional healers and Western doctors, along with a traditional medicine market and various research facilities. I used interviews with healers and doctors, along with information from program lectures and Internet sources to write my paper. This topic was particularly interesting to me because I was able to connect my love of Biology and French into one subject matter; I also used this concept for my senior paper.

This experience changed my view of traditional medicine and its ability to treat diseases, but I think I learned as much as I did because of the personal connections I made with people around me. The friendships I made will last forever.

Post graduation plans: I will be a "lectrice," which is similar to a teaching assistant, at a university in Brest, France teaching English.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? I loved spending time with my host family. I truly felt like a member of their family, and we always had a wonderful time whether we were going to the market or simply cooking dinner.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Full of unforgettable memories and relationships.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. I've always wanted to travel to a francophone African country.
2. I wanted to experience a different culture and meet new people.
3. I needed to fulfill an immersion credit for my French major.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? I would love to go back to Madagascar to visit my host family. If I were to travel to a new place, I would go to India or Greece.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? I would like to learn Chinese, Greek, or Farsi.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? I really enjoyed a combination of vegetables with meat over rice with rice tea. It was always delicious!

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? I most recently watched *Pride and Prejudice*, and it made me cry.

Elizabeth Laferriere
*Luther College ’13*

**Hometown:** Maple Grove, MN

**Majors:** Biology and French

**Program:** SIT Study Abroad, Madagascar: Traditional Medicine and Healthcare Systems—Summer 2012
Going into this program, I wasn't really sure what I would expect. I knew that coming from such a small town, Chicago would be like doing an off-campus study in a foreign country. What I did know was that I wanted to experience things that I had never gotten the opportunity to do while I was back home in Galesburg, IL. I didn't know that after only about three months, this program would make me see the world for what it really is.

I did my internship at Northwestern School of Law, in the Children and Family Justice Center. There, I was given the opportunity to learn from and work amongst activists and lawyers fighting for civil rights and justice for all citizens. My main objective was working on a campaign to help stop children from being sentenced to life without parole. This changed my life in the fact that hundreds of minors had been living their lives behind bars, and would never have the chance to see the light of freedom again. The severity of this issue is overwhelming and something I would never have experienced back home.

From my internship and going out into the community and becoming more aware of civil justice issues, I came across the story of the young women who ultimately became the focus of my independent study. From here I realized what my calling in life was. I was not going to be one to just sit in the background and watch the negative social affects that have damaged our cities. From this program, I became ready for the fight; the fight for civil rights and the fight to stop these injustices from continually occurring without purpose or consequence.

Post graduation plans: Potentially work for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission Corps (at Lincoln Jr. College) while attending the University of Illinois at Springfield for my master’s degree.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Learn about myself and my inspirations through the lives of the type of people that I want to help in my future career.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Undescribable.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. I wanted to experience new things that I may have never gotten to see coming from such a small town.
2. I wanted to gain more responsibility by living on my own.
3. I wanted to learn about social justice issues in large cities and what is or isn’t being done to prevent or stop them.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? I would go to either Haiti or a small village in Africa and conduct as much service work as I possibly can, especially with youth.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Fluent Spanish because it is important to be bilingual, especially in the social advocacy field where I will be working with people from all different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? ANYWHERE IN PILSEN! I love Hispanic food and I ate in Pilsen at least twice a week.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Slavery and the Making of America: The Downward Spiral. This was a drama/documentary that I watched in my Race & Ethnicity class this semester.
The neighbor’s blaring radio and an empty shell of a building: avenues through which we tried making sense of our thoughts, our emotions, and ourselves in the spaces and sounds we experienced in Dakar, Senegal. Tandem to discovering different parts of the city, we found ourselves in a diversity of roles; we arrived as just students, but transformed into friends and family. In navigating our semester, we were humbled by Senegalese values and the beauty of the Wolof tradition of hospitality, *teranga*. The external world informed our evolving mindsets, and each place we lived and worked — school, our homes, the markets, clubs — directly affected this internal process. Each day, we embraced the attitude of *nungi fii rekk*, we are here only.

Our concluding projects for our course Dakar in Transition illustrated our distinctive perspectives on living abroad: one through communal sounds, the other through unfinished spaces. By taking tangible cues from the world around us, we individually presented our understandings of Senegalese culture in our everyday lives.
Valmai Hanson
Beloit College '13

Post graduation plans: After graduation, I will be working for a couple of years, hopefully tying in my interests of English and French to my work before applying to graduate school. I hope to use my experiences from college and especially going abroad in graduate school by studying Comparative Literature and Post-Colonial Studies.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Go across country on an overnight bus halfway through my semester abroad. Going to Kedougou from Dakar required a lot of independence and an adventurous sense of self.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Exhilarating and humbling.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. Improve my language skills through immersion by constantly speaking French as well as learning Wolof, a regional language of Dakar, Senegal.
2. Go to a country that would be harder to visit without preparation or for so long a time (four consecutive months). Unlike programs in France or other Western countries, going to Senegal was a more unique opportunity.
3. Challenge myself by living in a developing nation with a Muslim host family; Senegal is vastly different from the U.S.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Everywhere and anywhere. I think going to both the Dominican Republic and Haiti would be interesting. I’m working on a project on both of these countries currently, and I find their shared and separate histories fascinating, in terms of boundaries, both geographic and social.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Welsh. My mother’s from Wales, and speaks it fluently, but I’ve never had the opportunity to learn it. It’s a language so different from anything else I’ve learned, and I would be able to read old documents in libraries about my heritage at Welsh universities.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Maffe or yassa poulet. Maffe is a peanut and tomato sauce served with meat and rice. It sounds very intense, but it has a great hearty taste, and is extremely filling. Yassa poulet is chicken served with tangy onion sauce. Both dishes are served with rice, which is a big part of Senegalese meals.

Addie Washington
Beloit College ‘13

Post graduation plans: I hope to spend the next year participating in a volunteer service year.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? I hopped on a random bus in the city with a friend. We took a map along, but we ended up in a part of town we never would have seen otherwise, going where we felt drawn. I’m glad for my friend who helped me muster the courage to do something new and uncharted.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Humbling.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. A real, itching curiosity to see what’s out there in the world.
2. I wanted to put the theoretical and academic material I’d been absorbing to the test.
3. I was at a point in my life where I felt like I needed to take a few risks.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? The Middle East.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Arabic.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Yassa Jënn! This delicious meal was often served at my house for the main meal of the day—lunch. A sauce of caramelized onions with a spicy lemon-flavor was topped with fresh fish of the day. Sometimes my host family added raisins or pickles to the sauce, which though it didn’t seem possible, only improved the dish.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Le gamin au velo.
“Nos besamos en la mejilla”: Greeting with a Kiss in México

When I learned that I would have to greet everyone with a kiss in México, I was terrified. But as it turned out, greeting by kissing was wonderful. That marvelous gesture of tenderness and intimacy, even with a new acquaintance, symbolizes to me the many ways in which I came to feel close to the people with whom I interacted during the semester: classmates, host parents, strangers on the bus...There is something in Yucatecan society which does not exist in America, something which folded me into it. Kissing, which had at first seemed to me to be “something Mexicans do,” became “something we do.”

Post graduation plans: AmeriCorps, or a Fulbright Teaching Fellowship in Mexico, or starting a career in public service in Santa Fe.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Get away from the American students and beg the locals to teach me Spanish tongue-twisters!

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Heart-opening.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. My mother studied in France in college, so I always wanted to study abroad.
2. I live in a state with a high immigrant population, and I wanted to know where they were coming from.
3. Speaking a new language is the most exciting challenge I've ever undertaken.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Right back to Yucatán!

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Arabic.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? The unflatteringly-named but delicious “gringas,” or ham quesadillas, which my host mom cooked regularly for dinner and served with the hottest salsa I've ever had.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Beauty and the Beast.

Eleanor Stevens
Grinnell College ’14

Hometown: Santa Fe, NM
Major: Spanish
Program: Institute for Study Abroad, Butler University, Mérida, Yucatán, México—Fall 2012
The off-campus experience opened my mind to new ways of looking at life. I would like to focus on how my perception of death has changed resulting in a new way of understanding my society, my education, and myself. Overall, our society is suffering from the fear of death, attachment to material items, and lacking the knowledge of the basic concept of impermanence. Meditation practice while living in a Burmese monastery, conversations with realized Buddhist monks, and exploring death through the lens of Tibetan Buddhism in an independent study were key factors of the program that helped me achieve my understanding. My outlook on life has changed in a very beneficial way from this experience. My core values have strengthened, helping me feel more grounded as a person and more aware of whom I am as a whole. Academically, I have learned to overcome my stresses and self-doubt as a student in comparison to others. School has become clear to me: the grade is no longer an important factor. I now focus my attention on how I can get the most out of my education in order to continue growing as a person.

Post graduation plans: Work outside, help others, and wake up smiling.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Meditate with thirty-five other students in India.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? May you be well and happy and free from suffering.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. I wanted to learn how to meditate.
2. I was excited to try Indian food.
3. It was time to break out of the bubble of my small, liberal arts school.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Easter Island!

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Italian & French.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Paneer butter masala with nan.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? La Maison en Petits Cubes.

Ben Yoder-Henley
Knox College ’14

Hometown: Minneapolis, MN
Major: Psychology
Minor: Creative Writing
Program: Antioch University, Buddhist Studies in India—Fall 2012
You don’t have to go looking for teranga—the Wolof word for hospitality—in order to find it. It’s just about everywhere, from the friendly guard who quizzes you on your Wolof as you’re walking to class, to the complete stranger who buys you and your friends two rounds of café Touba at the local hangout. The relationships I formed in Senegal showed me how deeply teranga is engrained in the culture. I met Papi Diop when I was going through a hard time with my host family. He accepted me into his circle of friends and treated me as a brother. His commitment to friends was mirrored by his love for his family. When he wasn’t doing schoolwork, he was searching for tenants to rent out rooms in his house. The money he earned from this he used to support himself and his grandmother. Being around Papi and people like him for a term taught me the importance of giving—giving not only to friends and family, but also to strangers. Although in Senegal I was often on the receiving end, I leave the experience more willing to share what I have with those around me.

Post graduation plans: My plan is to take post-bac courses at the University of Washington and apply to graduate or medical school programs.

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Explore Dakar at night with my close friend Papi.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Teranga.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. Immerse myself in a new culture.
2. Improve my French.
3. Leave Lawrence for a term.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Back to Thailand.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Thai.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Djibi—freshly roasted goat meat. So delicious!

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Half the Sky.

Xavier Al-Mateen – *Photo Contest Winner*
Lawrence University ’13

Hometown: Tacoma, WA
Major: Biology
Minor: French
Program: Lawrence University, Francophone Seminar in Dakar, Senegal—Spring 2012
Finding Yourself through the Eyes of a Big City

My journey on the Chicago Arts Program started off on not so great footing. There were many things bringing down my excitement and confidence. However, while on the program, I met with a challenge to be open with and accept myself. I didn’t know that the most amazing teachers would be waiting for me to help me understand my place in this world. My professors taught me to learn from everything, everyone, and every experience around me. My coworkers believed in me in everything I endeavored upon. Community organizers allowed me to see things from multiple perspectives. My fellow students showed me ideas that always further inspired me. Chicago, the city, helped me become the more confident and self-aware person I am today. I learned to believe in myself and the decisions I was making, and I began to have faith in my future and what I wanted to accomplish in life. This experience of personal growth, learning to accept mistakes, not fear the unknown, and believe in what I was doing wouldn’t have happened without the opportunity given to me from the Chicago Arts Program.

Post graduation plans: Enter the workforce! When you put it that way, it doesn’t sound so fun. But on the contrary, there are a lot of things I love to do, and I am currently applying for jobs to work for a non-profit (charitable) organization. If I can’t obtain one of my many dream jobs right away, I am planning to go into retail management and spend every minute outside of work volunteering, organizing, and doing what I love!

What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Experienced life. No really, I just stopped and experienced it. I stopped to smell the roses. Of course, there are not too many roses in the middle of Chicago. Honestly the best thing I was ever taught was to learn from every experience around you, and by doing that, it was the best thing I ever did in Chicago.

What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Life-changing.

Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. To experience something completely new and different that would push me out of my comfort zone.
2. To experience living in a big city—to see whether I liked it or not. Turns out I love it.
3. To do more of my art and practice my creativity.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Every other major city in the world. If I had to choose just one though, it would probably be London since I’ve always wanted to visit there. I want to experience the differences, similarities, beauty, and culture that every major city has to offer.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? French. I feel that the language is beautiful, and I started to learn it when I was a child, but lost most of that knowledge so I want to pick it up again.

What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Tamales from this place in Pilsen. The name escapes me but they were almost as good as the ones my neighbor made as a child (and those were some of the best, the whole neighborhood would come by because she made hundreds). But this place in Pilsen was truly delicious. I could have eaten ten of their Tamales, maybe more!

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Les Misérables.
My presentation revolves around my recognition of the vast differences between peoples and cultures, and how little that difference really matters, yet is defining. There exists an inherent essentiality among human beings; we can communicate with each other in ways that are not only verbal or physical, but emotional as well. The key feature that allowed me to recognize this was the generous amounts of free time afforded. While the many trips the program provided were interesting and enjoyable, the time I spent walking around Pune, experiencing life as an Indian—as best I could—was invaluable. I learned through conflict and misunderstanding there are differences; yet these differences are central to a cultural understanding. For instance, my academic project revolved around the use of English as a mode for Indian writing. It touched on literary authenticity and the need to retain a language. The key aspect of my study, however, was the liquidity of these identity classifications. I studied a bilingual Marathi/English writer, and one doesn’t get more transitive than an author who writes Indian sensibilities in a non-native language. In short, what most affected me was the realization of the important tension between identity of culture and identity of humanity.

Post graduation plans: Not set in stone at all. Some options are to apply to teach English as a foreign language or graduate school. If all else fails, I’ll dig ditches.
What was the best thing that you did while on an off-campus program? Walk around the city of Pune and experience the city as both a visitor and an inhabitant.
What is one word or phrase that best describes your experience off-campus? Enlightening.
Top 3 reasons why you chose to go off-campus:
1. Experience a different culture.
2. Gain a different perspective of America.
3. Money – it was cheaper to go to India rather than my school for the semester.
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Istanbul, Turkey.
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Hebrew or Arabic.
What was the best meal that you had while on your program? Pohe, a smashed rice meal usually served at breakfast and topped with coconuts. Simple yet superb.
What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? The Notebook, probably.
If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? Don’t underestimate yourself. Always stay positive and aim high, and you’ll be surprised by what you can achieve.

What countries have you visited? In chronological order: The Bahamas, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ukraine, Egypt, Japan, Germany, Austria, France.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? There are a lot of new countries I’d like to go to (Ireland, Iceland, India, and others that don’t start with I), but right now I most want to go back to Russia to visit all of my students, colleagues, and friends from my two years as a Fulbright ETA in Kursk and Ussuriysk.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Maybe Spanish, because it’s spoken by so many people in the U.S. and in so many countries around the world. Or Chinese, because so many of our international students come from China.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Are we talking real tears here, or just tearing up a bit? To be honest, most movies make me tear up at least once, even if I see the sad moment coming a mile away. The last one that did it was probably Les Misérables.

Where did you go for undergrad? Harvard University.
What did you study? History and Literature.
How long have you worked at your ACM college? 11 years.
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? The students - they keep me excited, challenged, and interested in everything I read.

If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? It’s a terrible cliché, but it’s one worth remembering: do what you love.

What countries have you visited? UK, France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium, Serbia, Russia, Mexico, Canada, and (as of this month) India.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Too hard to pick! So I’ll say Iceland, where I’m headed in 2014.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? The Descendants, with George Clooney.
Where did you go for undergrad? University of Dakar, Senegal. 
What did you study? Languages and Cultures, Linguistics, and Sociology.
How long have you worked at your ACM college? 15 years. 
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? Enjoy the students, their commitment, and the academic rewards gained through interaction and collaboration with students and colleagues.
What countries have you visited? Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, France, etc.
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Across the Francophone World!
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? I already speak a few, but would also like to deepen my knowledge of Arabic.

Where did you go for undergrad? I graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara. 
What did you study? I majored in Aquatic Biology at UCSB. However, my PhD is in molecular plant pathology. My current research involves molecular marine biology.
How long have you worked at your ACM college? I have worked at Cornell College for 24 years. 
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? One aspect of teaching that provides me with the most satisfaction has been the on-going activities of my research program and the integration of my research into all facets of my teaching. I believe the best way to foster intellectual inquiry is to integrate teaching and research. Cornell College has made it clear that student-faculty research matters and is an important component of undergraduate education. Opportunities spent with students in my research lab are what I enjoy the most about working at an undergraduate institution.
If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? Student success: All ACM colleges offer the opportunity for undergraduates to get involved in faculty research. Actively seek these opportunities because these experiences are rewarding. You will meet interesting people who are passionately involved in their discipline and you will gain insight and context about your undergraduate education.
What countries have you visited? Italy, Germany, Austria, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Bahamas, Belize, Bonaire, Canada, & Mexico.
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Australia. I am interested in doing coral research in Western Australia.
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Spanish. I regret not taking Spanish in college.
What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Good question, I am not overly sentimental at movies. Maybe Schindler’s List.
Marlene Jacks
Grinnell College
Intercultural Affairs Associate

Mike Schneider
Knox College
Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Professor of History

What did you study? Speech Communications; WIU Graduate School - Education and Interdisciplinary Studies.
How long have you worked at your ACM college? 13 years.
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? Grinnell College provides a wonderful liberal arts experience for employees to work across various disciplines with talented students, faculty and staff.
If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? Take advantage of the opportunity to see the world and leave a legacy of helping others.
What countries have you visited? Japan, Hong-Kong, Taiwan, China.
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Barcelona.
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Chinese.
What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? The Help.

Where did you go for undergrad? Michigan State University.
What did you study? Chemistry and History.
How long have you worked at your ACM college? 20 years.
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? Freedom to innovate and invent new pathways to explore our interests, provide new opportunities for students, and meet the serious issues facing higher education in the 21st century.
If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? Learn to listen. Everything else is, by comparison, easier.
What countries have you visited? Japan (a lot), China, S. Korea, Canada, England, most of Western Europe, Poland, and other places I can't think of right now.
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? New Zealand. My daughter is there now and I am jealous.
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Mandarin (at least to a much higher proficiency than I am now).
What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Milk.
Jill Van Newenhizen
Lake Forest College
Associate Professor of Mathematics

Where did you go for undergrad? Lake Forest College.
What did you study? Mathematics.
How long have you worked at your ACM college? 25 years.
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? My colleagues.
If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? You never get a second chance to make a first impression.
What countries have you visited? Italy, Holland, England, Canada.
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Italy.
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Chinese.
What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? *Now Voyager* (1942).

Jason Brozek
Lawrence University
Assistant Professor of Government

Where did you go for undergrad? Wayne State College - Wayne, NE.
What did you study? Political Science and Philosophy.
How long have you worked at your ACM college? This is my fifth year at Lawrence.
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? I’ve had the chance to work closely with students over multiple years/courses, so I get to see firsthand the impact that international experience has on them.
If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? In my experience, a smile, some flexibility and a little patience are often the difference between a terrible travel experience and a wonderful one.
What countries have you visited? Most recently, China. I’m one of the organizers of Lawrence’s Sustainable China program, which involves small (12-15 student) study trips during our December break. Together with our Chinese partners, we’re investigating the complex relationship between environmental conservation, economic development and cultural preservation.
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? I’m dying to go hiking in Peru again.
Megan Benzschawel  
*Luther College*  
Center for Global Learning Intern

Where did you go for undergrad? I am a graduate of Luther College.
What did you study? I had majors in Sociology and Spanish.

How long have you worked at your ACM college? I have worked with Luther since August 2012. My position in the Center for Global Learning is a one academic year term for a recent Luther graduate – I graduated in May 2012.
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? I love interacting with students and getting them excited about off-campus study. Our college’s emphasis on global citizenship and the engagement of critical global issues is something that is so inspiring to me. Our world is in such dire need of individuals who have a heart for issues of social justice and peace.

If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? Have an open heart and an open mind. Listen. The world has so much to teach you.

What countries have you visited? India, Israel, Palestine, Turkey, Guatemala, Ecuador, Argentina, Chile, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, France, England, Ireland, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Norway, Uruguay.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Sub-Saharan Africa.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Swahili.

What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? I actually couldn’t tell you... I prefer movies that make me laugh. :)

Suresh Mudragada  
*Macalester College*  
Assistant Director of Campus Programs

Where did you go for undergrad? Auburn University.

How long have you worked at your ACM college? Almost 2 years.
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? Working with engaged and passionate students.

If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? You know that you can accomplish a lot, but don’t forget to take the time to reflect on what you’ve done so far.

What countries have you visited? India, South Korea, Thailand, Cambodia, Canada, Mexico, and United Arab Emirates.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go? I’d travel around the world, but first stop would be Italy.

If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Portuguese.
Nick Dobson  
Monmouth College  
Assistant Professor of Classics

Where did you go for undergrad? Rice University.  
What did you study? Linguistics.  
How long have you worked at your ACM college? 6 years.  
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? The small classes that make it easy to interact with students.  
If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? Ask questions.  
What countries have you visited? England, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Canada, and Austria.  
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Switzerland.  
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Italian.  
What was the last movie you saw that made you cry? Lincoln.

Diane Beres  
Ripon College  
Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, Mathematics and Computer Science

Where did you go for undergrad? Ripon College.  
What did you study? Mathematics and Biology (Majors); English and Educational Studies (Minors).  
How long have you worked at your ACM college? Off and on since 1971.  
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? Students.  
If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? Try new things.  
What countries have you visited? Canada, Mexico, Barbados, Costa Rica, Israel, Bahamas, Venezuela, Ecuador, Japan, Jordan, and Sweden.  
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? Southern/Eastern Africa.  
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Spanish. I know some. I’d like to be fluent.
Where did you go for undergrad? Undergraduate degree: Brown University; Graduate degrees: Yale University.
How long have you worked at your ACM college? This is my 34th year at St. Olaf. 25 years as a full-time teacher and 9 years as a college administrator.
What do you enjoy most about teaching/working at an ACM college? I attended research universities but have become a strong advocate of liberal arts education. I appreciate the sense of community that exists in a smaller institution and the coherent mission of our college.
If you could offer just one hint for success, what would it be? Make both short-term and long-term plans but be very flexible and ready to change the path you are pursuing. Being organized is a profitable virtue but there is also a place for serendipity.
What countries have you visited? Just about all the countries of western Europe and Scandinavia, Morocco, Turkey, Greece, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian Territories, South Africa, Tanzania, Botswana, India, Thailand, China, and several islands in the Caribbean.
If you could travel anywhere where would you go? New places: Japan and New Zealand. Places I would like to explore more deeply: India and southern Africa. Favorite place I like to visit over and over again: Italy.
If you could learn to speak any language what would it be? Icelandic.