THE HUSKY EXPERIENCE AS A GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

MAY 2018

At the University of Washington, it has long been our priority to support our students with international backgrounds, and to offer all students opportunities to gain global perspectives. Now, as our graduates join an increasingly global workforce, it’s more important than ever that we seek new ways to create inclusive international communities on campus, and develop all students’ global competencies.

There are two important and related aspects to ensuring the Husky Experience is a global experience for all students. The first has to do with the tremendous ways in which our diverse international students enrich our campus. International students, and students with international backgrounds, strengthen our UW community — from our classrooms and labs to our residence halls and student organizations. They bring diverse knowledge, perspectives and experiences. Through evolving existing programs, and creating new ones, we are intensifying our efforts to provide international students with a rich student experience — one that connects them to domestic students, and to each other, both in and out of class to build lasting, cross-cultural relationships with opportunities to share and learn.

At the same time, a UW education needs to include learning and experiences that prepare all our students to live and work in global environments. We are committed to creating opportunities for students to connect to the world at large, and we have a strong foundation for this work. Our focus is now to extend new pathways for accessing global learning to all students. This can take many forms. For example, faculty are experimenting with short-term study abroad programs and using technology to create globally connected classrooms to increase access to international experiences. And students are building international connections themselves — on campus, in the local community and elsewhere in the world — developing the skills of collaboration and critical thinking that are key to global engagement.

Interacting, connecting and collaborating across borders is our students’ future — and it’s ours, too. So we make it our priority in the present, ensuring all UW students are supported and encouraged to be active participants in our increasingly globalized world.

Gerald J. Baldasty
Provost and Executive Vice President
Professor, Department of Communication
WELCOMING NEW STUDENTS TO OUR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Recently, the UW's Seattle campus has been building on longstanding orientation efforts to increase support for students with diverse experiences of transition, including international and first generation students. Welcoming these students — often less familiar with U.S. university environments and most in need of support — has meant both evolving existing partnerships and creating new programs. The result is a range of opportunities for students to find their home in the UW community, and for the entire UW to benefit from the diversity of our student body.

Joining the community before arriving to campus

The Office of First Year Programs welcomes all new students before they leave home — whether home is in China, Chile or Washington state — with information and steps to begin the orientation process. Additional resources are offered to international and exchange students transitioning into the UW.

A first step for all students is U101 — a self-guided, multi-media online course that prepares students for Advising & Orientation. U101 also offers a customized track for international students (as well as for transfer students). In about three hours, students have information on everything from registration information, to study skills tips, to videos on using library resources. The international student track includes additional information such as on resources for multilingual students.

Meanwhile, International Student Services (ISS) provides its own online welcome and information session to international students, including a pre-arrival checklist to complete before registration. The “front door” to the UW for many students, ISS manages crucial logistics such as visas and health insurance for students once they arrive to campus.

In addition, some students begin celebrating the start of their Husky experience before leaving home. In cities around the world, UW student organizations host send-off events, often in coordination with alumni networks and the Office of Advancement. In late summer, in cities from New York to Taipei, local students are welcomed to the UW community with parties and student-led orientation programming. The Chinese Students and Scholars Association, for example, hosts a large welcome program in Beijing organized by current UW international students from China who go home for the summer to coordinate. Evelyn Seo, class of 2018, participated in a send-off event in Seoul as an incoming student and later worked as an Orientation Leader, guiding students through Advising & Orientation sessions organized by First Year Programs. “Seeing students come together as a community to welcome the incoming students is truly amazing and shows the importance of inclusion as a core value at UW,” she says.

Transitioning to the UW includes resources, information — and intercultural exchange

For all new students arriving to the UW, the Advising & Orientation program includes a session on Global Engagement. “The main conversation is about how students gain intercultural competence here on campus,” says LeAnne Jones Wiles, director of First Year Programs. “Intercultural connections are more accessible than ever at the UW, and U.S. students find those interactions to be just as valuable as international students do,” she adds.

Many incoming students, including around 300 international students each year, also enroll in Early Fall Start. These are intensive four-week courses that offer a jump start on transitioning to campus and academic life before fall term begins. Students choose from topic-driven Discovery Seminars or English Language and Writing courses. The latter include several sections of ENGL108: Writing Ready, Learning Ready: Preparing for Success at a Global University, in which international and domestic students develop comfort and confidence with academic writing in small and mutually supportive classes.
In addition, the Foundation for International Understanding through Students (FIUTS) hosts its own 10-day “Welcome Weeks” at the start of fall quarter for all incoming international and exchange students. Students explore campus and the greater Seattle area, and participate in dozens of activities. “Whether here for a one-quarter exchange program or a seven-year PhD, undergrad and graduate students from all over the world take part in the experience together,” says FIUTS Director Era Schrepfer. Students of all backgrounds — including many domestic students who serve as event facilitators — forge lasting relationships through the intense, often memorable 10-day experience.

In fall quarter, the end of FIUTS Welcome Weeks overlaps with the start of Dawg Daze events for both first-year and returning students. With over 220 social and academic events occurring on campus between the two, students have seemingly endless opportunity for fun and bonding — all while getting to know the UW.

Building community throughout the year

Even after orientations end, the opportunity for campus involvement continues throughout the academic year.

The Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center (ECC) is home to 165 student multicultural organizations and hosts cultural events year round, as well as opportunities for student leadership development. As a whole, the UW is home to hundreds of enormously diverse Registered Student Organizations (RSOs), offering a wealth of opportunities to get involved with on-campus communities.

FIUTS keeps a full calendar of its activities throughout the year. They host up to 40 social events and activities per quarter, from Mount Rainier hikes to Theo Chocolate factory tours, from snow-shoeing to bubble tea and hot yoga nights. Every Wednesday and Thursday, community volunteers lead culture-sharing English conversation groups on campus, which are open to all (not just UW students). The Wednesday Lunch program offers food and socializing to 150-250 people each month a mix of undergraduate and graduate students, international and domestic, alumni and community members.

“It’s so important for students to build a community here at UW,” says Schrepfer. “Whether that includes students from other countries, their home country, domestic students, community members — it’s about finding the smaller university within the larger university.”

INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING THROUGH STUDENTS: FIUTS

An independent nonprofit, FIUTS was one of the first organizations of its kind nationwide. In 1948, UW administrators and local civic leaders created FIUTS to support international students, promote cross-cultural understanding and connect the UW with the greater Seattle community. Today, the UW international student population is much larger: from 274 students in 1948 to over 9,000 today, from 37 countries to over 100. And FIUTS remains a central piece of international students’ experiences, particularly at their point of transition into the UW.

FIUTS’ homestay program places around 200 students each year with local hosts for their first week in Seattle. Participants — mostly graduate students — have a home base while looking for a more permanent residence, becoming familiar with their new school and city, and bonding with the community members who host them. Many students stay connected to their host families after the homestay week; some host families have participated in the program for decades. “It’s an amazing bond that can span generations,” notes Schrepfer.
Welcoming and orientation programs do more than serve incoming students. They provide opportunities for leadership development, cross-cultural experience and community involvement to all UW students, domestic and international.

**WELCOMING CONTINUED: HIGH-IMPACT OPPORTUNITIES TO WELCOME NEW STUDENTS — ON CAMPUS AND ABROAD**

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**FIGs: STUDENTS GUIDING STUDENTS THROUGH THE FIRST QUARTER AT UW**

First-year Interest Groups, or FIGs, are a central part of nearly half of all UW students’ first year; in 2016, 47 percent of incoming international students enrolled in FIGs. FIGs are clusters of courses that students can choose for their first quarter at UW, centered around a two-credit General Studies seminar (GEN ST 199). Through FIGs, students connect with peers, engage in critical thinking and begin to build a strong academic foundation — all within a smaller social community.

FIGs are guided by upper-class students called FIG Leaders. Many FIG leaders are international students — and likewise, domestic student FIG leaders engage with new international students. All FIG leaders take a 10-week leadership course before teaching GEN ST 199, where they design 12 unique lesson plans on topics such as time management, diversity and inclusion, and undergraduate research. “Being a FIG leader gave me the opportunity to gain skills as an instructor, and to create relationships with other students as a mentor, guiding them in navigating university culture,” says Nawal Syeda, class of 2018.

**HUSKY PRESIDENTIAL AMBASSADORS: EXTENDING THE UW WELCOME ABROAD**

Since 2015, the Husky Presidential Ambassadors Leadership Institute (HPA LI) has developed as a model for forging strong international bonds across communities. A three-week program during Summer B Term, HPA connects incoming Chinese students to current UW students, helping all participants build leadership skills and cross-cultural fluency.

Each year, 20 undergraduates are selected to be Ambassadors and participate in this study abroad program. In the program’s first week, students stay in Seattle and prepare for their ambassadorships, learning everything they need to know to support the transition of new students to campus. The second week takes them to Beijing, where they visit historical and cultural sites and get acquainted with new cultural surroundings. In the final week, they meet a cohort of 20 incoming Chinese students and participate together in an immersive Leadership Institute — living and learning together at Tsinghua University.

**An immersive experience: Learning and bonding across cultures**

In Beijing, the bonding really begins.

In close quarters, students get to know one another and the city itself, as most Chinese students are not from Beijing. From a city scavenger hunt to sharing sessions at communal dinners, students are continuously prompted to share perspectives on leadership and practice cross-cultural communication. “Because they spend hours of informal time together — on the subway, sharing meals, as roommates — they form really meaningful relationships,” says program co-leader Francesca Lo, director of the Husky Leadership Initiative.
They also share some powerful experiences through UW alums in Beijing, who get them thinking about leadership and potential career paths. Students attend “leadership chats” with local Huskies — such as Vice President of China Boeing Ian Chang, who invites the whole group to his office for informal conversation and advice. Through visits to Amazon China and the Beijing office of the Gates Foundation, students learn important leadership lessons from a wide range of professionals. Other local alums invite small groups of students out to dinner for more intimate conversation, which students often cite as a standout experience.

**Developing skills for a global future**

Many aspects of HPA make it a unique experience for participants. There’s the service component for the ambassadors, invested in supporting the transition of first-year international students. There’s the close interaction between students from different cultures, both incoming international students and a broad spectrum of current UW students. And there’s the focus on leadership. While the program is about welcoming and developing meaningful relationships with new students, says Lo, “building cross-cultural leadership skills is a great mechanism to do that.”

The many leadership workshops and activities invite students’ self-reflection — of broader personal goals, values and leadership philosophy. “Everyone has the capacity to be a leader,” says co-leader Liping Yu, senior lecturer in Asian Languages & Literature. “This is a very important message that we instill in our students from day one — that they themselves can be a leader, one way or another.”

Student Ambassadors have felt the enormous impact of participation in HPA — and in turn, pass that impact onto the UW community. Chelsea Ye, class of 2019, learned to ‘talk less, listen more,’ she says. “HPA showed me to take the time to listen to others and try to get to know them on a deeper level, allowing me to be a better student, family member, friend, and also a better leader.” Benjamin Pennant, class of 2017, is now earning his MA in computer science at Tsinghua due to his participation in HPA. “I think the whole UW benefits from the program,” he says. “Students come back with a heightened sense of what it must be like for international students to come here, in this case, all the way from Beijing. In that way, they are able to empathize with a large portion of UW students and are more equipped to bring the whole of the student body together.”

Looking ahead, HPA is looking for ways to sustain and possibly expand the program. As Lo says, “We have so many other countries that international students are coming from. We would love to see the model replicated in other cities and countries, in and beyond China.”
CONNECTING HUSKIES THROUGH INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Two new programs connect domestic and international students for bonding and cultural exchange to build a more inclusive, global UW.

UNITE UW

Connecting international and domestic students

How do we create more opportunities for international and domestic students to meet, socialize and connect? In 2015, staff in the Division of Student Life focused on this question. While programs existed to connect international students among themselves, fewer existed to build bridges between international and domestic students.

Enter Unite UW: An intense, quarter-long bonding experience on the Seattle campus for domestic-international student pairs. The program launched in winter 2016 with a cohort of 34 participants. By spring of the following year, it had grown to three concurrent 30-student programs, running all four quarters (including Early Fall Start). By Winter 2018, Unite UW has paired over 540 students — and has a long waiting list for future quarters.

A model for equal partnership and mutual benefit

Staff at Student Life first considered, then quickly rejected, a mentorship model, in which domestic students would “mentor” international students. Vice President for Student Life Denzil Suite, along with International Student Engagement Specialist Dan Zhu, recognized that international students would be mentors to their domestic peers, as well. The model was designed as one of equal partnership, promoting two-way learning and exchange.

For Zhu, the primary value of Unite UW is that it is mutually enriching. “Our international students bring diverse perspectives, knowledge and experiences that strengthen our classrooms, research and cross-cultural competencies — just as our domestic students do,” she says.

“Our domestic students gain different worldviews and cultural competencies on the one hand, while on the other hand, our international students feel valued and empowered to truly take ownership of their life here at UW.”

— Dan Zhu, international student engagement specialist, Student Life
Cultural exchange and common ground, at home on campus

During their participating quarter, the student pairs do weekly activities together — sometimes with other pairs and sometimes with the whole cohort. Activities run the gamut from resume-building and leadership workshops, to a Seattle scavenger hunt, to a “slang sharing” potluck. In winter, the program invites participants and alums to a dumpling-making party in celebration of Lunar New Year. Optional activities are offered weekly as well, such as ice skating or Husky basketball games.

One of the highlights is a weekend retreat at Pack Forest near Mount Rainier during the second or third week of the program. All 90 students of each cohort attend and take part in various bonding activities, including a culminating “sharing circle” in which students share personal experiences that have shaped who they are. As one student put it in a post-retreat reflection, during the sharing circle, “I realized that despite our cultural differences, we were all united and similar in some way.”

Developing the global skills that all students need

International experiences are central to student development, says Denzil Suite. “Students graduate from UW and enter working environments with people from all over the world,” he points out. “We would do our students a disservice if we didn’t prepare them to work and interact with people from all over the planet. It’s about being a well-rounded individual.”

These values appeal to international and domestic students alike; the program has continued to attract both in equal numbers. While waiting lists grow each quarter, Suite and Zhu are committed to keeping the program at its current size. Small cohorts foster the deep connections that can last a lifetime — within “a welcoming space,” says Zhu, “where all students can truly listen to and learn from one another.”

UW Tacoma has developed its own cross-cultural partnerships to suit the campus’ urban-serving mission. The Global Ambassadors Program, for example, links incoming international students with domestic students in ways that benefit the whole campus community.

Led by Office of Global Affairs staff members Courtney Kroll and Amber Hallberg, the program takes applications from interested students in roughly equal numbers. A yearly cohort of 30 students keeps the program intimate, with a focus on social justice and cross-cultural bonding and exchange. Monthly events include lectures, films, group discussions and informal social excursions.

Participants gain greater cultural competency and humility, a sense of global citizenship and strengthened connections to the community, says Jeff Cohen, executive director of the UW Tacoma Office of Global Affairs. International students are supported in their transitions to UW Tacoma, and domestic students are provided global experiences without leaving campus. At the end of the program, participating students receive a personalized letter of recommendation from the Office of Global Affairs — and more importantly, they build relationships that extend well beyond graduation.

Learn more about the UW Tacoma Global Ambassadors in Shooq Alhathelool’s profile on page 12.
Thousands of UW students have had life-changing experiences all around the world with study abroad — but many students are deterred by the time or cost of traditional programs. Recently, innovative faculty have been exploring new models so that even more students can study abroad.

At the UW Bothell School of Nursing, Associate Professor Mabel Ezeonwu has partnered with a local nonprofit to bring student health care providers to rural Guatemala. In the College of the Environment, Lecturer Kristi Straus has piloted a “global flip” program with Tsinghua University in China. And in the College of Engineering, Associate Professor Heidi Gough has partnered with a Jordanian university to have students study water engineering in drastically different regions of the world. These and other faculty, along with the Office of the Provost and the Office of Global Affairs, are committed to making the life-changing study abroad experience accessible to all students.

Many of Associate Professor Mabel Ezeonwu’s graduate students in the UW Bothell School of Nursing are working professionals for whom a full study abroad program would be challenging — if not impossible.

So Ezeonwu found a way to give her students a study abroad experience in a way that works for them. In 2016, she partnered with Seattle-based nonprofit Guatemala Village Health (GVH) to launch the 12-credit cross-disciplinary course, Global Health Promotion: Health Services Delivery in Resource-Poor Settings. GVH has been providing health services with partners in Guatemala for years; together with UW students, they have been able to provide care at unprecedented scale.

The program is designed to be as feasible as possible for working students, even before they get on the plane. It meets the Nursing program’s core requirements and runs during summer term. It’s also a hybrid course, combining online and classroom coursework with field work and team-building activities.

Students spend the first eight weeks at home, learning about global health issues in the context of Guatemalan policy and culture. Then, they go to rural Guatemala for two weeks, where they help provide on-the-ground health services to hundreds of people in a hands-on clinical setting.

Hands-on service learning: “Education at its best”

Advance team-building is crucial, as in Guatemala, “the work is pretty much 24/7,” says Ezeonwu. The program welcomes a mix of students from all disciplines, both graduates and undergraduates. “The diversity of backgrounds makes the program unique,” Ezeonwu says. She creates working groups that draw on students’ complementary skills: for example, the graduate students and experienced registered nurses bring clinical expertise and leadership experience, and undergraduates in majors ranging from cultural studies to biology bring different disciplinary perspectives.
Once in Guatemala, everyone is part of the team that delivers care — whether doing lab work, taking vital signs or running health education sessions. With GVH, the UW students visited seven villages, setting up mobile clinics with multiple stations (such as pharmacy, lab or education) in each one. Over the course of two weeks, they served around 600 patients.

These are mostly remote Mayan communities without local sources of health care. Some of the most impactful work is the most basic, such as tips on handwashing, tooth-brushing, boiling water or wearing shoes to avoid parasites.

“For students to see what it takes to deliver care in an environment with almost nothing, with almost zero resources to work with, that's education at its best,” says Ezeonwu. Program participant Stephanie Covel, former Masters in Nursing student and now surgery center manager at UW Medicine's Northwest Hospital & Medical Center, agrees. “You can't really put into words how it might affect you — being able to see how other people live in the world, and how that opens your mind to global issues,” she says.

**Connecting local learning to global issues**

For students, the program brings to light how the local and the global are always intertwined when it comes to health issues. “Students need to understand that what is going on elsewhere is also relevant to people in the U.S.,” Ezeonwu says. "I try to get them to understand the connectivity of health issues in the world."

Students also learn the value of collaboration — across disciplines, communities and nations — to make health education accessible for patients and students alike. These perspectives, for Ezeonwu, are at least as important for students as their discipline-specific learning.

In looking ahead, Ezeonwu has a lot of ideas for how the program could expand. For example, she envisions a training program for health practitioners and community health promoters in Guatemala who don't have access or time to attend traditional degree programs.

In the meantime, GVH has reported that partnering with UW Bothell has allowed them to see many more patients than ever before. As the program grows, its impact spreads — from Washington state into rural Guatemala, and back again.
THE “GLOBAL FLIP” EXPERIMENT: UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABILITY IN CHINA AND AT HOME

Kristi Straus, lecturer in the Program on the Environment, has long been practicing the “flipped classroom”: in which students study course content outside of class, and do more active learning during class time. The idea — increasingly popular nationwide — is that “flipping” makes best use of learning time, as instructors can support students through problem solving, discussions and other applied learning activities in the classroom.

In partnership with the Office of the Provost, Straus piloted a “global flip” program in Fall 2017: a study abroad model that allows students to maximize the international experience in a shorter time frame.

With support from Center for Teaching and Learning consultant Wei Zuo and Academic Technologies, Straus worked with professors at Tsinghua University to design an introductory course on sustainability for students on both campuses. Tsinghua students watched recordings of Kristi’s lectures in her UW classroom, so that all students had in-person sessions at their own schools as well as access to an international, multi-cultural and collaborative online learning environment. Throughout the course, students connected online — via WeChat, online discussion boards and video conferencing — to think critically about how personal choices affect social, economic and environmental sustainability. They shared assignments and activities while comparing sustainability challenges and approaches to solutions in the U.S. and China.

Then, the real abroad portion: 10 days in Beijing. Together, the UW and Tsinghua students heard from well-known Chinese researchers and worked in teams on course materials. But they also did more active, applied learning activities, with each other and their instructors there for support. They took field trips to industry labs, a water treatment plant, and solar and wind farms, to see Chinese sustainability efforts at work.

As the global flip model includes shorter-term travel, it increases access to immersive global experiences both for students in technical majors who have less flexibility, and for students who may not otherwise be able to afford them. Faculty in other departments, including English, Philosophy and Oceanography are currently seeking partners in countries around the world to replicate the global flip.

The global flip model combines short-term study abroad with Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) to maximize the international experience for students.

UW Students at the Gaobeidian Waste Water Treatment Plant learned about how waste water is managed in Beijing. Photo credit: Shunxi Liu.
Students of water engineering can learn a lot from studying local systems in the Pacific Northwest. But what might students learn from comparing those systems to a completely different climate and region of the world?

In 2012, the College of Engineering was lacking for study abroad programs, but Associate Professor Heidi Gough was determined to give students options for studying abroad. “If students are strong enough to get a degree from the UW, they should have the opportunity for an international experience,” says Gough. A professor of water engineering, she also felt it crucial that students apply their learning to different climates, populations and resource situations.

So she contacted colleagues in one of the most water-scarce nations in the world: Jordan. With professors at the Jordan University for Science and Technology, she co-designed and launched the course Water in an Arid Land in 2012.

To make this program as feasible as possible for students, Gough made sure the five-credit course would count as a technical elective (required for the engineering degree). Gough runs her course during the four-week Early Fall Start term to work around students’ summer internship schedules. By 2018 she has run the program four times, each time bringing 8-12 students to Irbid, Jordan. There, UW and Jordanian students have a completely immersive experience — living, traveling and working together.

The UW students tend to be a mix of domestic and international, undergraduates and graduate students. They also tend to be a disciplinary mix, including students specializing in chemical, structural and/or water engineering, or environmental studies. All work together on projects with Jordanian undergraduate and graduate students — collaborating across cultures, disciplines and educational levels.

Making the study abroad experience local

Currently, Gough is working hard to extend a similar experience to Jordanian students, by bringing them to study alongside UW students on the Olympic Peninsula. Her course Sustainable Water in a Wet Region launched in summer 2017 with UW students, who lived and worked on the Peninsula for four weeks. In Washington, students had a range of cross-cultural experiences: visiting tribes in Kitsap County to learn how they manage resources; comparing values around water across tribes and towns; and talking with city officials about sustainability in different regions.

Gough designed the course with the mixed cohort — Jordanian students with UW students — in mind, and is making progress around initial obstacles to Jordanian students receiving course credit. She looks forward to Jordanian students joining in the experience in Summer 2019.
GLOBAL LEARNING THROUGH DOING: HIGH-IMPACT EXPERIENCES

The UW offers a myriad of paths to high-impact global experiences for students: from service projects with international communities to internships in the global workforce; from conducting international research to serving our diverse student body through student organizations or government. And some students create brand new paths toward more intercultural engagements at the UW. These students are having transformative experiences — and transforming the world around them.

SHOOQ ALHATHELOOL, UW TACOMA, CLASS OF 2019

In Fall 2016, Shooq Alhathelool had been in the U.S. for a year when she transferred from Tacoma Community College to UW Tacoma. Originally from Saudi Arabia, she quickly became interested in learning about the cultural diversity surrounding her on the UW Tacoma campus — among both the international and domestic student populations.

Getting involved

Alhathelool joined the UW Tacoma Global Ambassadors Program in Fall 2017. “Before the Global Ambassadors meetings, I didn't know anything about civil rights issues in the U.S. — racism, immigration, the prison system or other issues,” she says. “Every month we get to meet and hear professionals discuss these issues and then discuss them ourselves. I'll hear a student say, oh, we have the same issue in China and I'm thinking, we have something similar in Saudi ... I see how we all connect.”

One particularly impactful presentation came from a visiting Indigenous Studies scholar, Paulette Blanchard. “I'd never learned much about Native American issues, especially from a woman's perspective. She talked about tribes and wanting to keep traditions alive, and I really relate to that because sometimes I think, why do we [in Saudi Arabia] still do that old tradition? But seeing her fight for her culture was really cool. It made me embrace my culture more, be proud of it and want to preserve it.”

Forging new paths

Alhathelool also joined the Muslim Student Association (MSA). “I really wanted to do something for MSA and for the community,” she says. “The president of MSA suggested, 'what about teaching Arabic?' In Islam, all of our practices are in Arabic — and I saw how most students in MSA were struggling with their Arabic. So I thought it was a great idea.”

A great idea — but at first, an overwhelming one. “I didn't know where to start! First, I was binge-watching videos on Youtube about teaching Arabic to beginners,” Alhathelool says. “At the same time I was learning Spanish, so I was thinking about what was helping me learn a new language, and I created similar games and lessons. I tried to use any resources I could for support.” In time, she created a complete syllabus, and in Spring term started holding lessons every week.

Alhathelool expected lessons would mostly be of interest to MSA students — but from the beginning, they drew a diverse mix of students, as well as faculty and staff. One student, she remembers, had served in Iraq and was interested in refreshing his Arabic.

“All too often students have a localized perspective on their lives — the impression that their own experiences represent the totality of experiences available to them. The degree to which we can expand that thinking, the better we can prepare them for the world beyond the UW.”

— Denzil Suite, vice president for Student Life
“Undergraduate research is one of the uniquely transformative offerings of the husky experience. International huskies bring their global perspectives to the research context, enriching their inquiry and contributions. Students engaging in international research often have deeper and more meaningful experiences — often leading to collaborations and connections that have the potential to be both life changing and lifelong.”

— Jennifer Harris, Undergraduate Research Program director

AYAN ABSHIR, UW SEATTLE, CLASS OF 2017

Ayan Abshir knew for quite some time that she wanted to do something to help refugees in the Seattle area. “In 2016, I had just come back from a study abroad program in Italy and had seen the huge refugee crisis there,” she says. “So I started looking for a community-oriented internship through the Carlson Center.” With support from the Carlson Leadership & Public Service Center’s Undergraduate Community Based Internships (UCBI) structure and a Class of 1957 Fellowship, Abshir began working as Youth Program Intern with the International Rescue Committee in May 2017. Her project? Creating a summer day camp for refugee children.

Abshir, of course, had never created a summer camp from scratch, so she used whatever resources she could, including help from her supervisor. Ultimately, she designed the curriculum, daily activities and structure for the camp. “I learned so much,” she says, “about youth development strategies, community building and program coordination, by interacting with the refugee youth who were adapting to a new environment.”

The service project had personal resonances for Abshir. “I was born here [in the U.S.], but have seven older siblings who were born in Kenya and Somalia,” she says. “They came here when the war broke out. I saw my family struggle — with stereotypes, language barriers, the education system — so I know how that feels. I used to hear from my siblings about their fear when they first arrived. So with the refugee kids, I got to see them wanting to engage and building their confidence. It was so cool.”

For Abshir, working with an international community in the Seattle area was the definition of a “high-impact” experience — and she encourages other students to get involved with global issues. “For UW students, many of us do come from diverse backgrounds, so an internship like this can open up your mind to a whole different experience,” she says. “It forces you to engage with people that you haven't before, encounter problems you hadn't thought about before. I grew up working class, but it opened up my eyes to the privilege that I have.”

“Like everything at the university right now, we’re both influenced by and serving international students — and finding all students opportunities to work with communities unlike the ones they grew up in.”

— Rachel Vaungh, Carlson Center director

FHUTS wide range of Educational Programs include several that offer UW students hands-on experience in K-12 classrooms. Photo courtesy of FIUTS.
Traveling abroad isn’t the only way to gain cross-cultural competency, for students or for teachers. Faculty are exploring new methods to connect UW students with peers in different parts of the world, without leaving campus. Meanwhile, the Center for Teaching and Learning is developing new ways to support international instructors and leverage our international classrooms.

Bringing global connections into local classrooms via COIL

“We can’t get 100 percent of the student body traveling internationally,” says Greg Tuke, lecturer at UW Bothell. “So how do we bring the international experience to all students?”

One way is through COIL: Collaborative Online International Learning. Sometimes called “virtual exchange,” COIL refers to any method of using technology to bring global experiences into classrooms or curricula. In COIL courses, faculty in different nations loosely sync their curricula so that students collaborate on projects in international groups. COIL can allow students who may be bound by time or cost from studying abroad to have rich international experiences — without leaving campus.

A growing method to support essential skills

Online fluency and cross-cultural teamwork have become highly valued skills in the workforce, “and those skills take practice,” says Natalia Dyba, director of Global Affairs at UW Bothell. For students across the globe, COIL methods are gaining traction to support those essential professional skills.

UW was one of the first U.S. universities to offer institutional support for COIL courses. In 2013, UW Bothell launched the COIL Fellows program with seed funding from the Jackson School for International Studies (and continued support from UW Bothell Academic Affairs). The program provides support for faculty on all three campuses to develop and teach COIL courses, and a community for sharing ideas and resources.

Now, over 25 COIL courses have been implemented on all three campuses in a wide range of disciplines. On the Bothell campus, in the 2016-17 academic year, students in COIL courses outnumbered those who studied abroad for the first time.

Tuke leads COIL workshops for instructors around the world, and while still in early stages, the UW remains “ahead of the curve,” he says. “There are few other universities that have so many faculty trained and doing COIL courses.” It makes sense that COIL is spreading. It can allow faculty to develop international aspects of their research, and universities to offer cost-effective global experiences to many more students than could otherwise have them.

Bringing other nations into UW classrooms

Using COIL is simpler than you might think, Tuke says. It’s ideal to use the simplest technology available in participating countries and platforms that students are already using. Tuke’s students interact mostly via instant messaging and closed Facebook groups, through which they discuss ideas, problem-solve and share videos.

Course planning can be more challenging, as it means figuring out where aspects of curricula might overlap with different courses, taught by different instructors in different countries — but the payoff is worth it, says Tuke. He is currently teaching a course entitled Taking It Global: The Great Debates East and West as part of UW Bothell’s first-year curriculum. Through international faculty networks, he connected with a professor at the University of Al-Qadisiyah in Iraq, who is teaching an advanced English course. They decided to link courses, using the same content to teach English at the same time as critical thinking, research and collaboration skills. Meanwhile, the collaboration enriches the content, as students tackle the central issues through cross-cultural perspectives. Students work in groups throughout the term, exchanging ideas online and building toward a final team project: an enactment of a “great debate” in real time, via Skype or Zoom.
Bringing about new ways of knowing

Through collaboration, students can better understand the content itself, notes Tuke. Often, they are working with peers who might be directly impacted by the classroom work. For example, in winter 2018, Tuke co-taught a course with UW Bothell professor Ursula Valdez entitled Great Rivers of the World, linked with universities in Peru and Egypt. UW students studying the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest got to work with students living near the Amazon and the Nile — comparing local ecosystems and coming up with actionable solutions to improve them.

In addition, UW students’ international backgrounds — international students, but also students of immigrant or refugee backgrounds — are often engaged in important ways. As Dyba says, “engaging with another ‘other’ helps them understand their international experience in a new way.” In his courses, Tuke has noticed that these students often have cultural experiences or knowledge that might be more similar to the students in other countries, he says, “and they bring skills that aren’t often called upon in traditional classrooms.”

Perhaps most importantly, Tuke notes that his students seem inclined to approach difficult issues through broader perspectives after working with students in other countries. Their teamwork, he says, can “recreate something that happens in traditional study abroad — those life-changing moments when you start seeing yourself, and others, differently.”

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS ENRICH CLASSROOMS: WHAT THE DATA SHOW

Sandra Silberstein, professor in English, has been researching academic support for international and multilingual students at the UW for ten years. Recent surveys of faculty, TAs, and students yielded an overwhelmingly common response: international students enrich classrooms. Both students and instructors said that perspectives from non-U.S., often non-Western, students broaden the scope of learning. Many instructors reported changing teaching practices to adapt to a globalizing campus — and that these changes made them better teachers for all students.

The student survey revealed the wealth of linguistic, academic and cultural resources that international and multilingual students bring to the UW. While around 40 percent of international and multilingual students attended high school in English, the survey reported approximately 70 home languages. 74 percent of respondents communicate in one or two languages in addition to English — most of the rest in more.

At the same time, the research shows that international students are like other students at the UW. They graduate at similar rates with similar GPAs; they worry about financial support and getting into their majors; they wish they had more time to socialize. And they feel supported: 84 percent said that they would recommend UW to a friend.

Instructors reported that international and multilingual students enrich learning for all:

» “International students bring new perspectives to issues discussed in class which invite students (and instructors) to rethink what they have too often taken for granted.”

» “International students can often give illustrations of how the principles taught in the class apply in contexts outside the U.S.”

» “International students help us ‘see’ the U.S. by sharing with us the things they find different about our cultures and cities.”

Instructors also reported how international students benefit discipline-specific learning:

» “Especially in macroeconomics courses, perspectives on peculiar macroeconomic phenomena — and on national policies outside of the U.S. — are interesting and valuable.”

» “The benefit of cultural diversity in social work is crucial in order to know that students are well-prepared to work with diverse clients. International students bring an incredibly useful perspective when students might assume they all have the same experience or perspective.”
The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers a wealth of resources for faculty, TAs and staff educators to create more global and inclusive classrooms. These include web resources for teaching international students and for international TAs who teach at UW. Inclusive teaching is a shared area of expertise among CTL's instructional consultants, who offer facilitated conversations and workshops on topics related to the teaching and learning of international students.

**Support for international graduate student TAs**

CTL Instructional Consultant Katie Malcolm coordinates the International TA Program, which offers support for new international graduate student TAs. As Malcolm notes, teaching for the first time is challenging for anyone — and those challenges can be compounded by teaching in a second, third or fourth language, within a new culture.

Most of the program content is not unique to international TAs, says Malcolm. Rather, the program offers TAs a space to “ask questions in a safe, supported environment, and encourages community building — especially as grad school can be much more compartmentalized than undergrad.”

The International TA Program includes a set of workshops at the TA Conference every Fall, in which 150-200 international TAs generally participate. The conference is a further opportunity to share perspectives on classroom cultures, expectations and norms in the U.S and at the UW.

In addition, TAs often talk about wanting to learn more about inclusive teaching, Malcolm says, but struggle to carve out the time alongside their own graduate work. The solution? Offer course credit. In Spring 2017, she launched an interdisciplinary one-credit course entitled Teaching in Global Classrooms, which attracted an interdisciplinary group of graduate students from Engineering, the iSchool and Chemistry (to name a few).

The course is all about “leveraging resources that students bring, and using those to make the classroom more global,” she says.

**Department-specific support for instructors**

The CTL also offers departmental workshops for faculty and TAs on working with international classrooms. “We help teachers think about all the great resources that international students bring into the class, to enrich the learning experience for all students,” Malcolm says. Commonly, instructors want to learn strategies for clarifying expectations, assessing student writing and making sure that class discussions are inclusive.

One example of this is a workshop session Malcolm led for PhD students in the Foster School of Business Teaching Effectiveness seminar. “Our cohorts are quite heavily international,” says Christina Fong, principal lecturer of Management. “So [Malcolm’s] session offers strategies for how to succeed as an international instructor, and at the same time embrace and leverage the diversity of UW classrooms. Our TAs left feeling more confident, and also more informed about their students and excited to engage with them.”

In general, thinking about pedagogy in regards to international students “can be a way into thinking about race and equity in teaching more broadly,” says Malcolm. “When instructors make changes to support international students in their classes, they support all students.”
SELECT RESOURCES

Supporting global classrooms: Resources for instructors

Strategies for teaching international and multilingual students: a wealth of resources for inclusive teaching from the Center for Teaching and Learning.

The International Teaching Assistant Program helps prepare newly appointed international TAs for their roles as graduate Teaching Assistants at the UW.

UW Bothell COIL Initiative: Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) fosters global competence through developing a multicultural learning environment that links courses in different countries.

UW Tacoma COIL Fellows program provides training and funding for faculty to develop COIL courses.

The Global Innovation Fund provides seed funding for initiatives and programs that enhance the UW’s global engagement and reach, including innovative study abroad programs, developing new and existing programs, research collaborations and faculty exchanges.

Study abroad: Resources for students, faculty and staff

UW Study Abroad for students: comprehensive resources for students to make an informed decision about these opportunities to engage in the diversity of the world.

Study abroad resources for faculty and staff: resources for program directors, administrators, advisers and departmental exchange coordinators.

The Office of Global Affairs offers a Global Opportunity Scholarship for global study, research or internships.

The Office of Global Affairs at UW Tacoma offers study abroad scholarships and resources for students, faculty and staff.

The Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity Study Abroad works with academic partners to offer study abroad programs, including one during spring break.

Global learning and leadership: Opportunities for students

The Office of Global Affairs’ comprehensive list of schools and colleges that offer global opportunities for students — through coursework, service learning, research, internships and study abroad.

Unite UW: An on-campus cultural exchange program that builds bridges between domestic and international students on the UW’s Seattle campus.

Husky Presidential Ambassadors Leadership Institute: A cohort of current UW students and a cohort of incoming first-year international students from China to participate together in a cross-cultural leadership development immersion experience.

International internships: UW Study Abroad works with partners to offer internship opportunities around the world, including IE3 Global Internships, Omprakesh, Aga Khan University Internships and IFE French Internships.

UW Tacoma Global Ambassadors Program: A student partnership program that pairs international and domestic students to interact and share learning and experiences.

UW Tacoma Global Honors Program: An interdisciplinary honors program, open to all majors, designed to increase the depth and breadth of student understanding of critical global issues.
**UW Tacoma Institute for Global Engagement (IGE)** connects honors students to collaborative innovation and career opportunities through the Community Engagement Program, and extends funded global learning opportunities, including to non-Honors students.

**UW Bothell Global Studies Program:** Global Studies majors explore the cultural, political and economic systems that bind people across the world.

**UW Bothell Intercultural Coordinators** offer a variety of events and activities for students to share experience across cultures and social groups, and encourage intercultural communication.

Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS): Student Leadership Programs offer a range of opportunities for students to lead and facilitate FIUTS events and programs.

**FIUTS Education Programs:** UW international students connect with the community, including giving presentations about their country and culture in K-12 classrooms, after-school programs and senior living centers.

**UW support for international students and global connections**

**International Student Services (ISS):** A committed advising staff helps students understand benefits and restrictions of, as well as changes to, F-1 and J-1 visa statuses.

**International Student Success Committee (ISSC), including Quarterly Community Forums on International Student Success:** open to all who are interested in joining conversations around supporting international students on campus.

**Foundation for International Understanding through Students (FIUTS):** Programs advance international understanding through cross-cultural experiences and student leadership, connecting international and U.S. students, members of the local community and alumni around the world.

**UW Bothell Office of Global Initiatives**

**UW Bothell Center for International Education**

**UW Tacoma Office of Global Affairs**

**UW Seattle Office of Global Affairs**

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