Looking back on the past three and a half years I have spent with Carolina Passport, I’m amazed at how much my international experiences have shaped me. I came to Carolina with some background in international travel. Yet, I was still thrilled with the possibilities of the next four years, an excitement that began when I found a copy of Carolina Passport in my CTOPS packet. I remember my hands trembling as I read the stories and drooled over the pictures. I wanted to be those students who had seen so much of this world. The minute after I settled into my first-year Hinton James dorm, I was tripping over myself to get to the Global Education Center, to learn, to experience and mostly, to get out of North Carolina. Don’t get me wrong, I will always have a love affair with Chapel Hill, but I knew that I would thrive and succeed only if I saw the world. And, like so many others, I made it happen. So as I say a painful goodbye to Carolina Passport, I ask that you heed my advice when I encourage you to read the following pages and envision yourself as the speaker and picture yourself in the images painted on the pages. And then make it happen. Think about every conversation, connection and moment at this amazing institution as an opportunity for an experience that will take you to new places and change your life too. — McKay Roozen
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Walking the Line

BY ANYA RUSSIAN

I buy taro root on the roadside, dirty bulbs still clinging to the familiar underground.
Locals, barefoot, stare out of a squat doorway, boarded shacks barely hanging onto the pleated edge of a mountain, at the windows of the minibus as our faces fly by like pictures flipped in a comic book, watching the way you would a snail in an aquarium—attentive, but unconcerned.
This tilted universe between us—
I seek a thoroughfare, a break, a dotted line, a depression.
Like a broad-shouldered vase inquiring towards its slender neck, I crave proximity, the full shadowed sphere of the moon hiding behind its crescent suggestion.

I want to unclench the jaw of our well-trained synapses suturing this gold sputtering moment. To spear the tongue chained to some mental command and its ridiculous notations.

To tackle the army of failed language and incalculable gesture that gathers like a wave in the ocean, folding in upon itself, making a fool of intention.

My smile startles like a hiccup, brackets me in my own sentence. These words float into rings of smoke, impossible O’s that nestle themselves in the wide potholes grinning under a blanket of orange dust. So we are reduced to routine transactions—the bloated sun rising and setting its same steady ordinance, our perspiration continuing its long labor to the ground, the comforting gait of our inhalations and exhalations, the body’s unifying standard—the straight, bold, flat line seesawing between us.

— Laos

Anya Russian is a UNC alumna (’05) from Greensboro, N.C., who majored in sociology.
This poem was originally published by the 2nd Annual Nazim Hikmet Poetry Festival.

Manomenima

BY MOE LONG

A child clings to his mother’s breast, Rice and palm oil smeared on his chubby face, Ribs visible through a bloated stomach. A dog, teets dragging in dust and rock, Nurses its pups, providing nourishment As nearby children play in the court barrie With sticks, pebbles, and broken machetes. The blacksmith’s muscular arms hammer out rusted railroad tracks, His bloodshot, jaundiced eyes-squinting, Dust-covered face streaked from beads of sweat, While sweet, rolling notes of Arabic Emanate from the mosque, Now being invaded by an impenetrable army of moss, And a burned out Liberian tank sits, Rusting at the entrance to Manomenima.

Moe Long is a senior from Carrboro, N.C., majoring in English. He traveled to Sierra Leone.
Eighteen months ago, I stepped on campus as a first-year, ready to absorb myself in university life as a student-athlete and a member of the women’s tennis team. As a young girl growing up in England, I dreamt of becoming a professional athlete; never in my wildest dreams had I imagined I would end up at a university in the United States. I hardly knew what college sports were until I was a junior in high school. I was talented at soccer and golf, but my passion was to pursue a career in tennis, and at 15 years old, I left school to commit to a full-time tennis schedule that allowed me to travel to international junior tournaments.

The UNC women’s tennis head coach, Brian Kalbas, and assistant coach, Sara Anundsen, had seen me play at a tournament in Philadelphia and wanted me to visit Chapel Hill. The only thing I knew about the University at that time was that Michael Jordan went there and that the campus was pretty — I had a feeling it could be the one. On my recruiting visit I fell in love, and a month or two later I signed the National Letter of Intent.

Living in a different country is a huge challenge, but I never let a day go by without knowing how lucky I am. Traveling to junior tournaments with the national team for weeks at a time gave me my first experiences of homesickness, but nothing can prepare you for going to college. At times, the separation of the Atlantic Ocean can be a strain; my family and I are very close. Sometimes I miss everything about England -- even the rain! However, I know I have made an amazing decision and have such a great opportunity here in Chapel Hill.

After my first year I thought living so far away would get easier. That wasn’t the case, but a few weeks spent at home for Christmas break was a reminder that home will always be there.

I am extremely fortunate to have joined a tennis team with family-oriented values; I have eight sisters in my teammates. They call me London. One time our coach asked us why we came to Carolina — to which we each responded with individual reasons. Then he asked us the reasons why we stay here — for each other. It is an incredible feeling to be part of a true team that cares about each other and works so hard.

The entire Carolina community is this way; we have a school spirit that can’t be matched.

Walking to my 8 a.m. journalism class this morning, I took a second to notice the beauty of the morning. The birds were singing, the sun was shining and in the Quad the stars and stripes were flowing in the gentle breeze. It sounds corny, but I needed a second to take it in. For some reason it made me think of John Smith in Pocahontas — I can see why this land has been fought so hard for — it’s beautiful.

Cultural differences are an interesting part of being a foreigner. I’d be rich if I got a dollar every time someone made a comment on my accent — “Are you from Australia?” My teammates laugh at me and my “properness” and all the English sayings that don’t really make any literal sense, but across the pond we all know what they mean.

My international experiences before UNC helped prepare me to some extent, but living here has been, and will continue to be, a life-changing experience. It’s an adventure. I will have a level of tolerance that I never had before — joking — America’s not that bad. Maybe I’ll end up living here one day.

Laura Slater is a sophomore from Camberley, U.K., majoring in global studies.
BY EMILY MILKS

We were that close. I could almost see the top of the mountain, which we were trying to reach. Mountain in a loose sense of the word—it was really more of a hill we were climbing, but in the frustration of the moment, it was a mountain. And one that seemed forever away, no matter how much we climbed.

Alice had lied to me, it was as simple as that. She lived in the flat above me, and in an effort to get to know each other, she asked if I wanted to go for a leisurely stroll. Yes, she used those words. Leisurely stroll. Redundant and a lie.

Arthur’s Seat is a huge hill that you can see from practically anywhere you are in Edinburgh. It is beautiful and helps to balance the buildings and shopping centers and crowds of city life. It is most beautiful after the rain because the fog gives it a Wuthering Heights feel. It is not beautiful when climbing it after the rain, though. Trust me.

An hour later, still not having regained my breath, I hated Alice.

Physical exercise brings out the worst in me.

“Almost there!”

“Yeah, you said that fifteen minutes ago.” I couldn’t forgive her, even with her British accent.

Clearly, I lived to exaggerate the tale, and we finally made it to the top of Arthur’s Seat. It was then that I realized Edinburgh is the most beautiful city. That is not an exaggeration. The view was stunning, from every angle.

Scotland is known for its rain. Some might even say notorious. But because of all this rain, the country is so green that there should be a crayon named after it, and it is this prevalence of nature that makes Edinburgh such a magical city.

Studying abroad in Edinburgh for a year was a big change for me. Besides the fact that it is part of a different continent, I had never lived in a city before, and I didn’t know if I would like it. I am from the South. I like the woods and conversations with strangers and driving down the highway when the sun sets. Cities scared me.
But not Edinburgh. There is something about this city that does not make it feel too much like a city. Yes, there are tourists, and people who work too hard and walk too fast. It is a vibrant city but it is also a quiet one. Princes Street, the main shopping area, is always crowded, but Rose Street, the one parallel to Princes Street, is never so busy, and it is a great place to sit outside a pub with some friends and just take in the magic of Edinburgh.

Standing on top of Arthur’s Seat, I was especially aware of this calmness that is not exactly descriptive of a city. I could see the buildings but not the cars and people, and the only noise was me still trying to get back my breath.

On the way back down the hill, I fell. That should surprise nobody. Oh yeah, I fell big time. I blame the rocks. They were so slippery because it had just rained. And yes, I also blame Alice because I do not want to blame myself. I had worn Sperry Top-Siders, thinking we were just going for a walk. She just stared at me as I fell, probably wondering how that could have happened, even though I had told her beforehand that I knew I would fall.

I skinned up my knee pretty badly. There was a big hole in my leggings and I could see blood. So I limped down the rest of Arthur’s Seat, and when we were almost at the bottom, some Scottish woman with a dog (they love their dogs in Scotland) came up to me and asked if I needed any help. And you thought it wouldn’t get any more embarrassing.

The thing is though, she seemed genuinely concerned, something I was not expecting. It took me a few more instances like this to realize that generally speaking, Scottish people are friendly and willing to talk to you regardless of whether they are in a hurry or late for meeting a friend.

When I ask someone for directions, I also get recommendations of good restaurants. When I go to pubs, I start up conversations with locals and listen to their stories and what beer they think is good. And through all this, the friendships and connections I make will last much longer than my stay here.

There are times when I am sad knowing that I am missing an entire year at UNC, but there are even more times when I am excited to know that I get to embrace and explore an entire city in that time, especially one so cool as Edinburgh.

Emily Milks is a junior from Cary, N.C., majoring in English.
Every sport has its great arenas. Soccer has the Camp Nou and the Bernabéu. Rugby has Twickenham. Tennis has the All England Club in Wimbledon. Road cycling, however, is blessed with many spectacular venues due to the fact that, by its nature, it traverses the natural features of the earth.

Thus, the legends of the road are often forged in the mountains, on the Tour de France’s Alpe d’Huez, or Provence’s moonscape of Mont Ventoux. For me, though, there is a time and a place for the most beautiful and best sporting event on earth: the second Sunday in April, along the roads of northern France — Paris-Roubaix.

Paris-Roubaix is one of cycling’s classic races, first run in 1896 and interrupted only by the two World Wars, which contributed partially to its ominous nickname, “The Hell of the North.” On return to the region in 1919, the men charged with surveying the route found an apocalyptic scene — charred trees, crater-pocked roads and an absence of life. The race’s reputation as hell was solidified by the inclusion of its defining feature, pavé, otherwise known as cobblestone sections. Every year, the professionals would batter themselves over the miles of unforgiving stones to inscribe their name in the history books as a winner of Paris-Roubaix, perhaps the greatest honor in the sport after being crowned Tour de France champion. Now, though, the event runs an amateur “sportive” on the same route, so we mere mortals can ride the route of our heroes and experience the bone-rattling experience that Roubaix dishes out.

And it was thus that I ended up in a tiny French village at six in the morning, shivering as the sun licked the horizon but refused to give out any warmth. I was surrounded by equally chilly Frenchmen, all aboard our gleaming bicycles waiting to roll away across the rolling French countryside and take in our own experience of hell. Of course, in France, cycling is effectively the national sport. So, although the field was full of amateurs who weren’t even going to be racing (a sportive is the equivalent of a stadium tour rather than an actual match...
played in the stadium — you go for the experience, not the competition), the entire town had emerged from their slumber to wave off the couple of thousand cyclists who had descended upon their town.

It is cruel that there are around about 30 miles of riding before you hit the first of the cobbled sections. This is just enough time to work yourself into a nervous wreck. Roubaix is famed for its crashes. The cobbles are notoriously slippery; when wet, the mud from the fields washes over them to make them slick and slimy; when dry, a film of dust barely disguises the polished hunks of rock, giving them a glassy appearance that foretells the grip they give. I had never ridden them before, so while the pastures of rural France rolled gently by with the sweet hum of farming, my nerves were jangling ferociously.

Eventually, we hit the first section of cobbles and quickly discovered these aren’t the type of cobbles you find in towns, where a road with neatly set bricks counts as cobbled. Oh no. The stones here were the size of human heads and appeared to have been hewn from great blocks of granite with no consideration for neatness or order. Nor were they organized in any pattern; instead, it seemed likely that the Goliaths had been haphazardly tossed into the mud from a helicopter. This created a minefield of jagged edges, moss-filled gaps and blunt ridges, all combining to form a treacherous channel of pain. Indeed, there was carnage at the first section, with bodies scattered across the grass verges as tires burst on impact and screws holding saddles were shaken apart by the pounding of the cobbles.

Everyone has ridden a bike. I’m sure you’ve ridden over a particularly bad patch of road and thought the experience was rather uncomfortable. Riding the cobbles of Paris-Roubaix is like riding over potholes that are a foot deep and add up to nearly 30 miles of the route. There is a very fine art to riding over them: you can go fast or slow. If you go fast, you get the sensation of gliding across the cobbles, but the pain is unimaginable — your shoes transmit every single jolt through your legs, and your hands are given a bad thrashing. By the end, my hands were not only bleeding but had locked themselves into a claw shape. If you go slow, these effects will be somewhat nullified, but you will still feel the pulsating rise and drop of every single stone.

Why then, you might ask, would I submit myself to such an ordeal? The answer is in the timelessness of the experience. While other sports have been enhanced by the relentless march of technology, cycling has remained at a standstill. You are competing on much of the same equipment that men a century ago would have used, on the same course, which is stuck in a nostalgic throwback to the rural idyll that is the slow, relaxed plod of northern France. At the end, you lie on the ground, caked in dust, with muscles you never knew you had scorching with lactic acid. And yet you’ve conquered not only the route, but time itself — Roubaix is like a pilgrimage in that it almost becomes a rite of passage. I’ve ridden Paris-Roubaix you can proudly say. Theo de Rooij put it well. When asked about the race, he commented, “It’s a bollocks, this race! You’re working like an animal, you don’t have time to piss, you wet your pants. You’re riding in mud like this, you’re slipping ... it’s a pile of shit.” When asked if he’d be back next year, he simply replied, “Sure, it’s the most beautiful race in the world!”

Simon Crisp is a sophomore from Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K., majoring in history. He traveled to Northern France.

Far Left: The Arenberg Forest is a two mile stretch of some of the worst cobbles in the world. With 60 miles to the finish from its end, you can’t win the race here, but you can certainly lose it.

Left: The race finishes in the fabled velodrome in Roubaix, a sleepy industrial town otherwise known as the car crime capital of France. Thousands pack into the stadium from dawn to secure a seat, such is the infectious enthusiasm for the race.
Global Views

Travel three countries in four pages: Get a look into Paris, London and Seville through SARAH FLOYD’s lens.
A sunset over the Seine River, Paris, France.

2 // Sunflowers for sale. Paris, France.


5 // A bird’s eye view of Seville from the top of the main cathedral. Seville, Spain.

6 // Obsessed with French bulldogs, I naturally fell in love with who I later found out, from his owner, to be six-month-old Jasper. Paris, France.

Where are we going?” I asked my host-father Moussa as we clambered into the back of his beat-up jeep, closely followed by his daughter Assitan and wife Myriam who wore a flowing gown of rich lime-green fabric delicately embroidered with golden trimmings.

“To see a spectacle,” he replied with brevity – the word being one of those faux-amis in French; words that at first-glance appear to be their English equivalent, but in fact have an entirely different meaning. In this case, ‘spectacle’ means a show or performance.

We drove from Kalaban-Cora across the Pont-des-Martyrs and through Bamako, the city sweltering under a reddish haze and choked with the smells of fuel exhaust, garbage and sewage. Myriam and Assitan chatted amiably in the backseat in bambara, and I sat with my arm out the window gazing at the people and places as we drove by, reflecting on my first week here in Mali.

“So.. uhh, where are we?” I inquired of Moussa, as we ascended the ridges that surround Bamako and the road went from paved, to packed gravel, to nothing more than a suggestion. The scene became increasingly rural.

“On our way to a village outside Bamako, they are having a celebration to mark the town’s founding – Myriam does vaccinations there.” Myriam, a nurse, nodded from the back-seat – “You’ll meet my colleagues!” she added with a laugh.

After a while of jostling around in the jeep, we passed through a grove of mango trees and found ourselves in the middle of a small outcropping of structures – houses clustered around a main thoroughfare with a mosque, small clinic and mango stand close at hand. Mali seems to have a season for everything. Rainy season, dry season, mosquito season, gardening season, scorpion season – luckily, I seem to have happened upon mango-season,
Exiting the car we made our way through the crowd of people assembled. Muttering customary Malian greetings and found seats ringing a large circle of packed earth. In the center of the circle, a group of three men stood out, wearing a rhythmical beat on large drums engulfed by swarms of the town’s children – laughing, jumping and spinning in circles around the drummers.

The circle of earth was bordered by many onlookers, the entire village assembled as mic-checks were made, outfits were donned and instruments tested. Within the hour, the mayor of the village had arrived and everyone settled down to watch. During this time, Moussa had been conferring with one of the villagers who urged him to make sure I stayed for the entire performance, which would conclude well into the early hours of the next morning. The villager looked at me, gesturing wildly with his hands and talking in rapid streams of Bambara. Moussa translated, “He’s telling you that there will be many spiritual things – unexplainable things – at midnight three mystical serpents shall appear.” I tried to probe further, asking him where the serpents would appear, how long they would stay, etc. But Moussa just raised his hands and resigned himself, “I am a city person, I know not of these things.”

Then the music started.

Over the next hour, the beats from an assortment of drums large and small, the klak-klak-klak of curious wooden bowls ringed with beads and the shrill wavering notes of the wassalou singers filled the air. All manners of dancers took the floor – scores of men with a variety of props (everything from a Santa hat to a fake Burberry scarf) pounded their feet against the earth, soon joined by women and then any reveler who wanted to dance. My favorite, an old man dressed in bright neon colors, got right in the middle of the festivities and went absolutely wild. After the dancers had tired themselves out, the music changed – taking on a more bare and urgent tone. Soon, a dancer appeared, clad entirely in mud cloth with a bulging stomach sporting a fearsomely painted mask with golden horns affixed with the idol of a naked pregnant woman. The dancer wildly circled the ring of spectators flailing their limbs and emitting bizarre whoops and screams. The beat of the drums increased in speed and volume, whipping the dancer into a crazed frenzy – until they collapsed on their knees near a spectator, one hand clamped on their bulging stomach. The dancer shook and heaved and pulled a long, red cloth from their loins and presented it to the spectators.

tor, an old man. Moussa leaned over to me, “now, they must dance.” Sure enough, the man took the red cloth and paraded into the middle of the circle and danced as energetically and in time as if he had been in training himself. He returned the cloth to the masked dancer and sat back down, to applause from the audience.

The only thing I could think was: Please don’t choose me.

However, I was spared and the dancer took the red cloth and retreated from whence he had come.

Next came a bizarre bird-like creature lead on by a man with a pipe. The same pattern as with the fertility-dancer – the beats would start out calm and gradually increase in speed and intensity until the dancers were going absolutely insane.

The bird soon retreated and the crowd quieted. Then, from both sides of the ring, two masked dancers came streaming in, red ribbons flying from their hands. They circled the crowd, with hands up to their eyes as if they were searching. Searching… searching… but for what? Simultaneously, they both turned towards where I was sitting and descended upon me.

One of the dancers squatted at my feet, while the other began to pull red cloth from beneath the shirt of the first one, extricating the cloth and handing it to me. Hesitantly, I took the cloth.

I looked to Moussa, he gave me a raised eyebrow, “You must dance. It is the way,” he said. Desperately, I looked to his wife Myriam on the other side of me, she was bent over in a fit of hysteric.

So, red cloth in hand, I rose from my seat, slowly proceeded to the center of the ring and I danced. Stamping my feet to the beat and raising the cloth high above my head, and swishing it around as I had seen done, I expected laughter from the 1000-strong crowd; me, a large white male, so obviously foreign to this environment was attempting to imitate their tradition.

But instead the crowd began to clap.

In unison, they clapped to the beat of the drums, increasing the fervor and speed until I could scarce keep up. Joined by the two dancers, we spun around the circle for what felt like an eternity stomping and kicking and moving until the claps had turned into applause.

Sweating, I returned to my place.

As soon I had taken my seat, the villager who had told me about the mystical serpents leaned over and whispered to me in halting English, “you… you have achieved maximum fertility.”

I expected to experience many new things during my trip to Mali – but I will admit that an increase in fertility was never one of them!

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Max Seunik is a sophomore global studies and health policy and management major from Toronto, Canada. He traveled to Bamako, Mali with the Morehead-Cain Scholarship.

Photo: I was later told that the dancers represented a goddess of fertility. I found it curious how these spiritual traditions seemed to coexist in a syncretic manner within the context of a predominantly Muslim society.
When I first told people I was going to study abroad in the Caribbean, they smirked and rolled their eyes. “Sure,” they said. “I’m sure you’ll be doing a lot of studying.”

I would smile with them, acknowledging my somewhat less-than-academic motivation for choosing the program. I needed a science lab credit, and I knew that studying abroad in paradise would distract me from my distaste for the subject. Hard science just wasn’t my thing.

The program had intrigued me, because I was raised on a love for the ocean and instilled with a desire to contribute to its conservation. However, I had long ago given up the hope of becoming a marine biologist and instead, followed my strengths into the field of journalism. I still enjoyed scuba diving with my family and volunteering with sea turtle conservation groups, but my involvement was strictly recreational.

As it turned out, the month I spent in the Turks and Caicos Islands was all it took to reawaken that watery spark within me and eventually — perhaps inevitably — cause me to reconsider my career plans as a journalist.

It was raining when the other students and I landed at the airport on Providenciales, an island situated in the west of the Turks and Caicos chain, and the one that most closely resembled the American standard for civilization. The other islands fell short of that goal, especially South Caicos, our final destination and my home for the next month.

The airport was nothing more than a one-room house next to the runway; paper signs written in highlighter and taped to a wooden podium marked the immigration checkpoint. On the way to the School for Field Studies’ center, we drove past dilapidated houses pieced together from scrap metal and cinder blocks.

It was a depressing sight. Where was the paradise? After adjusting to a few quirks of the island — the permanent layer of salt that covered my body and caked my clothes (fresh water was scarce), and the perpetual need to drench myself in bug spray to avoid the swarms of mosquitoes — I settled into the daily routine.

Our mornings were spent in the classroom, but our afternoons were spent out on the reef, and it was there that I found my paradise. Tropical fish zigzagged around the mass of coral heads. Rays from the sun filtered through the water, making patterns dance along the seabed. But we were there to work. During these sessions...
in the field, we identified fish species, measured conch shells and analyzed benthic cover. It was thrilling to know that our data would later be compiled by our professors and included in reports presented not only to the scientific community, but also to government agencies in an effort to influence environmental legislation.

However, I have found that, as a journalist, my first instinct is not to calculate or analyze, but to feel. So, while I enjoyed snorkeling with a purpose, it was the weekly recreational dives that I looked forward to the most. Diving is one of those rare activities that puts life into perspective. It makes you feel like you are part of something bigger, and it opens you up to an entirely different world: lobsters the size of small dogs, stingrays with wingspans upward of six feet, and sharks that seemed to silently materialize out of the deep blue just past the drop-off.

My close-up encounter with that enormous shark, a tiger shark, remained vivid in my memory, and as the days passed in island time, I often found myself marveling at the lack of fear I had felt. In the moment, all I recall feeling was the thrill of being so close to something so large and mysterious.

And then suddenly I remembered the little girl with her new snorkel, watching her father pull an octopus out of its hiding place under a rock. I remembered the young diver learning to be fearless like her father, peering into dark crevices cautiously but without hesitation, learning to spot the carefully camouflaged creatures amongst their colorful backgrounds.

But most importantly, I remembered the little girl who wanted to save the sea turtles. That little girl wrote letters to her senators and put up posters in her neighborhood. That little girl didn’t care that she wasn’t good at science.

The time I spent in the Turks and Caicos made me realize that I am still that same little girl, that I still want to save the ocean. I have returned home with only pictures to remind me of my time in the islands, but the lesson I learned is still with me. Find something that takes your breath away and fight for it.

I’ve found my cause worth fighting for, and I don’t have to be a scientist to follow that dream. The world beneath the waves is worth saving.

Alexis Balinski is a sophomore from Lusby, Md., majoring in journalism with a specialization in editing and graphic design, and minoring in marine sciences and entrepreneurship.
Go abroad and start thinking outside of the box. Organizations like AIESEC and Students for Students International challenge UNC students to step outside of their comfort zones and explore the world around them. Their goal is about more than making a difference in the communities where they send student volunteers — it is also about promoting the change within the students that will encourage dedication to international and community development throughout their lives.

AIESEC

Growth and change is more likely to happen outside of your comfort zone, and that’s just where AIESEC wants you.

With its internship program and the 10,000 internships worldwide offered through its database, AIESEC has over 60,000 members in 110 countries and territories. AIESEC (aka the International Economic and Commercial Sciences Students Association — the acronym is in French) is headquartered in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and is the world’s largest youth-run organization — run by young leaders for young leaders.

AIESEC believes that a well-rounded leader is a global leader, and the only way to become a global leader is to experience the world. AIESEC aims to develop global leaders through international exchange via internships abroad. And there is a chapter of AIESEC right here at UNC.

“I fell in love with AIESEC the second I joined,” said UNC junior and former vice-president of outgoing exchange Kathryn Carlson. “The culture within the organization is extremely prevalent. We’re all best friends and we all have a higher mission to really impact the world in some social way — to bridge the gap that separates different cultures, religions and languages.”

Carlson participated in an eight-week internship in Manila, Philippines. Seven interns from five different countries came together to work on a multimedia tourism project. The group went to cultural festivals, landmarks and restaurants in order to put together a regional media guide for tourists.

Carlson said Internet-based marketing is not commonly-used in the Philippines, and that the goal of the AIESEC team was to create a forum for tourists to plan their vacations, and ultimately to improve tourism.

“Matching interns to internships is all about determining the interns who we want to represent the U.S.,” Carlson said. “The mission of AIESEC is socially and politically-driven to break down stigmatisms. The internship program is not for the weak of heart, nor is it for those who are along for the traveling joy ride.”

A lot of work goes on behind the scenes of AIESEC chapters to make sure student internships run smoothly. Ethan Fujita, UNC junior and president of the University’s chapter of AIESEC, said he spends fifteen to thirty hours weekly addressing AIESEC business. Fujita manages five different teams within the organization that take care of everything from human resources to communication to finance, and he ensures efficient communication between all of the teams. Fujita estimates there are about fifty members in the UNC chapter of AIESEC.

UNC sophomore Simone Duval, the vice-president of communications for the UNC chapter of AIESEC, said that she joined AIESEC her first year and was hooked by the great com-
munity of leaders in the group. Duval said AIESEC helped her find her niche at UNC.

Students for Students International

Students for Students International (more commonly known as S4Si), creates educational opportunities for high-achieving young women in the developing world by awarding scholarships. Founded in 1995, the organization is volunteering in Zanzibar for its sixth consecutive summer.

The executive director for S4Si, Alison Grady, said that going to Zanzibar opened her eyes to the difficulties their partner organization faces.

“It becomes really personal and you know you are fundraising for the people you know and love,” Grady said of meeting the girls who are the scholarship recipients.

Kathleen Hayes, UNC sophomore and co-director of scholarships for S4Si, said the selection process to choose the scholarship recipients is executed in partnership with an African non-profit organization. Through the non-profit, S4Si gets in touch with the schools ranked in the top five for academic quality. Then the girls in the top 20 percent for academic performance are given the opportunity to apply for the scholarship. The application process includes interviews and home visits.

Through the selection process, eight women receive scholarships, based on the criteria of academics, contribution to the community, passion and need. The value of each scholarship is about $1,200. S4Si is currently sponsoring 33 scholars in Zanzibar.

Part of what makes the S4Si experience so special is the opportunity to live with a Zanzibar-born woman while volunteering in the community. This creates a better immersion experience for the S4Si volunteers.

Measuring impact is something that is very important for S4Si. Every summer, the UNC students in the field check in with the scholarship recipients. S4Si has also implemented a mentorship program so that girls can receive guidance.

The organization sponsors the scholarships via small events on-campus and other funding. S4Si is also supported by Clark Shoes, fraternities and sororities, the Muslim Student Association, among other organizations.

Jen Serdetchtnaia is a senior health policy and management major from Toronto, Canada. Jen is an associate editor for Carolina PASSPORT.
program: Burch Fellows Program
description: For students with self-designed off-campus experiences pursuing a passionate interest.
requirements: Full-time undergrads who have completed at least 1 but not more than 6 semesters at UNC. Must have 2 semesters at UNC after the Burch experience.
stipend: Up to $6,000
deadline: February 23
more info: www.burchfellows.unc.edu

program: Study Abroad Office Scholarship Opportunities
description: For students to participate in study abroad programs approved by the College of Arts & Sciences.
requirements: Full-time undergrad students accepted in a study abroad program. Specific requirements vary.
stipend: Varies
deadline: Early February for summer/fall programs; mid September for spring programs.
more info: studyabroad.unc.edu

program: Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURF)
description: For students to carry out research, mentored scholarship or creative performance projects during the summer.
requirements: Full-time undergrad students in good academic standing. Projects must last at least 9 weeks (min. 20 hrs/wk).
stipend: Minimum $3,000
deadline: February 24
more info: www.unc.edu/depts/our/students/fellowship_supp/surf.html

program: Robert E. Bryan Social Innovation Fellowships
description: For students who are interested in making a significant contribution locally, nationally or internationally through the creation of an entrepreneurial project that addresses a community issue or need.
requirements: Any returning, full-time undergrad teams of at least four students at UNC are eligible to apply.
stipend: Up to $1,500
deadline: November 4
more info: www.unc.edu/apples/students/fellowships/index.html

program: Mahatma Gandhi Fellowship
description: For students to pursue independent summer projects that benefit South Asians.
requirements: Full-time undergrad or grad students.
stipend: Up to $3,000
deadline: March 1
more info: mgf.uncsangam.org

program: Sonja Haynes Stone Center Undergraduate International Studies Fellowship
description: For students pursuing academic research or study in an international setting.
requirements: Full-time second-term freshmen, sophomores and juniors who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Preference for students with financial need from underrepresented groups and for programs in areas of the African Diaspora.
stipend: Up to $2,500
deadline: February 28
more info: http://sonjahaynesstonestr.c.unc.edu/programs/forms/uisf

program: Honors Thesis Research Grants
description: For students carrying out research for senior honors thesis projects.
requirements: Undergraduates performing research for senior honors thesis. Students apply directly to their departmental Honors advisor.
stipend: Minimum $500
deadline: Varies by department
more info: honorscarolina.unc.edu/current-students/resources/honors-thesis-and-undergraduate-research/honors-thesis-research-grants

program: Phillips Ambassadors Program
description: For students participating in summer or semester study abroad programs in Asia that are approved by the College of Arts & Sciences.
requirements: Students accepted to a UNC study abroad program in Asia with min 3.0 GPA. 25% of scholarships awarded to qualified business majors/minors. Students going to China and India receive additional consideration.
stipend: Up to $7,500
deadline: Early February for summer/fall programs; mid Sept. for spring programs.
more info: studyabroad.unc.edu/phillips

program: CGI International Internship Awards
description: For students who wish to implement a summer internationally focused internship.
requirements: Full-time undergraduate students returning to UNC. Graduate students pursuing a master’s degree.
stipend: $500 - $3,000
deadline: March 2
more info: cgi.unc.edu/awards/internship

program: Carolina Undergraduate Health Fellowships
description: For undergraduates to create a self-designed health-related project anywhere in the world.
requirements: Full-time returning undergraduate students. Projects must have a health-related focus. Preference for students with financial need.
stipend: $1,000 - $3,000
deadline: March 19
more info: cgi.unc.edu/funding/health-fellowship.html

program: Office of Global Health Funding
description: For undergraduates to pursue international/global health internships.
requirements: Varies
stipend: Varies
deadline: Varies
more info: www.sph.unc.edu/globalhealth/students/student_funding.html

PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

1 // Alison Ives. Paris, France.
5 // Lanie Gilbert. Terrier Rouge, Haiti.
learned just enough to make us aware of how we should feel about the world (should?). But we wandered fast; I mean to say we frantically wandered. We are, still, anxiously searching, embarrassingly grasping for some kind of something, anything, that we can claim we are about. You could practically see us salivating. We are starved for ideas we can consume and metabolize, turn into the physical proteins which comprise us; create ourselves out of them! We want to act out these ideals, become them! We've really got solutions, just ask us!

Enter, Nenad.

"Yes, of course, there are times when you should steal books."

"You don't owe anything to anyone, and you can't just do what is expected of you."

"Marriage isn't real. I don't even remember what year I got married; it was either last year or the year before that."

"Yes, I consider myself a member of a country which does not exist."

Maybe I shouldn't say "we." Of course, I am speaking about myself because that's all I can reasonably do. Still, I'd imagine these are the sorts of things that young people want to hear. After all, I am nothing if not a stereotypical, eager, young person. And these ideas made me feel like I had power of my own conception, independent of any external source.
There are things I want to thank you for teaching me about; the ones that you never meant to teach me. How about compassion? To have been an 18-year-old refugee in Arkansas, watching your country fall apart from afar, in a nation that just couldn’t quite decide whether or not it cared about the genocide ripping your home apart in an unrecognizable, bloody mess — how could that have felt? I don’t even know if you cared that we were all American — if you did, you never said. Or to know that the country in which you struggled to remain, to continue your education and provide the means for your brother to pursue his, was bombing your hometown into submission, with the cooperation of the other member states of NATO? And to know your parents were still there — how could that have felt? These things intrigue and inspire me not, I hope, because I romanticize the horrors of war, but because of the person you actively decided to become in response to these horrors.

I have learned about bravery. To abandon years of rigorous study in a lucrative discipline (electrical engineering) undertaken in the name of practicality, and return to the former Yugoslavia, in the wake of such infamous wars, to become a peace activist? To do something difficult because you have determined it is what you really want? To me, this is profound. Truth be told, though I write to you here, Nenad, I mean to write to more than just you alone. It’s as though I’ve ascribed the elation I bizarrely felt throughout my time in Serbia to you, my imagined personification of each rousing and challenging thing I observed, learned, and witnessed. This should be a thank you note to you, but also an offering of gratitude for everything that happened to me in the fall.

It should also be to Marija and Aki. Thank you for taking care of me. Who knew I still needed parents to make me dinner and kiss my forehead? And to Aja, for playing dress-up with me; who knew I still needed practice in putting on makeup (actually, a lot of people might have known that)? And to Selma, for showing me how a sincere young playwright could expose the demons of her personal and societal realities; who knew art would always be more subversive than politics? So many things I could say here, if I wanted to speak to all those I am grateful to. I offer a general thank you, to the fall 2011 of Serbia, of Bosnia and Hercegovina, and of Kosovo, for bringing me closer to the person that I want to become.

And if I know one thing, it’s that it will be all the more meaningful if I can internalize the discoveries I’ve made. It’s such a tough thing, being that person you imagine to be your ideal self. But, upon reflection, I’m realizing it’s the best way I can thank and respect all the people and things that comprised the past five months of my life — much better than a public thank you note possibly could.

Nenad was one of my instructors for the SIT Study Abroad Program I did in the Fall of 2011. My other instructors, Orli and Nikica, were equally foundational to my experience abroad.

Grace Phillips is a junior from Bozeman, Mont., majoring in philosophy and geography. She traveled to Serbia, Bosnia, Hercegovina and Kosovo.
The Way the Earth Feels to Me

BY ELLEN CURRIN

I dug my feet into the sand, posed like a bull ready to charge. My toes curled and buckled around the granules. Amazon sand. When will I ever be in Bolivia again? I asked myself. I took a deep breath. I was a timid bull.

“Go! Go Ellen! Just go!” I heard Alexi’s voice, but all I could see was the top of his messy head of curls, bobbing up and down as he jumped and yelled with enthusiasm. He was climbing back up the slope, having already leaped off the edge and into the pile of slough below. When he finally emerged, a look of wild thrill was plastered onto his mud-splattered face. His legs were coated in thick sludge up to the mid-thigh, the level to which the earth had swallowed him.

“Come on, Ellen! Do it!”

“Go Ellen!”

Evi’s and Will’s voices rang out from behind me. That was easy for them to say. They were fully clothed, and several meters away from the edge. All they saw was the fun of the jump. Having stripped down to my underwear in preparation, I was standing, exposed and sensing the reality of the action as it came closer and closer. In front of me, the Amazon tributary was slithering by like a giant blue snake, moving slowly and strongly. For the past several weeks, I had been boating down this very river with a group of seven other students. Behind me, the forest watched me over my shoulder, the enormous ferns and thick vines threatening to spill out any moment and push me into the river. I wished to be in either place, hidden, rather than standing on the open bank, wearing nothing but my underwear, trying to muster the courage to jump.

I walked over to the edge and looked down. The ground was six or eight feet below me, and the plunge was more sloped than I expected: the vertical edge flattened out slowly at the bottom. I could see the glistening pit of mud—full of holes and dimples from Alexi’s body—a few feet away from the foot of the cliff. Beyond that, small waves from the river lapped up on the smooth, undisturbed ground.

Why did I agree to do this? Alexi always did stupid stuff. It was no surprise he saw the cliff and decided to leap off without warning. He was in wilderness therapy for four years. I was not, and this sort of adventure was not in my nature. Just as my thoughts began to wander, I was snapped back to reality by a blur streaking past me, quickly disappearing over the edge of the bank. It was Adam. As I stood trying to convince myself to make the leap, he had stripped down and bounded off. I heard the hollow splat as he hit the mud at the bottom, followed by whooping and lots of splashes and squelches as he made efforts to move through the soft earth.

“It’s fine, Ellen! All you have to do is jump!” Adam’s voice called out to me from the bottom.

All I have to do is jump, I told myself. I knew I couldn’t get hurt. It would be just like jumping off the diving board into a swimming pool filled with pudding. What am I worried about? I rocked back and forth in my pre-race stance. I couldn’t simply turn away from the edge and put my clothes back on. I was standing, ready to take the plunge.

“Okay I’m gonna do it. I’m gonna do it.” I told my friends behind me.

“Okay I’m gonna do it.” I repeated, hoping that I might convince myself that it was the truth.

“Okay — I’m gonna do it.” I said again. I’m gonna do it.

I shook off the clamps that had been holding my feet into the Boliv-
ian sand. My bare legs contracted as I sprung forward, gaining speed with each stride. My head screamed for me to stop as I raced across the last few meters of solid ground.

But I didn’t stop. My foot contacted the edge of the crumbly sand bank one last time and I dove into the air. My chest led the flight, and my arms, thrown up and back, steered my fall. I kept my eyes open, pointed upwards so I all I could see was the blue sky. My mouth was open too, tasting every bit of Bolivian air I could suck into it. My foot contacted the base of the cliff and I propelled myself off of it into the mud, finishing the stride I had begun at the top.

The taste of Bolivian air in my mouth was replaced by the taste of Bolivian mud. I wasn’t sure how Alexi was able to land so up-right into the mud, sinking his legs straight down to mid-thigh level. My landing was tragic - head-first and sprawled out - but I loved it that way. The earth swallowed me, absorbing me into the ground like gentle quicksand. I lay across the pile of mud on my back, arms and legs open, stretching my body to every corner of the planet. The mud was grainy in my mouth but everywhere else it felt as smooth as silk against my skin. The coolness of the earth was a surprising relief from the hot tropic air. I rolled over and over, covering every inch of my body. The mud slid between my legs and squished between the webbing of my fingers. It was soft enough to move through, but solid enough that I could feel it’s weight against my lower back as I floated. I let the earth make a mold of me, so it would always remember that I had lay there.

I was so happy; I was so alive. I could have laughed and cried at the same time, but instead I grinned as big as I could, showing off the mud between my teeth. After several minutes of wallowing, I cleared the pool and climbed back up to the bank. I wasn’t the only one who had enjoyed my mud-jumping; all of my friends were still laughing and reminding each other what I looked like as I tumbled into the pit. I ran up behind my friend Greg, the only clean-cut city boy in our group, and gave him a big muddy hug. He screamed and resisted, so I slapped a handful of mud into his hair. I laughed at his futile attempts to stay clean; we were traveling in the Amazon, for God’s sake.

Having been encouraged by my floundering jump, the rest of my group soon shed their outer garments and plunged into the mud pit as well. By the time the river glowed orange with the sun’s setting rays, we were all in the mud together, intertwined with each other as much as we were with the earth. Laying on my stomach, with just the tip of my chin sunken into the soil, I could see that the sunset cast color not only across the water, but also across the slick brown mud on the shore. From the sandy edge of the cliff, it must have looked like we were bathing in thick, golden-purple goop. But I didn’t care about seeing it from the sandy bank, because I was in it.

I woke up the next morning with mud still in my ears. I wouldn’t be surprised if I it was still there when I returned stateside, two months later. And boating down the river that day, I couldn’t help but wonder if some of the sediment that clouded the water had come from me. I am sure the river’s lapping tide soon filled the mold of myself I made that afternoon, but when I think of that place, I will always see my body carved into the earth the way it was.

Ellen Currin is a first-year from Raleigh, N.C., majoring in geography. She traveled to Bolivia with the Morehead-Cain scholarship.
PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

OGLE ME, HANOI!

BY DANIELLE GILLIARD

Ogle [oh-guhl]
Before I arrived in Hanoi, I knew people would stare at me. I’m a six-foot-tall, African-American woman with braided hair; staring was going to happen, and I was prepared for it. But on my first day walking around Hanoi, my experience was not one of being stared at but something bolder, more penetrative and undisguised. I was being ogled.

How did I deal with being ogled daily for almost four months? I blogged. I wanted to not only share my personal experiences abroad with friends and family, but also to share my experiences abroad as an African-American with other minority students. My blog contains humorous stories of my roommate Dien performing “Thriller” with other UNC students on Halloween, cooking Thanksgiving dinner from scratch, and serious reflections of my personal growth in Vietnam. Here is an excerpt from “Supervisibility,” the first entry on my blog, oglemehanoi.blogspot.com:

“Have you ever felt invisible? Well, my first two weeks in Hanoi have made me feel more VISIBLE than ever before. I walk down the sidewalk and heads turn. People stop talking, stop chewing, stop walking, stop doing whatever they’re doing, and look.

I mean it’s absolutely crazy. The most interesting part of the looks is the vast range of expressions I get; no two are alike: shock, awe, intrigue or confusion - what are they thinking?

“Where is she from?”

“What is going on with that hair?”

“Why is she here?”

“Whoa!”

I don’t really know. Sometimes I wish I didn’t care.

I don’t know how I feel about the staring. The first few days were weird, but I expected it. I’m a six-foot-tall, black girl with braids; I get stares and hear “Whoa, you’re tall” back at home, so of course I’d have a similar experience here. Then one day the novelty just wasn’t there anymore. Awkwardness ensued. When was the last time you made eye contact with every single person you passed on the street? People in my program began to notice the staring and point it out. Sometimes I feel extremely annoyed when teenagers point and laugh with their friends and call out to me. I tried being indifferent, it didn’t work. To be honest, trying not to care - when in fact you do - is tiring.

So I became a novice mind reader. I tried to read the mind of the man who almost got into a motorcycle accident craning his neck to look at me. I also tried reading the thoughts of the young couple, two tables down from me, who didn’t avert their eyes when I stared right back at them. However, mind reading is just as tiring as pretending not to care. Trying to decipher and separate the interested looks from the penetrating stares and the curious smiles from the creepy sneers is absolutely exhausting.

So now, I put thoughts into their minds and I put words in their mouths. I add my own subtitles to every situation. I may feel more visible than ever before, but I also feel more appreciated and admired by strangers than ever before. So, ogle me.”

This blog post is one of my personal favorites, because it reminds me that studying abroad as a minority can be challenging but also rewarding. While abroad, I experienced an increase in confidence and self-esteem, went through personal growth, and found a stronger sense of individuality. I’ve built lasting friendships and gained unforgettable memories and a wealth of knowledge, both experiential and academic. To be honest, I actually kind of miss being ogled while walking with my five-foot-tall Vietnamese roommate and being called “Socola” (Vietnamese for chocolate) by a random passersby. Someone, ogle me, for nostalgia’s sake.

Danielle Gilliard is a senior global studies major from Fayetteville, N.C. She traveled to Hanoi, Vietnam.
A Difficult Lesson to Learn

BY BRENDAN O’BOYLE

Nothing to do but learn from it.

I spent a good portion of my semester in Quito, Ecuador, listening to my gringo friends talk about their most recent experiences of being robbed. A typical conversation with a fellow exchange student often included where they traveled to this past weekend instead of studying, which downtown bar was least sketchy, what kind of craziness went down on city buses and, finally, whether or not they had been robbed yet. I say “yet” because, although I arrived in Quito ignorant of how dangerous it was, I was quickly enlightened during our orientation by a State Department official of the fact that we were getting ourselves into a five-month game of beating the odds and trying to avoid the apparent inevitability of being robbed.

With some experience in Latin American travel and an internship under my belt in the slum of Kibera, Kenya, I thought that my ability to keep my wits about me and have common sense would prevent me from being a statistic. And although I knew the statistics were indeed against me, I figured I’d make it through my semester untouched. However, I usually prepared myself to get robbed, taking only cash, keys, and my phone whenever I went out. This is all I had when it happened, but nothing can prepare you for what you’re going to lose, and gain, emotionally.

Anger. That’s not what I felt. Maybe a little angry that on my friend’s last night in Ecuador, we took the foolish risk of walking two blocks at night to get a cab before going out, or maybe a little angry that I jinxed it earlier in the day by congratulating myself on making it five months without any kind of assault. What surprised me most was how little anger I felt toward our assailant. I had thought, upon hearing all my friends’ robbery and mugging stories, that I would be pissed, venegful and perhaps even combative.

However, when it happened, as the young man took the gun out of his bag, waved it in our faces, patted us down and demanded money, I can’t help but remember a sense of fright shared both with my friend and my assailant. It was as if the pain I felt from losing my security and being at this man’s (who might have been younger than me) mercy, was also pain I felt for the ways things had come to be. I could tell that he was afraid as well.

Maybe part of me was just hoping he was afraid.

But as my host brother took me in the car to look for the thief so that we could call the police and tell them his location, I just couldn’t feel the need for vengeance. If there is anything I’ve learned at UNC, it is that the world is far more complex than moral versus amoral actors. It’s that we live in a world with structures and forces influencing us to do different things.

Even though I’m back at UNC with a mild case of post-traumatic stress disorder and a fear of walking alone at night, I am grateful for the critical thinking skills and worldview that I have crafted here. This paradigm has allowed me to consider where this young man was coming from, the challenges he was facing and how much pain he might have felt. And, in the end, this helped me choose sympathy over hatred, and gratitude over anger.

Brendan O’Boyle is a junior from Charlotte, N.C., studying political science and global studies. He received the James and Florence Peacock Fellowship to complete the Carolina for Kibera internship his sophomore year.
PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The Study Abroad Office at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provides opportunities for students to travel all across the world. The map shows the diverse travel experiences of students. This does not include international programs offered by other units.
UNC students travel all across the globe. The numbers on the map reflect participation in the Year Long 2011, Summer 2011, Fall 2011, Spring 2012 and SH Year 2012 Study Abroad programs.

SOURCE: Mark Nielsen, Information Systems Director, Study Abroad Office