

MOSAIC

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COVER ART



This issue's cover is based on an image that we've hung on the wall outside our new offices in global hallway of HSSC.

The world, like a ball, has no top. Top is a matter of habit, convention, and emphasis.

If you look at the world from only one vantage point, you miss so much! Our lives are enriched when we see things from a different point of view. This map is a reminder of that simple truth.

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Inscribed around the continents is "MOSAIC" in Chinese, Arabic, Thai, Russian, Japanese and Hindi.

What's up? South!

MOSAIC is an annual publication from the Office of International Student Affairs (OISA), which celebrates diversity and highlights the variety of global adventures that Grinnellians experience. MOSAIC is a collaborative effort, executed by student writers and editors, with funding support from the Institute of Global Engagement (IGE).



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*Top: Carlton and Nana with FIS
host Richelle (left)
Middle: Mariyah and Anaan at ISO
Food Bazaar Fall 2019
Bottom: George (center) with FIS
host Allen and Donna*

Letter from the Editor



It is an absolute pleasure to welcome you to MOSAIC. This year brings about a fresh round of engaging stories, captivating reflections and stunning art.

MOSAIC is a publication that doesn't just report on events; it stands for something. We embrace the idea that diversity does not weaken a society, it strengthens it.

The origin and intentionality behind our name, *MOSAIC*, is simple: A mosaic is an assemblage created by the purposeful and meticulous arrangement of colored glass tiles to form a single mesmerizing and coherent work of art. Like each tile on a mosaic, each individual on our campus represents a single brightly colored bit of culture, identity, and background embedded side by side on our campus mosaic – one where each piece tells a distinct story but contributes to the beauty of our narrative.

I first stepped onto to this campus four years ago, and I had no clue what I was getting myself into. I was just an anxious, wide-eyed 1st year from small town Kenya (or so I thought!) eager to jump into the world of even smaller rural Iowa. Fast forward four years and now I am just an older, and hopefully a little bit wiser, senior reluctant to say goodbye.

It seems hard to believe that this chapter of my life is coming to an end. As I reflect on my time at Grinnell and attempt to make meaning of these last few years, one ideal stands out above all – pluralism. We live in a diverse world, a world where nobody is the same. There is beauty and strength in this diversity and the celebration of being different is what pluralism is all about. While globalization means that diversity in our world is a fact of life, pluralism is the active and enthusiastic choice to engage. It is not about finding common consensus or erasing our distinctions, nor do we need to endorse values that we do not believe in. It is the simple recognition that every single one of us – including all our factions – have the right to be different and, as a collective, engaging with this difference and learning from open dialogue

– listening and sharing – is our collective strength and can only be an engine for progress. Earl Nightingale framed this perfectly. He said when you light your unlit candle from mine, my light is not diminished, but our light is enhanced. This is the essence of pluralism; lighting candles and shining brighter.

From studying abroad and immersing myself in new cultures, to coming together and sharing food from all corners of the globe or breaking out in song and dance, my experience at Grinnell has constantly been defined by identifying, embracing and sharing this inherent difference that exists within our community. I have learned how to make Nepali Momos and Macedonian Pastrmajlija, write my name in traditional Japanese calligraphy, make headdresses for a Caribbean carnival and dance Bachata (admittedly very poorly). I have had conversations about my multifaceted identity and race with people who cannot define either, debated issues through perspectives I would never have considered, and I now know how to say too many words I shouldn't in more languages that I can count! These are just a few of the incredible experiences that I will always remember – doors that were opened by a campus culture that promotes, lighting other candles – a celebration of difference, our MOSAIC. If these are the values at the heart of Grinnell, then it is my hope that this magazine can be the stethoscope for that heart.

All of this is the result of a broad collaboration between an incredibly talented, dedicated, and insightful team at the Office of International Student Affairs and the Institute of Global Engagement. In particular, I would like to thank Karen, Brenda, and Mollie. Without your constant support, MOSAIC would have been impossible. Finally, on behalf of our entire team, I would like to thank all the incredible writers who contributed to this publication. Your unique perspectives and breadth of experiences is what makes Grinnell, and in turn this magazine, so special.

I hope that you enjoy reading MOSAIC as much as I enjoyed putting it together.

Aabid Shamji '20
Kisii – Kenya

The Pain We Carry

JUN CHEN '14 - Shenzhen, China

The pain we carry

like blocks of ice

biting cold, sitting on our shoulders, face, eyelids, hearts

Our shoulders tighten, face harden, jaw clenched

But there is so much gentleness in the smile of you,

the softness so strong, pouring, fierce that

the block of rock melted into soft, white, light powders of warmth and love

Writing to all the parents, sons and daughters, doctors, nurses, our warriors, who care so deeply, movingly, bravely about each other during this overwhelming crisis of Coronavirus outbreak in & beyond Wuhan, China.

May we be free from suffering.



"I took this picture on July. 31st, 2019 when I was walking along the Long River with my mum after dinner. I hope, in the near future, we can get over the disease. My city and its people are fighting a battle with this disease, COVID-19. We have to win, and we will win. Soon in the future, we will again be able to take a casual walk along the river without fear, hearing cars and trains passing by on the bridge and waves kissing the river bank." - Cindy Luo - Wuhan, China

International Student Affairs Update

KAREN EDWARDS - Associate Dean & Director of International Student Affairs, PDSO/RO



Last May, as Brenda, Mollie, and I packed our bags for the Annual NAFSA: Association of International Educators Conference in Washington, D.C., we also boxed up the office! International Student Affairs was moving to the new Humanities and Social Sciences Center. Our co-location with the Institute for Global Engagement (IGE) was an outcome of the Global Grinnell Task Force. We continue to work within Student Affairs, but the move has ignited our collaboration with global initiatives and campus internationalization. Come visit our new space, if you haven't done so already!

Annual programmatic initiatives endure – like working with amazing IPOP Mentors to organize the International Pre-Orientation Program (IPOP). We continue to match new international students with loving community hosts, through Friends of International Students; and to collaborate with the International Student Organization to host ISO Food Bazaar. We held the second annual 'South Asia Dinner' – supported by trustee Atul Gupta '88 and his wife, Sherry '88. Tommy O'Donnell '20, who received the Fischlowitz Travel Grant, explored food security as he traveled the U.S. In addition, we held a 'Rare Bird' gathering at the Grinnell College Museum of Art Gallery – reflecting on the eclectic collection as an analogy for unique identities. You can read more in this issue about newer initiatives, too - like the Cultural Attaché program and a winter break Art & Architecture trip to New York City.

Another priority is to increase awareness about how visa status affects students. We curate regulatory guidance on GrinnellShare, and offer group sessions and one-on-one advising. This fall, we hosted our immigration attorney, David M. Ware – a national expert in the field. David facilitated training opportunities for faculty, staff, and students. Following his visit, OISA staff offered a brief overview at academic division meetings. The regulatory landscape for institutions and students is challenging – but we are doing our best to counter the narrative and support our students well.

Spring 2020 is well underway! IcePOP has become a tradition – a first year reunion in the cold Iowa winter. We will launch IPOP Mentor search and training; enable non-resident tax compliance via Glacier Tax Prep access; collaborate with Admission to open the I-20 Request Portal and communicate with future international Grinnellians. During spring break, Mollie travels to Spain with Nick Phillips' class; Brenda is off to Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia with the Grinnell Singers; and I will travel to Washington, D.C. for NAFSA Advocacy Day - to promote international education on Capitol Hill. We will authorize Curricular Practical Training for summer internships, and Optional Practical Training applications for post-completion employment. In May, we will celebrate graduating seniors, and then we will attend the Annual NAFSA Conference in St. Louis, MO. Mollie will offer a poster on the Cultural Attaché program, and I co-present with Alicia Stanley, director of off-campus study, and colleagues from Macalester College. Our session, "Study Abroad Squared," is about improving access for international students who wish to study away.

The Institute of Global Engagement

KATE PATCH, PhD - Senior Director of Global Initiatives
SUSIE DUKE - Associate Director of the Global Learning Program



In today's geo-political climate, there is an ever growing importance for students to gain the global competency skills needed to navigate (and hopefully bridge) cultural difference. At Grinnell College, we are privileged to have a robust Institute for Global Engagement (IGE) that helps to encompass a comprehensive internationalization plan for students, faculty and staff. We believe students should learn how to position themselves to work in cultures and navigate societies, to communicate in other languages, and to learn experientially about global systems or issues facing the world. Whether students have come to Iowa from abroad, or whether they will study internationally for a semester, or a few weeks, a global experience is a powerful way to understand the world.



Global learning takes place in multiple forms throughout various offices/units on campus; we in IGE are a coordinating unit to help facilitate comprehensively internationalizing the campus. Together, we support students who come to Grinnell from abroad, as well as while students are away on international programs. IGE also enriches global learning on campus in various ways such as through support for language learning and by hosting visiting scholars, artists and lecturers who come to teach for a short period of time or up to an academic year.

Together, we comprise the following units in IGE:

- Off-Campus Study (OCS) – offering semester-length credit-bearing opportunities off campus
- Language Learning Center – supporting learning within Grinnell's language departments as well as Grinnell's Alternative Language Study Option (ALSO) Program
- FLLAG Programs (Faculty-Led Learning Across the Globe) – including the Global Learning Program for first-years, Course-Embedded Travel, Research and Athletic Teams Abroad
- Office of International Student Affairs – helping the one in five Grinnellians who comes from an international location to navigate cultural and regulatory issues
- Visiting Scholars – hosting scholars, lecturers, and artists from around the world in Grinnell
- Partnerships/Collaborations – facilitating exchanges and disciplinary partnerships with institutions, organizations, and communities all over the world.

Last spring, IGE moved all of these global offices to the first floor on the north end of the Humanities and Social Studies Center. Co-locating, rather than operating as separate units physically located across campus, facilitates a stronger collaboration and synergy within our programs. Ultimately, we are better positioned to support students and global learning at Grinnell.

Global Education in the 21st Century

SHUCHI KAPILA - Assistant Vice-President & Senior International Officer, IGE



It has been a pleasure to learn about international education in my position as Assistant Vice-President and Senior International Officer at Grinnell. As a scholar of postcolonial and British literature, I have always been sensitive to place, people, geography, and the many ways in which the world is interconnected through migration and colonialism. As an administrator I learnt the ways in which we arrange, manage, and facilitate global learning for our college and community. This is a critical endeavor in a world that seems to want to confine itself in national boxes even as transnational forces bring us ever closer. Whether it is borders, epidemics, labor, trade, migration, or climate change that is the subject of discussion, it is clear that there is no way for human beings to survive without cooperation and collaboration.

There are two aspects of this that are of particular interest to me: the first is to build and nurture our relationship with the global South located as we are in the United States and the second to marry strong structures with flexible and

spontaneous learning opportunities. The Institute for Global Engagement has made a start towards both—we are exploring partnership opportunities with institutions like ours all over the world, but especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We are also building strong protocols, staff expertise, and best practices in the programs that we offer. We have seized opportunities to support global learning in the form of exciting short courses by international faculty, talks, exhibitions, workshops on campus, and partnerships with our excellent international students who are now a fifth of our student body. However, experimenting with learning opportunities, seizing on collaborations, discovering partnerships is an open-ended process that is continuous, often dependent on faculty energy and ideas, often on serendipity, and often on the pressure of social and political events. Keeping flexibility alive in what and how we learn will keep us open to our ever-changing world.

One of my greatest pleasures in leading IGE has been to hear student and faculty testimonies about their global experiences. Students are transformed by what they learn in other countries, other parts of the US, or in their classes on campus. Summer language programs provide the kind of immersive experience that gives them a life-long commitment to learning

languages. Faculty who design new courses or pursue entirely new avenues of research and pedagogy share their excitement about the new directions in which global education has taken them. Whether it is a scholar of American history who turns to alternative medicine, a scholar of Art Deco who discovers the form in the global South, or a scholar of health who expands her area to include global health regimes, they bring back to campus their excitement at discovering new interests, skills, and commitments.

In its best form, global education is about cultivating friendships everywhere. It is about moving around the world respectfully, with a sense of our reciprocal obligations. As we confront what we have done to the world, to our climate, to our oceans, it is only these friendships that keep alive for us not just what we destroy, but also what we create, not just exploitation, but also generosity. As I rotate off this position and return full-time to the faculty, it is these friendships that I will most remember. I am energized by the vast potential of learning about and from each other and about continuing to keep international education at the center of my future work.

Update from International Admission

JON EDWARDS - Associate Dean of Admission



Grinnell received a new, record number of international applications for the Class of 2024, totaling 2,877. I'm writing in the midst of our application review season to reflect a bit on this past fall's recruitment season.

College admission work can be a bit hectic. While the winter 'Review' season typically means spending a lot of time alone staring at a computer and reading up to 50 applications per day, the fall season is dedicated to 'Outreach' when we spend about four months presenting Grinnell and the liberal arts model of education to prospective students and parents around the world. We visit high schools, private counseling organizations, government agencies, and conduct personal interviews with students while on the hunt for new Grinnellians. We are often the first face of college and we literally talk about Grinnell all day! Mentholated cough drops are always in my backpack to stave off inevitable laryngitis. Fortunately, most are eager to hear us out and we, in turn, learn more about each country's educational system, local culture, and the talents and dreams of our prospective students.

This year, we were able to stretch ourselves a bit farther and wider with the help of my colleagues, Tina Elfenbein, and our new, half-time international admissions counselor, Grace Lloyd '16. Tina traveled to **China** for two weeks in August to represent Grinnell for our 10th year in a row on the Liberal Arts in China college tour. Grace attended two professional conferences and made two long trips to **India** and **Japan/South Korea**, which she describes in the accompanying article.

My travel season started in Southeast Asia and began with my first-ever visit to Siem Reap, **Cambodia**, on the way to a regional education conference in Bangkok, **Thailand**, hosted by EARCOS (The East Asia Regional Council of Schools).

The conference was attended by college counselors at high schools throughout the region, many of whom are old friends of mine, and who had initially recommended Grinnell to many of our past and current Grinnellians. My friend, and Assistant Vice President for Enrollment, Brad Lindberg, joined me in Bangkok to present a very well-received session on applying financial aid for international students at U.S. colleges. Brad had presented with me at other international conferences and he always does an amazing job explaining a very complex process. The counselors love hearing from him! While in the region, I also visited Hanoi, **Vietnam**, where Grinnell is very well-known and Jakarta, **Indonesia**, where Grinnell should be more well-known. I hadn't traveled to Indonesia for Grinnell before, so it was a new experience and I will definitely return soon.

In early October, I went to São Paulo, **Brazil**, partially because we had seen a decent uptick in applications from there last year, but also because it had been

a few years since we visited. I interviewed many Brazilian students over the weekend and spent some quality time with a recent Grinnell grad, Desiree de Mota '17, who works at the U.S. Embassy's educational advising office, EdUSA, in São Paulo. She has been working in the field since graduation and has helped several of our current Brazilian students find their home at Grinnell.

I was supposed to travel to Quito, Ecuador following Brazil, but was advised by my host at the American School of Quito, to cancel that visit due to the rising political unrest unfolding at that time. They had just closed the roads between the city and the airport, so I wouldn't have gotten much done there. This gave me a few extra days in **Costa Rica**, however, which proved to be a good stop as well.

My final trip was in November and it took me on a very quick tour of the Baltics, from Tallinn, **Estonia**, to Riga, **Latvia**, ending in Vilnius, **Lithuania**. Smaller, but very promising markets for Grinnell. From there, it was on to Bilbao, Spain, to attend the Council of International School's Forum on Higher Education. This event is a fun and important reunion of sorts among international admission professionals and guidance counselors from international schools around the world. We share initiatives and best practices as well as connect with our high school colleagues regarding their students who will be entering this year's applicant pool.

While it's usually a good mixture of excitement and exhaustion being on the road, I'm always glad to come home to Grinnell. Now, it's back to all of those applications!



Jon Edwards in Sao Paulo, Brazil at Colegio Albert Sabin School in October 2019

Admission Travel Diaries

GRACE LLOYD '16 - Admission



This is my 8th year of living in Grinnell, Iowa. I started at Grinnell as a student in 2012, graduated in 2016, and have been representing the College in the Office of Admission since then. In my life I have always had a love for travel and meeting people from other places; for languages, cultures, and food; and of course, for learning. And this past year, I was able to combine my love for Grinnell and higher education with my other passions when Jon Edwards (who everyone from Grinnell to Timbuktu seems to know!) asked me to be one of his international admission counselors. So here's where I've been and what I've seen (and what I've eaten!) since August 2018, when I left for my first trip.

China: 2.5 weeks in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Hong Kong. I travelled with 19 other colleges on the Liberal Arts in China tour, where we gave presentations to hundreds of students on what is distinctive about this type of education and interviewed dozens of students. I had dim sum, whole fish,

and Peking duck among other delicious eats, walked past the Forbidden City, went on an early morning flea market run, shopped at night markets, and went to Lantau Island.

India: 2.5 weeks in Delhi, Kolkata, Jaipur, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, and Chandigarh. I traveled with 29 schools ranging from large universities to small liberal arts colleges as part of the CIS India Tour. I met students at college fairs, conducted interviews, and visited a number of high schools each day. This was my second time to India, and I was able to explore a different part of the country (more cities and less countryside this time)! The food was fantastic, notably momos, masala dosa, and vegetable saagu. I also went on a leopard safari, visited the Amber Fort, and wandered through the Jantar Mantar astrological park.

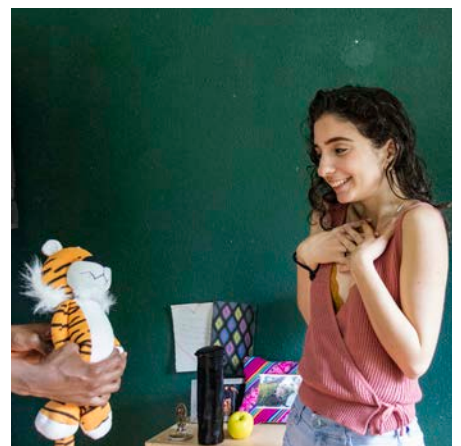
Korea: 1 week in Seoul, with a day trip to and through Gyeonggi-do. I traveled here and in Japan with three other Midwestern liberal arts colleges, giving presentations at high schools, hosting interviews, and representing Grinnell at college fairs. I ate amazing food—barbecue, bibimbap, bulgogi, and samgyetang were some of my favorites from my trip. I visited Namdaemun market, Sungnyemun gate, watched a traditional Pungmul performance, basically

bought half of a new wardrobe, and hugged the bear at LINE Friends in Myeongdong Station!

Japan: 1 week in Osaka, Tokyo, and a day trip to Karuizawa. We visited a number of high schools, attended 2 college fairs, presented at a number of organizations such as Bennessie and Grew-Bancroft, and I conducted 16 interviews in 2 days between Tokyo and Karuizawa. I ate standing sushi, vending machine ramen, okonomiyaki, played for hours at an arcade in Shinjuku, and rode the shinkansen (bullet train). Between Japan and Korea, I met with more than 200 students!

Spain: 1 week in Bilbao. What a way to finish off travel season—Jon and I met in Spain for an international admission conference with high school and college counselors from around the world. We ate amazing pinxtos, saw the Guggenheim, walked the Casco Viejo, and had amazing conversations and sat in on eye-opening presentations by peers and leaders. Overall, it was a busy year for international travel in our office, but a wonderful one—we are so excited to see what next year holds, and who comes to Grinnell of the many students we met!

Friend... to Friend...



to Friend...



This is part of a larger photo project that I did for an art class in the spring of 2019. These photos celebrate the diverse perspectives that are passed along - from friend, to friend, to friend, here at Grinnell College. Meeting people and getting to know more about them and their home cultures has been one of the most precious things for me in my college life. The world is so big, but we all happened to meet in this beautiful prairie in rural Iowa, with the stories we brought from thousands of miles away. We speak different languages, enjoy different foods, and celebrate different festivals – and through these friendships we all share a part of ourselves with each other.

#MiddleOfEverywhere #RareBird

YI-CHIA WANG '20 - Taipei City, Taiwan R.O.C.

Sofia Mendez Subieta '19 - Bolivia, Elvira Nurmukhamedova '19 - Uzbekistan, Bogdan Abaev '20 - Russia, Luo Yang '20 - Singapore, Calvin Tang '20 - Hong Kong (SAR), Yi-Chia Wang '20 - Taiwan R.O.C, Abdi Yusuf '20 - Somaliland, Ana Segebre Salazar '19 - Honduras (top left - bottom right)

Comfort Food Matters!

ROHAN GANDOTRA '20 - New Delhi, India

My first year at Grinnell in 2016 was great - I was doing well in my classes, had great friends, and was definitely enjoying my time here. At the same time, however, I really craved good Indian food, and there weren't local options to fulfill this craving. I decided that day that I wanted to do my best to remedy the situation and somehow make Indian food more accessible at Grinnell.

The perfect opportunity struck when Mr. Atul Gupta, a Grinnell alum and a College Trustee from India, decided to engage the Indian community on campus. He invited students from India to lunch, and he asked us about our experiences. After hearing the positive experiences of everybody present in the room, Mr. Gupta asked what could improve. The cheeky first year that I was, I blurted out "Butter Chicken!" I went on to explain to him how much I was missing the delicacies of home. The D-Hall just didn't cut it for me. Mr. Gupta heard me out, and he promised a dinner with catered Indian food.

After that initial meeting, I got lost in the flow of college and did not follow up to plan the event. I lost contact with Mr. Gupta and the idea was about to be a forgotten failure. A few years later, in my third



year, I decided to participate in the Pioneer Weekend. As luck would have it, one of the mentors for Pioneer Weekend was Mr. Gupta - so we reconnected! Neither one of us had forgotten our first interaction. This time, we worked together (with the OISA, Dining Hall, and President's office) to plan and execute a catered Indian dinner for the South Asian community. The event is in its second year, now - hosted at the Grinnell Golf Course and catered by one

of Mr. Gupta's favorite restaurants in Cedar Rapids. After only two years, the event is already considered a tradition that is anticipated by the South Asian community. I have faith that the event will continue to live, well beyond my first year cravings for butter chicken. Thank you to Mr. Atul Gupta and his wife, Sherry!

*Top left: Rohan Gandotra on Mac Field
Top Right: Joshua East and his
monther, Mitchell Smilie*

Food, Memory and Finding Home

DANIEL "JOSHUA" EAST '23 - Saint Andrew, Jamaica

Food is at the center of the Jamaican culture and it is the centerpiece around which my family and friends congregate. It is, therefore, no wonder that I have more food memories than I can recount. In light of moving to a new country, and to a new school with 'new' food, I can't help but to reminisce.

I was diagnosed with a tumor on my left upper jaw in April of 2019, and was scheduled to have surgery on July 23rd. Because of the position of the tumor, the doctor noted that I wouldn't be able to eat solid food for at least three months after the surgery. This was hard to hear, but it was part of the process. On the day before surgery, as I sat in a chair by my bedside pondering how life would change after surgery, my Mom entered the hospital floor and immediately changed my mood from one of pensive contemplation to one filled with smiles. Not only was her presence a gift, but she was there to surprise me with a dinner that consisted of some of my favorite dishes. Just how I love them. Cooked by her. Made with love. The only other phrase I could utter aside from a hearty thank you was, "you shouldn't have." I opened the containers one after another checking to see what was inside. My visual and olfactory sensors were bombarded by the aroma of rice and peas, stewed oxtail and beans,

vegetable salad, and potato salad. It was so much food, and I had eight hours to enjoy it. I ate them in increments, savoring each bite as it would be my last for a while. I first whet my appetite with some vegetable salad and I thoroughly enjoyed it: the crunch of the cabbage, lettuce, and carrots; the juicy cucumbers and tomatoes that were lightly drizzled by mommy's homemade vinaigrette. Then I made my way to the rice and peas with some of the oxtail gravy - my eyes watered. The potato salad was warm and just as scrumptious. To top it all off, she brought me a bottle of carrot juice and sour-sop juice.

In that moment I couldn't help but to also be reminded of the 'ten finga lickin' cooking escapades of my 'Mamoi' who had passed away one year before. Before she transitioned, my grandmother loved to feed her family and friends. Sista Dolly/ Miss Dolly/Mama (all aliases my grandmother was known by) knew how to manipulate sweet potatoes, a major staple in Jamaican cuisine, to make memorable and scrumptious dishes. She would spend close to eight hours carefully crafting her version of a classic Jamaican dessert 'Hell a Top, Hell a Bottom, Hallelujah in di Middle' (a type of sweet potato pudding). "Ms. Dolly a weh yuh duh mek dah pudding tayse suh nice..." one of her friends would remark. She



would also use sweet potatoes to craft her delicious red peas soup every Sunday morning.

Relocating to Grinnell, Iowa, U.S.A. - thousands of miles away from a mostly sunny Jamaica, was at first very difficult. I found myself missing Jamaican cuisine. It was in these moments that memories like these became most important; even though I was away from home, memories kept me connected. I have also managed to create new food memories that are interlaced with my new home here in Grinnell. These memories span from the scrumptious homemade bread and apple pie my Tutorial professor Elias Saba shared with our class, to the scrumptious stir-fry in the Marketplace Dining Hall. I've also enjoyed meals with new Grinnell friends - like the delectable Ethiopian, Indian, Greek and Asian-Fusion meals I was able to "full-joy" over winter break. Food and the memories associated with them can have such a lasting impact on our lives. Savor them, cherish them, and endeavor to create new memories everywhere you are.

Momo Night at the Brown's

PRATIK KARKI '20 - Katmandu, Nepal



One of the things about being from Nepal is that people associate you with loads of things that you don't really relate to. Over the years I've heard it all – Mount Everest, Yetis, Sherpas. I've even been asked whether Nepal is a part of India or China. In reality, I think with my guts, so I think about Momo (मःमः), the most revered food item for Nepalis. Momo is a national obsession; every street you go to will have a small shop in which a steamer is bubbling with this delicacy. The dish originates from Tibet and is believed to have been introduced to Nepal by the Newar merchant community of Kathmandu. These merchants modified the meat filling with local seasonings and introduced Nepali tomato sauce, which sets the dish apart from other types of dumplings. So, it's not surprising that one of the things I missed the most when I came to Grinnell was momo; in particular, the feeling of community that it fosters. Imagine huddling over a table, wrapping momo, whilst sharing news and gossip with your friends and family, and complaining about how not so spicy (or too spicy) the sauce is.





“Momo is a national obsession; every street you go to will have a small shop in which a steamer is bubbling with this delicacy.”

It is not too surprising that us Nepali students in Grinnell miss momo. An American couple, the Browns, have been strong proponents of the momo movement here. Amy, who worked at the library for the last 8 years, and Jerry, had a host daughter, Prakriti Shrestha '16, who introduced them to the delights of these goodies wrapped in flour and steamed to perfection. They immediately got hooked (yes, there has been evidence of momo addiction). What's more, Amy and Jerry were vegans, so it really proves that momo are for everyone! They started hosting momo nights a few times a semester and made it a tradition amongst the Nepali students on campus. I quickly became indoctrinated to this tradition; in fact,

one of my first Grinnell memories was going to the Browns for momo at the end of NSO.

A typical momo night starts off as you might expect, full of happy faces eager to eat some good food. Nepali tunes in the background, and a hearty dose of jokes. However, as I mentioned before, it takes a village to make momo. Firstly, you have to prepare the kima (कमि), the stuffing, which can be either meat or tofu/paneer for vegetarians. Then, everyone gathers around to wrap these beauties. There are normally some other non-Nepali friends over as well who may need some help learning how to wrap the momo.

Finally, the momo are put on the steamer to cook. However, there is one crucial ingredient, one which either makes or breaks the experience. This is the achar (अचार), a sauce made from tomatoes, garlic, cilantro, peanuts, and chilies. Every momo night the duty of crafting the perfect achar lies with the best cook. After all this work, it's time to eat! The rest of the evening is spent by playing games, singing songs, reminiscing, and of course, going for seconds. This tradition of Momo Nights would be impossible without the help of Amy and Jerry, who would help us get the ingredients, give us a place to make them, and drop us all home at the end of the night. However, as the saying goes - all good things must come to an end - so did the tradition of Momo Night at the Browns. Sadly, Amy and Jerry moved to North Carolina this January. I really hope the tradition of Momo night will continue as it has given us Nepalis the space to commune together over great food and remember the best of our home country. So, the next time that all of us are huddling together wrapping momo and sharing stories, we will be thinking of the Browns. Also, next time you meet a Nepali person, ask them about momo — not Everest or Yetis.

Top: Traditional Nepali Momos in a steaming basket

Right: Nepali Students with Amy and Jerry Brown during Momo Night

Guess Who's Back on Campus...

SHANICE WEBSTER '15 - Clarendon, Jamaica

"Guess who's back, back again." (in the voice of Slim Shady) If anyone told me that I would be back in Grinnell in a million years, I would tell them that they are crazy. But five years later I am back in the capacity of professor!

Late last year, I received a heartbreaking message from Dr. Shannon Hinsaleasure regarding her health. Shannon had been my research mentor and academic adviser at Grinnell, and now she was asking me to co-teach Bio 150, as she was likely to miss class due to treatments. I said yes immediately, still unsure if this would materialize. Shannon was serious, and soon I was dealing with paperwork and planning a move back to Iowa. Shannon has been quite influential in helping to shape my career. She encouraged me to apply to the Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB) program at Dartmouth. I got in, and found myself doing

my PhD in George O'Toole's lab, the same lab where Shannon did her PhD. In fact, Shannon was George's first graduate student. Now that I have been in George's lab for about four years, I realize how similar he and Shannon's mentorship style and approach to science are. Shannon's career path matched with her resilience as a scientist, and she has inspired me. It is an honor to teach alongside such a wonderful person.

Teaching at Grinnell as helped me realize how committed and passionate Grinnell professors are. Being on the other side, I see the amount of time and effort that they put into planning lessons to improve the learning experience. As a student, this was something that I took for granted. So, to all the professors at Grinnell, especially those who taught me: "Thank you. You are rock stars!"

Another wonderful thing about returning is that I get to spend time with the best FIS host family – Delphina, Scott, Joel, Ian, Chloe and Ella Baumann. As an international student from Jamaica, I was matched with the Baumanns my first year. I was regularly invited for home cooked meals, Thanksgiving dinners, and I would even have cookies brought to my dorm! The Baumanns were kind and gracious while I was at Grinnell, and since I graduated. Delphina



would check in with me to see how things were going at Dartmouth. I even got a Christmas package every year! It is fun being a part of their family and I am thankful to have them in my life. Now, I get to spend a whole semester living with them. I hope I don't drive them crazy!

Being back in Iowa has been both exciting and strange. I get to spend time with kind and inspiring people, while getting a glimpse into my future. Following graduate school, my ultimate goal is to go into academia. I am still trying to figure out what ratio of research to teaching I prefer, but this semester of teaching will help me have a better idea of that. I keep hearing from my host family that I might end up coming back to Grinnell long term to teach. To that, I have learned never to say never, so now I just say "ok."

Top: Shanice Webster (left) and Professor Shannon Hinsaleasure (right)

Left: Shanice and FIS hosts Scott and Delphina Baumann

Right: Gay and Jack at Ruilin Yu's (center) poster presentation in Noyce Science Center



Lucky to Feel at Home

RUILIN YU '20 - Beijing, China

I still remember when I first arrived at Grinnell. I had zero friends and zero idea what my college life was going to be like. I flew for eighteen hours, all alone, to a place that was off of my map of the world (which up to this point included three districts in Beijing, China). All I did for the first month here was ask questions, like: What are gender pronouns? Where is anything in Noyce? Where can I get some familiar Asian snacks? I felt excited, but I was also stressed by these uncertainties.

My host family through the Friends of International Students program was Gay and Jack, and their two pugs Molly and Gracy. The Irwins were the only people who resembled



something from my life back in Beijing – a family.

Gay and Jack often invite their host students to their house for dinner. I appreciated Gay's cooking very, very much, because I was on the full meal plan and ate almost every meal in the dining hall. During the first winter, I ate venison for the first time in my life. Jack had caught the deer during a hunt. After dinner, we would play games or do hand crafts. I also enjoyed playing with Gracy and Molly. Dinners at Gay and Jack's place were my major source of relaxation from school and a foreign environment.

My host family has helped me in many ways in addition to giving me food. During my second year, I got my first car with the advice from Jack. My Chinese dad is also an expert on cars, but he could not provide much help when all the conversation and transactions were in English. My host dad Jack gave me lots of tips on how to pick a car, how to take care of the car, and how to avoid spending unnecessary money on insurance. Without Jack, I would not be able to drive around and enjoy my college life as much as I have.

Through Gay and Jack, I also learned about a new way of living - which is to constantly help others. My host parents have been hosting interna-

tional students as a part of the FIS Program at Grinnell for 17 years. Additionally, they have been foster parents to many children and have volunteered in Mexico. On the wall of their dining room, there are almost a hundred pictures of their past host students, some of whom are still in contact with them today. Because people of my age in China often volunteer only to make their resume look good, I was deeply impressed by my host parents' past. Contrary to my parents at home who always taught me to "mind my own business first," my host parents have shown me that people could change others' lives as well as their own through volunteering. Both my biological family and my host family love me, and the best part about this is that their love gives me different perspectives.

Looking back as a senior at Grinnell, I realize how lucky I have been to be a part of Gay and Jack's family. Time that I spent with them made my experience at Grinnell wonderful and unique. I don't see the upcoming graduation as a sad occasion for saying goodbyes, but I see it as a new stage in my relationship to my host family and Grinnellian friends. My host family will always be in my heart because I will never forget about our happy memories together.

Finding Home Away from Home

CRISTIAN DOUGLAS SALES GARCIA '22 - Sao Paulo, Brazil



Every college needs a tight community, so that students can feel fully embraced and welcome. Here at Grinnell, there are people from different backgrounds, with different fears and expectations. While some of my friends have come from nearby cities, many others are international students, just like me. I am from Sao Paulo, Brazil, and whoever visits my hometown may wonder how it has felt for me – moving from such a crowded and crazy city to the calm cornfields of Iowa. I can respond to say that Grinnell has quickly become my home, far away from home. My personality helps, since I am quite social and I am a fan of small town life, but I believe that college staff, faculty and students have made this sentiment arise with ease.

“In the middle of everywhere.” I have come across this motto multiple times since I got accepted to Grinnell, but what does it really mean for me as a Brazilian? Well, it means that on my first visit to Bucksbaum I would find a Portuguese citation engraved on a bench outside the Gallery. It means that I’d have



the opportunity to see a photography exhibit in Burling library, about the Brazilian favelas—and I would even get to meet the photographer. It means feeling represented in the Gallery of Flags in the Grill, and feeling welcome in the HSSC Global Living Room. It has been wonderful to encounter small ways to feature my home country, within my new home campus.

The motto “in the middle of everywhere” embodies a meaningful characteristic of Grinnell: it embraces its role in this pluralistic world. The college opens many opportunities to the students to engage with different cultures and become global citizens. For instance, I participated in the Global Learning Program, called “Global Medicinals”, which allowed me to explore traditional and herbal medicine in Japan and England—right during my second semester here. Such an experience was so meaningful that during my second year, now that I have become a Community Advisor, I decided to give my floor a “global” theme. All door decorations are related to travelling, and I design bulletin boards that try to apply this global concept to the community of the college.

I believe that this global concept is so important for us, Grinnellians, because it makes us more comfortable with changes. The world we live in is in constant change, and so are we. To adapt easily to new situations is a skill that many of us have already developed



when coming to Grinnell. This adaptability has made it easier for me to call this college home, which is also the case for many of my friends; in fact, I believe that the bonds between us and to Grinnell grew in a symbiotic relationship. The community I created is much different than the one I have back home, but still very unique and important to me—because it is diverse, inclusive, and educational. For instance, my friends would hear me complaining about Brazilian politics, as they would teach me about the electoral college in the United States.

Moreover, by embracing its role in this plural world, Grinnell also recognizes its situation within the town and local community. As an example, the entire Community Advisor staff was required to go on the social justice tour during training before NSO. We were then invited to assume our responsibility with the town of Grinnell, and I highly encourage every Grinnellian to seek this experience. This opportunity, as well as many other

resources on campus, allow us to connect better to the town community and feel welcomed by them.

Finally, I want to mention that Grinnell is indeed an academically rigorous school, and one will gain many hard skills throughout their education here. However, this place is full of opportunities for Grinnellians to gain soft skills like adaptability, critical thinking, and empathy, which demand a certain step back from the textbooks and into involvement with the campus communities. I believe that finding Grinnell my home is intrinsic to the many opportunities I took advantage of, and I invite all of you to do the same.

*Top right: The Octavio Frias de Oliveira bridge in Sao Paulo, Brazil
Left: Christian (far left) and his team of Community Advisors outside Younker Hall*

Art & Architecture in the Big Apple

MOLLIE ULLESTAD - International Student Advisor

Winter break is traditionally viewed as a well-deserved time of rest, relaxation, and quality time with loved ones. For some students however, staying on campus over break is the best option for a variety of reasons. Grinnell College's dedication to being an international-student-friendly institution allows students from outside the U.S. to sign up to remain on campus over winter break at no additional fee. Winter in Grinnell is beautiful, but can also feel long, dark, and just... cold. For international students on-campus during this time it can also feel slightly boring, with the usual buzz of campus at a lull.

Because of this, OISA saw the need for winter break programming that was fun, new, and got students out of Grinnell. With the help of the Institute for Global Engagement and the Division of Student Affairs, OISA was able to take 10 international students and 2 OISA staff to New York City, NY (NYC) for a 4-day, no-cost program to study art, architecture, and how the two can relate to the international student identity.

With only three full days to explore these topics in one of the largest, most diverse cities in the world, we jumped right in. Day 1 included a trip to the top of the Empire State Building, a spectacular view of the NYC skyline, and a discussion about how NYC compares to cities from students' home countries. We wandered through Central Park, ate delicious Greek food,

Continued on the next page →



Mollie Ullestad

Pictured: View of Manhattan from Brooklyn Bridge. Did you know? More than 800 languages are spoken in New York City, making it the most linguistically diverse city in the world.



and paid a visit to Times Square. The morning of Day 2 was spent at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, where Brenda Strong led a discussion comparing and contrasting what it was/is like to be an international student pre and post Sept. 11, 2001. During the afternoon students explored the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), while looking for art/artifacts from their home countries and thinking about the social and political implications of globalization in the context of a museum. Day 2 also included Indian food and seeing the giant tree and ice skating rink at Rockefeller Center. Day 3 started with a ferry ride to the Statue of Liberty, where we climbed up into Lady Liberty's pedestal. The group discussed immigration and the original meaning of the statue in comparison to the current political climate of the U.S. Students were then given a free afternoon to explore the city on their own, before meeting back up as a group to see the Broadway musical, *Wicked*.

While the program was short, it was also sweet. As international students know, traveling and seeing new places is one of the best ways to learn. NYC provided our group with the opportunity to learn about multiple forms of art, the significance of various architectural icons, and how international student identities are linked to both. Thank you to Brenda Strong for helping to lead the program and to Abdi, Diana, Haorui, Haruna, Joshua, Khondamir, Mario, Pouya, Sakura, and Tino for being a great student group.

OISA hopes to provide international students with similar winter break programming in the future!

*Pictured outside the MET (left - right):
Standing - Pouya Gholami, Brenda Strong, Miranda Strong, Mario Manalu, Joshua East, Haruna Suzuki, Abdi Yusuf, Khondamir Imomnazarov, Haorui Sun, Diana Chege.
Front row - Sakura Ishizaki, Mollie Ullestad, Tinotenda Tazvitya*

Experiences from the City that Never Sleeps

"In an overwhelmingly metropolitan place like NYC, I felt the need to revisit my roots to see where I stand relative to everyone else."

- Abdi Yusuf '20, Somaliland

"I enjoyed going to various historical places. The Statue of Liberty for starters. I don't mean to get sentimental but it's amazing what a thought could become."

- Diana Chege '22, Kenya

"Within a few days, we left our steps at several places in New York City. At the same time, we became friends from strangers."

- Haorui Sun '21, China

"I saw people from so many different ethnicities, social classes, and genders having different purposes in being in the city."

- Haruna Suzuki '23, Japan

"It was a fascinating and delightful experience seeing the many ethnicities represented as we walked along the streets of New York and the many different languages being spoken. It gave me hope that like the Grinnell campus, despite the differences between people they can support each other and coexist beautifully."

- Joshua East '23, Jamaica

"Seeing something written in my native languages in the streets 10 time zones away from home made me smile hard. I knew that NYC was a multicultural metropolis, but knowing and seeing are different things."

- Khondamir Imomnazarov '23, Uzbekistan

"During the show [Wicked on Broadway], I constantly got inspired by how talented those actors on the stage were. They sang, harmonized, danced, acted, and monologued all in one go."

- Mario Manalu '22, Indonesia

"I do not think any of us could mistake New York City for another city, because at its heart, which we got to see, it is filled with art and culture."

- Pouya Mahdi Gholami '20, Iran

"[At the Metropolitan Museum of Art] I was amazed by the significance of art in building stronger relationships between countries."

- Sakura Ishizaki '23, Japan

"I can say my interest in art and history developed more on this day."

- Tinotenda Tazvitya '23, Zimbabwe



Student participants at the statue of Liberty in New York City

Military Service in South Korea

SANG YOON BYUN '21 - Seoul, South Korea



I can still vividly recall the first conversation I had with another Grinnell student during IPOP. After the long, typical, and somewhat awkward process of introducing ourselves to each other, we began to talk about what courses we wanted to take, what we intended to major in, and what we wanted to achieve during our four years here in the United States. To my surprise, he seemed to have sketched out a perfect year-by-year plan for the bucket list of things he wanted to do as a college student. The truth is, this first conversation made me rather uneasy, mostly because I, on the other hand, had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. My so-called four-year plan was more of a checklist than a bucket list. It was a mold of unanswered questions and full of incomplete sentences. One question in particular ruled them all—when exactly should I go to the military?

When South Korean men turn 18 years old, they are automatically enlisted for mandatory national service. Afterwards, when they turn 19, they are required to go through a series of physical examinations that ultimately determine how suitable they are for the military. These young men, most of whom have just graduated high school, then face several options. In general, they can decide to serve in the Army (18 months), Navy (20 months), Air Force (22 months), or Marine Corps (18 months). Each service branch has its own unique features and purposes, and individuals take their time to thoroughly weigh their options. Whichever branch they choose will determine their next two years.

Choosing where and when to go to the military can be especially challenging for South Korean men studying in the United States. Most of these students generally go serve their country after completing their first year. This choice can be ideal because one gets to cross off a major homework assignment from their to-do list early on, and can continue studying after their service without any interruptions. However, choosing this option means that when the student returns to campus, their friends from IPOP are now graduating seniors. A two-year gap in college can also be a surprisingly huge gap in academics. When a student spends 24-hours with Korean men, speaking Korean, in one of the most Korean places, they can gradually begin to lose their valuable academic skills. When they spend every day following someone else's orders and just do what they are told to do, they can lose your ability to think creatively and independently. Some students thus decide to serve their country after their graduation. While this option allows them to stay connected with their friends, it can impede some of their career opportunities later on.

So far, I have made it sound like going to the military is a significant obstacle in one's life. It most certainly can be, but it doesn't always have to be that way. To be honest, it really depends on one's attitude and willingness to

“It is up to that ordinary person to make those two years extraordinary.”

learn and grow. Some people spend their entire two years dreading and living each day lifelessly until they are eventually discharged. They will say that they have wasted their youth in the middle of nowhere. Some people, on the other hand, learn leadership, create lifelong friendships, and/or get fit both physically and mentally. They will say, “If you have to go anyways, why not make at least it worth the time?”

Looking back at my first year, choosing when to go the military was difficult because I was afraid. I was afraid that I would lose my friends and be alone when I returned. I was afraid that I would have a hard time adjusting back. I was afraid that I would not fit in well in the army. I was afraid South Korea would go to war when I was right in there. After going through the process, and as a third year now, none of these fears were realized (I did have a hard time adjusting back, but that’s okay).

When we hear the word military, we often imagine it to be full of strong, smart, and brave souls with perfect leadership. From what I have observed, however, that is definitely not the case (at least not in Korea). Instead, it is a place where ordinary people come and try to make meaning out of their two years. It is up to that ordinary person to make those two years extraordinary.



Korean Flag at a Market in Seoul, South Korea

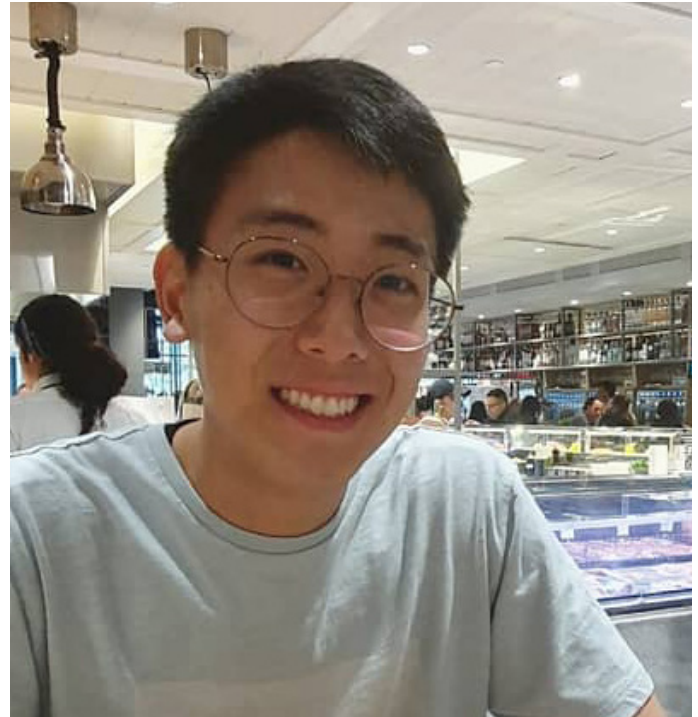
Experiences from the Korean Military



Jong Yoon Choi '21

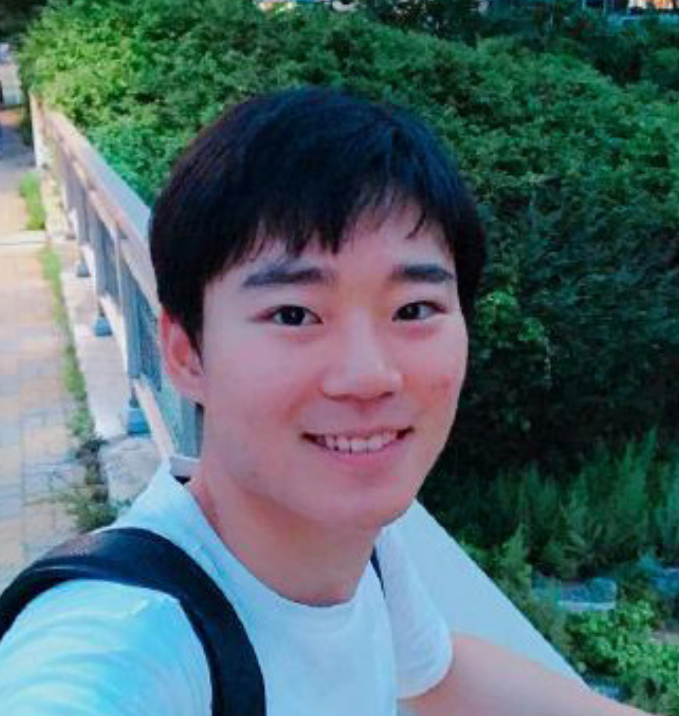
I was stationed on the front-line, especially the most northeastern part of South Korea, where I could see North Korean fishing boats to my right and North Korean soldiers up front. My regular tasks included but were not limited to: looking out for North Korean refugees/defects and suspecting activities 24/7 with rotations; missions inside the DMZ with UN soldiers; and training drills to counter a surprise attack.

Serving with and getting to know people from extremely different backgrounds definitely humbled me during my service. I plan to stay deferential and understanding towards others.



Sang Yoon Byun '21

I worked in the headquarters company of the Ammunition Support Command, which is responsible for maintaining and distributing ammunition to numerous combat units across the Korean peninsula. As an administrative officer, I had two primary roles within the company—security operations and human resources. I primarily planned and directed security operations around ammunition bunkers and the main command center. My role also included managing various administrative tasks, like maintaining military personnel records, arranging training sessions, and providing necessary military gear and supplies for non-commissioned officers.



Woochul Kevin Kim '22

I was deployed in the 94th Military Police Battalion, which is the largest forward deployed Military Police Battalion in the U.S Army. I worked as a human resources specialist. I was responsible for reporting readiness, health, and welfare of all soldiers in the battalion, and assisting the Commander on all human resource support matters. Also, because of my specialty in language, I was responsible for Korean-English translation to help bridge language barriers between the Korean and U.S. army. I learned to endorse diversity and endure hardship. It taught me to engage with people who have grown up in different cultures and to believe in myself when I am confronted with challenges that I have never tried. While studying computer science at Grinnell, I hope to take more leadership roles here and to help create a culture where everyone feels welcome.



Mingi Lee '23

My duty was to help the reserve force - training as an assistant instructor, and to administratively arrange the reserve force training sessions. I was responsible for managing 800 reserves in Gapyeong, which is a rural region in Korea. My role as an assistant instructor was to help the reserves on the reconnaissance patrol drill section. During the training, I had to give a demonstration on behalf of the drill sergeant, and answer the questions that reserves had. My duty also required a lot work on the computer, as it was my role to arrange the reserve forces training agenda and location. I learned to be more responsible, since everyone gets into trouble if you don't carry out your army duties right. It helped me to be more disciplined and to do my schoolwork with responsibility. I plan to study computer science, but I am still exploring diverse academic subjects as a first-year. I hope my Grinnell experience will help me work in the field I devote myself to.

Cultural Attachés

...in Action

The Cultural Attaché Program helps connect international Grinnellians with local schools and community venues in order to facilitate authentic cultural exchange. We invite students to share topics they love, and we invite the local community to welcome new ideas and new perspectives. Cultural Attachés have been visiting school classrooms, the Grinnell Art Center, the Mayflower Community, etc. for the past two years. Nearly 25 international students from 10+ countries have participated. Attachés have approached a variety of themes – from food to music, politics to sports, and language to pop culture, with any appropriate cultural topic being welcome. We hope this program helps to make the world a bit smaller, a bit smarter, and a bit kinder.

If you have questions about the program, visit www.grinnell.edu/OISA or contact Mollie Ullestad [ullestad@grinnell.edu].



Georgia

Sesili Koberidze '21

I went to Grinnell Middle School to talk to a class. The topic that I wanted to share with the students revolved around Georgian culture, history, cuisine, and general values. The experience was amazing for sharing a part of home that I really miss. The kids enjoyed learning about a new culture and a country that most of them had never heard of. Sharing the language and history of my country was extremely rewarding and the audience was very responsive.



Japan

Momiji Fukushima '22

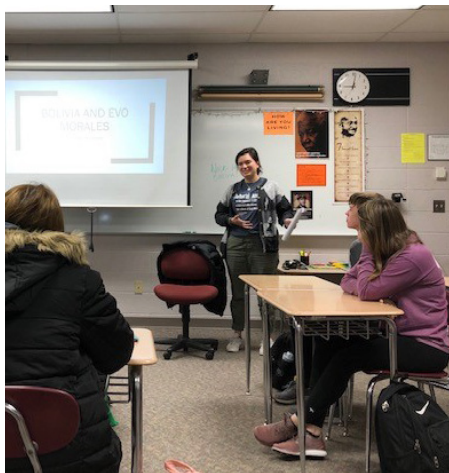
I taught 5th grade students how to fold origami mittens and stockings. Many of them told me that they will definitely fold more origamis for Christmas, and I was happy to see how excited they were to learn about my Japanese culture. I am very thankful for OISA who gave me an opportunity to appreciate the diversity we have in our small community.



South Korea

Shirley Jwa '22

I went to a 5th grade class at Grinnell Middle School and introduced gonggi, a Korean traditional game. The students enjoyed it so much that they even asked if they could keep it. They were also enthusiastic throughout the game, which made me happy. Especially in the end, some students personally came to me and thanked me for coming and sharing the game. This made my day, and I felt grateful to be able to share my culture and feel appreciated.



Bolivia

Nicole Mendez Subieta '21

I appreciated the opportunity to share more about Bolivia's current political situation with the class taught by Mr. Todd Crites, a Contemporary Global Issues teacher at Grinnell High School.

Bolivia has been facing social convulsion ever since Evo Morales, my president for already 14 years, decided to run for a fourth term after ignoring a referendum in which the majority of Bolivians voted NO to his perpetuation in power. Being away from home in pivotal moments like this can be very hard, but feeling that there are people, and especially a young group of students, that seem interested and curious about what is happening back home means worlds to me.



Japan

Jo Saito '23

For my Cultural Attaché experience, I shared the Japanese video game culture and the traditional game of Kendama to middle school students. The students seemed to enjoy learning how Japan contributes to the current global gaming scene with its innovative ideas and unique characters. In contrast to the video games, most of them were unfamiliar with Kendama (a traditional wooden toy) but everyone got to learn the basic trick, which is actually pretty hard to master at first. The session ended in great success thanks to the enthusiastic students and OISA who helped me organize this opportunity!



Hong Kong [SAR]

Calvin Tang '20

As part of the Cultural Attaché program this fall, I was able to visit the Mayflower Community as one of the Lyceum speakers. I presented a brief history of Hong Kong, in photos. This was a great chance for me to talk a bit about the history of home through one of my favorite mediums – photography! I had a nice time sharing some of my families' stories with an attentive crowd, and I was eager to answer many of the questions they had for me too! I felt very welcomed and it warmed my heart to see everybody come to shake my hand and say thank you at the end of my talk. They also wrote a sweet card and sent me home with the best plate of cookies I've had in my life!



Japan

Machiko Takanashi '22

This semester was my third time being a Cultural Attaché. I find new things every time I visit the local schools. They often give me new perspectives to look at my culture that I have never noticed. Certainly, I tell my culture to the students, but I feel I am also learning at the same time through the interaction with them. I love to spread my culture to the community and it helps me feel more at home here.

Exploring Food Sovereignty Across Cultures

TOMMY O'DONNELL '20 - Plymouth, United Kingdom



Over the past year, I have had the unique opportunity as recipient of the Fischlowitz Travel Fellowship to explore the idea of food sovereignty across cultures within the United States. The fellowship allowed me to travel to New York City, NY; Plymouth, MA; New Orleans, LA; Los Angeles, CA; and Seattle, WA; where I visited community gardens, vertical farms and local markets to understand the importance of local food systems on individuals and communities. Since hearing about the fellowship during IPOP in 2016, I knew that one day I would love the opportunity to take part in such a rewarding experience. I learned that I would be the 2019 fellow while suffering from a lung infection during the polar vortex. The news was the best medication I could have received.

When I was a kid, my dad would always take me to the monthly Plymouth farmers market. I would agonize for the weekend to come that we could go to the market and buy my favourite syrup sponge cake from 'Georgie Porgies Puddings'. Back then, I had no idea about local foods vs industrial agriculture,



Community Garden in New York City

all that I knew was George's cake was delicious. Being from a town that is surrounded by farmland and rather separated from the rest of the UK, I was lucky enough to grow up in a community that cared about local, sustainable foods. So much of our 'Janner' culture revolves around food. Plymouth, as one of the UK's largest fishing ports, is known as the Fish and Chips capital of the world. We also lay claim to other delicacies such as the mighty Pasty and Cream Tea.



Tommy looking through a fence in LA, at what once was the largest urban garden in the U.S.

“Arriving in Iowa was simultaneously a blessing and a curse. I had landed in a farming state, with so much of the local culture intertwined with food and agriculture, yet, I also discovered the large control Industrial farms had on the landscape.”

Eager to learn more about my new surroundings, I enrolled in a special topic course entitled “Nature and Culture on the American Prairie”. This anthropology class, taught by Professor Andelson, taught me so much about the history of the Midwest, how the prairie was destroyed, how European mono-crop farming took hold, and how in recent times local communities have fought back to try and reintroduce the local farming culture that once existed. After taking this class, I knew that I wanted to use the fellowship to explore how other communities across the U.S. have fought back against industrial agriculture and used food sovereignty as a mechanism to preserve culture and traditions

centered around food. I began my travels during the first week of summer break, visiting New York City and Plymouth, MA. While in New York City I revisited my internship site from the previous summer in the Lower East Side in Manhattan. A group of environmental organizations and a Puerto Rican community centre work together to preserve a number of community gardens in the area. Completely volunteer run, these gardens operate as centers for community members to come together nestled between skyscrapers, they provide everyone with an opportunity to take a break from the metropolitan lifestyle, with picnic tables, ponds and numerous pick your own allotment patches.

I also used my time in New York City to explore a modern solution to food sovereignty issues - vertical farming. Located a block away from Wall Street, Farm-One produces micro-greens from a basement facility underneath a Michelin starred restaurant. It was a far cry from the community gardens of the Lower East Side, with tour goers being offered glasses of prosciutto while tasting basil that costs more for one leaf than a typical meal would cost. Although the farm was obviously aware of the climate problems caused by industrial agriculture, I am not sold that vertical farming offers a real solution. Its operation currently only targets high-end restaurants - I can't see how such an operation could be scaled up enough to reduce costs and produce enough food to make a significant impact on urban communities.

I spent the final two weeks of the summer break visiting Los Angeles, New Orleans,

and Seattle. I was especially excited to visit South Central Farm in Los Angeles that was the location for the amazing documentary 'The Garden'. I remember watching this during high school, learning about how the local community was fighting back against private landlords to keep hold of their farm - the largest urban garden in the whole of the United States. Sadly, they lost the land, which has sat derelict for the past 13 years. When visiting the site, I couldn't comprehend the size of the land, imagining how prosperous such a space could be for the community to produce their own food. Although the Farm no longer exists, the community members have stuck together, creating a coalition of smaller community gardens, while still fighting the Los Angeles City Council for their rights to use the land once again. It was sobering to see how much the community had lost, but also to recognize their resilience to not give up. Food security and food sovereignty are important for communities, so much so that they spend their lives fighting for the right to autonomously control their local food systems.

I will never have such a collection of enlightening and interesting experiences again. My desire to improve local food systems has only strengthened through this opportunity and I hope that more is done in the future to ensure Industrial Agriculture practices are eradicated.

*Top: Tommy at an urban garden in New York City
Middle: Tommy with the sign for the Plymouth Rock in Plymouth, MA
Bottom: Tommy at one of the vertical garden farms in New York City that supply local restaurants and businesses*



The **Fischlowitz Travel Fellowship** provides an opportunity for Grinnell College international students to pursue casual yet purposeful independent travel in the United States, focused on deep exploration of a chosen theme. One award of \$5,000 is available each year, made possible through the generous support of Teresa and Merle Fischlowitz '53.

Fischlowitz remembers his friendships with students from abroad as one of the most rewarding aspects of his time at Grinnell. He believes traveling independently in the United States has the power to enrich an international student's education, beyond what can be accomplished by living for a few years in any single community. This award was established to provide opportunities for meaningful travel to students who might not otherwise be able to pursue it during their time at Grinnell.

Dashain: Ages Old Tradition, New to Grinnell

ANSHUL TAMBAY '20 - California, USA

Having attended SASO events since my first year, I was very familiar with the schedule when I began serving as the VP this fall. However, I had my eyes opened during our first cabinet meeting when Puravi Nath '21 and Vidush Goswami '21, pointed out that almost all of our events were both Indian and Hindu centered. In an effort to correct this, we resolved to include more events to represent other populations within our constituency.

Enter Dashain, the Nepali celebration of Ram's victory over Ravan as told in the Ramayana. We worked alongside the kind folks at Everest Restaurant in Des Moines to put together a small gathering on October 4th, 2019. There were plenty of samosas, around 50 people, rangoli (a form of painting with colored powders), sel roti, henna, and music. To learn more and reflect on the celebration, community, and holiday, I wrote to a good friend of mine, Pratik Karki '20, who is from Kathmandu, Nepal.

Why do you celebrate Dashain?

"So, Dashain basically means celebrating the victory of good over evil. However, this festival has transitioned from a purely mythological/religious standpoint to a cultural event akin to [Christmas]. It's a great time to bond with family, meet relatives that you might normally get a chance to interact with, and get

new clothes and good food."

What are some of your favorite memories of the event back home?

"Being the youngest in my family, Dashain left me with a lot of good memories. The festival entails the elders passing down blessings to the young, so as you can imagine, it led to me getting a lot of blessings (and cash offerings called Dakshina). I also loved the food and conversations. Rice and lentils (daal) with vegetables, pickles, and a side of meat, most commonly goat, is a staple. According to my grandparents, getting to eat meat was rare in the hills and mountains when they were growing up, so they took the opportunity in this festival to indulge in the delicacy."

Can you describe sel roti?

"We called Sel Roti 'Nepali donuts'. It is made of rice flour, normally beaten by hand to get an uneven texture, and they are deep fried in a ring-like shape. It's eaten with some pickle on the side or with tea. Sel Roti is made especially for the festivals of Dashain and Tihar and served as a snack for guests."

Speak on the Nepali community at Grinnell.

"The Nepali community in Grinnell is small but very tight-knit. We work together to make food and host events together. Being from a smaller South Asian



Traditional Rangoli on the floor during Dashain. The name रंगोली [rangoli] symbolizes beauty, hope, and tradition.

community, we find ourselves sharing esoteric jokes and memes online often. Everyone really makes me feel at home and I'll sorely miss them after graduating."

The event was a success and well received by all, which bodes well for those looking to add new gatherings. The rest of the cabinet and I hope that future leaders of SASO further widen our horizons to engage all those who we represent. I also thank Puravi and Vidush for their addressing this imbalance in programming and am honored to work alongside them.

From Grinnell to India – Family is Forever

JENNIFER McALEXANDER - FIS Host



In 2008, we did this thing. We signed up to participate in the Friends of International Students Program, then known as The Host Family Program. Our three children were ages 5, 7, and 9. We considered it a great way for our children to learn about other cultures without having to leave Grinnell. My husband and I saw it as a great opportunity for us to be hospitable to students who had traveled many miles to be part of our community. We agreed to add a 'big kid' to our family of little kids, and thus it began.

Our first 'big kid' (i.e. student match) was Sneha Saigal, an Indian student from Mumbai. We had the privilege of meeting her parents, younger sister, and older sister, who was a third year at Grinnell, the night of the program dinner in August 2008. Throughout the next four years, we enjoyed sharing pieces of our life with Sneha and sister Sakshi while they were at Grinnell. My extended family was local, so the girls met my parents and grandfathers. It was typical for them to join us for family birthdays, celebrating holidays, and Sunday dinners at my parents' farm.



McAlexander family at the wedding. (left - right) Jennifer, Parker, Kevin, Isaiah and Ella

The girls shared their college life with us, too. We met their friends and hosted gatherings for them in our home. They taught us how to cook Indian cuisine. We joined them on campus for Diwali celebrations and annually for the ISO Cultural Evening – our favorite! It was there that we learned about Bollywood dancing and the great joy it brought them to dance on stage.

Sharing life didn't end when the girls graduated from Grinnell. Our families continued to stay in contact through email and Facebook. We were able to gather with Sneha, some of her family, and second year roommate Olivia Birwari ('12) in Chicago over spring break in March 2016.

It was during that spring break trip that we learned about the elaborate Indian weddings. Sister Sakshi Saigal had married earlier that year and although we were invited to India to attend, it wasn't possible for us to go. While in Chicago, we enjoyed watching the video of the ceremonies and celebrations that took place during the event. Our daughter Ella, age 13 at this time, was completely taken with it all. My husband and I made a promise to her that when the time came, we would do what we could to get Ella to India for Sneha's wedding.

In 2020, we did this thing. We went to India for Sneha's wedding! The notice came in 2019 that the date and location were set. Plans were in motion for the McAlexanders to go to Mumbai. Although boys aren't usually into weddings, the McAlexander boys (now ages 21 and 18) decided that this was a trip they didn't want to miss. It was officially a family affair!

Our family departed from Chicago on Friday, January 3 and arrived into Mumbai the next morning. The next two days were filled with family time and sightseeing. It was enjoyable to see and learn about the community that Sneha called 'home'. We purchased traditional Indian outfits for the wedding, awed as we rode through Mumbai traffic, and consumed a lot of fabulous Indian food!

On Tuesday, January 7, we traveled by plane with Sneha, her groom Vaibhav Bhanot, and other family members to the wedding venue in Goa, located south of Mumbai along the coast of the Arabian Sea. Pre-wedding activities began that evening with mehndi (henna) for the women during an informal gathering of family who'd arrived.

The guests arrived on Wednesday for High Tea in time to celebrate the Haldi and Mehendi ceremonies that afternoon. The agenda said 3PM, but we quickly learned that we were on "Indian Standard Time", which meant that everything would begin later than scheduled. I also learned that this intimate group of 175 family and closest friends was small compared to what one might find at a bride's traditional ceremony in her hometown. Several women in attendance shared their stories of choosing destination weddings, as Sneha had, so they could celebrate with an intimate group. After celebrating in Goa, the Saigal family would extend the celebration of the marriage in Mumbai on Sunday, January 12 with a larger reception of 400 guests comprised of friends and colleagues.



Host Parents Kevin and Jennifer McAlexander with birth parents Sushil and Anjali Saigal at the Sangeet celebration



ISO Cultural Night Spring 2009. Back: Sakshi Saigal ('10), Sneha Saigal ('12), Isaiah McAlexander Front: Parker McAlexander, Ella McAlexander



2020 recreation of the picture taken at ISO Cultural Night. Same order as above.

Wednesday evening was one of my highlights! The Sangeet celebration included many choreographed dances in which the bride's and groom's families and friends participated. I loved watching Sneha dance on the stage! She was glowing as she danced to the popular Bollywood song, "My Desi Girl" with her sisters and girlfriends. I'll admit, I teared up a little when she did this song. It was one of the first songs she danced to during the ISO Cultural Evening. Who would have thought this host mom would have seen her dance 12 years later on stage the night before her wedding? After the dancing, Sneha came over smiling and said, "Did it remind you of ISO?" Yes dear, it sure did! After the choreographed dancing came more dining.

Thursday morning began with the Chooda ceremony of blessings. Sneha was adorned with the chooda (set of bangles) by her maternal uncle and aunt. The guests tied on the kaleera (umbrella shaped hangings) to the bangles for continued blessings.

The main wedding ceremonies began close later that afternoon. The men's heads were wrapped in padgis (turbans)—peach colored for the groom's family and gold colored for the bride's. Sneha chose pastel colors for her color scheme and herself wore sage green instead of the bride's traditional red or yellow. The women wore ornate and sparkling kurtas, saris, lehenga cholis, and dupattas (stoles). They were gorgeous!

Groom Vaibhov's processional (Baraat) to the ceremony site involved much music and dance, although no elephants or white horses were included. He stayed



Back row: Kevin McAlexander, Sakshi Saigal, Parker McAlexander, Ella McAlexander, Isaiah McAlexander, Jennifer McAlexander. Front row: Bride Sneha Saigal, Groom Vaibhav Bhanot

on schedule so the couple could enjoy their ceremonies during a gorgeous Goan sunset overlooking the Arabian Sea.

The bride's arrival and exchange of garlands with Vaibhov during the Jaimala ceremony signified that they were indeed accepting each other as husband and wife. The remainder of the ceremonies took place on the mandap with the priest, bride and groom, and their immediate family representatives. Once the ceremonies concluded, the groom was forced to buy back his shoes from the bride's sisters who stole them while he was on the mandap. Following the ceremonies, the couple and guests changed into appropriate dancewear for the After Party. The newlyweds were introduced into the party during a firework-filled entrance.

On Friday, January 10, the group left Goa and returned to Mumbai. We enjoyed Saturday, our last day in India, sharing visits with parents, grandparents, and siblings. Our stomachs were filled with one more home-

cooked Indian meal before heading to the airport that evening. After two days of travel (with flight delays and missed connections), we reached our own beds in Grinnell.

The Saigals shared with my family as much about their life and culture in seven days as we did in four years with their girls in Grinnell. We experienced culture shock and faced language barriers. We better understand jetlag and the time it takes for your body to recover before you can resume routine function. We shared meals with grandparents and extended family members and participated in family celebrations while being included as one of their own. We are forever grateful to the Saigal family who were amazing hosts on this trip of a lifetime.

If you had told me 12 years ago that I would one day take my children to India, I would have never believed you. Now, I believe that connections made in Grinnell may one day lead you to anywhere in the world!

Alumni Adventures



MARIAM ASAAD '14 - Karachi, Pakistan

When I graduated from Grinnell in 2014, I was torn about whether to return to Pakistan and work in the development sector; to pursue a Grinnell Corps fellowship that I had been offered; or to give in to the temptation of availing my work authorization (OPT) and the “freedoms” that life in the U.S. accorded. Eventually, parental pressure prevailed and I returned home. I felt a bit resentful as I watched friends go on to impressive jobs in the U.S., but that feeling didn’t last long. The next 2 years would be the most transformative of my life this far: as I secured a job with Teach for Pakistan (TFP).

TFP functions similarly to Teach for America: fellows are placed in government schools to work with the students, schools, and communities. Throughout the fellowship, I was perpetually in fight or flight mode. I wasn’t the most talented teacher, but the experience shaped my career choices, and my life and my network in Pakistan in incredible ways.

After TFP, I pursued a Masters in International Education Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education (impressive as that sounds, the experience made me so much more grateful for the inclusivity and love I experienced at Grinnell). Then I headed home to Pakistan, albeit entirely of my own accord and much less begrudgingly. I

started consulting for the World Bank on a project focused on nutrition, with an embedded education component. It was fascinating to work with the provincial government and to navigate this very bureaucratic space. While the work felt inefficient at times, I was constantly learning and it prepared me for the work to come.

Being an educationist, it was difficult to not be directly involved in education, so I sought additional opportunities. I started volunteering at an organization that I’ve long been associated with: The Citizens Foundation (TCF). Pakistan’s largest education non-profit, TCF builds and operates schools in underserved areas, with a network of 1500+ schools. My work with TCF started off by conducting research for a partner provincial government. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had identified multi-grade teaching (MGT) as a ‘problem’ in its primary schools and they wanted guidelines to improve school quality. The more I delved into the research on MGT—where one teacher leads multiple grades at once (reminiscent of one-room schools in the U.S.)—the more appealing this design became to me. With the right design elements, it can be a superior model to typical mono-grade schools.

My research evolved into a full-blown set of recommendations that included curricular reform and teacher training. We identified that schools that were practicing MGT, often due to low student enrollment and/or teacher availability. Armed with a significant amount of design leeway, I lead a unit to redesign MGT within 198 schools. The project has a reach of 33,000+ students, with plans to pitch it to all four provincial governments. About 40% of all public primary schools are multi-grade, and with more than 22 million children out of school, an effective multi-grade solution could greatly improve primary school access.

I am intimidated by the scope of the project, but I am deeply humbled knowing that this was born from my involvement. This work also reminds me that moving back home was a good decision for me. My work here feels extremely meaningful. Through my application for the Wall Award, I sought financial support to hire a team to develop the new curriculum and enable teacher training. I did not secure an award this year, but returning to campus to interview, and meeting the other finalists and selection committee members, reminded me how proud I am to be Grinnellian - to be part of a community that values and supports its alumni and the impactful work that we do.

मेरी कहानी [My Story]

VYSHALI "VYSH" RAJA RAM '23 - Tamil Nadu, India



Four. That was it. The age and time that would determine the next years to come in my life. I remember most of my childhood facing harsh treatment from my grandparents and succumbing to their insults of my gender and my color. When I was two years old, my grandfather nearly killed me, but if it wasn't for my father and my mother's parents, I would not be alive. 18 years have passed and it is hard to imagine that moment of inexplicable violence now. My dreams for the future, to become a cardiologist and serve communities in need, would have perished in that single moment. My mother feared for my safety every day, and being a woman in the rural society, she did not have a voice to stand up for herself and protect her own daughter.

I spent most of my childhood with the fear that my paternal grandparents would try to harm me again. As a result, I did everything I could to make myself useful. I quickly learned all the household chores. I learned to cook, and to wash dishes and clothes. I managed our home alone while my parents worked in the fields. My parents worked a lot, but the money they earned wasn't enough to sustain our family. To add to this, my father drank away a lot of our money. I remember the nights he came home drunk and beat my mother. Confused and frightened, I would cry, as I was hopeless.

Violent episodes with my father usually meant that my mother would leave the house for a few days. During those times, I was again in charge of the household. I did the cooking, cleaning, washing, and helped my brothers get ready for school. I did anything and everything that was needed in the home. I was just three years old.

It was uncommon for a girl to attend school in my community. If they were lucky they would complete 10th grade, but the less fortunate never attended classes at all. As is the case, unfortunately, in most of India. Back then, being educated was seen as a privilege; that it could only be afforded by those who had higher socio-economic status.

However, sometimes something happens that changes the course of your life. The first such moment for me, was when my father saved me from my grandfather. The second happened when I was three-and-a-half. On that day, a distant relative mentioned a school called Shanti Bhavan; they said there was work to be had there. Immediately, my father and some of my uncles went to see the place. Soon after, they were working at the banana plantation owned by the school, and I found myself attending my first day of classes.

I can clearly remember the day that I arrived. The bright colors, lush greenery, and smiling faces made Shanti Bhavan seem magical. I had never been to Disneyland, but this was how I imagined it. My mother told me she was

surprised by the way I responded to everything. She said that I was without fear; I ran to a bed, picked up the doll that was laying there, and looked back to show her, smiling. She and my father watched as I met my classmates for the first time, uncertain but excited. Little did we know, we were about to embark on a fourteen-year journey—an experience that was going to change our lives forever.

Shanti Bhavan is a boarding school in the southern state, Tamil Nadu, of India. They provide education to children with low socio-economic status. Children are enrolled at the age of four, and their entire education is taken care of, including college. I am ever so grateful that I got to study in Shanti Bhavan, for it was they who helped me rewrite my destiny. Growing up in Shanti Bhavan meant loving dorm caretakers, understanding teachers, and meeting fascinating volunteers. Our classes were equal parts challenging and engaging, an environment which allowed us to thrive academically. I loved all of my subjects, especially biology. In addition to academics, Shanti Bhavan emphasizes extracurricular activities. Dance and soccer became my passions and a way to express myself and work together with my classmates, whether choreographing a new move or testing a new offensive strategy.

Being an “SB kid” as we affectionately call ourselves, also opened up many opportunities for us. One of my opportunities came when I visited the U.S. to receive Glamour Magazine’s

Woman of the Year Award. In 2014, I was honored along with nine other young women from around the world who are fighting for a good education through extreme adversity. I spoke not only for the girls present, but for all girls around the world when I accepted the award on their behalf. While the award ceremony itself was an amazing experience, the best part was the new hunger it awoke in me. After visiting the U.S., I knew there was more of the world I wanted to see. I was inspired to dream bigger – hoping to make a positive impact not only in my village, but in many other communities around the world as well.

One of the other biggest moments in my life was when I was applying to come to Grinnell. Despite the fact that it was one of the most competitive colleges and the many doubts I had conjured up about being accepted, I knew that I had to try. What I did not know at that time was that I would be accepted, and soon be gearing up to embark on the next journey of my life.

This past spring, Ajit, the Director of Operations for Shanti Bhavan, called me into his office. I was expecting him to share a news article, or maybe something on Facebook. As I glanced at his laptop screen, reading the first sentence of the letter he had pulled up, I let out a shriek. I had been accepted into Grinnell! I was shocked and excited as I continued reading. Other staff members began trickling into the room, congratulating me. The news spread like wildfire, and the whole

school buzzed with electricity.

It wasn’t until later, when I was alone, that I began to process the overwhelming news. I knew what an accomplishment this acceptance was, but it also began to sink in that going to Grinnell would mean leaving behind everything I knew and loved. More importantly, I felt at that moment that I did not deserve this opportunity. I thought of my family, and whether they would be happy or proud to hear the news. This was the chance I had been waiting for, but I was afraid to take it.

As I continued to process the news, I realized an important truth. Shanti Bhavan had equipped me to take on the world. They made sure that I was ready to face any challenge. The values they emphasized all my life would guide me on this new adventure. More importantly, they helped me find my identity and voice, and the self-confidence to believe that I could excel at Grinnell.

Graduation solidified that I was about to end a chapter of my life and start another. Everything that I had learned would finally be put to the test, as I left my Disneyland for an unknown world. The reality is I am here today in an unfamiliar country and in an unfamiliar school, ready to start a journey that no one in my family even dared to dream of. However, Shanti Bhavan has empowered me to believe in my own potential. My life could have ended 18 years ago, but instead, here I am, starting the next chapter of my life at Grinnell.

The Making of a Maker Lab

CARLTON SEGBEFIA '21 - Tema, Ghana

In the spring of 2018, the Grinnell College Wilson Center launched their idea to create a space where students could use a variety of tools to craft objects out of wood, glass, fabric, and plastic. At that time, my knowledge of “making things” was limited. You use saws to cut wood; a 3D printer uses plastic not ink; batteries provide electricity that moves through wires, and wood is brown. Needless to say, most of my ideas were wrong (though yes, you can use a saw to cut wood).

I got involved with the ‘fabrication lab’ after applying for the position through Handshake. I was hopeful that my familiarity with graphic design and my penchant for learning would help me secure the job. The more decisive factor would be my interest in building my communication and teaching skills. The creators of this new space realized that since few students on campus were familiar with ‘making’, trained student workers to tackle this was necessary.

We had funding support from the Wilson Center, in partnership with the Grinnell Area Arts Council and community members, and we had the agency to help plan the space. One thing we realized early on was that the plan would evolve and change over time. We made ini-

tial assumptions about how students would use the space, but we wouldn’t truly know for sure until it opened near the end of the semester. So, we threw a bunch of ideas at a wall, to see what would stick. Rather than buying the most powerful tool, we tried to get a variety of tools to see what might be used and favored. Of course, this method came with a few disadvantages.

Sometimes we found ourselves ill-equipped to deal with larger projects. For example, when the College was cutting down trees (due to construction projects) we gained access to quite a bit of nice hardwood. They gave access for MLab members to make gifts and mementos with it, for sentimental value. As a result, we suddenly had a huge piece of wood, but we didn’t have a blade large enough to cut it. Of course, we could still find ways to safely cut the wood - but it meant that a project took over an hour rather than under 10 minutes.

All in all, I am glad that we have worked through the project this way because we learned some valuable lessons. People find creating their own designs from scratch intimidating; everyone likes staring at the laser in the laser engraver; people really like 3D printing and jewelry making. These lessons have helped

guide us in making the MLab the space it is now. We offer workshops to guide members through the initial hurdle of a first design. We have created safety posters and re-arranged the space to make informal discussions easier. We have also made new purchases, like glow in the dark 3D filament, silicone resin, purpleheart hardwood (yes, it is purple), and a lot of jewelry making supplies.

The MLab is still a growing space. We still have a lot to learn, and things will continue to improve and evolve. In addition to offering a creative outlet, we want the space to be accessible and welcoming for all community members and all identity groups. And I’m sure with time and effort we can meet that goal.



Carlton teaching fellow student how to use some of the equipment at the Maker Lab

IPOP August 2019



Participants of the International Pre-Orientation Program (IPOP) 2019 and Mentors



A few of the family members at IPOP



IPOP Mentors



OISA Staff: Karen Edwards, Mollie Ullestad, Brenda Strong

