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2017





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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Han Trinh '17  
MOSAIC Editor 2016-17

It has been my pleasure to be the editor of this year's issue of **MOSAIC** magazine. I was super excited to be editor of a magazine - the power! It was hard sometimes - InDesign doesn't always like me, I felt bad for bugging people for articles... but it was a great experience. Reading and editing such interesting and insightful pieces by the international student community and friends inspired me greatly. Putting together MOSAIC feels like putting together something beautiful.

I'd like to thank **the OISA - Karen Edwards, Brenda Strong, and Jaime Chambers** - for entrusting me with this project and believing in me. They have been so supportive and so helpful every step of the way, and many times it almost brought me to tears. Thank you **Josh Anthony '17**, for designing the cover art, and for being an awesome human being in general. Thank you to **all the contributors to this magazine**. Thank you for replying to all my emails, and for writing/taking photos of beautiful things. This magazine wouldn't have happened without you.

I hope you enjoy the magazine. I hope you find it visually appealing. I hope it conveys both fun and wisdom. I hope it tells a story of hope, positivity and the belief in Grinnell as a community that love and support international students, no matter what.

## COVER ART

Josh Anthony '17



"I'm very glad I got the opportunity to contribute to MOSAIC. A very special thank-you to Han for allowing me to work on the cover and for all her help. And a major shoutout to Serena Hocharoen '17 and Sno Zhao '19 for their invaluable comments during the making of the cover."



# LIVING THE OLYMPIC DREAM

*Grinnell swimmer remembers his Olympic experience*

**Joshua Tibatemwa '19**

Perhaps it was the way the world suddenly disappeared when she walked in. Somewhere in the back of my mind, pieces of a puzzle I did not know I was trying to solve slid perfectly into place. It was the 27th of July 2012 and I had been swimming for a couple of years but I had decided to take a break. It was an entertaining after-school activity, and it helped to keep me in shape, but it was becoming tedious. I had stayed up way past my bedtime, school started in less than six hours, but I had to see her. I had to see my former classmate Jamila at fifteen years of age, enter the Olympic stadium with the rest of team Uganda in London.

There she was. I remember the exhilaration and disbelief. Next to her, another swimmer much older than me but one I knew well and competed against several times. He held the flag in his hands with immeasurable pride and joy. Without knowing quite why I closed my eyes and

whispered a prayer under my breath. “God if you’re out there, next time that’ll be me up there.” Immediately I opened my eyes and burst out laughing. I imagined God laughed, too. What on earth was I thinking? I turned off the TV and the lights, then went to bed still laughing at myself.

Almost exactly four years later and I am standing on a balcony in the Olympic village. Below me hundreds of athletes scuttled about; their bright Nike, Adidas and Puma tracksuits reflecting the light from the bright Brazilian sunlight. I spot Kenyan runners warming up below my apartment building. They are running intense on the spot drills and even from here, four floors above the ground, their sweat is visible. I take it all in, I let this moment stretch into a small eternity that I know I shall never forget. I hear my name being called from inside and retreat into my team’s apartment. At this point the open-

ing ceremony is in two days and the administrators are running around trying to get everything in order. Out of nowhere Elijah, the team administrator, looks up from his papers at me and says “Josh I hope you have a nice pair of black dress shoes.” To mess with him I reply “No, I only brought flip flops with me from Uganda.” I watch a sly smile spread across his face as he says “Well, the Ugandan flag bearer is going to embarrass us and the competition hasn’t even begun.” That is how I found out I was going to carry my country’s flag.

I blinked once, looked around the room expecting someone to rebuke him for teasing me but it never happened. I let his words sink in. “Are you sure you have the right Joshua?” “Well there is only one Joshua swimming for Uganda so I am pretty sure it is you.” Looking back, I probably did fully let the gravity of the situation weigh on me. I had my first and only Olympic race in less than a week, carrying a pole and not tripping sounded like a breeze. The next two days seemed to just melt away and suddenly I had a massive white pole in my hands with my country’s flag at the top. My mind chose this particular moment, right as we were about to enter the stadium, to remind me that I had been given the opportunity to decline being the flag bearer. It was a bit too late to back down and I had been practicing walking my entire life so I put on the bravest face I could and entered the Maracanã Stadium.

Somehow I managed not to trip. The opening ceremony was breathtaking. It however paled in comparison to the glow of the individuals I stood next to. The world’s best athletes in one stadium. The whole “I must be dreaming” cliché wasn’t enough to describe the situation. That moment was too real, too intense, to be a dream. The dancing, the fireworks, the presentation; it was all spectacular.

The next hurdle required more of me than not tripping. I had swum hundreds of hours, like any other swimmer, so you would think I would have no worries about being in a pool. Standing on the deck, thirty seconds before they blew the whistle, I actually did not know if I remembered how to swim. At that point adrenaline ceased to matter, I

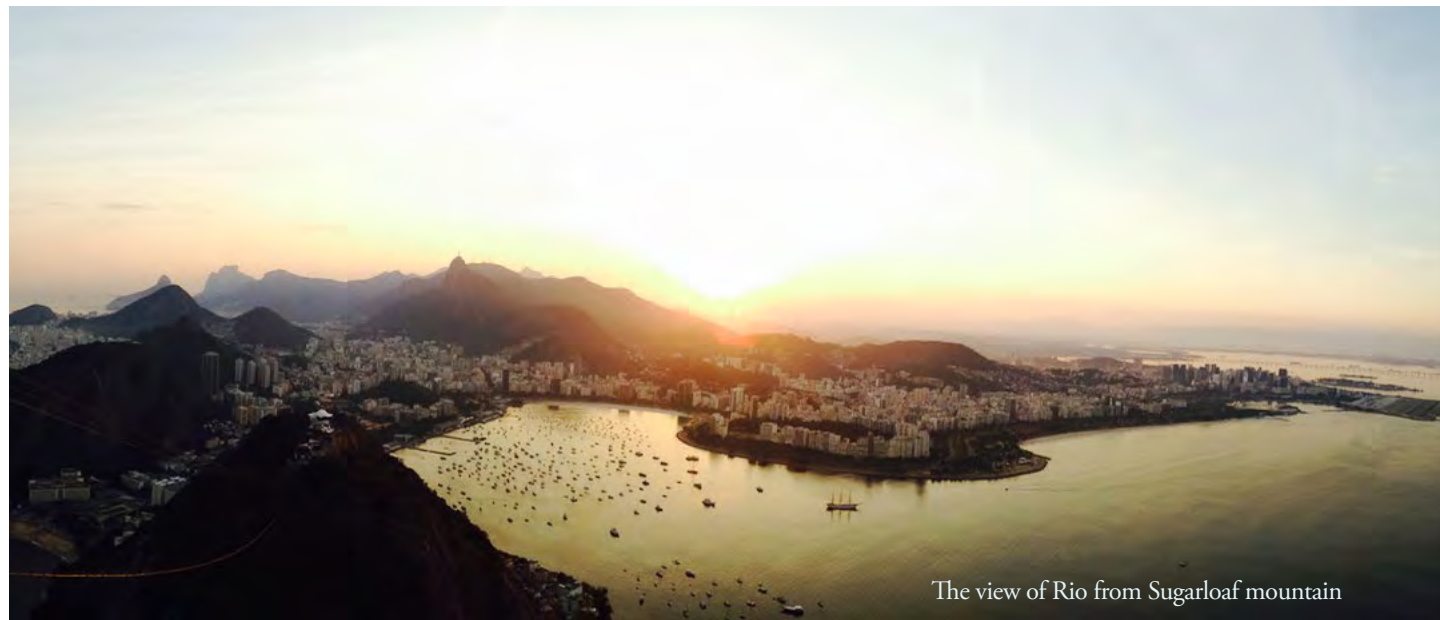
felt as if I had more of it than I did my own blood. There are probably few moments in life that will cause me to feel that particular concoction of fear, excitement and awe. The buzzer went off and I swam my fifty freestyle. It was over all too quickly. As any sprinter will tell you, you do not have much time to think before the race is over. 25.96 seconds and it was all over. Four years of dreaming, training and in less than half a minute it was done.

The experience itself was great but I think the most important part for me was the process of getting there. Half a minute cannot represent every minute spent in the pool, every worried sleepless night, every push up, every pull up and every drill. Those moments hold their own value. They remind me that sometimes all I have to do is try. I lost countless times, got sick, got tired and often got told that it was practically impossible since Ugandans aren’t particularly known for their swim prowess. Maybe in that brief instant in 2012, when I had a crazy idea and looked up and asked God for help, He did laugh but not for the same reason I did. Looks like being crazy pays off sometimes.



Joshua bearing the Uganda's flag at the opening ceremony. Photo by Ana Karin Kozjek '17.





The view of Rio from Sugarloaf mountain

# MY RIO STORY

*Ana's experience travelling to Rio with her mom and watching a friend compete in the Olympics*

**Ana Karin Kozjek '17**

First, the setting: South America. Brazil. Rio. The city also known as “cidade maravilhosa” or the marvelous city. And for good reason.

Second, the culture and people. In one word, I would describe them as “passionate”. I came to this conclusion after having spent 8 weeks in Ecuador over this summer, having previously visited Nicaragua and Peru, learned Spanish at Grinnell, and being lucky enough to befriend many wonderful people of Latin origin. In general, Latin-American people love and know how to enjoy and celebrate life. Over the years, I developed the hypothesis that the national character correlates to the amount of yearly sun exposure, which nicely fits the sociocultural characteristics of the map of Europe- the more south you go, the more expressive and “living la vida loca” the people get. Anyway, back to Rio.

Having the cultural and geographical settings of Rio, now imagine adding one of the arguably most dramatic athletic events of the human history. It can either be a recipe for

a thrilling disaster or a spectacular show. The Brazilians knew that. As it turned out, they prepared arguably well and put on a show that many of us will never forget.

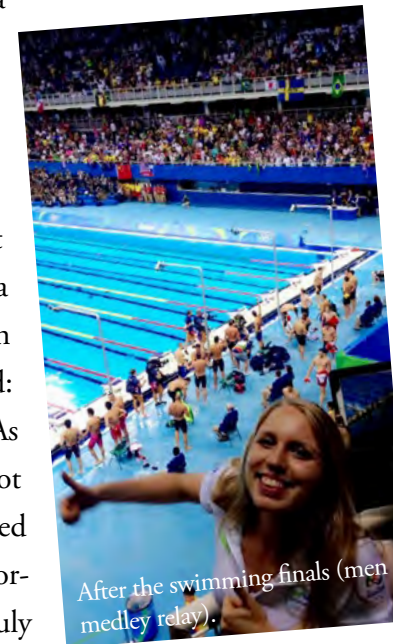
Rio 2016 was not my first Olympics that I witnessed from close-up. I am truly fortunate to have an awesome mom who not only rocks her job as leading the department of clinical nutrition at the Oncological institute of my hometown Ljubljana, but also volunteers as a doctor for our national Olympic team. Because of how close we are and also my general excitement of being there, I always try to accompany her at athletic events. This year, the Olympics became a rare opportunity for us to spend some quality mother-daughter time together.



With my mom at the Olympics village

The Olympics in Rio were special for many reasons. Personally, in addition to seeing my mom and many other Slovenians, I was excited, together with so many other Grinnellians, to see our Joshua preform in the Pool (yes, the Pool with the capital, because a pool hosting the bodies of Michael Phelps and Katie Ledecky’s caliber can not be simply called “a pool”). Having said that, another reason that the Rio Olympics were exceptional for me is that it was the first time that I actually got a chance to be there when the magic happened: the swimming finals. As a swimmer, you are not only amazed and inspired by all the athletic performances, but you also truly appreciate the achievement because you know how much hard work it takes to get there. That holds true for Joshua as well, who trained with our Grinnell coach Tim Hammond in the spring—often on his own, which can be especially hard—and then back home in Uganda with his national coach.

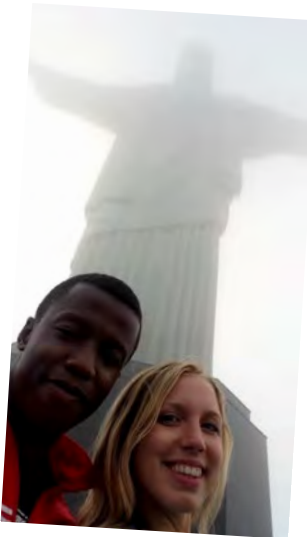
Joshua is a champion because not only did he do his best, he also fully enjoyed his Olympic experience. \*Before explaining why, I want to acknowledge that he might be adorably mad at me for sharing these insights.\* He told me stories like how proud he was when one of the elite swimmers laughed at his joke, or how nervous he was in the call room waiting for his race and sitting next to Hercules-like humans such as Nathan Adrian. My personal favorite was how his upset mom called him because the Ugandan press reported on his enthusiastic dancing endeavor



After the swimming finals (men medley relay).

ors during the presentation of his national team in the Olympic village. He was also the fashion trend-setter with his cool printed pants that he likes to wear. Maybe that was one of the reasons that he had the honor of being the Ugandan flag bearer at the opening ceremony. Amusingly, no one in Grinnell nor I had known that until my mom sent me the live-stream pictures from the Maracanã stadium. Since the “live” showing of the opening ceremony was notably late in the USA, I was one of the first to channel the news to Grinnell and Facebook. In general, I realized how precious the Grinnell network can be for bringing together people at the most unexpected places and occasions. One of such was the unforgettable adventure of getting to and visiting the famous Christ the Redeemer together with coach Tim and his partner, Joshua and his Ugandan teammate and my mom (right photo).

In addition to enjoying the company of Olympians and their crew, I also worked at a Slovenian business center at



Joshua and my mom at the opening ceremony at the Maracanã stadium.



Joshua and I at the Olympics village



# TEACHERS FOR A DAY

*Planning and teaching a class for 5th-6th graders during the Ignite program.*

Yuya Kawakami '20 & Calvin Tang '20



The **Ignite Program** allows local students to enroll in mini-courses taught and created by Grinnell College students. Ignite Program classes can be about anything and everything, from rockets to storytelling and everything in between.

For more information, visit <http://www.grinnell.edu/academics/offices/careers-in-education/ignite>

We first heard about the Ignite Program through their tabling sessions outside of the dining hall, and we were both immediately hooked on the idea of planning and teaching something to a younger group of students in the local community. We were also pleased to hear that no previous experience was required, especially since neither of us had much experience and we were slightly intimidated by the prospects. Nevertheless, the Ignite Program was a wonderful opportunity for us to not only plan and teach a unique class, but also give back to the community that has welcomed us so warmly.

Our initial idea came from a TED Talk video on flag design, something commonly overlooked but requires more thought and planning than one would expect. The video laid out a solid foundation for us to build our initial lesson plan from, including elements like symbology, design principles, and a hands-on flag creating activity.

Planning a two-hour class for 5th-6th graders was not an easy task, as we first had difficulties figuring out the best balance between lecture and activity for this specific age group. Being college students, we had difficulties putting ourselves in the shoes of our prospective students and plan a class that 5th-6th graders would enjoy (rather than just a class that we would enjoy teaching). Our major task was to effectively engage the students

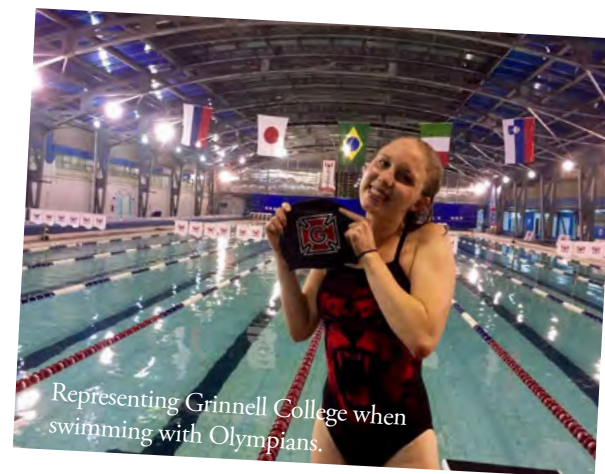
while also providing them with good insight into art and flag design.

As part of our learning process, we attended workshops hosted by local primary school teachers, where we got a real taste of what it could be like in the classroom. These sessions were extremely helpful, and we drew a lot from them to teach our own classes. We sought advice from the faculty and students in the Education Department, and refined our lesson plan that we had created at the beginning. We felt that our content was still quite narrow, and we received suggestions to expand it to include country creation as well as flag design. After doing some research online, we added a section about personal values and how that can relate to the bigger picture of what it meant to be a country.

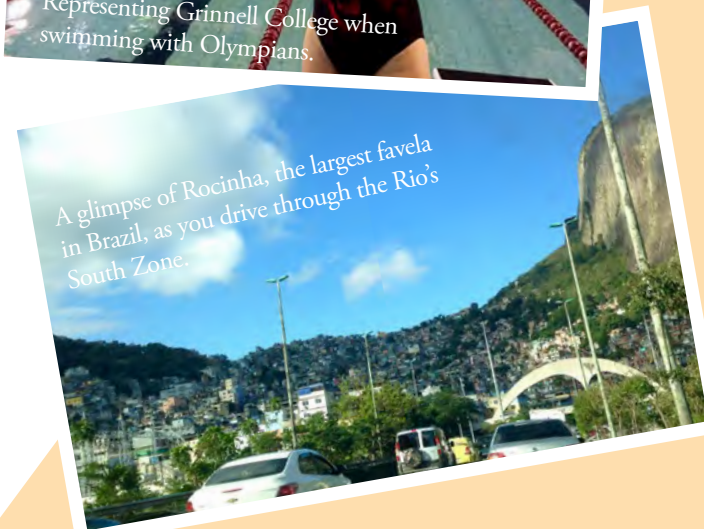
Looking back, the Ignite Program was one of our highlights in the first semester. The challenges we faced initially in planning and later in the classroom helped us develop more as students and being more mindful about learning and information sharing. The experience we gained in classroom management and conflict resolution may translate into leadership skills in large group environments. We highly recommend this fantastic and rewarding experience for everyone! It may sound daunting at first but, trust us, it's worth it!

the soccer World Cup and Olympics. In addition, many were upset because the money that went into these athletic events could have been used instead for improving the education, living conditions, and better economic opportunities for all. It was a complex situation and it still is. It is hard to say what the Olympics truly brought to the people of Rio and only the time will tell for sure.

As of right now, I can only tell what I've seen and felt during my time there. I've seen people from all over the world being brought together by this grandiose event; not only for the sake of the athletic events but, more importantly, for the experience of mingling with different cultures in such a unique environment. After all, most of us will remember the Olympics after the feelings of being there when it all happened and after sharing the unforgettable moments with friends and family or even completely random individuals. By sharing a little bit of my Rio story in this way, I hopefully managed to take you on a brief journey there as well and inspire you to travel and enjoy the world in all of its beautiful diversity.



Representing Grinnell College when swimming with Olympians.



A glimpse of Rocinha, the largest favela in Brazil, as you drive through the Rio's South Zone.



Above: a photo captured by one of my high school classmates who was enjoying his morning newspaper in Slovenia.

Bonding with the local receptionist while working at the Slovenian business center in the hotel on Copacabana beach.

Copacabana where I helped with arranging and carrying out various events. As my payment, I received the tickets for very exciting handball matches, at which the Slovenians were doing surprisingly well. Not only were the players amazing, but so was our Slovenian cheer squad despite being in the minority. We attracted many random fan supporters and made it to the Slovenian newspapers (including the crosswords)!

However, my Rio experience extended well beyond just the Olympics. I lived in an apartment at the edge of a favela in the northern part of Rio. On the day that I arrived, I was told by a nice stranger that normally nothing bad happens, as long as you don't go to the wrong places at the wrong times. Also, if a car pulls over and someone aims a gun at you, just give them all you have on you and carry on. Thanks for the advice! Anyway, I was lucky enough that in almost three months in South America, nothing significantly bad ever happened to me. On the contrary, in both Ecuador and Brazil, I have encountered so many kind and welcoming people, who were sincerely willing to help or simply talk to me. I learned a lot about their culture and social reality, including the profound economic inequalities and the heavy burden of hosting the Olympic on many people of Rio. For instance, at least 77,200 people of Rio de Janeiro have been removed from their homes since 2009 for the purpose of building the infrastructure for



# Finding My Identity

*A Bangladeshi who grew up in Thailand and then came to Grinnell*

Nanita Banik '20

Growing up in Thailand, I was always aware that I had a different identity than other kids at school. My parents are Bangladeshi but they moved to Bangkok for my father's post-graduate degree and decided to stay back. Kindergarten years were the most confusing. I would learn English during school, listen to Thai during break time (since the other children would be speaking in Thai) and speak Bangla at home. I was made aware fairly quickly, by other kids at school, that I was not like them. I was called names for my skin color, teased about my horrible Thai accent and secluded from certain social activities. To be fair, it was hard for them to grasp the concept of cultural diversity at the age of five. I inherited a different culture, spoke a different language, and carried a different world perspective in comparison to other children.

Thailand has influenced my identity in numerous ways. My most favorite cuisine in the world is Thai. I speak Thai with my best friend from elementary school years. I celebrate Loy Krathong (Thai Floating Basket Festival) every year with my family. On the other hand, I equally enjoy the staple "maach

daal bhaat" (fish-lentil soup-rice) that my mother makes. I speak to my extended family back in Bangladesh and my parents in Bangla. My family also celebrates Durga Puja (Hindu Bengali Festival) every year. In fact, the common ground between the cultures would be New Year. Bengali New Year (Pohela Boishakh) and Thai New Year (Songkran) fall on the same day. I have grown to become an accumulation of my Bengali heritage and Thai experiences.

To date, I have not been able to conclude which identity I find myself closer to. Throughout IPOP week and the rest of the semester, I was asked where I am from and I spent nearly a minute trying to explain myself. Some friends advised me to say I am from Bangladesh because that is my ethnicity; some told me to say Thailand because that is where I have always lived. However, after contemplating, I have realized that there is no one identity I find myself closer to. I am as much as a Bangladeshi as I am a Thai.

Now, here I am in America, experiencing a third culture far away from home. At this point, I would like to believe I am

a gypsy. I believe in no single home or culture. I am starting my fifth language at Grinnell – Spanish – and I hope to continue adding more to my bucket of diversity.

Living in Thailand has influenced my identity more than I can imagine. I am an accumulation of past experiences and my multicultural experience has molded me to be a hybrid of a Bengali-Thai person. My favorite cuisine in the world is Thai but I similarly enjoy the "maach daal bhaat" (fish-lentil soup-rice, a staple in Bengali households). I blurt out Bangla while speaking to my Thai best friend sometimes. I refer to certain objects in Thai while conversing with my Mother at home. I celebrate Loy Krathong (Thai Floating Basket Festival) and Durga Puja (Hindu Bengali Festival) with equal joy and galore. There are distinctive aspects of each culture which I have learnt to call my own but on the other hand, there are instances where Bengali and Thai Culture intertwine. For example, we celebrate our New Year together. The Bengali New Year (Pohela Boishakh) and Thai New

Year (Songkran) fall on the same day. My family takes a trip somewhere to celebrate both of them every year.

My family has adopted a few practices from Thailand and continued several traditions from Bangladesh. To date, I have not been able to conclude which identity I find myself closer to. Throughout the International Pre-Orientation Program (IPOP), whenever someone asked where I was from, I spent nearly a minute explaining myself. Some friends have advised me to say I am from Bangladesh; some have told me to say I am from Thailand. After days of contemplation, I have concluded that there is no one identity I find myself closer to. I am just as much a Bangladeshi as I am a Thai. I cannot separate the Bangladeshi from the Thai in me anymore. At this point, I am just a Bengali-Thai person who spends a minute explaining where she is from, loves Thai-Iced Tea just as much as Cha, and participates in both Thai and Bengali festivities.



## SHARING THE BEAUTY

Celebrating various traditional Hindu festivals in Thailand.



*Left:* Crossing a river in a speed boat in Bangladesh *Right:* my grandmother, mother and me - three generations of the family in Bangkok, Thailand.





# The State of Belonging

*Reflections of an American with Chinese ancestry*

**Brenda Guan '20**

It's an interesting thing, having immigrant parents. It's a state of existence where two different cultures have claim on you and your life, yet strangely enough, you're often left with nowhere to go. Your sense of belonging, instead of being struck and fixated in one place, is an ever-shifting, ever-changing concept, a state of wandering where those who share some part of you only see the differences between you and them, never the similarities.

I never became truly aware of this until I left the shelter of my home, where I had always reveled in the limelight of being "different". I don't remember much from my first trip to China, but I do remember the notion that, for the first time ever, my complexion was shared by the majority. I thought that I could finally get away from mainstream conversations about my Chinese heritage. My third-grade-self figured Chinese people wouldn't care about my being Chinese. I could finally be ignored, be the same, be-long.

Oh, how wrong I was.

The "say something in Chinese" turned into "say something in English." The "what Chinese food do you eat at home?" turned into "what American food do you

eat in school?" The chopsticks challengers turned into "I can name all the NBA teams, can you?" challengers. The last one amused me the most. All of my American friends wanted to "out-Asian" me, while all the Chinese children I met wanted to "out-American" me. It was as if they were trying to prove I was some sort of fraud. I must admit, I sometimes felt like it.

The one thing that did not change was people's general surprise that I could use chopsticks. For Americans who didn't eat P.F. Chang's every other day, the concept of eating with anything but a fork, spoon, and knife was just too foreign. For the Chinese, the thought of an American using chopsticks to eat even the most basic things like rice and noodles was just too surprising. No matter how you spun it, I was always the alien. To Americans, I was Chinese. To the Chinese, I was an American. I loathed this fact for many, many years.

Being largely judged by my outward appearances at home and being largely treated by my inward inclinations abroad in what should have been also home did not, however, fully encapsulate my lack of social belonging. At times, the situation flipped, and as I came to realize, it always flipped in ways that did not favor me.

*"It's striking just how few people are truly prepared to stop labeling and taking people at their face-value, even in this increasingly diverse society, where globalization allows people of the same nationality to come from a plethora of different backgrounds."*

The first time I went to China alone, I was thrown off by the way things had changed. Suddenly, I didn't have my family to speak English to on the subways, my sisters to sing Taylor Swift out loud with me on the streets, my parents to bicker with in the supermarkets—thus, no way to broadcast my "special" status to the world around me. I was taken at face-value by passers-by for the first time, unquestioned and overlooked as everyone else was. It wasn't until someone overheard a phone call I made atop the iconic Tiananmen gate that made me realize what this difference really meant to me. As I spoke English quietly while looking out over the square, a security guard drew near with a mystified look on his face. When I hung up, I gave him an uneasy smile, afraid I had done something wrong. "Wow, you're a *huaqiao*!" he said to me. I didn't understand what the term he had used meant at the time, so I simply laughed and nodded, my defense mechanism when my relatives said something in their heavy dialectic accent that I didn't understand either. That night, I asked my cousin what the term he had said meant. My cousin laughed when she heard the story. "What a dunce," she said. "He heard you speak English and assumed you were only a Chinese national living abroad."

I was immediately struck by a sense of indignant disbelief. Was it so implausible for an English-speaking individual to be simply American? To that man, because of the way I looked, English could only have been learned and taken up in school or abroad, not spoken as a native tongue by a native American. It was appalling to me how an American

with Chinese-ancestry could never be assumed as an American. It was appalling to me, how the one time a Chinese person acknowledged my Chinese features, they did so in order to claim me as one of their own only in light of what he had thought was my higher education and successfulness. It was appalling to me how I couldn't be American and Chinese, how I had to be degraded in order to belong.

I often think how a Chinese national with American ancestry would be treated in both China and America. I would wager that even if he didn't speak a word of English, he would be assumed American by everyone he encountered as long as he remained silent. And even if it became apparent his English was a little lacking? I would wager even more that the minds of everyone he encountered would jump to French, Russian, Dutch, German, Danish—anything but the Chinese passport he would indeed hold. It's striking just how few people are truly prepared to stop labeling and taking people at their face-value, even in this increasingly diverse society, where globalization allows people of the same nationality to come from a plethora of different backgrounds. Like it or not, diversity is upon us, and we have a choice. We can either run and hide, or we can start living up to that beautiful, high, and honorable creed with which our very liberty was founded upon: that America is not only a nation of immigrants, but a nation of belonging; a nation bound together not by race or religion or language, but by liberty, freedom, and resounding justice for all.

# English and Identity

*How exposure to English shifted the identity of a Grinnellian from Hong Kong*

Calvin Tang '20

“I’m from Hong Kong” is a phrase that I probably said over a hundred times during my first weeks here at Grinnell. What surprised was not how much I said it, but the faces of curiosity and confusion that followed. Was my home someplace else? It was the following comment that people made that allowed me to understand their initial reactions – “But your English sounds so American.”

I was born and raised in Hong Kong, a small, densely populated city of over 7.3 million people off the Southeast coast of China, and I have lived there for the entirety of my 18 years. In fact, the last 27 generations of my family have called this city their home. When I was just three, my parents had to make a decision that undoubtedly changed the trajectory of my life: whether to enroll me in a local school or an international school. I can only speculate that I was enrolled into an international school - the Canadian International School of Hong Kong - because of the greater exposure I would have to different people and cultures, and the additional opportunities that would arise as a result. This would be logical as my parents both im-

migrated to the United States and Canada when they were in high school, only to return to Hong Kong after completing their university education.

My enrollment into an international school made sense, because my parents would want me to follow a similar path at a younger age in a more diverse setting. However, one of the simpler implications of international schooling was that my education would be in English. Although Cantonese is the official language of Hong Kong and my mother tongue, I would be taught in English spoken by international expats who are mainly from North America (“Canadian” International School). As a result, I found myself in this bubble of interaction at school with the same type of people that kids my age in the U.S. or Canada would be with, except my bubble was contained within the boundaries of my school.

While some bubbles just stop there, mine slowly expanded as I visited my relatives in Canada, attended summer camps in the U.S. and watched Hollywood movies at home. I became more fluent with each visit

to my cousins who were born and raised in Los Angeles, and a strong influence on me outside of school. I would often find myself wanting to imitate people and the nuances in their speech, whether they were characters in the movies that I found ‘cool’, or teachers whom I respected in school.

Over time, those imitations accumulated and morphed my own speech and intonation. Before I realized it, English became the dominant language of my life. I spoke with fluency and read with the speed and accuracy to the degree of natural speakers. I began thinking and reasoning in English, a result of all the English-taught courses at school. I read more sophisticated and lengthier prose, as suggested by my mother, to improve my written English. Cantonese and Mandarin took a secondary position, simply because my opportunities to interact with those languages diminished. The consequences of this change expanded to my interests, my taste in music, and even how I dressed myself.

I now look back at those faces of initial curiosity and confusion with more understanding, as my English has only grown more adept as the years went by. I was able to expand my bubble even more through my visits across various U.S. cities, and my growing appreciation of western – primarily American – culture. I played on my high school’s varsity basketball team, and fell in love with jazz music. As my focus shifted away from my place of origin, so did the way people perceive me. Family friends and relatives would remark how much more I resemble a *white boy* than a local Hong Konger. Although I would be perplexed, sometimes even angered, by such comments, it compelled me to reflect about my identity, and how people might perceive it.



Society has advanced more in the last century than in the last millennia combined, and our world now is more interconnected and diverse than it ever was. Either through migration or forced displacement, people and cultures have also homogenized as we seek to find better opportunities for ourselves in our families. More and more prominent are 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants, whose identities do not often align with their ‘country of origin’. Thus, I can understand why one may be confused or curious as to why my English is so good, despite my origins. Although my experiences and opportunities in school, in that they placed me in a circumstance where the English language was dominant, there is a shared experience of growing up in Hong Kong which can and will never be separated from me. The culture of which I have absorbed, observed, and practiced through my upbringing is integral to my character, and who I consider myself today. My identity is and will always remain with Hong Kong - it is my city. It is my home, and it is where I belong.

*"I began thinking and reasoning in English, a result of all the English-taught courses at school... The consequences of this change expanded to my interests, my taste in music, and even how I dressed myself."*



# WINNERS OF ISO'S FOOD BAZAAR '16

The ISO Food Bazaar is an annual culinary event where student chefs cook and serve up food from around the world. This year, we had one of the biggest turnouts - 56 dishes! The three winning dishes, selected by a tasting committee, will be featured in the dining hall one evening in the Spring semester. Here are the winning recipes from this year.

by Han Trinh & Hanh Pham '17

## TOMATO BEEF STEW *China*

- 1lb beef
- 3-4 tomatoes
- 1 stalk green onion
- 3-4 slices ginger
- 3 gloves garlic
- 1-2 grams szechuan pepper
- 2 star anise
- 2 grams red dried chili
- cooking wine:soy sauce 1:3
- 6 cubes crystal sugar

### DIRECTIONS

1. Cut beef into cubes, tomato into small pieces.
2. Boil beef (to remove all the blood from it). Strain and rinse beef with hot water.
3. Heat up oil, add all spices.
2. When aromatic, add beef and the mixture of soy sauce and cooking wine. Stir fry for a minute.
3. Add boiled water to same level as beef, and tomatoes. Bring to boil.
4. Turn heat to medium heat and stew for approx 1.5 hours.
5. Add crystal sugar, turn to high heat and boil for an additional 20 minutes.



by Yuxi Deng & Jinlin He '18



## MALVA PUDDING with VANILLA CUSTARD *South Africa*

### Cake

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup (250 mL) sugar
- 2 cups (500 mL) cake flour
- 2 tsp (10 mL) baking powder
- 2 tsp (10 mL) baking soda
- ¼ cup (60 mL) apricot jam

### Sauce

- ½ cup (125 mL) sugar
- ½ cup (125 mL) boiling water
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk
- ¼ cup (half stick, 60 g) butter

### Custard

- ½ cup (125 mL) sugar
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) cornstarch
- 4 egg yolks
- 3 cups (750 mL) milk
- 2 tbsp (30 g) butter
- 2 tsp (10 mL) vanilla

- ¼ cup (60 mL) white vinegar

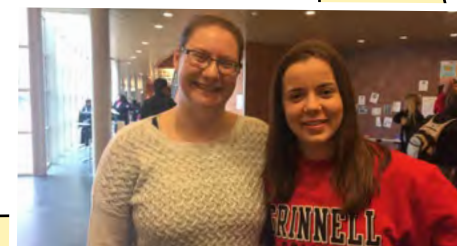
2 cups (500 mL) milk

Preheat oven to 350F (180C). Grease 9x13 pan well with butter. Beat eggs and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add flour, baking powder, and baking soda, and mix well. Add the jam then the vinegar, combining well. Add the milk, cup by cup, and mix until smooth. Bake 40-50 minutes until done in center.

- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla

Mix all ingredients above in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Pour hot sauce over the cooked pudding right when it comes out of the oven.

Bring the sugar, eggs, milk, and cornstarch to a boil in a saucepan over medium heat, whisking constantly. Boil and whisk until mixture thickens. Remove from heat and add the butter and vanilla. Serve hot over warm pudding.



by Monica Knaack & Miranda Thomas '17

## PULLED CHICKEN SALAD *Vietnam*

- 1 medium cabbage
- 2lbs chicken (half breast half thigh)
- 2 big carrots
- 2 onions
- 1 English cucumber
- 1 bundle of cilantro
- 8oz crushed peanuts
- 3 limes
- ¾ cup light soy sauce
- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoon of salt
- ¾ cup sesame oil
- (black pepper for garnish)

### DIRECTIONS

1. Bring water to boil, add chicken and boil for about 15 minutes. Turn off the heat and let chicken sit in hot water for about 5-7 minutes before removing from hot water.
2. Once cooled, shred chickens into small pieces. Add 2 tablespoon soy sauce, 2 tablespoon sugar, and 1 tablespoon lime juice to the shredded chicken, mix well and let sit for 30 minutes to marinate.
3. Slice cabbage into shreds. Blanch cabbage in boiling water for 1-2 minutes then remove from heat once cabbage is slightly softer but not cooked all the way.
4. Slice cucumbers into thin round wedges. Slice onions into very thin slices. Shred carrots. Break cilantro into pieces.
8. Combine soy sauce, lime juice, sugar, salt sesame oil to make sauce.
9. Combine all vegetables (cabbages, onions, cucumbers and half the cilantro) in a large bowl. Add in the chicken, peanuts and sauce. Mix well.
10. Garnish with black pepper and the other half of the cilantro.





*IPOP (the International Pre-Orientation Program), might be over, but the memories from the program linger with its participants. Here are some of their fondest memories.*



## DOWNTOWN ADVENTURES

"This was the Scavenger hunt, when we had to follow riddles and find specific shops downtown that corresponded to them. The purpose was to make connections to the town of Grinnell and familiarize the students with businesses downtown. In this one, our group had to propose to someone in the flower shop."



## ANOTHER FAMILY

"There was an event with a lot of pie and ice cream, and we met with our local FIS host families for the first time. We introduced ourselves, and we got to show them the country we're from on a map."



## SHOPPING SPREE

"There were several shopping trips so international students can get things they need like comforters, cleaning supplies and food. I wish we were told what we could get here so I wouldn't have brought so much from home!"

## BREAKING THE ICE

"This was a mass ice-breaker activity. We had to go around and ask each other questions that were given to us on the orange piece of paper. The questions were culturally different, so for example they would be in a different language, or about an ethnic food, so you have to find the specific person who would know the answer. It really pushed us to go outside of your comfort zone and talk to everybody"



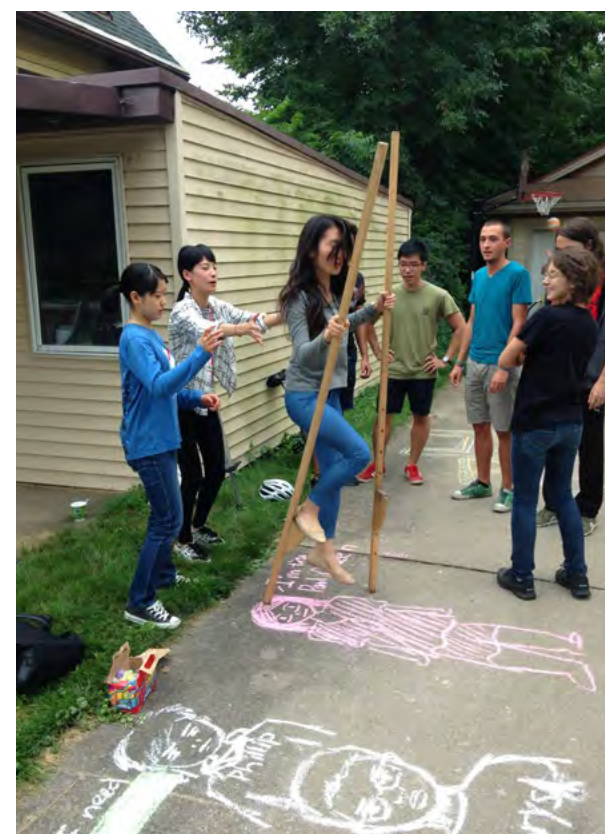
## SEEDS OF A NEW FRIENDSHIP

"If our roommates had already arrived, we went with them to this activity where we decorated flower pots and grew seeds together. My roommate and I grew parsley. Some people's plants are still alive (hopefully)."



## UNWINDING AND FOLDING

"During our free time, they had tables out with origami paper and we folded them. That was one of the awesome things about IPOP - they always had something for us to do so we wouldn't get bored and homesick!"



## DANCE LESSONS

"Two of our IPOP Mentors offered an optional dance class for those who wanted to come, and I went to it. It was fun!"

## REUNITED

"A week after IPOP, we were all invited to Jon and Karen Edwards' backyard. We got to play with all sorts of fun stuff: stilts, pogo sticks, unicycles, tiny basketball hoops..."



# What Does It Mean To be An IPOP MENTOR?

*An interview with some of the 2016 IPOP Mentors*



Aleksandar  
Hrusanov '18



Abyaya  
Lamsal '19



Mineta  
Suzuki '17



Sofi Mendez  
Subieta '19



Pinn Zhang '17



Tapiwanashe  
Zvidzwa '19



Jinlin He '18

## 1/ Why did you want to become an IPOP Mentor?

**Sofi:** Because I really enjoyed the experience when I participated in IPOP as a first year. Looking back, I realized how important that week had been in my development as a student and as a individual, growing and adapting away from home. I wanted to share that lesson and that sense of community with incoming students.

**Abyaya:** I had a great IPOP experience. It was informative and fun. I got the opportunity to bond with a lot of new people and make new friends. It wouldn't have happened without the IPOP mentors. My mentors worked day in, day out making sure every event was conducted successfully. They made sure nobody was left out. I wanted to be part of the team that made IPOP happen. Consequently, I applied to be one!

**Aleksandar:** I remember my IPOP – being an ever jet-lagged, confused international student. I did not know where am I, why I am here, what am I doing exactly. IPOP mentors, for me, were the people who were in my place a couple of years before me and were there to help me with whatever I needed help for. Thus, I felt like I can be one of those people and, more importantly, I wanted to be one of those people.

**Jinlin:** I had a very heart-warming experience with IPOP and received much support from OISA and IPOP mentors. I know I can always go to them whenever I have problems. I thought this was great, especially when school starts and everything was very overwhelming, this emotional and social support made me feel less alien. It was the experience of having gone through this that I wanted to make sure others have someone to support them as well.

## 2/ Tell us the best memory that you had as an IPOP Mentor

**Mineta:** The best memory was when I was at the airport, handing information packets to the new faces. It was both nostalgic and refreshing to see that jet-lagged tensions thaw and excited smiles bloom.

**Pinn:** On the first day of IPOP, I was helping with first years' employment paper work:

- "Hi, can I have your last name please?" (I have never been so friendly in my entire life)
- "No" (then silent for 10 seconds.)
- "Excuse me, but, what?"
- "No"
- "Can you spell your last name for me?"
- "N-G-O"

**Aleksandar:** We won the Scavenger Hunt! It was mid-day, hot and humid, so my amigos were not so enthusiastic. I had to build up the competitive spirit. Once they started running around and looking for places, they were the ones to turn to me with "Come on, faster, faster!" We ended up winning the hunt and, when we arrived at the gallery, they were really happy and excited and were smiling high-fiving me and each other. It was a nice moment.

**Tapiwanashe:** Meeting my mentees for the first time. On the very first day of IPOP, I was injured, so I could not go and meet my mentees at the airport. However, I managed to meet them all the next day. Greeting them in person and taking a group photo gave me a great feeling of fulfillment as I had been waiting to do this for quite a long time.

**Jinlin:** I was supposed to speak about how international students should not be nervous about speaking up in class. But I myself blanked out while twenty rows of people have to wait quietly for me to recall my thoughts. I was totally not a good example of speaking up and not being nervous. But at the same time, I realize I was the best person to talk about it.

**Abyaya:** Conducting "Saturday Morning Live with Yaya" featuring Pinn and Jon Sundby. It was first time I was conducting an interview on stage. I won't lie - I did think about going into show business in the future after that show.

## 3/ What advice do you have for future IPOP Mentors?

**Sofi:** Just remember to keep an open mind, be accessible, and have fun.

**Jinlin:** Practice your speech :3

**Pinn:** Be smart in your application. Be sincere and warm in IPOP.

**Tapiwanashe:** Take time to talk with any IPOP mentee if you feel they are having a hard time adjusting to the new place. I have had really interesting conversations with mentees just by sitting and talking with them over the dining hall table.

**Abyaya:** Just be yourself. Be willing to help other people, but also have fun and make other people's experience fun as well!

**Aleksandar:** Be prepared to put a lot of time and energy into the preparation of IPOP and the week itself. Do not lose contact with you amigos throughout the semester, year, and until you graduate. They won't need you anymore as a mentor, but if you build a good relationship with them, they will need you as a friend. Do not consider it a job – have fun!

**Mineta:** Do not apply! Just kidding :) But honestly, IPOP will make you appreciate the staff so much, your group chat with the peer mentors will become addictive, and you will not want to leave Grinnell anytime soon!



# OUR JOURNEY AS A HOST FAMILY

*Host mother of a Serbian student writes about her journey*

**Kathy McCammant - Host mother of Strahinja Matejic '17**

When our family started on this journey, we had three boys whose ages ranged from middle school to high school. I thought that living in a small community, with some of our travel experience, hosting an international student could give us a bigger vision. When our packet with the student's information arrived, I had to get out the atlas. Serbia?? Eastern Europe?? Well, our learning had just begun! Thanks to the OISA office and their great ability of matching the host family and the student; we have been blessed with a perfect match.

At first, I thought we might not be good candidates to be a host family because we live in the countryside outside Grinnell. Remember, the students do have busy lives on campus, and you make it work by picking them up and dropping them off. However, having a host student has been an adventure that our family will always be thankful for. We have a new life-long friend in our host student and his family. If you have ever thought about hosting an international student, do it - you will be blessed, enlightened, encouraged, and grow so much from the experience.

Since this was our first time as a host family, I wasn't sure what our responsibilities included. Here are the things that I have learned. First of all, be available to help. We have driven him to and from the airport, which is especially important due to the international flights that don't always arrive on time or match the shuttle schedule. Also, you should have an open mind. No subject has been "off limits" for us - we have discussed so many topics that are controversial. In order to learn how people from other countries see us, we have to be open and willing to change the way we think. Another thing we've learned (but maybe a little late), is to plan events that international students might not be able to attend in their own country, like going to the rodeo, camping or attending sporting events. It doesn't have to be expensive, but it should be an adventure for the host student. It's also fun when we invite our hosts student over to family gatherings, holidays and birthdays. He is extremely friendly and outgoing, so having him was more fun for us!

We had the opportunity to visit our student's home in Serbia over winter break. If I didn't know better, I

*"We have a new life-long friend in our host student and his family. If you have ever thought about hosting an international student, do it - you will be blessed, enlightened, encouraged, and grow so much from the experience."*

## SERBIAN VACATION

Photos from our trip to Serbia to visit our host son and his family.



Monument to the Unknown Hero



Inside the Temple of Saint Sara



At the military museum, overlooking the Danube River

would've thought we were royalty! It was especially fun for our family to be able to mingle with the citizens of Serbia and observe their daily lives. Serbs are very warm and inviting, playful, fun, and intelligent. We learned of thousands of years of their history and saw what strong and resilient people they are. We saw some similarities to Iowa, like the terrain, the weather, and they produce some of the same crops that we do. And of course, the food was outstanding! One of the nicest things about staying with his family was being able to taste their homemade meals as well as going out to eat. It was nice to mingle with the locals, and everyone made us feel like

family. We were even invited to their traditional family gatherings. It was one of the best vacations we have been on!

The Host Family program is such a wonderful program, and we would like to thank Grinnell College and the Office of International Student for the opportunity. We are thankful for these last four years with our Serbian friend. We look forward to what the future holds for Strax and our continued friendship, and we are thankful to have met his family as well. We wish him all the best!





The Reichstag building in Berlin.

# ENCOUNTERING SYRIA IN GERMANY

## MY FULBRIGHT EXPERIENCE

*An international learning experience in Germany*

**Mark Peltz - Daniel & Patricia Jipp Finkelman Dean of Careers, Life, and Service**

I have a secret to disclose. For the first 41 years of my life, and for the entirety of my career in higher education mentoring and advising students, I had never traveled outside the United States. That changed this past October (2016) when I was selected by the U.S. Fulbright Commission as one of 20 leaders in higher education to represent the U.S.A. during an International Education Administrator (IEA) seminar to Germany.

My lack of international experience was difficult to hide or escape, particularly at a place like Grinnell College. In countless meetings and interactions I would hear about the global travels and experiences of students, faculty, and staff. Not able to identify with the transformative nature of these incredible cultural learning experiences, I would simply listen intently, nod along, and keep my comments to a minimum (fearing I might reveal my secret). On one hand, I felt like an imposter; how did I end up at an institution with such international ties and commitments? On the other hand, I was overwhelmed with envy. It's not as though I didn't want to travel outside the U.S.A.; it was simply never a part of my experience. As a low-income, first-generation college student, international travel or study abroad was something other students did. Thus, when I learned that I was selected to be part of this 20-member delegation, I was

excited, thankful, and honored.

Fulbright IEA seminars aim to accomplish three goals: (1) to acquaint college and university leaders from the U.S.A. with higher education systems around the globe; (2) to facilitate cultural understanding; and (3) to foster international exchanges and partnerships. Through an intensive two-week itinerary, these seminars included site visits to different colleges and universities, meetings with government officials, and sessions with non-profit and non-governmental organizations with ties to higher education (e.g., foundations, immigration/refugee agencies).

During my 17 days in Germany, I spent extensive time in Berlin and Frankfurt with shorter stays in Leipzig and Bonn. Learning about the contemporary German higher education system was intriguing. The approximately 2.5M students pursuing higher education in Germany are attending one of its ~400 colleges, universities, or research institutes. In Germany and across the European Union, the bachelor's degree is designed to be finished in three years. It is common, however, for students to continue their studies for at least one additional year to complete a master's degree, which is the preferred credential among employers in Germany. Students pay a modest enrollment fee (~€300) to matriculate into a public institution, but there is no tuition

to pay. My knowledge of the German higher education system grew exponentially over the course of this two-week period, and I'm eager to continue exploring how Grinnell College might structure mutually beneficial exchanges.

As expected, time away from the board rooms and university campuses in Germany provided invaluable time to learn more about this country, its complex history, and its diverse culture. As I navigated the grounds of the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp and Memorial, it was difficult to remain composed while learning about and reflecting on the inhumane experiences of those who passed through the gates of this work and elimination camp. My soul will forever be marked by this experience.

Many people have asked me what was most memorable about my time in Germany. While there are so many stories to tell—taking in the serene vistas while traveling by train along the Rhein River, visiting Marx's and Nietzsche's alma mater, or losing all sense of time at the Berlin Philharmonic—one experience in particular stands out.

A tour of the Pergamon Museum in Berlin was arranged for our group. Featuring an array of Babylonian artifacts, it's among the most impressive collections (of any kind) I've ever seen. And while the temple walls (yes, you read that correctly), ornate rugs, and stunning vases are truly magnificent, it was our museum docents who distinguished this experience from the others. Recent immigrants from Syria—Salam, Narine, and Omaar—were our guides for the duration of our museum visit. I was in Omaar's group.



Mark and Omaar at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin.

This 18-year-old was originally from Palestine but had moved to Syria when he was just a young boy. He learned English by watching American cartoons with Arabic subtitles. Omaar had fled Syria with his sister and his mother just over nine months ago, and he and his family are among the estimated 1M Syrian refugees in Germany. When I asked about his other family members, he shared—with a palpable sense of courage and concern—that his father is still in Damascus; they are hopeful he will join them soon. Omaar has been fervently studying the German language since he arrived. In fact, he enthusiastically shared that he will begin as a full-time student at a university of applied science where he will work toward a bachelor's degree in marketing and graphic design. His visual and artistic proclivities were revealed by the interpretations he provided throughout our tour. My sense is he'll be quite good at the field he's chosen.

There is no substitute for firsthand experience when it comes to learning about new cultures, but what are the catalysts of a transformational experience? For me, it's expectations. I went to Germany expecting to learn a great deal about Germany's higher education system and to explore the ways in which partnerships and/or exchanges with Grinnell might be structured. I expected this, and I learned more than I anticipated. But what made this experience transformational—what impacted me deeply, what impacted me personally—were those encounters I did not expect and for which I was completely unprepared. Meeting Omaar was the most memorable of those experiences. I'll never forget him or the afternoon we spent together at the Pergamon Museum. I was not expecting my time in Germany to personalize the Syrian refugee crisis, but I'm so thankful it did. I'm thankful to have had the opportunity to meet Omaar, to learn about his family, and to learn about his goals and his dreams. And I'm hopeful that he is reunited with his father soon (very soon). Of course I learned a great deal about Germany and the German higher education system through my Fulbright experience, yet I learned so much more about myself, the world, and—most importantly—my perspectives on the world.





# MUSINGS, FROM THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AFFAIRS

*Dealing with current events and the #YouAreWelcomeHere video campaign*

**Karen Edwards, Associate Dean and Director of International Student Affairs**

On September 11, 2001, the air was filled with shock, sadness, and fear. That same evening, I stood before a room of international undergraduates at The College of Wooster, and a young man from Burma rose his hand. He was seated about five rows back, toward the left side of the room, and he asked “Will this impact my access to OPT employment after graduation? Or to graduate school in the U.S.?” I tried to reassure him, perhaps out of empathy but also from a place of naivety. I could not predict the future, of course, but this event would impact him, and students like him, in significant ways for many years to come.

Turn the clock forward to November 2016. I found myself once again in front of a room of international undergraduates – this time at Grinnell. Again, the emotions of the day

included shock, sadness, and fear. This time, a young man from Japan was seated about five rows back, toward the left side of the room. He asked the same question that I’d received in 2001, “Do you think this will impact my access to OPT employment after graduation? or to graduate school in the U.S.?” The moment stopped me in my tracks.

Over the past decade, I’ve witnessed tremendous shifts in the field of international education. My colleagues and I, and our students, have become responsible for increasingly complex and ever evolving reporting and compliance requirements. We’ve helped hundreds of students navigate tremendous government bureaucracy. We have less time to focus on student success and cultural education, as we’ve been taken hostage by regulatory priorities -- many of

which are based on the premise that foreigners are problematic or dangerous. We have also supported far too many international students who have been victims of xenophobic bias and hate. Yet in the midst of current challenges, I feel a renewed sense of mission in my work. Supporting international student success and engagement in the U.S. has always been, and will continue to be, a vital form of soft diplomacy.

When we learned about this fall’s Twitter campaign, [#YouAreWelcomeHere](#), we felt inspired. The hashtag originated with a Study Group video campaign, and Temple University’s director of international admission, Jessica Sandberg, felt motivated to “let current and prospective international students know that nothing has changed -- that we welcome them, that university campuses are progressive, open-minded, friendly places, and that we truly value that here.” While we know now that many things have changed, and continue to unfold, the OISA wanted to join institutions across the country to proclaim this valuable message – to reassure our current and prospective international students that [#YouAreWelcomeHere](#)! We were grateful to the many partners who participated in this impromptu project. We sent out a simple request for video clips, and within a few days they started rolling in. **Takahiro Omura ’17** and **Xiaoxuan Yang ’17** collaborated on their iMovie/Adobe Premier debut – and they created a heartfelt tribute from the Grinnell community. The video was shared via Facebook and Twitter and has logged over 54,000 views, becoming the most heavily viewed video that Grinnell has ever launched on social media.

Don’t get me wrong -- we know that there is a lot more work to do. That message was also intentionally included in our video! International students do not always feel

entirely welcome here, and we are far from perfect. But I am affirmed, every single day, that Grinnell is committed to creating an international-student-friendly learning environment. This spirit is evident in the many ways campus partners and collaborators work to support international students’ experience here. The College continues to offer significant financial aid to international students. Students from outside the U.S. can stay in their on-campus housing over winter and spring break, without the typical need to consolidate or pay additional fees. CLS staff advocate for unique needs of F-1 students - by collaborating to improve CPT policies, expanding internship funding, and by helping students explore career opportunities in the U.S. and around the globe. Significant amounts of College funding supports course-embedded travel and off campus study opportunities for all – including international students (this is not the case on many U.S. campuses). The CRSSJ supports and advocates tirelessly for our multi-faith community, and Intercultural Affairs staff offer dynamic programs related to community building, identity development, and diversity education. Staff in financial services areas (Bursar, Accounting, Student Employment, Financial Aid, etc.) offer skillful and nuanced support with regard to the unique needs of non-immigrant students. Faculty and staff work hard to improve inclusive teaching methods and offer a broad curriculum.

In the midst of a national political climate that is particularly challenging for immigrant and non-immigrant communities, Grinnell College continues to affirm our commitment to social justice and a global worldview. We will continue to strive to send out the message that [#YouAreWelcomeHere](#) – both in words and in actions.

**Watch our "You Are Welcome Here" video at**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olcWErd6Gfg>



The Grinnell Singers (left), faculty and staff (middle) and friends in town at Saint's Rest Coffee House (right) offer messages of support in our "You Are Welcome Here" video.





# FISCHLOWITZ TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP U.S. MUSIC HISTORY

Aleksandar documents his travels as the recipient of the  
2016 Fischlowitz Travel Fellowship

**Aleksandar Hrusanov '18**



Traveling and music are two things that enrich me greatly, and allow me to explore and meet amazing new people. The **Fischlowitz Travel Fellowship** gave me an opportunity to combine these two passions. A special thanks to **Teresa and Merle Fischlowitz '53** for making this amazing adventure possible for me! I will try to describe the 3 weeks I spent traveling the United States to learn about the music of different regions, which have been incredible and almost indescribable.

## New Orleans

My first stop was New Orleans – the city of blues and jazz. I stayed with my friend Philip, a musician from Bulgaria who had been living there for a couple of years. It was a promising start of a great adventure. The day I arrived was a national Bulgarian holiday (May 24th) and Philip introduced me to a group of Bulgarians who were celebrating. There were also a lot of Americans there as well. Everyone at the gathering had one thing in common – they were all musicians. They discovered Bulgarian traditional music through a unique experience and ended up loving it so

much they learned to play it on different instruments. I had such a great day meeting people with interesting stories who were united by their passion for Bulgarian folk music and listening to them playing and singing it.

Interestingly, I met the daughter of one of the very few successful Bulgarian blues musicians. She and Philip showed me around New Orleans over the next few days. I heard numerous amazing street performances; we went to a free outdoor music festival for young rising bands; we visited the Louis Armstrong park; we had a few drinks in the Maple

Leaf Bar – one of the oldest and most famous bars in NOLA and saw the legendary drummer Johnny Vidacovich playing with a couple of guest musicians. Of course, we could not miss out on trying the great gumbo, crawfish, shrimp and alligator po' boys, and other delicious meals.

## Seattle

My next stop was Seattle – the home of grunge music. I grew up listening to Nirvana, Alice in Chains, Mad Season among many others. There, I stayed with Aditi Roy, a Grinnell alumna who, it turned out, has hosted Grinnellians

on various occasions. She was extremely hospitable. She prepared for me a short guide for the city, a set of keys, and her warm attitude. I headed out to explore right away. The whole spirit of the city was great but there were three places that stood out as extraordinary:

The first was Viretta Park and Kurt Cobain's residence. The house had a very sad but at the same time awe-inspiring vibe. Although it is not open to visitors, seeing it from the outside was memorable enough for me. The small park next to it and the pair of benches were full of items and inscriptions from visitors in memoriam of Kurt. Sitting there, I felt something that was hard to explain. I also left a small mark behind, hoping that it ended up going through and reaching its recipient.

Another amazing experience was the Experience Music Project Museum. It was an incredible combination of get exhibitions, like the history of horror movies, Star Trek, development of the guitar as a music instrument and Indie games. The most significant exhibition was the one devoted to Nirvana, which had the most items on exhibit. Seeing old photos of Kurt playing the guitar in his room at the age of 12, posters from his live shows, or hand-written letters he sent to his friends during Nirvana's first tour, sensing the potential success

of the band ... I will leave the rest to you.

The third unforgettable memory from Seattle was the Northwest Folklife festival, a free open-air festival with numerous stages, different music genres and performances (there were even some Balkan performances, including a couple of Bulgarian ones), great food, intricate crafts, and unique and amazing people. I had such interesting conversations, both with the young and old, which showed me once again how colorful the world is in terms of people's backgrounds, lives, and ideals. I spent a day and a half at this event as I simply could not force myself to leave earlier.

## Los Angeles

LA was an interesting city – beautiful sight at the Observatory, great food, nice neighborhoods, a lot of places to visit, hospitable people (shout-out to Enrique Castanó and his family for hosting me and to Connie Wang for showing me around). But in terms of music, all I can say is that LA, being the metropolis it is, has mainly turned it into a business and nothing more.

## Nashville

I got in touch with a couple of alumni in Nashville: Connie Wang, who showed me around, and Abi Tapia, an ex-musi-

cian who worked in the Country Music Hall of Fame. Abi and I met up for lunch, talked a lot about Grinnell, music, and events and places in Nashville. After that, I headed out to the Hall of Fame, the museums of Willie Nelson and of the legend Johnny Cash; I dived into the night life on Lower Broadway, went through Earnest Tubb's Record Shop, visited a few bars with live music and songwriters that were off the beaten path.

## Memphis

Getting a bit sick during my overnight ride to Memphis prevented me from enjoying it as much as I wanted. However, I was able to visit the Stax museum and Graceland. The latter was quite magical – seeing where a legend like Elvis used to live with his family, the endless awards and records that he had, all the planes and luxurious cars he owned was once in a lifetime. I managed to pay my respect to such a legend and feel part of the magic he had created throughout his life.

Unfortunately, due to the limited space, I can only tell so many amazing stories about the places and people I've seen. However, I hope that whoever is reading this will get to experience this adventure in their own way and will see it on paper next year! Best of luck to all!

**More information about the Fischlowitz Travel Fellowship can be found at**

<http://www.grinnell.edu/about/offices-services/international-student-affairs/fischlowitz-travel-fellowship>.



# MES AVENTURES EN SUISSE

*Studying abroad in Switzerland*

**Aminata Buganzi Kinana '19**

*"I spent the first few weeks checking to see if the trams would ever be late and they weren't! Swiss punctuality is something all of us can learn from."*

Sometimes the best things in life are the most unexpected. Never had I thought that at 20 years old, I would be spending a year in Switzerland, of all places. Maybe it was destiny - maybe all those years of growing up a chocoholic really meant something. All semi-jokes aside, my experience in Geneva has been incredible and I already cannot wait to see what the next few months will bring.

I am spending this academic year studying abroad in Switzerland through a program called Smith in Geneva. Geneva is one of the most international cities in the world, with the population of foreigners around 80%. I study and live in an entire building with other international students, so I like to think of Geneva as mega-IPOP! I study at the University of Geneva and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. I also have an internship with Save the Children's Global Advocacy Office, which gives me connections to the International Non-Governmental Organizations and United Nations. Geneva being such an intellectual city has influenced me in the best possible ways. As a student, I have never been more inspired; and I find myself developing new ideas and goals every day. My drive for learning has skyrocketed is at an all-time high; and more than ever, I feel like I can accomplish anything that I put my mind to. The liveliness of the city and the spirits of John

Calvin, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Henry Dunant and Mary Shelley continue to live on.

To answer the question on everyone's mind: Yes! Switzerland really is chocolate heaven! There are all kinds of chocolate available here. Whether you want to buy a Kitkat, or a Swiss Lindt, or even to get fancy and go to one of the several chocolatiers in the city, you will get your fix! Swiss cheese is amazing too, with my favorite being le Gruyère,



**Me in the Swiss Parliament Building in Bern**

which has become a part of my daily diet. All of it is so healthy—I am getting a lot of protein. Another thing I love is the tpg - transports publics genevois - the public transportation system. I even declared my love for the trams in my French phonetics class. Its efficiency is incredible. I spent the first few weeks checking to see if the trams would ever be late and they weren't! Swiss punctuality is something all of us can learn from. The punctuality of my Swiss friends who always arrives on the dot amazes and inspires me every day.

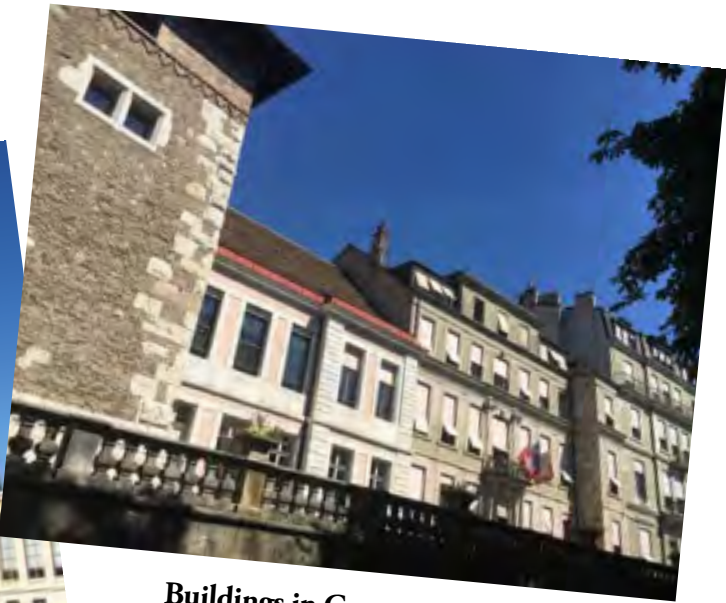
*Les suisses romands*, the French-speaking population of Switzerland co-exists with the German, Italian and Romansh-speaking populations, but Geneva is the French-speaking capital of Switzerland. A large part of why I opted to study in Geneva is to continue improving my French, and I am glad to be able to say *mon français est mieux et je me sens très francophone*. You don't have to be able to speak French to survive in Geneva, but it gives you an element of comfort and belonging, specifically with the

local Swiss population. I feel very at home being part of the French-speaking Swiss circle.

Geneva is so much bigger than Grinnell but much smaller than Dar es Salaam, the city I am from. Comparing the differences in the dynamics of the different cities I have lived in just make me realize more than ever that I am a global citizen. Yes, there are differences in infrastructure and facilities but people are people, and I have been incredibly blessed to have the privilege of interacting with kind and intelligent people everywhere I go. Choosing to study abroad in Switzerland is one of the best decisions I have ever made in my entire life, and I will be eternally grateful to my advisors, my family and Grinnell for making this happen.



**Palais des Nations (UN)**



**Buildings in Geneva, Switzerland.**



# THE LESSONS OF DISSONANCE

*A semester in Russia without language*

Erhaan Ahmad '19

I believe that it is in times of dissonance that we learn the most. The truth about learning, and in fact the reason its true realization is difficult, is because you must be uncomfortable for it to work. Like G.H Mead said, it is in times of social and communicational discomfort that we must truly look inward, and assess the person we are in relation to the person we must be to negotiate the situation in front of us. Studying abroad in Russia, for me, has been an experience of the most fruitful dissonance I could ever imagine.

Being without language meant being without access to a framework of the world shared by everyone around me. At times, it feels as if there is a giant secret that everyone understands except me, and I want nothing more than to know a little bit about it. Being without language, as so many of us international students understand, can sometimes mean being without a claim to make. It is like being a child that cannot influence their situation- except in this case, you are a mature adult with developed thoughts and feelings who is used to expressing them.

However, for me, this is where most of my learning takes place. It has been a journey of discovering the space between hearing and listening, between talking and speaking, and between knowing and understanding. Sometimes I could not express my preference when my host mother asks me what I'd like for breakfast, and sometimes I could not tell her how I felt about the art I saw in a museum. Sometimes I must settle for less than I am used to. And here, at the mercy of the world around me, is where I was utterly humbled by my experience of studying abroad.

Of course, as a Pakistani coming to America too was uncomfortable and strange at times. But the fact of the matter is, I grew up in a very westernized section of so-

ciety, and speak English fluently, and this meant that the transition was never as paralyzing as it has been at times in Russia. Eating what others decide because I can't say exactly what I'd like, meeting where other people want because I know nothing about the city I'm in - these experiences allowed me to let my guard down, and let other people shape my life without struggling and grappling to control it myself. And there's nothing like it. Because for all my time here, native speakers of this language have been nothing but welcoming, kind, helpful, and respectful of all the mistakes I have made with their mother tongue. They have looked past my flawed words, and understood the meaning behind them. They have overlooked my wretched pronunciation and listened to the sounds I wished to make. And to me, the fact that people are willing to put aside what they know to give someone else a chance to be on the same level as them, is the beauty of human communication. That is the power of human beings.

It stands to reason then, that we must look upon our international community in Grinnell, and anywhere we encounter foreign people, with the same kind of respect and admiration. Because by coming to America, we have taken a massive leap into the uncomfortable, hoping that we are better for it in the end. We must, in other words, be humble about where we come from, and admire where others come from, because two peoples' worlds can never really be the same- even if they are standing right next to each other.

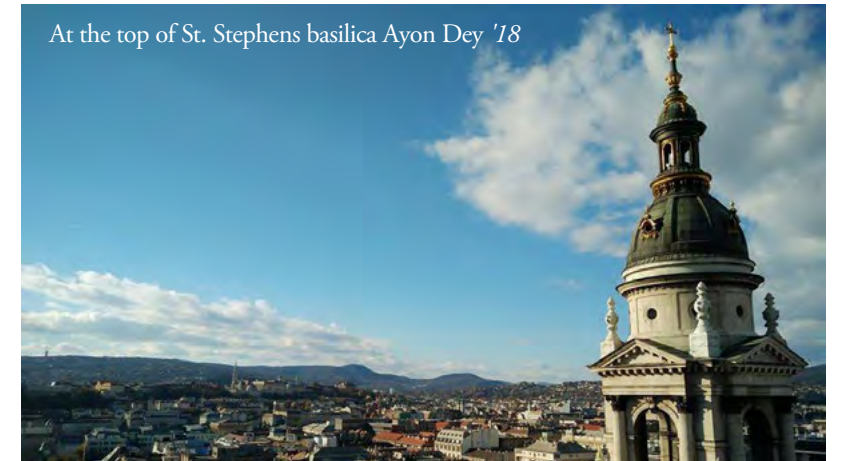
*"At times, it feels as if there is a giant secret that everyone understands except me, and I want nothing more than to know a little bit about it."*

# WHERE DID YOU STUDY ABROAD?

A  
COLLECTION  
OF STUDY  
ABROAD  
PHOTOS



Milan - Italy's big business and fashion hub Anastasiia Morozova '18



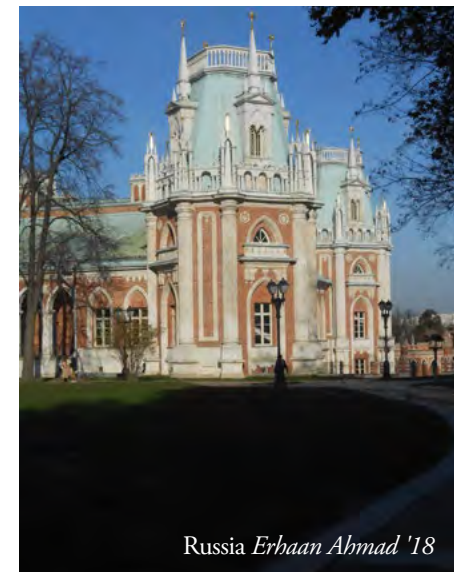
At the top of St. Stephens basilica Ayon Dey '18



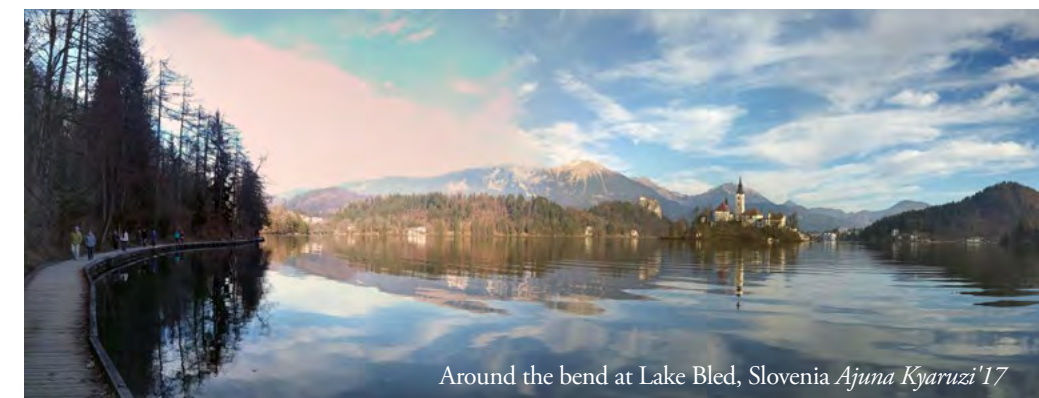
Stonehenge Casey Yuan '18



London Duy Duong & Thanh Mai '18



Russia Erhaan Ahmad '18



Around the bend at Lake Bled, Slovenia Ajuna Kyaruzi '17



Thu Nguyen and Prabir Pradhan '18



# THEY STUDIED ABROAD TOO!

Faculty and staff studied abroad - just like us!  
Here are a few sharing their study abroad stories.



**Karen Edwards (OISA)** on a visit to Jellingstenene (massive runestones in southern Jylland) during her undergraduate study abroad via the Danish American Studies (DIS) program. *"I had studied the runes as part of a Nordic Mythology course, but being 'on site' brought my textbooks to life!"*



**Jonathan Larson (OCS)** with his students, while teaching English in Slovakia. *"I had never directed, and the students had never acted, but the performances were a wild success and the experience continues to impact my reflections on cultural norms and projects of educating for democracy."*



**Claire Moisan (French)** visiting friends in Oxford, England, during her undergraduate study abroad experience at Université de Nice, France. *"I made a whole bunch of international friends while studying in France and had open invitations to visit them in England, Spain, and Germany."*



**Sarah Moschenross (Dean of Students)** and her best friends from grad school at the Cliffs of Moher. *"We did a brief study abroad experience in Southern Ireland and London. It was exciting to gain new perspectives about higher education and the work of student affairs!"*



**Todd Armstrong (Russian)**, during his Fall 1983 semester in Moscow, USSR, on the ACTR program at the Pushkin Institute. *"This was my first ever visit to Red Square, and I still remember how surprised I was by its vast expanse, and by the folksy grandeur of St Basil's Cathedral."*



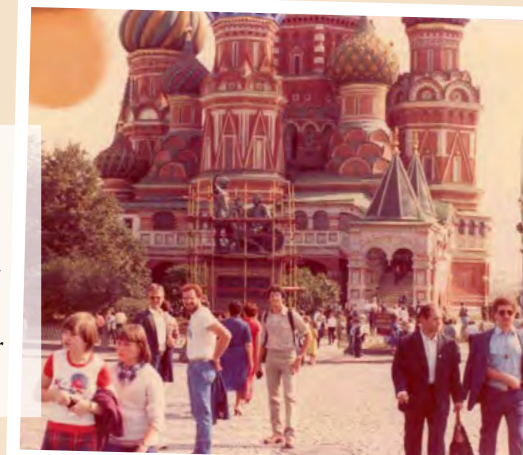
**Joyce Stern (Dean of Academic Advising)** studied abroad with IES in Freiburg, Germany during her senior year at Grinnell. *"IES planned a fall break trip for us to Berlin, which, coincidentally, happened at the same time as Germany's historic reunification of East and West. The wall had 'fallen' less than a year prior. It was an amazing time to see the changes in Berlin. I even walked briefly with a protest demonstration full of people who had a wide variety of concerns about the government change taking place."*



**Mike Latham (Dean's Office)**, with American and Spanish friends outside Madrid on a Bryn Mawr College program. *"The experience of learning to live in a foreign culture gave me a new sense of confidence and a deeper curiosity about the wider world. The conversations that I had in class, around the city, and in the countryside with my host family, professors, and Spanish friends still resonate with me today."*



**Susie Duke (Institute for Global Engagement)** participated in the Regents' Summer Study Abroad program in Lyon, France. *"This international study catapulted me into a new level of appreciation for intercultural learning and living. It paved the way to a career teaching French for seven years, and now working on course travel and many other international engagements projects."*



**Kristina Kosnick (French)** on a hike in the Alps during her undergraduate study abroad in Tours, France. *"That summer, when I wasn't in the French lab, I traveled by train throughout France as well as in Spain and Italy. It was the first time I saw mountains, swam in salt water, and learned to eat cheese without bread. I loved it!"*



**Megan Crawford (CLS)** at the Tower of London with a teddy bear guard. *"I explored all the nooks and crannies of London by riding the Tube and picking random stations to disembark to explore the various neighborhood of London. The people watching and the random foods (and Cadbury chocolate) I found were worth every trip."*





## “REPLACE HATE!” event by the Office of Intercultural Affairs



In response to bias-related encounters, Grinnellians wanted to do something active to replace hate and reclaim the space! **A section of 8th Ave, in front of JRC, was blocked for an afternoon of art.** All were invited to share messages that celebrate love and showcase the values of our Grinnell community.

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