



BAYLOR INTERDISCIPLINARY POVERTY INITIATIVE

Newsletter

September 2012

WHO WE ARE:

FACULTY CHAIR:

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COORDINATOR:

Rosemary Townsend

PROJECT MANAGER:

Mary Katherine Leslie-Van Hook

ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

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Honors College

Susan Bratton

Environmental Science

Mona Choucair

English

Darin Davis

Philosophy; Institute for Faith & Learning

Tisha Emerson

Economics

Jeremy Everett

Texas Hunger Initiative

Teri Holtkamp

City of Waco Housing and Community Development

Rebecca Kennedy

MCM Student Life (Spiritual Life)

Beth Lanning

Health, Human Performance, & Recreation

Joe McKinney

Hankamer School of Business

Jon Singletary

Social Work

James SoRelle

History

Tony Talbert

Education

Brian Thomas

Electrical & Computer Engineering

Jerry Waltman

Political Science

Suzy Weems

Family & Consumer Sciences

OUR MISSION...

The Baylor Interdisciplinary Poverty Initiative (BIPI) is designed to create a catalyst for social change around issues of poverty, social justice, and human capability. The project is administered through the Division of Student Life in partnership with a faculty director and advisory committee. There is a focus on discipline-based service, and faculty partnerships and civic research is encouraged.

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"Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow." - Isaiah 1:17

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SUMMER BIPI INTERNS

This June, five Baylor undergraduates dispersed across the nation and world to embark on unique internship experiences that joined their area of study and a passion for service.

Senior Sarah Picken of Wheaton, Ill was placed with Life Pieces to Masterpieces in Washington, D.C. through the Shepherd Poverty program. Before leaving for her summer adventure, Sarah wrote on the BIPI intern blog, "It's hard to put into words how I am feeling before I head to Washington, D.C. tomorrow. I am equal parts ecstatic, terrified, and hopeful."

It is fair to say that every student felt nerves before their departure, as there are many unknowns prior to their experiences. Both the BIPI internship/fellowship program and Shepherd Poverty program offer modest living stipends and place students in living situations with other students from across the nation. The intent is for participants to see first hand what it is like to live as the people they are serving and to also learn from their diverse housemates.

Senior Jake Abell experienced extreme cultural differences as he stepped far from campus and conducted a team research project in Kenya. The group consisted of four other research assistants and faculty sponsor Dr. Sarah Alexander. They worked directly

with Kenyan community leaders about how to increase food security. The people of the Nyakach Plateau in rural, western Kenya live in poverty but also have access to an abundance of nutrient-rich soil available for planting fruits and vegetables.

As Abell reflected on his time abroad, he wrote, "I couldn't have hoped for a better experience conducting this research through BIPI. The team was stellar, the project smoothly executed, and the experience of working with the people of the Nyakach Plateau- words cannot describe it. Now, Daniel and I look forward to a year of data analysis and ongoing communication with our friends in Kenya on how to improve, expand, and enhance... Kuoko agricultural yields."

Another Shepherd intern worked closely with agriculture back in the states at the Atlanta Food Bank community garden. "Forget about sitting in a cubicle, making copies or running coffee to my boss," said rising Kylie Aspegren. "Instead at least two or three times a week, I get the privilege of waking up before any of my



MEET THE INTERNS...



Sarah Picken

Classification: Rising Senior
Major: International Studies
Placement: Life Pieces to Masterpieces in Washington, D.C.



Kelcy Workman

Classification: Senior
Major: International Studies
Placement: National Campus Kitchen Project in Washington, D.C.



Kylie Aspegren

Classification: Rising Senior
Major: Nutrition Sciences
Placement: Atlanta Community Food Bank in Atlanta, Georgia

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CONTINUED...



housemates. I get to feel the morning sun on my skin and fresh dirt in my hands. I meet different volunteers from all over the country and teach them how to harvest different vegetables, what weeds to pick, how to mulch and water properly, how to build fences, and how to prepare produce for market or the food pantry."

Although thankful for her placement, Aspegren gained important insight from her internship that gardening or farming is not her vocation. "I have found that my calling is on the other end of the spectrum, the nutrition side. I want to be teaching people how to eat healthier not growing the nutritious foods," says Aspegren. Important lessons like Aspegren's is another reason the BIPI and Shepherd internships are so valuable. Students have the opportunity to take their dream jobs for a test run with little risk.

Of course other interns devoured every moment of their placements like Sarah Kate Langford at Raven + Lily in Austin, Texas. Langford learned the process for ethical business practices in a for-profit company—a system she wants to apply to her own fashion business someday. But on a different level, Langford has also made some personal changes because of her internship. "One immediate change is the way I view my purchases of clothing and many other goods," writes Langford. "Ethical and free trade goods are becoming easier and easier to find, and I'm hoping to begin only buying these products."

Meanwhile, at the National Campus Kitchen Project in

Washington, D.C. Kelcy Workman produced a tool and national benchmark that all participating Campus Kitchen affiliated schools can use to assess and measure learning outcomes on their campus. Her time spent with the national organization was eye opening and refreshing. "...Everything (Campus Kitchens) does is replicable. They aren't in the business of hoarding, but want to pass on what works well for them so that others can take it and adapt it to their community," wrote an impressed Workman who graduated in May with a degree in International Studies and minors in Sociology and Economics.

As their internship experiences came to a close, the students understood there was still work to be done. Final papers have been turned in and survey results are being calculated. Interns will give a final presentation to showcase their work from their summers this fall (time and date to be announced). All BIPI committee members are encouraged to attend and join the conversation as well as other students, staff and faculty. For more information and personal anecdotes from this year's interns, visit blogs.baylor.edu/bipi2012interns.

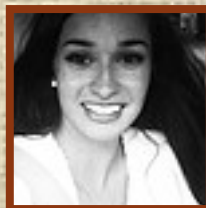
MEET THE INTERNS...

Jake Abell

Classification: Rising Senior

Major: University Scholar

Placement: Jake, along with four other research assistants and faculty sponsor Dr. Sarah Alexander, are traveling to Kenya to work directly with Kenyan community leaders about how to increase food security.



Sarah-Kate Langford

Classification: Senior

Major: Apparel Design and Product Development

Placement: Raven+Lily in Austin, TX

COMMUNITY WRITING

Last year, two English professors invited their students to apply their knowledge of technical writing and break through the fourth wall of the classroom.

Dr. Lisa Shaver and Dr. Michael DePalma designed a project for their respective technical and professional writing classes for students to work alongside community agencies and create business plans reflective of the non-profit's articulated needs. The assignment required students to, "identify a needed area of research in a community organization, research and analyze the various courses of action for responding to the community organization's need, and write a feasibility report that recommends the best course of action for responding to the community organization's identified need," wrote DePalma.

Organizations ranged from on-campus entities such as the Campus Kitchen Project at Baylor and Engineers with a Mission to local groups like the Waco Downtown Farmer's Market (WDFM) and the Urban Gardening Coalition.

Both Shaver and DePalma agree that their students had positive experiences while working in the community. Shaver noted how classmates learned from one another's projects during the duration of their research. "Students learned about four different local non-profit agencies (their own and their classmates'), those agencies' missions and important community issues that they are trying to address. For instance one team was working on materials intended to make teenagers aware of the factors contributing to diabetes, and everyone in our class learned that this is a serious issue facing our community," wrote Shaver. During the course of the project, groups met with their "clients" several times before delivering their final presentation. These interactions yielded beneficial lessons in how to communicate effectively with their clients and team members, correspond professionally, write proposals, and deliver a proficient presentation.

The final presentation consisted of various promotional materials and a personalized digital profile that each organization could use at upcoming events to raise awareness about their services. Many organizations use the materials even after the project is complete, such as the WDFM. "We pass out the brochures the students made for the Farmer's Market every Saturday morning," says Market Manager Bethel Erickson-Bruce.

In the end, the unique pairing of writing with non-profit organizations conceptualizes the professors' desires to take their students out of the classroom and apply their work. DePalma described his service-learning model further.

My central goal as an educator is to inspire students to fulfill the promise of their highest ideals and talents so that they might engage the world around them in productive and creative ways...I am guided by three overarching principles: (1) situate learning in students' experiences; (2) emphasize the consequences of the work students are engaged in; (3) always connect. The community-based writing projects I use in the courses I teach provide multiple opportunities to enact these goals.

If you or another faculty member are interested in applying service learning to your curriculum and need community contacts, call or email the Community Engagement and Service office at 254.71.3014 or CESS@Baylor.edu

**Looking to
Adopt?**



HUMANE SOCIETY
CENTRAL TEXAS

A brochure created by students in
Shaver's class for the Humane Society

Q&A with...

CODY MILLER

Cody Miller is a graduate student doing his practicum on BIPI. He has a B.A. in Psychology and a car named Rhonda (she's a Honda).



Q. TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROGRAM

A. I'm a graduate student in Baylor's Higher Education and Student Affairs program. In a nutshell, the degree focuses on how colleges and universities operate, as well as how students learn and develop during their college experiences.

Q. WHERE ARE YOU FROM

A. Red Lion, Pennsylvania

Q. WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER ASPIRATIONS

A. This changes regularly! I currently work with Campus Living and Learning as a graduate apprentice, and I would love to continue to work in the area of housing in the future. I am also interested in working with programs similar to those in Community Engagement and Service, which is what drew me to BIPI.

Q. WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GAIN FROM YOUR PRACTICUM

A. I deeply respect how BIPI encourages students to apply their academic discipline in their internships, in student programs, and in the Poverty and Social Justice Minor. I hope to learn more about all of these areas of BIPI!

MINOR IN POVERTY

DO YOU KNOW STUDENTS...

Interested in serving others in an effort overcome poverty?

Who feel called to work for social justice in our world?

Who want to develop the skills to help others develop their own capabilities to improve the situations they face?

Interested in studying what English, Economics, and Engineering all contribute to ending poverty and promoting justice?

If so, let them know about the Minor in Poverty Studies and Social Justice. This minor allows students to design an interdisciplinary study of these issues in a way that is relevant to them. The minor includes three required courses and three courses that you can choose on your own.

Interested students should both contact their advisor in their department to consider how the requirements for the minor relate to their major as well as declare the minor with this advisor. Their advisor can then contact either Angela Traylor or Jon Singletary if more information is needed.

Faculty: consider courses in your discipline that may be relevant to the minor or do as Dr. Brian Thomas and Dr. Jerry Walman did and design courses specifically for the minor. Students can also petition for courses to count for the minor.

The Minor in Poverty Studies and Social Justice is part of the academic foundation and a central focus of the Baylor Interdisciplinary Poverty Initiative, designed to create a catalyst for social change around issues of poverty, social justice and human capabilities.

MORE INFORMATION

CONTACT

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VISIT

www.baylor.edu/student_life/index.php?id=85468

www.baylor.edu/social_work/index.php?id=66469

www.baylor.edu/engage/pov