Dickey Global Experiences: Life-Changing, Deep Learning

This past year the Dickey Center sent 90 students abroad to pursue international internships and research projects, our largest number ever. The comment we hear most frequently from students is that these experiences abroad are life changing, and that terms spent off campus—often in isolation from other Dartmouth students and faculty—are one of the most important parts of their Dartmouth experience. What does their feedback tell us about our programs abroad and Dartmouth’s curriculum? Simply, that we have hit the sweet spot of higher education, where opportunities for students to learn about themselves meet up with a profound realization of the value of their Dartmouth education.

This issue of Crossroads highlights some life-changing learning that took place for several students who spent the summer in regions of recent or ongoing conflict. Their reports show how living in conflicted territory and interacting with survivors of conflict have deepened their understanding of conflict itself, a persistent feature of global society.

Writing of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Julia Fusfeld ’13, who interned with a non-governmental organization devoted to building peace through diplomacy, says, “I thought the conflict was more political and meta than present at a personal level. I was wrong.… Almost every Palestinian I met and engaged with had memories of difficult encounters with the Israel Defense Forces.”

Dickey Receives Generous Gift for Arctic Studies

The Dickey Center is the grateful recipient of a $1 million gift from Norman “Sandy” McCulloch ’50 and his wife Dotty to support the work of the Center’s Institute of Arctic Studies. The McCullochs’ generous support was recognized at the Dickey Center’s May 2012 Board of Visitors meeting by then-Provost Carol Folt and Institute of Arctic Studies Director Ross Virginia.

The gift will help build on the most successful features of our graduate program in polar environmental change, including a distinguished speakers series and interdisciplinary research collaboration, and expand on international partnerships as well as...
Melting ice and flooding dominated the news from the Dartmouth IGERT field seminar in Greenland this summer—a rare chance to witness history in the making. But the IGERT student blog was also alive in July and August with stories of camping at the edge of the Greenland Ice Sheet, talking climate policy with Greenlandic government officials, boating to an ecological monitoring station, fielding questions at a community center in the capital, practicing Greenlandic language lessons, and even raising funds for a local grade school.

In mid-July, IGERT students and faculty flew on a C-130 cargo plane from the 109th Air National Guard Base in New York to Kangerlussuaq, Greenland. After donning extreme cold weather gear, they continued on to Summit Station at over 10,500 feet above sea level. Their plane landed in the middle of not only the Greenland Ice Sheet but a controversy over a record ice melt caused by unusually warm temperatures. International news about the melt event provided a graphic lesson in rapid climate change as well as in what a media blitz looks like. By chance, IGERT Kaitlin Keegan had been at Summit a few days earlier teaching high school students from the US, Denmark, and Greenland about the properties of snow and ice as part of NSF’s Joint Science and Education Program (JSEP). Kaitlin talked about the melt layer that had formed near the surface of the snow, a phenomenon important to her PhD research. “At Summit, there is only one other melt layer besides the melt layer from this past week,” she wrote on the IGERT blog, “and this previous melt layer dates to 1889.” Kaitlin’s reference point was mentioned in a subsequent press release from NASA that resulted in over a thousand hits in twenty-four hours to the Dartmouth IGERT blog.

The group returned to Kangerlussuaq where a major bridge washout linked to the ice sheet melt disrupted life in town but fortunately not the field seminar. IGERT hit the road trekking to the edge of the Greenland Ice Sheet where they camped and studied soil and plant ecology, glaciology, and aquatic biology with Professors Ross Virginia and Matt Ayres. The ecologists had learned to drill ice cores at Summit; back on dry land the engineers learned about brown and green food webs and biodiversity. “Learning new material while immersed in Greenlandic tundra was an amazing hands-on experience that I’m sure I will never forget,” engineer Stephanie Gregory wrote on the IGERT blog shortly after she’d counted a surprising number of plant types in a small patch of ground within sight of the ice sheet.

Meanwhile, IGERTs Julia Bradley-Cook and Ruth Heindel led twenty-one JSEP students on a field trip through the complexities of climate change that included an improvisational “carbon cycle dance.” “Fortunately, the students were eager to dance as carbon dioxide..."
Four years ago the Dickey Center’s Institute of Arctic Studies began a ground-breaking new program that has been an adventure for everyone involved. Our NSF-funded IGERT program in polar environmental change has supported PhD students from earth sciences, ecology and evolutionary biology, and the Thayer School of Engineering in the interdisciplinary study of the dramatic changes occurring in polar regions. This year we welcome our final cohort of six graduate students, bringing the total number of fellows who have participated in the Dartmouth IGERT to 25.

The success of the Dartmouth IGERT in Polar Environmental Change is due in large part to the enthusiasm, diversity and character of students drawn to the program. Some arrive with extensive polar experience, while others have never been north of New Hampshire. But their individual differences enhance their curiosity and encourage them to learn from each other. Each cohort of new students, strangers at first, comes together to add their own unique knowledge and interests to the program. This year we welcomed two students in ecology and evolutionary biology, two in earth sciences, and two from Thayer—four women and two men who quickly learned to call themselves simply “IGERTs.”

The new engineering IGERT fellows are Alden Adolph ’11 and Ben Walker. Originally from New Orleans, Alden is a Dartmouth graduate and a second-year PhD student studying the physical properties of snow and ice. She got her feet wet with IGERT last year when she accompanied the field seminar to the Greenland Ice Sheet as a field assistant. Although new to Dartmouth, Ben Walker is a familiar face to students and faculty who have met him in Greenland. He comes us from the U.S. Air Force Search and Rescue. He’ll be working on the YETI polar robot system developed at Thayer.

Zak Gezon is a fourth-year Dartmouth PhD student who spent a few years surfing and snowboarding the world before entering the ecology and evolutionary biology graduate program. He’s studying the role phenology plays in plant reproduction and plant-pollinator interactions. Christine Urbanowicz is also a new IGERT in ecology and evolutionary biology studying pollination. She has an MA in geography from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and she’ll be investigating the effects of climate change on arctic pollination systems.

Ruth Heindel got a jump on her cohort by traveling to Greenland this past summer to assist IGERT Julia Bradley-Cook with her research into carbon cycling in arctic soil near Kangerlussuaq. An earth sciences student, Ruth will be researching landscape evolution and sediment transport in areas impacted by glaciers. She and Julia also worked with high school students from the US, Denmark, and Greenland who were in Kangerlussuaq participating in a National Science Foundation...
Forces. Similarly, many Israelis have dear friends and relatives who were victims of terrorism. My daily encounters in Jerusalem were shaped by this knowledge.

Prior to her experience, Julia took a course in the Government Department taught by Professor Bridget Coggins on civil war. Julia learned about theories of conflict, legitimacy and power. She writes:

We studied scholar Donald Horowitz’s theory of ethnic groups in conflict. In Israel, I definitely observed his theory regarding legitimacy and power in action. The Palestinians and Israelis are in contest for legitimacy; they both want to be recognized as the rightful inhabitants of the land of Israel. Individuals I have met on both sides are frustrated that the other does not accept their own narrative, or the claims they have to the land of Israel.

One of the most significant aspects of Julia’s experience was learning the narrative of the Palestinians—from Palestinians themselves. A visit to the home of a Palestinian co-worker was particularly influential. “We met her children, and all the children of the neighborhood, and her husband. It was so lovely; even though she clearly does not have a lot, she still shared so much with us.” Julia summarizes her experience in this way:

Having spent time here and interacting with individuals on both sides, I really believe that dignifying the other group and acknowledging its narrative and history can go a long way to bring parties to a negotiating table. I hope I have begun to do my part.

Karolina Krelinova ’14 participated in the Dartmouth/American University in Kosovo partnership summer program. “There is nowhere to escape the politics,” says Karolina, whose experience in the region allowed her to develop an appreciation for the uses of force in the prevention of atrocities, while also developing skepticism about the success of foreign-induced peace. She writes, “A pacifist of the strongest conviction, I believed that violence doesn’t solve anything until over and over I was presented with cases defying my logic in Kosovo.” After hearing two survivors speak on the Racak massacre of Kosovar Albanians, Karolina decided that violent action might have its uses. “While my opinion on war as...
a means of problem-solving hasn’t changed, I can now understand why, under certain circumstances, violent or better non-violent conflict can be the only way out of a stalemate.”

And yet the experience has left her with doubts about the durability of foreign imposed peace, and a need for mutual understanding, that echoes Julia Fusfeld’s experience in Israel. “Kosovar Albanian families,” Karolina recounts, “still bring their four-year-olds to the site of the Adem Jashari’s heroic death, and faithfully hate on the Serbs every time they revisit, listening to the emotions and rage of the survivors.” She describes also seeing Kosovar Serbs selling postcards that graphically curse America and declare “Kosovo is Serbia.”

“Most interesting,” she writes, “was talking to the young people, who, despite being too young to remember, hold prejudices and opinions not dissimilar to the trauma-informed narratives of their parents and grandparents.” She notes that the persistence of ethnic hostilities is in sharp contrast to Kosovo’s new constitution, which describes the country as a state of harmony, understanding, and respect between minorities.

Not all of our students’ encounters with conflict are so dispiriting. Anna Roth ‘13 undertook a health internship in Rwanda this past summer. She offers us a vignette of her encounter with conflict and its aftermath while driving by the main genocide memorial in Kigali with a Rwandan:

“Most of my family is buried there,” he said. He was 14 at the time of the genocide, and told me that throughout his entire life up to the genocide, society had been completely split between the two ethnic groups, with much animosity and little contact. He pointed to the people in the street and said, “See, even if people are not completely integrated, you see them working together, speaking, going to church together.” I asked, “Did you ever think that would be possible?” and he said, “No, it’s a miracle.”

One of the biggest lessons Dartmouth students learn in the field is to reconcile themselves to the often conflicting aspects of life. Anna struggles with how to perceive the political and cultural complexity of the Rwandan government:

The current government is accused of suppressing free speech and has recently been accused of war crimes and agitating conflict in the neighboring Congo, the same government has been responsible for record-breaking gains in health and development and has implemented an unprecedented reconciliation program.

Each of these student’s stories offers compelling examples of the value of learning in the world, not just about it. Unmoored from cultural norms and contexts, they had unexpected experiences, and we are never more open to life’s lessons than when we’re taken by surprise.

Students who have the benefit of learning in the world come back to it time and again, assessing new information and observations against what they experienced abroad. Their Dartmouth education helps them build the conceptual frameworks in which to make sense of these experiences, and reevaluate them as those frameworks expand and mature, and as new experiences generate new information about the world.

Luke Murphy ‘13 writes about his Jerusalem internship: “I just had a two-hour long dinner discussion about our work and the ‘peace industry’ as it is called, in the region in general.” One of the topics they discussed was whether the separation barrier being built between Israel and the Palestinian West Bank is ethical, even if it prevents violence against your people. “I’m still thinking about that one…” he writes. Imagine how much more powerful those reflections are in a city where that is actually happening.
molecules, willing to let me capture them through photosynthesis, and ready to have Julia decompose and respire them back to the atmosphere!” wrote Ruth.

In the capital of Nuuk, the IGERTs were kept on the move meeting a variety of experts: the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Rector of Illisimatusarfik (University of Greenland), Project Chief of the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic, President of the Inuit Circumpolar Council in Greenland, members of the Association of Fishermen and Hunters in Greenland, and many other scientists and policy experts. They also met up with an old friend, Upaluk Poppel, who spent a term at Dartmouth as part of the Greenland Student Exchange.

A highlight of the IGERT field seminar for students is always the “Meet Your Scientist” evening at the Katuaq Cultural Center, where they present their research to the general public. In a country where most international scientists have very little contact with Greenlanders, the Dartmouth IGERT stands out as setting a new standard for local engagement. (IGERT Lauren Culler, who is known by the nickname “Mosquito Lady,” discovered so many Greenlanders interested in her research on the local pest (but important ecological species) that she posted a flyer around town—in Greenlandic—explaining basic mosquito facts.)

Before flying home, the IGERTs even managed to participate in the Running of the Muskus (Musk ox) half marathon and 5K races that raised money for a local Greenlandic elementary school. So ended a busy five weeks in Greenland before returning home to much-missed fresh fruits and vegetables.
Dickey Fellows

Each year we benefit from the close proximity and intellectual freshness of our visiting Dickey Fellows.

Fellows spend up to a year conducting their own research, collaborating with Dartmouth faculty and interacting with Dartmouth students both as guest lecturers in the classroom and as informal advisors and resident experts. This year, we welcome the first cohort of fellows in our International Security and US Foreign Policy program, which enjoys the support of the Dean of the Faculty. The Dickey Visiting Fellows program also receives the support of the Glovsky Family Fund. We are also pleased to have other distinguished scholars visiting us this year, including the inaugural Roth Distinguished Scholar, James Nachtwey.

Dickey Fellows in International Security and US Foreign Policy

Trygve Throntveit joins us from Harvard University, where he is Lecturer and Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies in History at Harvard University. He received his PhD in History in 2008 from Harvard University on American intellectual history, political history, and international relations. His research focuses on the intersection of philosophy, political ideology, public opinion, and policymaking in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century United States, with particular emphases on philosophical pragmatism, progressive reform movements, and US relations with the wider world.

Rosella Cappella received her PhD in Political Science from the University of Pennsylvania for her dissertation, *The Political Economy of War Finance*. Her fields of specialization include international relations, comparative politics, and the political economy of national security. She received the Center for Teaching and Learning Graduate Fellowship for Teaching Excellence at the University of Pennsylvania for 2011-2012.

Matthew Trudgen comes to us from the University of Calgary, where he was the R.B. Byers Post Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies. He received his PhD Philosophy History from Queen’s University in 2011. His research focuses on the history of US-Canada defense relationships, with a specialization in air defense co-operation in the 1950s.

Michael Beckley recently completed his PhD in Political Science at Columbia University, concentrating in International and Comparative Politics, and was an International Security Program Research Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. His research topics include the durability and dynamics of unipolarity, the elements of national power, and US and Chinese foreign policy.

Austin Long is an Assistant Professor of International Security Policy and Strategic Studies at the School of International Public Affairs at Columbia University. He received his PhD in Political Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, focusing on how military culture is transmitted through professional military education and how culture influences the formation of military doctrine. He is working on a book on the role of military culture in counterinsurgency efforts in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Scholars in Residence at the Dickey Center

James Nachtwey ’70, Roth Distinguished Visiting Scholar
Photographer and humanitarian James Nachtwey has devoted himself to documenting wars, conflicts and critical social issues. He has worked on extensive photographic essays around the globe depicting the terrible costs of oppression, poverty, and war. At Dartmouth he will work on art installations involving his photographs and engage with students and faculty.

Celeste Campos-Castillo received her PhD and MA in Sociology from the University of Iowa. Her research is driven by a general interest in understanding the micro-context in which social structural conditions shape health outcomes. She is currently assessing the role of health literacy and health information-seeking in explaining gender differences in health outcomes.

Tim Stablien completed his PhD at the University of Connecticut in 2009, and then held a Visiting Assistant Professorship at Skidmore College. His research explores how adolescent experiences shape deviant and delinquent behavior, identity, and, more recently, health trajectories, and the intersections of technology, privacy, health care delivery, and health disparities.
Dickey Receives Generous Gift, cont. from cover

student and faculty exchanges. The gift also makes it possible for the Institute to continue leading a vibrant dialogue among the research, policy, and indigenous communities on critical Arctic issues through international conferences and workshops.

“The gift from Sandy and Dotty McCulloch comes at a critical time as the Institute is institutionalizing recent successes in forming partnerships in Greenland, Iceland, Finland and the University of the Arctic,” says Ross Virginia, Myers Family Professor of Environmental Science and Director of the Institute of Arctic Studies. “Because of their interest, vision, and generosity, undergraduate and graduate students and their faculty mentors will have new opportunities for research, teaching and public outreach.”

The Institute of Arctic Studies draws on a long tradition at Dartmouth in Northern and Polar Studies, which in recent years has focused on the nexus between climate change, science communication, and research ethics. The scientific and ethical dimensions of rapid climate change were an important motivation behind the development of the Dartmouth IGERT (Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship), a unique program funded by the National Science Foundation that is training a new generation of polar scientists and engineers. Collaborating with scientists and engineers in other disciplines as well as policy makers and community members is a skill critical to understanding rapid environmental changes.

This gift strengthens research, education, and policy priorities of the Dickey Center. Says Sandy McCulloch, "Our gift is in recognition of the value of the Dickey Center in fostering international understanding around the issue of climate change and its effect on people, the environment and security. We are enthusiastic about Ross Virginia’s leadership of the Institute of Arctic Studies and the international attention it is bringing to these critical issues, as well as the special role for the United States and Canada in addressing them."