AppState in DC: Global Internship Program

Participants
Madeline Perrou
Taylor Shellman
Thomas Gallagher
Joe Wrenn
Sarah Dickert
Brittney Maslowski

Purpose
The AppState in DC: International Experience provided 6 students the opportunity to live and intern in Washington D.C. while introducing them to different cultures and teaching them how to live and interact in a global society. Our goal was for the participants to see that they are active members of our global, interconnected world. Another goal was for them to start networking and making connections with people and organizations that operate on a much broader scale than their own backyards.

In addition to completing an internship, the AppState in DC participants attended events and activities helping them gain new, worldly perspectives. Another component of the program was to foster meaningful relationships between the participants and Appalachian alumni that are currently living in DC. Alumni with either extensive international experiences or whose work has a strong global focus were selected for these interactions. During the alumni networking, alumni shared how globalization was a part of their work each and every day.

Summary
TheAppState in DC: International Experience provided a new lens from which to view student internships in DC. In more ways than imagined, students experienced work in a global, interconnected manner. As one student simply said, “it was not Boone and that is all I have experienced.” Initially, students were asked to seek internship placements in sites with direct international focus. That proved more difficult than expected but the reality was that each student experienced globalization in a very different but very real manner in each site. In fact, the students’ growth towards becoming more globally competent citizens was organic and embedded in their daily work and life.

There were five over-arching goals for the AppState in DC project:
1. Provide an expanded inventory of internship opportunities with international learning opportunities;
2. Provide opportunities for faculty and staff to identify and visit potential internship sites as well as to conduct site visits during the internship experience;
3. Create and deliver a comprehensive learning experience of workshops, lectures, readings, and field experiences that support the student learning objectives (SLOs) of the QEP;
4. Foster connectivity and mentoring with Appalachian alumni especially those whose professional work is related to international affairs; and
5. Recruit participants for the AppState in DC: Global Internship Program for whom the cost of traditional study abroad may not be accessible.

The most successful components of the project were expanding knowledge of internship opportunities in Washington, DC; staff and faculty site visits; and fostering the alumni connectivity. Patrick Sullivan was hired to coordinate the program. On a weekly basis he identified and planned extra-curricular activities to support the SLO’s but due to the students’ work schedules, it was difficult to achieve a high level of engagement.

One four occasions staff from the Career Development Center (CDC) visited with alumni and professionals at potential and confirmed internship sites in DC that could meet the SLO’s for the QEP. Some of these sites hosted AppState in DC interns and some not; however, all sites will be included in the Career Development Center inventory of potential internship sites with a global connection. Staff traveling included Susan McCracken, Director CDC; Patrick Sullivan, AppState in DC Program Coordinator; Geralyn Mitchell, Career Counselor for the College of Fine and Applied Arts; and Deanne Smith, Employer Relations Coordinator. Sites visited included:

- National Endowment for the Humanities
- Smithsonian Museum of American History
- Center for American Progress
- Nike
- Washington Internship Student Housing
- SMYAL (intern placed here)
- Supreme Court of the United States
- National Council of Community and Education Partnerships
- American Council on Education (ACE)
- Brookings Institute
- The Enough Project
- Atlantic Council

In addition to sites visited, actual internships were at Human Rights Campaign, Emily’s List, Strategic Health Care, and Callison/RTKL, Inc. Patrick Sullivan identified and communicated with approximately 25 additional sites that are engaged in specific international work. When the CDC internship website is updated, these agencies and organizations will be listed.

As the coordinator, Patrick Sullivan led small group discussions as well as planned activities for the students. As part of the group’s orientation upon move-in on Memorial Day, he asked the students to identify what they hoped to gain in terms of international exposure. The group came to a general consensus that they wanted to have a better understanding of why people choose DC as a haven for international studies and work. Additionally, they wanted to have a deeper understanding of the cultural expression that happens around the world.

No less than twice a week during the 10 week program, students had opportunities to participate in lectures, festivals, cultural events, and/or workshops that highlighted and celebrated the
international aspects of Washington, DC. Patrick organized attendance for those events including:

- National Museum of American Jewish History. The focus of this exhibit was to portray the contributions made by Jewish-Americans to the major wars that are a part of our past.
- Digital Media and Cultural Heritage at the Spanish Embassy. This lecture concentrated on how emerging technologies are helping the world understand and preserve heritage among the Spanish Culture.
- Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: The Batala Washington is an all-women percussion band who aim to empower women through drumming.
- Around the World Cultural Food Festival on the National Mall. Students enjoyed being exposed to all kinds of cultural dress, dance, art, and of course...FOOD.
- The World Affairs Council and the Young Professionals in International Affairs organizations hosted WorldQuest Trivia. It was a fundraiser for the organizations and a fun way to meet up with each other after work to learn a bit about other cultures and enjoy a happy hour. The AppState team won third place.
- Spanish Illustrators: The Color of Optimism at the Spanish Embassy. This contemporary Spanish art exhibit displayed young artists’ interpretation of Spain’s global presence.
- Smithsonian International Folklife Festival.
- Bonsai Tree Exhibit.
- Democratoz at the Kennedy Center: Algerian folk music blended with Western rock to form “raï.”
- Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam Finals.
- Xiomas - CUBAAHORA: The Next Generation: Contemporary Cuban Art exhibit.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the program was the alumni networking. Each week, an Appalachian alumus or alumna met with the students. Those alumni and a summary of their discussions are listed below. The final week of the program, the CDC and the Office of Alumni Affairs co-sponsored an Alumni Networking Reception for theAppState in DC participants.

This gathering of 20 alumni and interns in a private venue was the culmination for students to reconnect with alumni they had met earlier, foster new relationships, and experience the inter-generational community that exists among alumni. For the students, the alumni networking demonstrated that they can have both personal and professional support if they choose to move to a city like Washington, DC.

Alumni Networking included:

- At the weekly Jazz in the National Sculpture Garden event, the ASU Alumni Chapter hosted a meetup for people to come to after work. Although the turnout from the chapter wasn’t abundant, the smaller group provided a more intimate setting for people to get to know each other.
- Ric Francis, Military Assistant to the Secretary of the Army at the Pentagon. Ric’s role in coordinating communications for the Army at its central Pentagon headquarters. Meeting with Ric was a great opportunity for students to interact with a seasoned professional in the city. Ric has had opportunities to travel and serve all over the world. He told us detailed stories about his time in Afghanistan and how that affected him and
how it affects our country everyday. He also shared how his experiences have shaped his idea of living as a global citizen.

• James and Katie Waynick: James is an instructor for the US Department of Defense and has the opportunity to travel extensively around the world. He told us all about how the entire course he teaches is all about how human geography can basically determine the course of your entire life and how we should take that into perspective while interacting with people from other cultures. Katie does digital marketing for a banking firm and she told us all about how Brexit has really affected her work because now they have a whole new landscape to explore when it comes to marketing.

• Tommy Wrenn: At the time, he was in transition from one position to another. He shared with the group how his experience working for organizations that have had international foci has improved his marketability as a candidate for jobs. His passion for social change and ending genocide has led him to gravitate towards careers with a global concentration.

• Rachel Hicks, Director of Communications for the American Beverage Association. Rachel shared lots of life advice and how a college major does define the rest of our lives. She spoke about her work with the beverage industry and how international trade and regulation impacts her.

• Michael McSwain, Coordinator for Government and Public Affairs, Nike. Working in government relations for Nike has provided him with a great deal of international exposure. Since a majority of their manufacturing happens overseas, he is often faced with controversies from groups that disapprove of the organization’s practices. He talked all about how the actions that our government takes daily affect his work.

**Progress in Meeting Project Specific Global Learning Outcomes:**

1. Provide an expanded inventory of internship opportunities with international learning opportunities.
   We made personal contact with thirty organizations whose internship opportunities align with the Global Learning Outcomes of the QEP. These organizations will be listed on the Career Development Center website as possible sites for 2017 summer internships. All but three of these sites are new additions to the existing list of potential internship sites since 2005.

   One goal that was not realized was to increase the number of global science-based internships. None of the participants was seeking a science internship. We did identify contacts at the EPA but no student sought a placement there.

2. Provide opportunities for faculty and staff to identify and visit potential internship sites as well as to conduct site visits during the internship experience.
   Three faculty advisors (Renee Scherlen, Phillip Ardoin, and Kristen Baldwin Deathridge) and three staff from the Career Development Center visited the program and internship sites. These individuals also met with the students individually as well as in small groups. The faculty visits happened outside the QEP funding cycle; therefore, no QEP funds were available to cover their travel.
3. Create and deliver a comprehensive learning experience of workshops, lectures, readings, and field experiences that support the student learning objectives (SLOs) of the QEP.

The goal was to offer two enrichment activities a week with at least 50% participation. Two activities a week were offered on average over the course of the program and several of those were listed above. Participation varied due to work schedules.

In lieu of an in-house survey, the Global Competence Aptitude Assessment (GCAA) was administered to four of the participants in early July. In addition, the participants submitted an application for participation in spring 2016 and completed a final reflection.

Results of the GCAA showed the following:

Internal Readiness (personal characteristics and attitudes that enable individuals to effectively understand and interact across cultural boundaries).

- 1 participant: High Aptitude
- 2 participants: Developing Aptitude
- 1 participant: Underdeveloped Aptitude

External Readiness (global knowledge and people skills acquired that allow effective navigation of the complexities of the world).

- 2 participants: High Aptitude
- 1 participant: Developing Aptitude
- 1 participant: Underdeveloped Aptitude

Due to the short nature of the program, a post-test was not administered but the participants did receive their scores and results.

The final reflection asked students to discuss how their experiences had impacted their global knowledge, cultivated intercultural competencies, and fostered their growth as a global citizen. Each of them responded that they had gained confidence and independence that they would not have experienced staying in Boone. One student wrote:

*This summer in DC, my internship, the Appstate in DC program, the culture and diversity, the friends I’ve made, and the experiences I’ve had have taught me so much more than sitting in a classroom. Although DC is within our country’s borders, I have experienced more religious, racial, and cultural diversity than in my three years at Appalachian.*

Though none of them worked in an “international” organization, they spoke of the global connections in their work environment. Two students said that constant talk of politics and engagement with colleagues from other countries made them aware of the impact the US has globally.

*These conversations have allowed me to further identify and explore obligations the United States has to other countries. As a part of fostering globally competent citizenship, it is important that I learn how other countries feel about my own. It is*
important to hear how the decisions my country makes can affect another person’s country.

One interesting perspective was that of seeing an issue through the lens of different cultures. The intern with Human Rights Watch commented on the differences in expectations and needs of LGBTQ people inside the US and those outside. She was also struck by the openness of her work setting for individuals to discuss difficult and challenging topics.

Regarding the supplemental activities planned, one student wrote about attending the Bonsai tree exhibit and how he had no knowledge of Bonsai but upon leaving, had learned about the unique relationship between Japan and the US as well as understanding that Bonsai was an art form, not “just a tree.” Another student said the activities allowed her to “gain perspective on other cultures, in order to have more insight and to be more knowledgeable of individuals that [she] could potentially meet in a future in a work environment.”

In both the written reflections and my meetings with the students, each one commented on how the experience had taught them so many things about themselves and had broadened their world view. They shared a house with other Appalachian students but also students from Hawaii, Kentucky, and Ohio. Those experiences and discussions after work have also shaped their global experience.

4. Foster connectivity and mentoring with Appalachian alumni especially those whose professional work is related to international affairs. Clearly, this was one of the most successful and popular aspects of the program. The summary of those interactions is listed above. One participant wrote in her final reflection:

*The alumni engagements were one of my favorite parts of the summer. Each one was very cordial and eager to meet the Appalachian students, and hear about our summer internships. I know that if I ever have any questions or need to contact someone in their network, that I can reach out to one of the alumni. Out of all of the ones I met, Michael McSwain was the individual that stood out to me and impressed me the most. His confidence, ambition, and humbleness greatly impressed me. He was very warm and welcoming when we visited his Nike office on Capitol Hill. We got to see for ourselves what he does on a daily basis, whether it is hosting clients or planning events.*

5. Recruit participants for the AppState in DC: Global Internship Program for whom the cost of traditional study abroad may not be accessible.

None of the undergraduate participants were receiving need-based financial aid. However, 3 of the 5 received merit-based scholarship funding. This may have offset the need for additional financial aid.