A World of Opportunities: LAS in the Global Community

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A World of Opportunities: LAS in the Global Community

FALL 2019

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In this issue of Insights, we celebrate all things global at the College of Liberal Arts and Social Science (LAS). We are deeply proud of the positive impact our students and alumni have had on the world, and of the many LAS academic initiatives that foster global engagement.

In LAS, we respond to the Vincentian question, “What must be done?” That means going beyond providing learning opportunities that establish awareness and understanding, to helping students learn how to act on that understanding. This last step is the hallmark of our distinctiveness, and rooted in a rich constellation of experiential learning opportunities.

That is why we say that our students are intellectually curious and actively engaged. And it is how we embody DePaul’s tagline, “Here, We Do.”

Our distinctive approach is getting noticed. As you will learn, we are extremely excited about two new philanthropic investments. A grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation allowed us to launch HumanitiesX: DePaul’s Experiential Humanities Collaborative to expand our project-based learning initiatives.

And we are deeply grateful for the extraordinary philanthropic support that has allowed us to establish The Grace School of Applied Diplomacy at DePaul University. We are the first in the nation to take a transprofessional approach to diplomatic study, through which we will train a diverse new generation of diplomats to build bridges across boundaries of differences—in their communities, the nation and the world.

DePaul University is a very special place because it delivers a very special learning experience. That experience is a product of collaboration between talented faculty and staff, dynamic students, generous philanthropists, and you—our alumni and friends.

This fall, we are launching a new Advisory Board structure to build even higher levels of engagement with you. The effort will be led by our new Advisory Board chair, Mitchell Goldberg (History ’96), formerly board secretary. Our outgoing chair, John Ward, who has so far dedicated 29 years of service to DePaul, will lead a new LAS Honor Society that will recognize key alumni and friends. We are forever grateful for the leadership that John continues to provide us. Stay tuned for more details.

We know that you are aware of, understand and actively engage with the global issues of today. Please keep us posted on your achievements at LASMedia@depaul.edu. Your stories embody the distinctiveness of an LAS degree, and we love to read them!

May the liberal arts be with you!

Guillermo
MITCHELL GOLDBERG (History ’96) became chair of the LAS Advisory Board in April 2019. A member of DePaul’s President’s Club and the True Blue Society, Goldberg is also the immediate past president of the Decalogue Society of Lawyers (America’s oldest Jewish bar association), an officer of the Chicago Lincoln American Inn of Court and an active member of the Illinois and Chicago bar associations. He was recently recognized at the 2019 Vanguard Awards—a multi-bar luncheon sponsored by the Chicago bar association—for his efforts to make the law and legal community more accessible to and reflective of the community at large. He is a director of the MR Bauer Foundation and Life Matters Media, a founding member of the Cook County Sheriff’s Tolerance Council and a partner at the law firm of Lawrence Kamin, LLC. He and his wife, Natasha, are proud parents of Rachel, Zachary, Jesse and Abigail.

WHAT HAS LAS GIVEN YOU?

The short answer is being a part of DePaul’s educational mission, which in addition to extraordinary academic instruction to me boils down to teaching good citizenship. As members of the DePaul family, we appreciate the difficulties others face. We understand the dynamics of diverse communities, and we also have this deep sense of wanting to improve the world around us. That's really the Vincentian mission. This resonates with me coming from a religious Jewish background where doing good deeds or mitzvot and having good midos (character development) are stressed. Being in an environment that's constantly reiterating similar values is a really positive experience.

One of the main things that I’ve gotten out of my DePaul education is this sense that these nonmonetary intentions and goals are good and that there is a place for this in our world today, even if we live in a world where success is often defined by our bank accounts or the car we drive. From that standpoint, how I define success is really something that I got from DePaul.

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WHY HAVE YOU MADE PHILANTHROPY AND SERVICE A PRIORITY IN YOUR LIFE?

My grandfather used to say that the greatest treasure and best measure of success in life are good friends and family, and that if you have solid relationships, then you are a successful person. This is one of the reasons why I was attracted to DePaul—because of its focus on the value of a nonmonetary version of success. I was also taught that you want to leave the world a better place than when you got here, and I believe that each of us has the tools and capabilities of doing so. It’s not going to happen by itself. Because of this I have a tendency to try and merge those two views and connect with like-minded people, including all the members of the LAS Advisory Board. As we collaborate, we are working to help DePaul by improving [the] curriculum and improving access to resources, which will ultimately benefit students.
It was an opportunity of a lifetime. As an LAS Honors student, Amy DeLorenzo (International Studies ’09) had the chance to study half the week in Leuven, Belgium, and spend the other half interning at the European Parliament in nearby Brussels.

“It was an amazing experience,” recalls DeLorenzo, now adjunct faculty in DePaul’s Department of Geography. “Even though I was doing a lot of writing memos, getting coffee and setting up meetings, to me it was very glamorous and exciting.”

What has stuck with DeLorenzo was the unprecedented chance to see how another government works up close. “It was really eye-opening, and it paved the way for so many opportunities that came later,” she says.

While the national average for university study abroad participation is just 2% annually, an estimated 4% of DePaul students take advantage of the university’s robust study abroad programs every year, according to DePaul’s Study Abroad Director Martha McGivern.

More than 80 study abroad programs annually reach more than 1,000 students from across all 10 colleges. Study abroad among LAS students is consistently high, with 275 LAS students (defined by primary college) studying abroad in 2018-19—23% of total university study abroad enrollment for 2018-19.

The Honors Program in particular produces a strong showing of study abroad participation, with a record breaking 40% of its students studying abroad over the past few years. “Because of our intermediate-level language requirement and our connection to the Fulbright program, the Honors Program is very strong in the area of study abroad,” says Honors Program Director and Associate Professor of Sociology Martha Martinez-Firestone.

Study abroad is also a good way for students to acculturate to an increasingly global world. “Students and those that mentor them recognize that they need to be able to participate in a diverse and global world in order to be successful—certainly professionally, but also personally and academically,” says McGivern.

While in the Honors Program, Elizabeth Woodruff (Spanish ’19) spent the winter and spring quarters of her junior year in Mérida, Mexico. This long-standing study abroad program sends students to a foreign city to work with community partners and take language classes. “We did so much hands-on learning,” recalls Woodruff, now a program assistant in the Honors Program.

For her internship, she worked for an NGO that examines the structural causes of poverty. That, combined with Spanish and other academic classes that were reinforced by applied learning experiences, prompted Woodruff to extend her stay from one semester to two. Living with a host family also heightened her experience.

“I think study abroad is such a valuable experience when done with sensitivity, respect and a lot of intercultural literacy support.”

—Elizabeth Woodruff

“Not only is this one of the best ways to learn a second language, but people are taking such good care of you and there is so much love. You get to build connections with people that last even after you return home,” she says.

Woodruff was so deeply influenced by her study abroad that she even changed her major to Spanish, and the research she began in Mexico influenced her Honors thesis topic on tourism on the Yucatán Peninsula.

Overall, Woodruff considers her time in Mexico a gift that keeps on giving.

“I think study abroad is such a valuable experience when done with sensitivity, respect and a lot of intercultural literacy support,” she says.
In 1977, a Kenyan professor of zoology named Wangari Muta Maathai came up with a simple yet powerful plan to alleviate poverty in Africa while sustaining the environment: planting trees.

Maathai's efforts grew into a movement that today works to dismantle the social, political and economic causes of poverty through structural changes in civil society. For her leadership and innovation, Maathai received the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. During her lifetime she was lauded as an activist, environmentalist and humanitarian. But the 21st century has another name for her: citizen diplomat.

While the most well-known definition of diplomacy centers on nation-state diplomatic corps, modern diplomacy is practiced not only by foreign service officers, but also by businesses, scientists, community organizers, educators, clergy and activists, among others. Today's diplomacy is truly transprofessional.

DePaul has embraced this new understanding of diplomacy by launching The Grace School of Applied Diplomacy, the first program of its kind to focus on the training of both citizen diplomats and those whose aim is to work in the Foreign Service.

Thanks to a generous gift of $20 million from anonymous donors—the second-largest gift in DePaul’s history—The Grace School of Applied Diplomacy, housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (LAS), will expand the borders of diplomatic practice beyond the work of official government representatives.

“Until now, citizen diplomats have largely been self-selecting, tenacious and highly creative people who have never had the opportunity to be trained in diplomacy,” explains David Wellman, director of The Grace School of Applied Diplomacy program and associate professor of religious studies. “Our program is designed to do just that: to identify, lift up and train the future Wangari Maathais of the world, so that they will be equipped to interpret and embody the work of diplomacy in their own contexts.”

The Grace School offers a BA with 10 interdisciplinary concentrations and an MA with six interdisciplinary concentrations, in partnership with more than 20 DePaul programs and departments. Linked to areas and issues as diverse as international relations, the arts, global public health, human migration, international public service and critical theory, the program also offers an innovative concentration called Urban Diplomacy, which focuses on diplomatic acts within the boundaries of a single city. The concentration is especially designed for students who are preparing to work in local government, community organizing, activism or faith-based work, fields for which mediation, negotiation and bridge-building are critical. The college also plans to offer both a minor and a certificate
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in applied diplomacy for interreligious engagement as pilots for building out its entire portfolio of concentrations.

One important goal of the new program is to broaden the definition of a diplomat. “A person who chooses to practice diplomacy is someone who has a higher calling,” explains Wellman. “That higher calling is grounded in a commitment to building sustainable bridges, and to understanding the aspirations and values of people across a broad ideological, cultural and economic spectrum. Diplomats are people who put that deep understanding into the service of peacebuilding, conflict resolution and community formation.”

For more information, please visit las.depaul.edu/academics/applied-diplomacy

Spotlight: Kevin Cole

As coordinator of the Wunderbar Together initiative, a yearlong celebration of German and American friendship, Kevin Cole (Spanish and German ’15) found himself in a Texas town on the border between the U.S. and Mexico, watching a German-inspired parade.

“A university German club had applied for funding through Wunderbar Together to host a St. Martin’s Day parade,” he says, referring to an annual cultural event celebrated in many European countries. “Suddenly, this was more than just a two-culture town—American and Mexican. There was also this element of German culture that we were able to bring to the city.”

Serving as an ambassador of German culture in America is the perfect fit for Cole, who is both a linguist and global citizen.

DePaul alumnus Kevin Cole coordinates Wunderbar Together, a yearlong celebration of German and American friendship.

A native of Carmel, Indiana, he studied Mandarin Chinese, Spanish and German in high school and then honed his German skills during an exchange year in Germany after high school.

Drawn to DePaul for its proximity to home and for its emphasis on experiential education, he quickly decided on a double major in Spanish and German. As a Fulbright Scholar, he spent two years abroad in Turkey and Germany and completed a binational German-Turkish master’s in social sciences.

Anna Souchuk, associate professor of German, shared with him the posting for the coordinator position at Wunderbar Together, which is based at the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. The initiative, which is sponsored by Germany’s Federal Foreign Office, organized by the Goethe-Institut and supported by BDI, the Federation of German Industries, has presented cultural events throughout the United States in 2018-19. (In April, DePaul students who participated in a Berlin service trip abroad spoke on a panel at a Wunderbar Together event in Chicago.)

Although based in America, Cole’s work environment is wholly in German, from emails to meetings. “It’s like being in Germany for all intents and purposes,” he says.

He credits DePaul, with its urban campus and global perspective, for helping to shape his worldview.

“This has been very central to the way that I developed a vision for myself,” he says.

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Landing in LONDON

Spring break trip brings DePaul students face-to-face with LAS alumni
Growing up in a small town in northwestern Ohio, Bob Burke (English ’95) was initially drawn to DePaul for being in the “big city.”

For the past four years, Burke has made an even bigger city his home: London. He was one of a handful of DePaul alumni based in London who spoke to a group of 22 DePaul undergraduates across the university—10 from LAS—who participated in the spring break trip “United Kingdom: International Careers,” aimed at helping students explore work and study abroad options after graduation.

Launched in 2018, the London trip was the brainchild of Leslie Chamberlain, former associate director of Alumni Career Services in the Career Center, and Karyn McCoy, assistant vice president, Career Center.

“This trip came about because we had students approaching us about an interest in working or studying abroad after DePaul, and we have about 220 DePaul alumni living in London,” says McCoy. London’s population is over 8 million, of which 36.7% are foreign born, according to the 2011 census.

Having alumni share their stories, particularly their career trajectories, is a powerful way to showcase the many paths available to students. The London trip “helps students explore a career path while making connections with people who have been in their shoes and who are living their desired path. It enables them to gather information that helps them answer the question, ‘Is this right for me?’ and gives them a network to tap into as they continue to explore,” says McCoy.

The eight-day trip also included visits to local colleges and universities to explore postgraduate programs and some fun cultural activities.

DePaul intentionally sandwiched this trip between other courses offering valuable career skill building, including one about the ins and outs of informational interviews. In fact, students were required to schedule informational interviews in London, according to McCoy.

For Burke, who met with students on both trips, a key goal is showing the connection between his LAS degree and his career path. “Probably the interesting thing is to figure out how I got from an English degree to a technology business focus role,” he says.

He initially chose English as his major because he had confidence that a well-rounded, liberal arts education would serve him well, whatever he ended up doing. That choice turns out to have been a very good bet. After initially working as a teacher, Burke landed a job at a start-up during the dot-com boom of the ’90s. Since it was a small company, he had the chance to take on a variety of tasks, including running the company’s IT operation.

“It was very much hands-on learning on the ground,” he says, adding that in retrospect, he believes what got him the job was his flexibility and strong academic foundation. “I basically sold myself as a well-rounded, well-educated person who could come in and do a little bit of everything for this 10-person company,” he says.

Soon Burke focused solely on IT. In 2015, he started working for Okta, a software cloud company that asked him to relocate to London to help build up their European operations.

The main message Burke hopes to impart to students is that what has set him up for success is a combination of being reactive to opportunities sent his way and proactive in seeking out exciting new ventures.

“London is so amazing because you have people from all over the world doing business, politics and everything else.”

—Daniel Andronovski

Daniel Andronovski (Political Science ’98) is another LAS alum based in London. He grew up in Macedonia and moved to Chicago as a teen. He began his undergraduate education at a community college and then transferred to DePaul. “It was an amazing experience,” he recalls.

Majoring in political science was natural for Andronovski. “Politics and geopolitics have been passions of mine since before I can remember,” he says. In recognition of his achievements in political science, he was recently inducted into Pi Sigma Alpha honor society as a distinguished alumnus.

Andronovski originally intended to go into the Foreign Service after graduation, but instead focused on technology and banking. After working for Andersen Consulting while a student, he took a job with the Chicago Board Options Exchange and later with Bank of America, once he completed his BA. He then pursued an MBA through an international program that married all of his interests: business, international relations and politics.

A brief stay in London in 2009 has turned into a decade of life in England, and connections to Europe are key to his current endeavors, including a hedge fund he recently launched out of Switzerland. Like Burke, Andronovski intends on staying in London. “It’s a big, global, international city,” he says. And he credits his DePaul LAS degree with setting the foundation for success.

“Most of your life you spend communicating with people, and this is where LAS comes in,” he says.
Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa. During which he also received an honorary degree, the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, for the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences and commencement address at the combined ceremony on June 16, 2019, Stevenson delivered the incarcerated and the condemned. Bryan Stevenson, the founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) in Montgomery, Ala., is a widely acclaimed public interest lawyer who offers graduates five things they must do to change the world.

Proximity
I urge you to find ways to get proximate to people who are poor, excluded, suffering. People who are marginalized, people who are incarcerated. If we get close to people who are suffering, ... we can at a minimum wrap our arms around them to affirm their dignity and their value and worth.

Fight the politics of fear and anger
We need to change the narratives underneath the policy issues that are being debated. ... The U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world. ... And we’ve used the criminal justice system to lock up hundreds of thousands of people. We have to fight against the politics of fear and anger [because they] are the essential ingredients of injustice.

Change the narrative about race
We are not free in this country. We are burdened with a history of racial inequality that we experience like a fog in the air that keeps us from actually experiencing freedom. We have to talk about the fact that we live in a post-genocide society. ... We can’t get [to freedom] until we usher in an era of truth and reconciliation.

Stay hopeful
There are challenges that are in front of you. One of the things that can happen is you begin to get hopeless about what you have to do. I am persuaded that hopelessness is the enemy of justice. Your superpower is your hope. Don’t let anybody take that away from you.

Do things that are uncomfortable and inconvenient
The opposite of poverty is not wealth; it is justice. You will be judged not for what you do for the rich and the powerful and the privileged but for what you do for the poor and the discarded and the excluded.
Since 2015, DePaul has been home to a unique model for experiential learning in the liberal arts through its one-of-a-kind translation and interpretation program.

The Translator & Interpreter Corps (TIC), housed in the Department of Modern Languages, offers much-needed translation and interpretation services for low-income, limited English proficiency immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. On average, TIC engages some 20 students per year across all LAS programs. Together, these students support over 25 Chicago community-based organizations whose clients speak Arabic, Spanish, French, Italian, Polish, Mandarin Chinese, German or Russian.

“TIC was launched through a unique collaboration with DePaul’s Asylum and Immigration Law Clinic, whose goal is to improve access to justice for low-income foreign-born people, which is a perfect match for TIC, whose mission is to provide vulnerable communities with access to pro bono language services that would otherwise be unavailable due to linguistic and/or socioeconomic factors,” says TIC Faculty Advisor and French Professor Pascale-Anne Brault.

Under supervision by DePaul faculty and staff, TIC students are doing everything from translating legal documents to interpreting at client intake meetings. In a city like Chicago, which is a hub for immigrants from across the globe, such a resource is greatly needed. It also deeply embodies DePaul’s mission of giving back.

“By encouraging our students to engage with TIC, we not only develop their translation and interpretation skills and help them develop a professional portfolio, but we also deepen DePaul’s commitment to its Vincentian values of enfranchising and empowering often neglected populations,” says Brault.

Pedro Antonino (French and Spanish ’18) has been a TIC translator since the corps’ inception. Raised in Chicago by two parents who immigrated to the United States from Mexico, Antonino credits DePaul with his linguistic mastery. “I owe all of my linguistic abilities to DePaul. Even though Spanish is my native language I spoke poorly, and it wasn’t until I went to DePaul that I learned to read and write Spanish,” he says.

He also honed his French skills and eventually graduated as a Spanish and French double major. In the beginning, Antonino found translation to be demanding, especially when grappling with legal documents, but at some point he turned a corner. “I realized that translation was a lot of fun. It was challenging, but in a way that makes you feel accomplished,” he says.

Soon he had “fallen in love with translation work” in large part because of TIC’s Vincentian mission. “I love that through a linguistic approach, TIC works with organizations that help people in need and vulnerable communities, such as recent immigrants and refugees,” he says. Antonino was so committed that he continued his work for TIC even during two semesters abroad in France. Eventually, he became an invaluable translator and interpreter in both Spanish and French, which he continues today while pursuing an MA in French and Francophone Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

According to TIC Administrator Citlali Ochoa (Spanish MA ‘19), TIC volunteers like Antonino are trained as linguistic advocates and prepared for a variety of career options. Some have gone on to professional translation work through organizations such as Illinois Legal Aid Online and Chicago Public Schools.

“It’s been hugely gratifying to see our students take the linguistic and intercultural skills learned in the rigorous academic setting provided by the Department of Modern Languages into the community,” says Brault. “To see them grow not only into young professionals, but into global citizens aware of the needs for advocacy for system change and social justice is the best reward an educator could ask for.”

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—PEDRO ANTONIO
FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

LOW WAGE IN HIGH TECH: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF SERVICE WORKERS IN GLOBAL INDIA

This book offers a unique look at the lives and livelihoods of the housekeepers, drivers and security guards working at some of the world’s wealthiest global corporations. A long-overdue representation of those overlooked and exploited in India’s technology boom.

Co-written by Sanjukta Mukherjee, associate professor, Department of Women’s and Gender Studies. (Oxford University Press)

BEYOND TECHNATIONALISM: BIOMEDICAL INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ASIA

The biomedical industry is among the fastest growing worldwide, with Asia on track to reach the epicenter of this growth. What accounts for the rapid and sustained economic growth of biomedicals in Asia? Vincent de Paul Professor of Political Science Kathryn Ibata-Arens integrates global and national data with original fieldwork to present a conceptual framework that considers how national governments have managed key factors. (Stanford University Press)

HENRY JAMES AND THE MEDIA ARTS OF MODERNITY: COMMERCIAL COSMOPOLITANISM

The author investigates Henry James’ late fiction, letters and essays highlighting his contribution to the development of an American cosmopolitan culture, in both popular and high art. Written by June Hee Chung, associate professor and director of the graduate program in English, this book contextualizes James’s writing within a broader cultural and social history. (Routledge Studies in Twentieth-Century Literature)

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF AMERICAN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Jane Eva Baxter, associate professor of anthropology and a foremost authority on the archaeology of historic American childhood, synthesizes the numerous ways researchers have approached the topic, guiding readers through an abundance of current data on the experiences of children in American history. (University Press of Florida)

STALIN’S SCRIBE: LITERATURE, AMBITION, AND SURVIVAL: THE LIFE OF MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV

This is the definitive biography of one of the most misunderstood and controversial writers in Russian literature. Thanks to the opening of Russia’s archives, Brian Boeck, associate professor of history, is able to piece together the uncensored life of the man who was once one of the Soviet Union’s most prominent political figures. (Pegasus Books)

WORLD WAR I: A HISTORICAL EXPLORATION OF LITERATURE

In his book, Eugene Beiriger, associate professor of history, explores the war on the Western and Southern fronts through material from both sides of the conflict. The approach is unique in its use of literary and historical sources as mediums through which to better understand both the literature of the war and the war through literature. (ABC-CLIO Greenwood)

FEMINIST ACCOUNTABILITY: DISRUPTING VIOLENCE AND TRANSFORMING POWER

What does it take to build communities that can stand up to injustice and create social change? In an age when feminism has become increasingly mainstream, noted feminist scholar and activist Ann Russo, associate professor of women’s and gender studies and director of The Women’s Center, asks feminists to consider the ways that our own behavior might contribute to the interlocking systems of oppression that we aim to dismantle. (NYU Press)

LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS

This collection offers a snapshot of the rich and nuanced scholarship in the sociology of health and illness from the global south. Features notable contributions from Latin American scholars exploring key issues, including sickle cell disease in Brazil, cancer and Chagas disease in Argentina and reproductive health in Mexico. Co-edited by Fernando De Maio, associate professor of sociology and co-director of the Center for Community Health Equity. (Routledge)
HEALTH EQUITY FOR ALL

Fernando De Maio, associate professor of sociology and co-director of the Center for Community Health Equity, received the prestigious Steve Whitman Research Award at the Health & Medicine Policy Research Group's HMPRG Awards, given to Chicago-area leaders whose work promotes social justice and challenges inequities in health and health care. De Maio, who received the award at a gala on September 27, 2019, was recognized for his research on how social factors influence patterns of health, as well as for his efforts to connect diverse individuals and organizations so they can adapt and learn together to build collective empowerment and nurture health equity.

ROCKET SCIENCE

What do you do with a master’s in Writing, Rhetoric, and Discourse (WRD)? Eric Iberri (WRD MA ’10) has parlayed his degree into working for SpaceX and now for Amazon.

After receiving his MA, Iberri initially taught first-year writing for non-native speakers at DePaul. Later, he landed a plum job at SpaceX at a time when the company was rapidly expanding from building one or two rockets to 10-15 a year. Rising in the ranks, he eventually worked as a senior technical writer on the Falcon 9 team for the rocket that SpaceX landed successfully in 2015, and for Falcon Heavy, which had its first commercial flight in April 2019. These days, Iberri is a senior technical writer for Amazon in the Prime Air division.

But he hasn’t forgotten what he learned at DePaul. “The WRD program taught me what writing is and what a text is. It doesn’t matter what kind of text you’re trying to put together, or if you’re working as a writer or editor, as long as you can break the text down to its fundamental parts,” he says. “Ever since graduation, I haven’t found any writing challenge that I couldn’t break down into those fundamental parts.”

FULBRIGHT, BOREN AND CRITICAL LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS, 2018-19

This was a record-breaking year for national scholarship winners from DePaul. In 2018-19, DePaul scholars submitted 41 applications to seven different scholarship programs. Among these, 11 students were awarded scholarships. Thirteen DePaul students were chosen as Fulbright semifinalists—five received awards. In addition, DePaul can boast two Boren Scholarship winners, three Critical Language Scholarship winners and a winner of a Fulbright UK Summer Institute Award. Another notable achievement includes DePaul’s first Truman scholarship semifinalist.

“Our success in generating applications and winners is a testament to the strength of our student body as well as our faculty’s dedication,” says Phillip Stalley, associate professor of political science and the Fulbright program advisor. “Twenty-one faculty members from 12 different departments in LAS served on at least one of our four campus committees. This represents a significant commitment, and I am very thankful for their efforts.”

FULBRIGHT WINNERS, 2018-19
- Gabriella Nelson, English teaching assistant, Brazil
- Kristen Smaga (Honors program), English teaching assistant, Taiwan

BOREN SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS, 2018-19
- Erna Hrstic (Honors program), Bosnia
- Anna Rose McGoldrick (Honors program), Lebanon

CRITICAL LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS, 2018-19
- Anna Ruhe (Honors program), China
- Liz Spencer, Oman
- Clare VanSpeybroeck, Jordan

FULBRIGHT UK SUMMER INSTITUTE, 2018-19
- Linette Sanchez
Karen Kilberg (International Studies ’13) first volunteered in a health center in Sierra Leone while she was in high school.

After that, she was hooked.

“I have always had an interest in international relations and humanitarianism, and health,” recalls the 27-year-old DePaul alumna from Batavia, Ill.

When the time came to choose a university, DePaul stood out. “I originally thought I wanted to be pre-med, so that’s why I chose DePaul,” says Kilberg. She also felt an immediate connection to the Lincoln Park Campus.

But once she started taking classes, she reconsidered her major.

“I started taking all of these international studies courses, and that’s when I decided to join International Studies,” she says.

Africa also beckoned.

“When I was in high school I studied French, and I was fascinated by the language. And then I went to Africa and I really just felt joy there. I had this desire to work in French-speaking Africa and combine both of my interests,” she recalls.

As a sophomore, she had the chance to return to Sierra Leone, where she interned at a women’s and maternal health NGO. She also wrote an independent study on the elections taking place in the country that year.

After graduating from DePaul in three years, Kilberg joined the Peace Corps. She was thrilled that her assignment was in French-speaking Cameroon. During her service she helped implement HIV screenings.

Spending more time in Africa only doubled her commitment to promoting quality health care.

“I’ve always been interested in health because I feel like it’s an essential human right that not everyone has access to,” she says.

“I started frantically applying for jobs,” she recalls.

Fortunately for her, a job opened up at the Lions Club International, a service organization headquartered in Chicago that does humanitarian work around the world. As the regional specialist for Africa and the Middle East, Kilberg is tasked with overseeing all of the organization’s vision and diabetes health projects in those regions.

“This role seamlessly combines my interest in Africa and health, and part of my job is in French so it really is a trifecta,” she says.

She’s also able to make a difference when it comes to health care.

“Even if I’m not working in the medical field, I’m still trying to improve health care systems so that people have access to health care services,” she says.

And she hasn’t forgotten about DePaul, either. Recently, Kilberg participated in an alumni panel for international studies students, where she shared her Peace Corps experiences.

As for the future, Kilberg says that while she loves her job, she’s been pursuing professional development courses in monitoring and evaluation. And she hasn’t ruled out one day moving to Haiti with her partner, Paul Carisma (CMN ’14, LAS MPS ’19), who is originally from Haiti and whom she met at DePaul.

“Wherever we end up, I hope to continue to work in the international field,” she says.
A fter living her whole life in her native Vietnam, Tô Lê Hồng Phúc (Gin To) came to America for the first time at age 18 to attend DePaul.

“My very first stop was Chicago,” recalls To, who was introduced to DePaul through her college counselor at the British International School in Ho Chi Minh City, where she studied.

Since 2016 was an election year, To found that she had arrived in the U.S. during a charged political moment.

“Being in Chicago then gave me a lot of information about America. People were very politically active and were talking about immigration, gender and race,” she says.

Looking back, To thinks this may have contributed to her becoming an American Studies major.

“I was learning so much that I felt like I could dedicate a whole four years to figure out what was happening around me and to try and apply that to better understand the environment I grew up in,” she says.

An actress and a visual artist, To chose DePaul mainly for its strength in the arts.

“I only knew I wanted to do creative arts. I didn’t necessarily think of myself as a liberal arts person,” she says.

Then in her freshman year, To took classes in women’s and gender studies and American studies, and a class she especially liked for her Religious Dimensions requirement. “The advice you give someone who’s undecided is that you start taking all of your general education requirements and see what you end up liking,” says To.

The only problem was that To ended up liking nearly everything she was learning. “That got me more confused but also got me thinking that there could be a way to combine and to do all the things that I was interested in and not feel like I have to limit myself to one discipline or to one box,” she says.

In that sense, To discovered the power of a liberal arts education, one in which she can still be “creative and learn about the real world and engage with issues and the political economy and learn about how the history of colonialism impacts the way countries relate to each other.”

To will graduate early this year with a major in American Studies and a concentration in race and ethnic studies, alongside three accompanying minors: creative writing, theatre studies and global Asian studies.

She also continues to create. Besides being a published playwright, she has had her artwork featured in a variety of exhibitions. To has also been active in theatre on and off campus.

These days she is working on two interconnected projects—a research project and a play, both examining the intersection between Vietnam and the west.

“Looking back, doing a liberal arts education, one that is sometimes looked down upon for its breadth and abstractness, has helped me realize what kind of thinker, writer and artist I am and want to be,” she says.