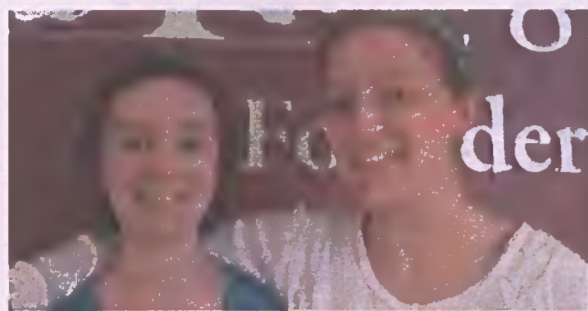


I studied abroad with CIEE, now what?



BY HALLIE DOWLING-HUPPERT & CHARLOTTE CLOYD
GUEST WRITERS

We expected to experience a “reverse culture shock.” What we didn’t expect was the sense of isolation and lack of interest about our specific study abroad experiences.

When Charlotte studied abroad in Botswana (Fall 2012) and Hallie studied in Mexico (Fall 2011), we were seeking experiences different from our own, a chance to broaden our horizons, then bring these back to the Guilford community.

The perplexing reality was the disinterest of the College in our returns. While the Study Abroad Department required us to participate in a pre-departure orientation with all of the students studying abroad in the fall, there were no programs arranged to help make the transition back to school manageable.

In this article, when discussing our experiences with Guilford Study Abroad, our use of “Guilford Affiliate” describes a program that does not have a Guilford faculty leader associated with it as opposed to “Guilford-led” which dictates having a Faculty leader studying abroad with students.

The experiences that we had while abroad were dynamic, challenging and difficult to relay to people on campus who have not also studied abroad. However, this didn’t mean we wanted to withhold sharing stories about our experiences with peers and faculty on

campus; we just felt there wasn’t a space for us to share openly.

Charlotte took part in a Public Health Program that included shadowing doctors and nurses at public clinics in Gaborone, Botswana. Guilford provides little in the way of discussions about global public health. As a result, Charlotte feels unable to apply much of the information gained from studying public health to campus as a whole.

Hallie studied community organizing and social movement building in Mexico with the Mexico Solidarity Network. With this program came an intensive politically radical education that had been previously somewhat-unknown to her. Upon returning, Hallie felt as though she didn’t have a space to talk about the new political ideals she had learned of; the ideas and structures that typical Guilford classes offered felt limiting. While Hallie had a Guilford Advisor overseeing the logistics of her program, that advisor did not travel with the students and thus could offer little in terms of a forum for processing experiences.

Guilford-led programs work to ensure that students are prepared for experiences abroad before traveling as well as prepared to return to school. The faculty members who lead programs through Guilford work diligently to help students process both of these transitions.

Don Smith, associate professor of physics, traveled with a group of ten students to Munich, Germany in the fall of 2012. Before, during and after the trip, the group spent time talking and discussing their semester. Before leaving, students were encouraged to find events happening in Munich that matched up with their current interests. During the semester, the group met each week to practice speaking German, as well as to discuss and process homestay living and plan weekend trips as a group. Upon returning, Smith invited the students to

have dinner at his home and voice their concerns about transitioning back to life at Guilford.

Senior Lexie Arani studied abroad on both a Guilford Affiliate program to Peru and a Guilford-led program to China. “Coming back from China was much easier because I had shared experiences with Guilford people I studied abroad with,” said Arani. “We could have dinner and talk about how much we missed China. I was unable to do that with Peru because people were more hesitant to listen because of a lack of shared experience.”

While we willingly chose to study abroad with Guilford Affiliate programs, we did not intend to feel cast aside upon returning to school. The process of acclimating to student life after a semester away from Guilford poses certain challenges that are difficult to face alone and without support.

The Study Abroad Office should understand that studying abroad impacts students in ways that we as students cannot foresee. In order to cope with these experiences and stories that rest on our hearts and minds, we need support.

Finding support on campus has been extremely difficult for students returning from Guilford Affiliate programs. Old friends often do not know how to listen or ask appropriate questions, while professors seem too far removed for students to approach.

Who do we talk to? How do we deal with the pressures of academics, social situations and responsibilities on campus after returning from cultures with different paces of life and priorities?

We want the school to provide students with a forum for discussion and support about how to be a student again and what to do with all of our experiences now that we have changed, while the school environment has remained largely the same.

UNC-Chapel Hill needs to stop blaming the victims

As someone born and raised in Chapel Hill, I found the recent news of UNC administration’s mishandling of sexual

assault cases to be especially nauseating.

Jezebel reported that former Assistant Dean of Students Melinda Manning and four other students

filed a complaint on Jan. 16 with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights for themselves and

64 sexual assault victims on campus. According to Jezebel, Manning was forced to underreport the number of sexual assault cases at UNC.

One student involved in this case is sophomore Landen Gambill.

According to The Daily Tar Heel, Gambill pressed charges on her ex-boyfriend with the Honor Court after enduring months of “stalking, threats and harassment” and continuous sexual and verbal abuse.

Gambill told The Daily Tar Heel about her experience with the Honor Court process, consisting of “irrelevant and inappropriate” questions that implied she was untrustworthy because of a history of clinical depression,

and that she was partially responsible for the abuse because she didn’t end the relationship.

Now, as if Gambill hasn’t suffered enough from her abuser and this difficult, painful process, she faces expulsion, among many potential punishments, for speaking up about her assault and the university’s reaction.

Gambill was warned by the graduate student attorney general about her Honor Code violation for “disruptive or intimidating behavior against her alleged rapist,” according to The Huffington Post.

You know what I bet was intimidating? Surviving sexual assault and then

mustering up the courage to speak publicly about it.

You know what I bet was intimidating? Facing expulsion before a court because you reported incidents of violence.

Gambill isn’t asking for her abuser’s head on a stick. She’s not out seeking revenge. She suffered psychological and physical abuse at the expense of a fellow student, who has notably remained nameless and faceless throughout this entire process. She assumed that the university would have her best interest at heart and help her feel safe.

To see full the article, check out: www.guilfordian.com

This Week's

STAFF EDITORIAL

Love is love: equality for all

The country is up in arms about marriage equality. As the U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments about the constitutionality of Proposition 8 and the Defense of Marriage Act, news stations broadcast images of protesters outside the Supreme Court holding signs that read, “Do it for Dumbledore” and “The Bible might call gay marriage a sin, but show me where it says that in the Constitution!” Images and videos have gone viral, forcing this topic to play out under the media’s microscope.

The question lingers: who are we to determine the legitimacy of someone’s love? But more importantly, who are we to deny our neighbors their Federal rights based solely on who they love?

A U.S. soldier in a same-sex marriage cannot collect the same benefits — monetary and otherwise — that a straight, married military man or woman can.

Same-sex couples cannot share joint insurance policies for their car, house or health. And they can’t access their partner’s coverage under basic government benefits like Social Security and Medicare, either.

Inequality and unfairness are found across the board. Except in nine states, same-sex love is not seen as equal and is not validated.

This Editorial Board stands against marriage inequality. In our eyes, all love, whether recognized by the state or not, is equal. All couples should share the same rights. In this proclamation, we join a large percentage of Americans who support the same sentiment.

But we’re not just pro-same sex marriage. We believe that the fight for equality should not be limited to different forms of marriage or any marriage at all, but should encompass equal rights for all citizens, no matter what their identity, orientation, or personal beliefs.

We believe in equal pay, equal access to healthcare, and education for all people, not just those who are married.

We’re anti-discrimination. And sometimes, it really is that simple.

It’s not a matter of if there will be equality; it’s a matter of when. We believe equality is long overdue. We believe the time is now.

We also believe this fight is about more than just marriage. Commitment and equality mean something different to each person experiencing it. This Editorial Board stands behind all levels of commitment.

We want to see the law go beyond marriage equality and encompass every person. While the laws being discussed in the Supreme Court address marriage, this Editorial Board hopes that someday soon, equality conversations will expand to include all identities, classes, races, orientations, genders and more.

REFLECTING GUILFORD COLLEGE’S CORE QUAKER VALUES, THE TOPICS AND CONTENT OF STAFF EDITORIALS ARE CHOSEN THROUGH CONSENSUS OF ALL 14 EDITORS.