Calendar:

May 3: Last class day of Spring 2012 semester
May 17-18: Spring Graduation ceremonies
June 5: Summer Orientation for new LAH students begins
August 26: LAH Orientation Bike Rides and Walks
August 27: LAH Kick-off Lunch
August 28: First Class Day
October 18-20: Family Weekend
November 5: Last day an undergraduate student may, with the dean's approval, drop a class or change a class to pass/fail
November 28-30: Thanksgiving break
December 6: Last class day
December 7-8: Fall graduation ceremonies

From the director's desk:

I recently received an e-mail from a father of one of our LAH juniors, which reads in part: "[my daughter] loves LAH and her classes, instructors, and advisers. Foot in the Door [the LAH Drama group] has led her to double major in drama, she almost has her thesis approved, is headed to the University of Edinburgh next fall, and she has been admitted to LAHSO [LAH's service organization]." I like getting such letters, confirmation that LAH is providing our students the tools to succeed at university and beyond. Students and their parents find LAH the best of both worlds—the personal attention of a small liberal arts college with the resources of a major research university. To ensure the ongoing success of LAH, a group of LAH alumni, parents, and friends of the program launched this past October a campaign to raise 1.5 million dollars. We are seeking funding for three specific opportunities central to a liberal education. First is studying abroad, a key to an education for leadership in the 21st century. We would like every entering LAH student to come with a passport, prepared to take learning far beyond the classroom. We also want our students to be engaged in research, conceiving of new problems, new questions, and imaginative ways of approaching them. Research often comes with costs—new materials, equipment, and travel. Finally, we want our students to participate in internships, which provide practical experience while offering crucial insights into potential careers, but which are often unpaid. We have, moreover, little scholarship money to offer incoming freshmen or to sustain our sophomores, juniors, and seniors as the cost of tuition and living expenses at U.T. Austin continue to rise. We need your help in building a community of LAH alumni, parents, and friends to support LAH, the College, and University for generations to come. As you read about what our students are doing in this newsletter—Aileen O’Leary’s internship in Prague, Jennifer Harrison’s Buenos Aires adventures, James Stratton’s participation in the Arabic Flagship Program, Asal Naderi’s work with the Global Medical Brigade in Nicaragua, and recent LAH graduate, Cori Dickie’s, riveting account of working as a nurse in Mexico, Jordan, and now Dallas—you will agree, I think, that in keeping trust with our students—past and present, their accomplishments and aspirations—it is vital that LAH have robust and ongoing sources of financial support. I welcome your comments, suggestions, and questions (carver@austin.utexas.edu).

Best wishes,
LAH Abroad: From New Orleans to Amsterdam

This fall semester 2012, I went abroad to Amsterdam. I had left my hometown of New Orleans in the midst of an evacuation for Hurricane Isaac. It was not a pleasant transition. I hadn’t slept the whole night before my flight, nor had I managed to pack anything. My suitcase sat gaping at me from across my room, and I stared back for hours. The city was gripped with a particular sense of anxiety—one so palpable, that even the local newscasters, who calmly and crisply assessed the situation and gave instructions to the residents of the city, had voices strained with emotion and fatigue.

I thought it appropriate that I was leaving one flood-prone country to go to another. Famed for their bicycles, pancakes and assiduously engineered canal and lock system, the Dutch people are generally understood as a tolerant and accepting, wholly European society. However, these traits merely describe the texture of the surface of the Netherlands. Throughout the duration of my semester abroad, I learned more and more about how and why the Kingdoms of Oranje—the Low Country people—are the way they are.

The Netherlands is one of the few places on Earth where large numbers of people live below sea level. After Katrina, a team of engineers from New Orleans were sent to Rotterdam to study the canal and dykes, the pumps and the technical workings of an ingenious system. Obviously, the one we have in Louisiana had not been up to par.

Despite the parallels, there are many differences between New Orleanians and the Dutch. Although certainly tolerant, the Netherlands is not an accepting country. Religious mores and a deep social conservatism underlie most goings-on day to day. Modesty and plain dress are appreciated. One key phrase I heard oft-repeated was “Du normaal”, or “Be Normal”. In a country famed for prostitution, lax social structure, and equality, this came as a surprise. But the motto unifies and signifies the way of life. It’s considered repugnant to live beyond your means, be flashy, stand out, or exaggerate. As one acquaintance explained it, “Humans are really, really weird. It’s better to try to fit in, why would you want to try to be weirder? It’s more practical if we all do the same.” I can’t help but contrast this perspective with the celebration of human eccentricity that is New Orleans during Mardi Gras.

In a country filled with identical square houses, square plots of farmland, and square apartments blocks, it’s clear that standardization and regulation is a way of life. In New Orleans, we have curvy-cue architecture, and sprawling, wild streets that follow the curvature of the river. Although it is urban, one is always reminded of the sometimes over-bearing presence of the natural world: mosquitoes, lizards, moss, termites. In the Netherlands, life is much more orderly. With a population of 16.5 million living together in a space the size of the state of Maryland, density requires such a high level of organization.

Furthermore, the Netherlands’ proximity to the sea and the constant threat of flooding and destruction warrant a practical co-operation borne from necessity. Consensus based decision making is the underpinning for the dynamic between family, friendships, government, even economics. Negotiation is one trait the Dutch have perfected—perhaps one factor in their famed trading and business prowess. In New Orleans, on the other hand, our civil society is not based on conscious and measured discussion, but rather, corruption and often, cronyism. It seems that in New Orleans, everything is marked by a sort of delicious excess. My semester in the Netherlands opened my eyes to an entirely new way of being.

Although it was very different from the glamorous, raucous, organic city I call home, I learned and loved to be in a different place, to have a different life. I learned that life could be lived in a manner disciplined, and calm. I left in the midst of a storm, and I went to a place forever safe from them.

- Ann Grace Martin, International Relations & Global Studies/Liberal Arts Honors

LAH Music Ensemble: The Amorous Paulharmonic

The LAH Ensemble and Choir held their End of Year Concert on Monday, May 6th. Selections included: the Beatles, David Bowie, Dvorak, Sibelius, the Mamas and the Papas, and Philip Philips.

If you play an instrument or sing, the LAH Music Ensemble is looking for anyone and everyone to join this fall! We are a group of LAH students that meets once a week, working to put on a few shows each year. We’ve played at Honors Day, Explore UT, and we always have a holiday concert. We’ve played pieces from almost every musical genre and we are open to anything that our members want to put together. We always need singers and instruments of all kinds (strings, guitar, woodwinds, horns, percussion, etc.). We are also looking for a conductor! If you are interested in songwriting, composing, or performing, then the ensemble would love to have you! Send a message to James Stratton, Music Ensemble Director, jrstratton38@gmail.com if you have any questions or are interested in joining.
Interning in Prague

My internship at the Forum 2000 Foundation in Prague was as much about living alone overseas as it was about the office work. The office taught me the technical aspects of working at a non-government organization, but living overseas taught me about myself. Having been through this trying yet rewarding experience, I know my strengths and weaknesses. I have become stronger, more understanding and more mature over the last semester.

Seeing the inner workings of a non-government organization brought home to me the importance of an interdisciplinary education. The two conferences with which I assisted both had participants from across multiple professions and cultures, and the planning process itself required many people. The first conference, the Forum 2000 Conference, brought together participants from all over the world to discuss Media and Democracy. Delegates included civil servants, politicians, activists, filmmakers, journalists, students from many different faculties, and professors.

The second conference, the Immovable Property Review Conference (IPRC), was a joint project among the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the European Shoah Legacy Institute, and the Forum 2000 Foundation. As the IPRC was smaller and later in the semester, I was able to see the conference planning from early stage. Conference participants included historians, museum curators, delegations of diplomats, Holocaust survivors, Jewish religious and community leaders, economists, and professors.

During my internship I used many of the skills that I learned throughout my LAH classes. Working in an office that speaks three languages—Czech, Slovak and English—I had to become comfortable not understanding everything that was happening around me. With a language barrier I also had to adapt to completing tasks with little guidance. Frustration was common, but I was able to work through it and remain open minded because I have had so many similar experiences on campus, both in classes and in outside activities.

Prior to my internship, I decided that I did not want to work for the government and thought I would look into NGOs. What I enjoyed most about the conferences was the preparation. It was more rewarding to put in the work and see it all come together than it would have been simply to attend either conference. With this in mind I plan to pursue jobs in project management or even conference planning after graduation.

Overall, I am grateful for the opportunity to pursue this experience. I learned a great deal about myself, about the nature of government and public service and about what growing up feels like. My time in Prague was one of the most frustrating, exhausting, lonely, difficult experiences of my life, but it was also my most exhilarating, educational and enjoyable experience.

- Aileen O’Leary, Government/Liberal Arts Honors
Students in Action: LAH Organizations

LAH Student Council

The Liberal Arts Honors Council had an outstanding year. We held an enormously successful all-honors formal, which raised a record amount of money, organized an honors trivia tournament, hosted two series of reading groups, connected freshmen with peer mentors, enjoyed capture the flag, holiday dinners, socials, and game nights, and - for the first time in our history as an organization - endowed an annual scholarship to reward students for their involvement in our community. As the 2012-2013 President, I am tempted to take credit for all of this. However, I cannot. The Liberal Arts Honors Student Council simply attracts the best and brightest of Liberal Arts Honors and provides them with an environment to engage with and lead their peers.

Elisabeth Eikrem, President Emeritus

LAH Pre-Med Society

The Liberal Arts Pre-Med Society was founded in 2008 to fulfill the University’s need for an organization that welcomes students from all colleges embarking on a non-traditional route to medicine. Whether our passions lie in Government, Psychology or Biochemistry, we all share the common aspiration of helping others via the field of medicine. Through volunteer and shadowing opportunities, social events, and peer counseling, the Liberal Arts Pre-Med Society aims to support and encourage all those on the journey to medical school. For example, in the past year, our members have volunteered at Dell Children’s Hospital as well as Austin State Hospital to interact with the patients. We also have a weekly Meals on Wheels route to deliver food to those who are home bound. On campus, our meetings have hosted guest speakers such as Dr. Passanante, an international emergency doctor. In addition to our events and many more, our organization strives to form an environment where aspiring students can form a social network of colleagues to further accomplish their goals.

Farhana Khaja, Co-President

Website: http://groupspaces.com/libartspremed/

Echo

The Echo Literary Magazine launched the 2013 issue, themed “flux” on May 1. At the release luncheon, they announced three $100 prize winners for best prose, poetry, and photography. The winners are:

Ariana Brown, poetry, “Doing It Right”
Kate Zimmerman, photography, cover photo
Caleb Parker, prose, “One More Cup of Coffee Then I’ll Go”

Photos on this page, top: Echo Managing Editor Andy Bowman and prize winner Caleb Parker; bottom: Jennifer Harrison (left) in Buenos Aires. Opposite page: Jennifer in Buenos Aires and studying on a rooftop patio.
When I first made the decision to study abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina, it was all business: I was going to perfect my Spanish, fulfill a degree requirement, and get firsthand exposure to the region I had only learned about in classrooms. But as the date of my departure approached, I began to get excited over the purely non-academic potential for my time abroad. Although I was determined to keep an open mind and adapt to the culture, my preparedness had led to the purchase of several guidebooks, and I had formed my own expectations before I set foot on the plane. Idealistically, I pictured myself returning to the United States in six months as a well-travelled international citizen, brimming with amusing stories to tell and world-wise wisdom to share. On paper I was prepared, but only time would reveal if I could survive in Argentina.

Upon arrival in Buenos Aires, I almost didn’t recognize the city—the famous photos in my guidebooks hadn’t prepared me for the crowded, narrow streets or the sheer amount of noise in any given neighborhood. I expected a large, colorful family and lazy, sunny days spent in open-air markets—but, of course, I chose the most European of South American cities, and my preconceived notions were dashed upon the fashionably cobbled sidewalks. The crowded press of the city and the complexity of everything from the buses to university enrollment had me reeling in panic, not to mention the more everyday problems of the unfamiliar porteño accent and the new set of social norms. For the first month I acted more like a lost child than the mature global citizen that I wanted to be. But as the semester progressed, I learned to adapt and fit into the Argentine society that at first felt so overwhelming. I began to arrive to my classes thirty minutes late, like the rest of the students (and the professors!). I took a social coffee break with my friends every day, and I learned that the stylish Argentines don’t start their nights until at least midnight. Academically, it was harder to get a handle on the rapid-fire Spanish that I heard in the classrooms, but soon enough I was passing tests and keeping up with my professors.

One of the most unexpected things I encountered in Argentina was the level of political activity in the general population. Before my semester abroad, I’d heard about the remarkable openness of the Argentine society and how people weren’t afraid to discuss anything, loudly, in any public space—from politics to family history—but I wasn’t prepared for the political protests that took to the streets at the slightest provocation. Enormous marches to the city center were staged to show the people’s unhappiness with the latest government decision, or when a debate was opened that they didn’t approve of, or even when the President interrupted a popular television show to make a speech. One day, the streets were packed so full of patriotic Argentines wearing flags around their necks and banging pots and pans that I couldn’t reach my apartment. At first it shocked me, then amused me, and then, after marches and protests began to make me late for travel plans and classes and even dinner with my host mother, annoyance swelled. But noisy protests and disorganized groups of everyday people are a consequence of democracy, and the vibrancy and involvement of the general population was inspiring, especially beneath an increasingly controlling government. Although the Argentines frequently disagreed with each other, I love that their society allows and encourages such visible political participation from all of its citizens.

If I didn’t have morsels of worldly wisdom to share when I returned to Texas, I did have a different perspective. I now drink my coffee a little slower, make time in my schedule for my friends and family, and look at current and historical events from a different point of view. With the unexpected encounters with politics in Argentina, I can now appreciate the (occasionally inconvenient) signs of a vibrant and lively society.

-Jennifer Harrison, International Relations & Global Studies/Liberal Arts Honors
Where in the world are LAHers? Summer 2013 Plans

Ayesha Akbar (2014) I will work with Professor John Hagan at Northwestern who is researching the impact of the Iraq War on Iraqi civilians. He selected me in part because of my Arabic skills, so the Flagship Program is coming in handy!

Samantha Allen (2015) This summer I’ll work as a technical intern at Etherios, a technical consulting company in Dallas.

Chandler Amoroso (2015) I will do a Marketing and Social Media internship at the Austin Affiliate office of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. In addition I am tutoring for the Thinking Caps Group in English, Spanish, and Elementary Math.

Olivia Applegate (2014) I recently got a manager in LA and will be living there for the summer auditioning for film! Woo!

Angie Acquafida (2016) This summer I’ll do an independent research project under Dean Musick. It’s called “The Herd-Mentality Incentive” and will be an experimental study of behavioral economics regarding ways to promote the NY Times.

Jenna Beron (2014) This summer I will be participating in McCombs’ International Marketing in Paris program and then will be backpacking for a month.

Shantanu Banerjee (2016) I’ll be taking classes at UT while also working for a marketing firm (Fahrenheit Marketing) in north Austin.

Emily Boyd (2014) I will work full time as a Marketing intern for Kendra Scott Design, focusing on social media and copywriting, for the first 6 weeks. Then I’ll travel to Oxford with the UT Oxford Program!

Chelsey Bravenec (2015) I will be attending the UT Faculty-Scholar Study Abroad Program in Santander, Spain May 23-July 3 as well as visiting Honduras with UT’s chapter of Global Medical Brigades from August 20-26.

Corbin Brooke (2015) I’ll be off in Africa (Democratic Republic of the Congo) for 6 weeks with alumnus Preston Nix doing English language instruction.

Daniel Chapman (2016) For two months during the summer, I will be interning at William and Mary working as a paid research assistant partly for AidData and the Canadian International Development Agency working on tracking development assistance for nutrition.

Jackie Chorush (2014) I am travelling to Russia with the Moscow Plus Program.

Sam Claflin (2016) I will be interning for U.S. Congressman Beto O’Rourke at his district office in El Paso.

Steven Dao (2015) I will be interning for Google (in the GeoCommerce Travel department) this summer in Boston.

Kimia Dargahi (2015) I am studying abroad for two months in Istanbul, Turkey.

Katie De Alvarez (2015) I will spend the first part of the summer traveling to London, Normandy, Paris, Berlin and Krakow with the Normandy Scholars Program. Upon returning to the states I will be taking German at UT and interning with TIPRO for the remainder of the summer.

Kevin DeLuca (2014) I’m going to Korea this summer! I’ll be studying at Yonsei University for pretty much the whole time I’m there.

Jessi Devenyns (2014) I’m studying at Oxford!

Jessica Dodd (2016) This summer I will be studying abroad in Barcelona!

Stephanie Donowho (2014) I’m doing the summer Winedale class!

Walker Fountain (2016) I’ll be interning at the Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs at Fordham University this summer.

Ryan Frankel (2016) I will be interning for The Schaffer Firm, a prominent criminal law firm in Houston.

Caleb Freund (2015) For the first half of this summer I’m going to be working as a counselor for the Laity Lodge Family Camp, which I am super stoked for! For the remainder of the summer I’ll be in Austin, taking Japanese language classes at ACC and couch surfing amongst the wonderfully charitable, and oh-so-interesting people of my church.

Julia Gallagher (2014) I am working at a law firm in Austin this summer, Barron & Adler, L.L.P.

Ted Garber (2015) I will be going to Europe for three and half weeks with the Normandy Scholars Program. We will be going to France, Germany, England, and Poland to see the historic World War II sites and museums. We spent the past semester studying World War II so it will be fascinating to see the places we have been learning about.

Gavin Gillock (2014) I will be interning with Aon Hewitt in The Woodlands, Texas this summer. Aon Hewitt is the Human Resources Consulting division of Aon and I will be working as a Business Analyst.

Jamie Hill (2014) This summer I will be interning at LIVESTRONG in their Navigation Services department, taking a GRE prep class, and volunteering in Peru.

Rachel Hill (2015) This summer I’ll be in Austin interning at VoteSmart, a government non-profit.

Xan Ingram (2016) This summer I am going to be interning at my church back home in Birmingham and working with the middle and high school students and helping to plan youth group trips.

Scott Jameson (2014) This summer I will be a legal intern with the Texas Civil Rights Project.

Salimah Jasani (2014) I’m going to be teaching photography at a camp called Legacy in New York.

Jenna Jones (2016) Over the summer I am taking a four-week volunteer abroad trip in Thailand! The program is through an organization called International Student Volunteers (ISV) and I will be leaving June 6. I have not been assigned a project yet, but I hope to to work with the wildlife conservation project. Alternative projects include community development or children’s programs. Can’t wait!

Coley Kellogg (2015) I will intern with Texas Speaker of the House, Joe Straus’ Policy Office

Damir Ljuboja (Humanities 2013) This summer I continue my internship at DocBook-MD, a physician communication company with over 14,000 users. I am working as a Project Manager and Strategy Leader to design an emergency response system that facilitates communication during disaster events on local, regional/state, and national levels. I am currently developing the theory behind the software; we expect to implement our communication network in Afghanistan in the near future through a partnership with the Department of Defense. I will also take a couple of summer classes here at UT and apply to medical school.

Sarah Luckey (2014) I will be spending 6 weeks of my summer in Israel, working on the University of Washington’s Archaeological Field School and Excavation Project.
Sarah Lusher (2014) I’ll be enjoying a Vienna Maymester (Vienna: Memory and the City) from May 22–June 23. After that, I’ll be working full time for UT’s Vice President for Student Affairs office in Austin.

Abigail MacInnes (2015) will be interning in Washington, DC, with Congressman Lloyd Doggett in the House this summer.

Larisa Manescu (2015) I’m going to Trinidad in mid-June to visit my parents, then to Turkey for 10 days and then Ploesti, Romania to see my extended family (I haven’t seen them in a couple of years, so I’m really excited!) Finally, I’ll be heading up to Canada for my boyfriend’s family reunion in early August.

Jocelyn Matyas (2014) Currently, I am working as an intern/Assistant Program Coordinator for the Incubation Station here in Austin, I have been working there for about a year. This summer, I will be working in Chicago, IL for a social enterprise called A Safe Haven. My position is actually an “intern supervisor.”

Andy McMahon (2014) I am going to a study abroad conference in St Louis to represent the New Economic School of Moscow in May, then interning here till mid-July, then goofing off in Portland until school starts.

Karla Mejia (2014) I am going to intern for HP this summer.

Asal Naderi (2015) will be staying in Austin taking summer courses, volunteering in a local clinic, and shadowing a surgeon!

Eric Nikolaides (2014) For this summer I will be in New York City for an internship with the ACLU Immigrants’ Rights Project.

Sara Ness (2013) I am going to be doing my senior thesis research on the practice of authentic relating, at the Integral Center in Boulder, CO. I’ve tentatively been offered a paid internship to help work on a documentary and produce videos for that group over the summer as well!

Lanie Olmo (2016) This summer I will be continuing my job as a Head Lifeguard at a neighborhood pool in San Antonio. I also have an internship at the San Antonio Sports Foundation and will be working with families in the area in the Get Fit program.

Jordan Pahl (2016) will intern for her Senator Merkely (D-OR) in DC this summer.

Caleb Parker (2016) I will be teaching English to middle school students as an AmeriCorps volunteer with Breakthrough Austin, a program which serves students who will be first-generation college graduates.

Arjun Rawat (2016) I’ll be taking classes through the Arabic Summer Institute over the summer.

Dietrich Riepen (2014) I will be working part-time at Fulcrum Capital and part-time at the Retina Research Clinic. And taking online classes.

Ana Rivera (Humanities 2014) I will be spending my summer in Pittsburgh in Carnegie Mellon participating in a Public Policy and International Affairs Junior Fellowship Program.

Shibi Riyaj (2014) This summer I will be volunteering as a Big Sister for Big Brothers Big Sisters, volunteering at Westminster Hospice with a few select patients, working at a summer camp for underprivileged kids, applying to medical schools, traveling to Turkey with my boyfriend and his family and going on a cruise to Mexico with my family.

Ashleigh Schap (2014) I’ll be a Summer Analyst at the J.P. Morgan Private Bank in Dallas.

Macey Shay (2016) This summer I will be interning at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education! I am so excited and so grateful for the support of LAH/Dedman Scholarship.

Emily Snyder (2016) After working as a lifeguard and taking my first ever pilgrimage to Disney World (and more importantly, Harry Potter world), I will be jetting off to Spain for seven weeks. My adventure will begin in Madrid where I will explore the area with a friend before we set course for our respective study abroad program cities. The next six weeks I will spend in the beautiful coastal city of Santander, where I will live with a native family and study Spanish at the Universidad de Cantabria, with help from a generous LAH scholarship. I look forward to returning in the fall as a more worldly and tan member of society!


Sarah Strohl (2015) I will be going to Granada, Spain this summer to study Spanish!

Katherine Thayer (2014) This summer I will be working as a technical writing intern at National Instruments.

Dominique Trudelle (2015) I will be interning at the Equal Justice Center in San Antonio. I will be working with clients on gathering information on their case, presenting that information to the attorneys and observing how lawyers handle cases, along with some clerical work.

Kalyan Venkatraj (2014) This summer I was accepted into the Washington Leadership Program. A large portion of the program is spent at an internship they pair you with given your background. I will be working with the Smithsonian Museum’s Asian Pacific American Center on a new exhibit entitled Beyond Bollywood: South Asians in America. I am excited for this opportunity and hope to explore what DC has to offer academically and socially!

Melissa Victory (2016) Taking summer courses here in ATX (; But I am also participating on a Human Ecology research project! It is called Project SEED with Dr. Kim from the School of Human Ecology.

Kaleigh Wallace (2016) will have an internship with a company called Teysha and will be working in retail.

Robbie Walls (2014) is interning in Houston at Enervest (an oil and gas MLP) in the Finance Department for the first half of the summer and the Business Planning and Analysis group for the second half.

Ryan Willeft (2014) I will be taking physics here at UT and then working on my medical school resume by shadowing and volunteering.

Emily Young (2014) I am traveling to Leeds, England for the Sport and English Society Maymester. When I return to the US, I plan to conduct interviews for my thesis research.

LAH Study Abroad Scholarships

Applications will be due Monday, November 1, 2013 at 5 pm for students planning to study abroad in the Spring 2014 semester. Students must plan on studying a foreign language while abroad in order to be eligible for funding.

Apply online: http://utdirect.utexas.edu/student/abroad/globalassist.WBX
“James, I really think you should talk to Kathleen about her time in Egypt.” And with that sentence began my journey in Arabic. Kathleen and I attended the same high school, but she was a grade above me. Encouraged by a teacher who had taught both of us, Kathleen and I went out for coffee a few times. I would ask her about her experiences in Egypt: How was your host family? Did you have good Arabic instructors? Was Cairo as crowded as I heard? She replied that it was one of the most remarkable experiences of her life, and that it had kindled a lifelong skill: a foreign language.

I was inspired. I wanted to apply to the National Security Language Initiative for Youth and live in Egypt as she had done. My parents were excited and support my desires to study Arabic abroad. During this time, my mother would remind me about her “pregnant-conversations.” While she was pregnant with me, she would tell me that she wanted me to travel the world, experiencing new and different peoples and lands. When she grew tired of talking, she would increase the volume of NPR or of the TNG episode she was watching, hoping that All Things Considered or Jean-Luc Picard would make me yearn to travel the world.

In May of 2010, I learned that I would not study in Egypt. I was going to Morocco instead! I arrived in Casablanca in the middle of June with twenty-four other American students. I lived in the small seaside port of El-Jalda, an hour south of Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman’s famed city. I lived in the stately and spacious home of the Karashi family, with Fatima and her son Chafac. Chafac was my my age, and we spent much time together when I didn’t have class - going to the beach, watching movies, or hanging out with his friends. His mother always made sure that I, as her guest, would have more than enough to eat.

I studied Arabic at the introductory level. I learned the alphabet and basic expressions in Fusha. No Moroccan Arabic was part of the curriculum; to learn it, I had to cajole my teacher to share a word or two or ask Chafac and his friends. In hindsight, I now know that I learned pitifully little Arabic in ten weeks compared to what I learned in the same period of time during my first semester at UT. That being said, my NSLI-Y experience in Morocco gave me the inspiration to continue my study of the Arabic language. It brought me to University of Texas, which in turn gave me the invaluable opportunity that is the Arabic Flagship Program. Without Morocco, I cannot imagine where I would be today. It gave me purpose and drive, shaping me into the man I am today.

- James Stratton, International Relations & Global Studies/Arabic Flagship/Liberal Arts Honors
Stepping onto the tarmac in Managua, Nicaragua, I noticed the landscape looked similar to Honduras. The date was December 29th, and I had volunteered to participate in my second medical brigade. Since I was the only person who had previously attended a brigade, I was implicitly responsible for making sure the new brigaders, the medication luggage, and all the “important paperwork” made it past the customs checkpoint. To say the least, we were definitely noticeable. The Nicaraguans were clearly amused at the sight of a small, dark haired girl leading a group of mostly Asian and Caucasian students, and fortunately the customs officials decided that we were harmless. After passing through customs and meeting our in-country coordinator, we were on the bus towards our compound and home for the next ten days. Little did I know that this would be the most peaceful part of the trip.

I joined UT’s chapter of Global Medical Brigades (GMB) early in 2012. GMB is one of the world’s largest student-led health organizations aimed to improve the quality of life in under-resourced communities. Soon after becoming a member, I decided to attend a medical brigade in Honduras for one week in August. The trip was incredible in that it allowed me to preview the reality I hoped to fulfill. In Honduras, we saw over 900 patients, distributed over 1000 toothbrushes, and gathered data that would help make the community more sustainable in the future. Later in the year, when I was presented with the opportunity to attend a brigade to Nicaragua, I readily jumped at the chance. Not only would this be UT’s first time entering Nicaragua, but it would also be any university’s first time entering Nicaragua. Within one week, I had reserved my travel plans and completed all the necessary paperwork. It was an opportunity that I couldn’t pass up.

Arriving at the compound after a two-hour drive, the thought of rest was quickly forgotten. A delicious mystery sandwich and a cup of pineapple juice gave us the fuel we needed to grab the medication luggage and begin sorting. It all seemed so familiar and so new at the same time. Here I was, sorting medications into small Ziploc bags and putting them into the designated bins labeled allergies, headache, chronic, etc. - just like in Honduras. But this time, we weren’t simply adding to the current pharmacy, we were creating the first pharmacy that GMB Nicaragua had ever seen. The other half of our brigade group from Houston arrived at 11 p.m. and our day, which began with a 5:15 a.m. flight out of Dallas, ended at 1 a.m. the next morning.

We woke up at 6 a.m. to eat breakfast, receive information about our brigade, and pile onto the bus. A little under two hours later, we arrived at our first set-up location. The weather was dismal, the brigaders all had dark circles under their eyes, but everyone was eager to start our brigade. We established the triage station, designated a doctor consultation room, set up the pharmacy full of medication-laden luggage, and organized the children’s charla, a ‘chat’ about health topics. We received our first patients, and their thankful eyes reminded me why I had come. I stayed in the triage station, where I took vital signs, listened to patient concerns in Spanish, and wrote suggestions on patient charts. After triage, the patients went to see the licensed physician in the next room and then to receive multivitamins, antibiotics, and creams from the pharmacy. At the charla, we gave demonstrations and sang songs about the importance of tooth hygiene for the children. Over the course of three days, we set up our clinic in schools, churches, and tents. We saw over 400 patients, taught more than 50 children how to brush their teeth, and distributed approximately 200 toothbrushes.

Once we had completed our medical brigade, we began the public health portion of the brigade. For three days, our group of 35 students worked on rebuilding a home, building sanitary “stations,” and gathering health data through community surveys. The public health portion was just as important as the medical portion because we were able to see the living conditions that directly caused the patients’ health issues. I will never forget mixing cement in the stone-floored living room and having to step out because the smoke from the kitchen was too much to bear. The smoke from the daily cooking was a contributing cause towards the many respiratory problems we had seen on the medical brigade. On future brigades, GMB would install eco-stoves that would vent the fumes through a chimney and out of the house.

Even though we saw fewer patients and might have made a smaller-scale impact than in Honduras, we established Global Medical Brigades in Nicaragua. Instead of continuing an initiative, we began one in which other students would continue in the future. We gathered important data on health knowledge so that until next season, in-country volunteers can help educate community members on health and sanitation. We instilled a familiarity with GMB in the community, and maybe next season our current patients will bring their friends.

Foot in the Door Produces Shakespeare’s Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Congratulations to Directors Imogen Sealy and Kenneth Williams. Producers Stephanie Donowho and Kelsi Tyler, and the entire cast of Pericles, Prince of Tyre for their spring performance. Fall productions and audition dates will be announced in September.
Ashley Bagwell: After graduation I will be pursuing an MSc in the Behavior Analysis and Therapy program at Southern Illinois University Carbondale where I hope to focus on the study of behavior acquisition in children with Autism.

Cindy Brzostowski: I will be attending the Columbia Summer Publishing course this summer after graduation.

Katy Eyberg: I’m graduating in May and starting work with Teach for America. I’ll move twice - from Austin to Phoenix, Arizona, to attend TFA’s summer institute, then to Las Cruces, New Mexico, to begin my teaching career. Aside from working and moving, I’m planning trips to New York City, the Grand Canyon, and Missouri. I’m also hoping to take on a few centurys (100-mile rides) on my bicycle. Although I’m excited for my transition into professional adulthood, part of my heart will stay in Austin and at UT.


Ben Johnson: I am setting off on an adventure as a full-time musician. You know my passion for music, and I have recently become convinced both that making music is what I was meant to do and that it is possible for me to make a living doing it. My mission is to bring peace and comfort to those who have troubled lives and to anyone who wants some rest from the rising noise of our world.

Taylor Jones: I’ll will be heading to Georgetown Law in the fall to begin my JD!

Eleni Kyriakides: Columbia Law School in the fall!

Annie Lewis: This summer after graduation I’m going to be attending a field school in Texas with the Texas Archaeological Society in Medina County. I’m taking a gap year before I decide whether or not I’m going to apply to graduate schools, and in the mean time I plan on saving as much money as possible and maybe working as an ACE tutor (an English tutor for kindergartners through second graders). Next summer I plan to work as a technical illustrator for an archaeological dig in Gournia, Crete with Professor Jennifer Moody of the UT Classics department.

Eli Lipsky: The current plan is to finish up the eco-mpa route that I’ve started. This summer I will be working in Houston at the energy group of an investment bank.

Blake Meyer (Humanities): I’m graduating then off to Stanford Law!

Lauren Moore: I was recently accepted to a one year internship with Cru in the Middle East! (If you aren’t familiar with Cru, it’s basically an international non-denominational Christian organization that focuses on building Christian communities on college campuses). I’m pretty much thrilled out of my mind to get to go speak Arabic for a year and to do campus ministry at the same time!  

Megan Morgan: I will be starting the Master’s of Science in Social Work program at UT this summer.

Sam Naik will work at Austin law firm Brown McCarroll.

Eric Ormsby will attend Columbia Law School starting in fall 2014.

Kate Pederson: After graduation, I will be moving to San Antonio to teach middle school as a Teach for America corps member. I’m very excited!

McLean Rabb: I have accepted a job to teach 8th grade U.S. history at a charter school in Houston that serves low income students. The school is called YESprep Gulfton, and they seek to send all of their graduates to a 4 year university.

Evan Rosenfield: After graduating, I’ll be working for the Department of Defense!

Abi Ryan: My post-graduate plans are attending University of Oklahoma Law School with a focus in intellectual property law. After I go to Disney World to celebrate of course.

Sierra Shear: I’ll be at U Penn for law school next year and this summer I’m going to Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand (not on study abroad though).

Scott Tipton: After graduation, I’ll be studying abroad in Alexandria, Egypt with the Arabic Flagship Program. After that, I’ll come back to Austin to start a campus ministry that I helped to found, Crossroads Student Ministries.

Ben Weiss: This summer, I will be traveling in Peru, Galapagos, and Argentina. After that I’ll pretty much just be working and enjoying my break before starting grad school for History here in August.

Lauren West: I will be graduating this May and attending HBFSI at the business school this summer. I am then planning on moving back to Lebanon to work for a few years before pursuing a post-graduate degree.

Photos: LAH alumna Cori Dickie working in Mexico and in Jordan.
I am the liberal arts honors student that slid in. I took my SAT twice. First time, my score was unimpressive. A month later I took it again and scored over a hundred points higher. This fluke of a re-test opened the door to the UT’s LAH program, allowing me to have small discussion-based classes and still root for a real sports team.

The first college paper I wrote was in Professor Sullivan’s Reacting to the Past class. I made a D. It hadn’t taken him long to find out, I didn’t read Socrates for fun and write novels during my spare time like the other kids in the program. But, in faith, I pressed on, and graduated with a degree in Humanities.

Next I went back to school for nursing. After finishing this 14-month program I had missions on my mind. Three days after taking my nursing licensure exam I was off to Tamanzunchale, Mexico, with a 3 person medical team. There were no showers, no beds, just me, my sleeping bag, and my three pairs of scrubs for two months.

I woke each day to my battery-operated alarm clock. At its summons I would step outside my mosquito net to greet the day and the Lord as the stars faded and sun rose. Then I would pack up the day’s medicines and head to a village.

Most often, by the time we arrived, locals were waiting in the center of the town to present their health complaints. In one town, countless homes had been evacuated by people fleeing the Mexican drug cartel. I met a woman whose husband had been kidnapped the week before I arrived. I also met a young man who had seen several of his friends killed by people in the drug scene. People were scared to walk around, and scared for us to walk around. Our willingness to enter their dark reality, even if for a mere two months, seemed to bring more relief than our medicines.

Each day I returned home hot, dirty, tired, and content. My mind was tired from remembering medicine names, piecing complaints with diagnoses, and trying to speak Spanish. My body was tired from the humid heat, from standing, and from eating only when force-fed homemade tamales by the village women. I was mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausted every day, and I loved the feeling. This is the work I was made to do.

A month after I got back from Mexico, I was wearing a head covering, trying to speak Arabic to Syrian refugees who had fled to Jordan. Like in Mexico, there was a doctor, a nurse, and myself. We split into teams, one medical person with one translator, and went to visit Syrian refugees all day.

When the Syrians invited us into their homes or tents, we would sit, and they would tell their stories. Stories so sad I cannot write them. Every refugee I spoke with had had their homes destroyed and at least one family member killed in the war. They said they thought the world had forgotten them. Their war-worn eyes softened as we talked, cried and laughed. They were starved for a reason to laugh, so my Arabic was just what they needed. After listening to their stories, we would ask if there were any health needs in the family. They would gather all sick family members and friends: whether it was someone who had burns from the bombings, a child who had stopped speaking, or one of the many diabetes cases, and we would treat them as best we could.

I got back from the Middle East in December, just in time to start a job in the ER at Baylor Hospital in Dallas, Texas. The stories I have from working here are just as wild and tragic as those from my travels. Whether in Mexico, Jordan, or Texas, there is a trust established when people tell you about their health problems. For a split-second you see inside of them, and they know it, and they let you look. This momentary exchange is what I love about nursing.

Had you asked me what I wanted to do after college my senior year of high school, I would not have listed any of the things I have actually done. But I would have told you that I did not want my life to be boring. And it has not been. The most important truth I have learned in my years in and after college is this: an exciting life requires faith. LAH teaches you how to think, but it is up to you to learn how to act. To me, this is life: not knowing, but learning, not feeling safe, but feeling alive.

- Cori Dickie, Humanities/Liberal Arts Honors, Class of 2010

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LAH Alumni,

Please keep in touch with us by joining LAH on Facebook and LinkedIn.
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LinkedIn Group (for current LAHers and Alums): http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=4845278&trk=an et_ug_hm
You can also send updates for future newsletters to Linda Mayhew at lmayhew@austin.utexas.edu
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