

Stefanie Canright Endowed Scholarship


BY PHILIP WAINWRIGHT, CIPA DIRECTOR

This year we have a major new development at the Center for International Programs Abroad. Through the generosity of a large number of people an endowed scholarship fund has been set up to honor the memory of Stefanie Canright, who died tragically in a plane accident in 2004. The tremendous response of Canright's family and friends is a great testament to her, and the success of this grassroots fund-raising campaign is a remarkable achievement.

The scholarship was designed to reflect Canright's love of travel, her engagement with the community, and her commitment to leadership at Emory. The scholarship supports a student each year "to spend a significant period of time in another country or countries for the purpose of completing a project that integrates rigorous intellectual activity with public service." Thus, Canright's legacy at Emory will include enabling a current Emory student to engage with important issues both intellectually and practically. The scholarship will encourage exactly the type of engagement envisioned in the university's strategic priority of promoting global and engaged citizens.

The first recipient of the Stefanie Canright Scholarship is Elizabeth Sholtys, by any account a remarkable person. She, along with other students, has established an organization to help orphans in Pune, India. This service organization is called the **Ashraya Initiative for Children**. The project that earned Sholtys the first Canright Scholarship involves building on her remarkable work with children, by expanding the organization's outreach to street children, particularly focusing on the education of girls. Sholtys intends to work with this group to determine what the children themselves perceive as the advantages, disadvantages, and barriers that are associated with educational opportunities that are available to this population.

The Canright scholarship is particularly significant to the Center for International Programs Abroad, since it is Emory's first endowed scholarship specifically dedicated to supporting an Emory College undergraduate doing service-learning and research abroad. As service-learning and research abroad are a major focus of Emory's strategic plan for internationalization, we are very fortunate to have the Canright Scholarship as a prestigious centerpiece of CIPA's offerings to students. And Sholtys is a wonderful example of what resourceful and ambitious Emory undergraduates can do. This is a great start for the Canright scholarship and sets a very high standard for what will follow.

Undergraduate students interested in applying for the Canright Scholarship should refer to the CIPA website at www.cipa.emory.edu/canright/index.cfm. 



Stephanie Canright

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SIT Mali Program

BY PAMELA SCULLY, DIRECTOR,
INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES

In February 2006 I had the good fortune to visit the SIT program in Bamako, Mali, West Africa, along with a group of professors and study abroad officers from a variety of universities in the United States.

The Mali SIT program is wonderful. The program has its own educational complex on a hill in the newer section of Bamako. There, students take classes, have a very nutritious and delicious lunch, and get to talk with the academic director about things professional and personal. Students come from all over the United States from smaller colleges such as the College of Wooster and Hope College to larger universities like New York University. The students stay with families in Bamako. They communicate with their host families in French and Bambara. The visiting professors and directors spent an evening, in pairs, with a student and their host family. This visit showed us the wonderful care that each family gives to their visiting student, and the degree of true cultural exposure the students receive in this home stay situation. Students, even only after a month in Mali, spoke with great fondness of their Malian families.

I highly recommend this program. The academic director M. Modibo Coulibaly is a combination of professor and one's favorite uncle. He received a PhD in the United States, so he understands the background of the students very well. In the week that we visited with Coulibaly and his students, we saw him give lectures in English and French, consult with individual students on a variety of topics both academic and non-academic, and organize a wide range of speakers to come to talk to the students. At the same time he set up interesting field trips for future weeks to ensure that when the students visit Timbuktu or Segou, for example, that they would meet elders and other knowledgeable people in the area who could tell them about history and the present.


The program is intensively academic for the first six weeks and then opens up to allow students to do their independent research project. Coulibaly personally makes sure that students have local



Pamela Scully with colleagues in Mali

contacts in the town or village in which to do their research and contacts them regularly.

Mali is off the beaten track: it is a most lovely dusty country at the edge of the great Sahara. It is one of the most peaceful countries I have had the privilege to visit. People are very welcoming, interested in foreigners, and keen to discuss their majestic history (for example the great Mali, Songhai empires) with one.

If you want an intellectual experience that will change the way you think about the world, about what is important in life, SIT Mali is for you. Along the way you will engage in great conversations, learn Bambara and more French, and learn about informal economies and the power of local communities to shape their worlds. You will also sail on the great Niger River, ride a camel in the desert, visit the great mosques and contemporary riches of Timbuktu, and do so in a way that truly exposes you to knowledge and people that moves one beyond the realm of tourism and into intellectual engagement. 

Life that took us to unexpected places

BY DANA TOTTENHAM

Inside the Miller-Ward Alumni House, students gathered inside the Governor's Hall and listened intently to the life stories of three distinguished panelists. Panelist Martha Carey summarized one theme echoing throughout the room: *Life that took us to unexpected places*. From a distinguished professional in the mental health arena to a self-employed, cross-cultural trainer to a graduate student engaged in research in Africa, students explored international careers through the experiences shared by panelists Thomas Bornemann (director, Mental Health Program, The Carter Center), Rita Wuebbeler (president, INTERGLOBE Cross-Cultural Business Services), and Martha Carey (Emory graduate student in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and Rollins School of Public Health).

On Wednesday, February 22, 2006, CIPA collaborated with the Association of Emory Alumni (AEA) and Emory Career Center to host its annual International Career Networking Night for students. Prospective and former study abroad participants joined in an evening with distinguished professionals, Emory alumni, and current Emory students to network and discuss pursuing international careers. This annual event serves multiple purposes: (a) to provide ways for students to capitalize on their study abroad experiences; (b) to encourage students to explore connections on integrating new cross-cultural and language skills into future career plans; (c) to provide exposure to distinguished professionals who work in various capacities in the international arena from a variety of perspectives including public health, education, business, cross-cultural communication, and development; and (d) to promote collaboration between CIPA and the AEA as the offices create space for collective networking and sharing of resources between Emory students, Emory alumni, and others in the international community.

Undergraduate Research in Liberia

BY SHELBY GROSSMAN

The Liberian handshake is a complicated combination of grabbing, shaking, and snapping. In its entirety, the handshake can last up to ten seconds. Continuous eye contact is required, and each motion must be tight and crisp and defined. Faltering confidence at any point is easily spotted and often met with poorly suppressed laughter and amused eye contact among onlookers.

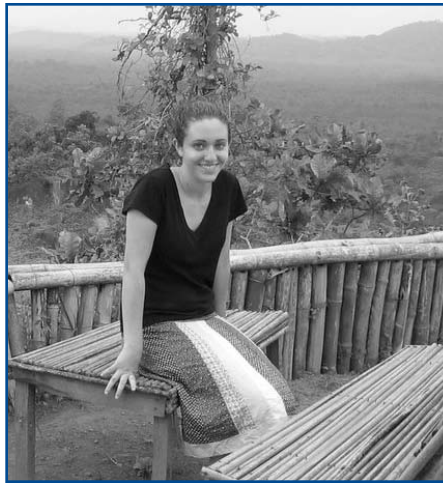
I experienced this handshake first hand during the 2005–2006 winter break. Funding from an undergraduate research grant, Scholarly Inquiry and Research at Emory (SIRE), and the Department of Political Science, along with logistical support from The Carter Center, allowed me to travel to Liberia to conduct research for my political science honors thesis on the Lebanese community living in this small West African country.

Liberians perform this handshake at about the same frequency as Americans say “How are you?” For most it is a courtesy, of course, but an intimate one. For me it was something of a cultural gateway, a conversation starter, an icebreaker, and ultimately, an insight into a community.

What skills are necessary to navigate and survive an international career? The panelists described the importance of developing relationships, maintaining a high level of tolerance, creativity, awareness, and flexibility, accepting a degree of ambiguity in one’s career path, and building bridges across languages and cultures. These characteristics directly relate to what many study abroad students experience and learn as they journey across the world to spend a semester or summer studying in another country. By following one’s passion and honing important skills, the panelists all agreed that life has taken them to unexpected places throughout their career development, and encouraged students to maintain an open mind as they began their career journey.

Returning study abroad students are encouraged to explore the many opportunities available to them including funding for research and service learning overseas, and international internships both abroad and in the Atlanta community. Students are encouraged to contact CIPA for more information, to consult with the Emory Career Center, and to connect with the Emory Career Network (an online database of 2,500 Emory alumni in a variety of fields who are willing to share information about their work and offer career guidance with current students). More information is available online at www.cipa.emory.edu/alternatives/ or <http://career.emory.edu/>.

The next annual International Career Networking Night will be held in February 2007. More details will be available on the CIPA website during the fall semester. CIPA



Shelby Grossman in Tubmanburg from Pakistani Point

For the ten to fifteen daily introductions during my first week in Liberia, my hand was limply tugged, pulled, and awkwardly manipulated. I was in the “honeymoon” or “spectator” stage of cultural adjustment. This was a fascinating cultural nicety—something to blog about—but learning the handshake was certainly not worthy of my time and effort.

One day, the security guard at the convent where I stayed let out a frustrated sigh. This was probably the twentieth time he had been the only active participant in our handshake,

and he was justifiably annoyed. “Sit down,” he commanded, motioning to a rock ledge. For about an hour we talked about the war that has consumed the country for the past fifteen years. We talked about Liberia’s president-elect, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first female elected president in Africa. And we talked about poverty and school fees and rice. Intermittently, the security guard instructed me on the minutiae of the Liberian handshake, and made me practice until he was confident I had mastered it.

Meeting Liberians became more enjoyable. They were consistently impressed that I had “taken the time” to learn their handshake. I suspect it also helped build a degree of trust that was essential during interviews. Several questions I posed to Liberians related to opinion about Lebanese—often a sensitive topic. When respondents trusted me, our dialogues were substantially more forthcoming.

Additionally, introductions with Lebanese slowly became more interesting to me. When I stopped distressing about my image as a confident-yet-inquisitive, omnipotent-yet-curious researcher with a solid handshake and easy, professional eye contact, I started to focus more on the individuals I was meeting. How did the Lebanese respondents introduce themselves to me? Did they greet me with a Western or Liberian handshake? Did this speak to the length of time they had lived in the diaspora? Or did this say something about their willingness and desire to integrate into Liberian society?

It may be cliché to conclude with a comment on the importance of intercultural respect and understanding. But it is worth noting for one important reason: Liberians feel an unreciprocated deep connection to the United States. Liberia was settled by freed American slaves in the 1800s. Liberian businesses accept American dollars; it is the only African country to use the same electricity voltage as the United States, most Liberians living in the capital speak English, and it is not a coincidence that their flag looks remarkably similar to ours. Yet I doubt most Americans could point to Liberia on a map of Africa. This small thing—learning a handshake—was a sign that an American valued Liberian culture enough to emulate one of their customs. CIPA

Stories and pictures from Shelby’s time in Liberia can be found on her blog: <http://liberiaadventures.blogspot.com/>

CIPA Welcomes Newcomers



Kenya Casey joined CIPA as study abroad adviser for several countries, including Indonesia, Mongolia, Vietnam, Latin America, and Spain. She has a BA in psychology from Clark Atlanta University and her MSW from the Howard University School of Social Work and has been working in the study abroad field for approximately two years. Kenya has had experience living, studying, and working in Africa and the Caribbean, including Ghana, Ethiopia, and Jamaica.



Stacy Shade joined CIPA to fill the 2006–2007 CIPA internship position as assistant adviser. She will be advising for semester programs in Australia, Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, and Switzerland. Shade is a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she received a BA in international studies and a BA in French. During her undergraduate career, she studied abroad one year in Lyon, France, and traveled extensively in Europe.



Oksana Gomas is from the Ukraine where she received a master's degree in linguistics and education and a PhD in linguistics at the State University in Kiev. She taught the Ukrainian language there for five years after graduating. Gomas came to America in 2001 and joined CIPA as receptionist last year and has now been promoted to senior secretary. She gives private Russian language lessons in the evening and will be taking advanced English classes starting this fall.



Carol Vess joined CIPA in December 2005 as accountant. Vess is a graduate of Georgia State University where she received a BBA with a major in finance. While she is new to academia, Vess has more than fifteen years accounting and finance experience in the banking and medical products manufacturing industries.

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