G-20 Activities Provide Life Experience

Include GSPIA Faculty, Students in Events

While global leaders spent only two days in Pittsburgh discussing global economic and social issues, GSPIA embraced the opportunity for a more robust forum on pertinent topics with classroom and panel discussions, guest speakers, student essays and even student and alumni participation in one of the world's most controversial events - the G-20 Summit.

Faculty Member Holds Discussion

Dr. Louis Picard, professor of development at GSPIA, moderated a panel discussion on G-20 issues on September 23. “The G-20 and Global Development,” featuring a number of policy experts from the Center for Global Development, ONE, African Development Group, and the Lindsey Group, weighed in on issues relevant during a panel discussion. The panel topics focused on the future role of African states.

"There are pragmatic reasons why the leaders gathered here [the G-20] need to include Africa," remarked David Lane, President and CEO of ONE. He later contended that African states should be included in the G-20, and a future meeting should be held in the continent.

After a series of three-minute presentations from panel participants, Dr. Picard posed his own questions to the panel: "Why should the people of Flint, Michigan, where they have a jobless rate of 20 to 25 percent, care about Africa?" he asked. David Lane was most poignant in his response: "there is a moral argument that Americans should care about people who have no food to eat or have to sell themselves to survive; there is a self-interest in bad populations."

Voices of 21 Presents Up-to-Date Commentary

Long before the barriers and dignitaries arrived in Pittsburgh for the G-20 Summit, GSPIA students geared up to frame the event in their own
DC CENTER

Office Hours: Jessica Hatherill will hold weekly office hours via videoconference.

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 NEWS BRIEFS

STUDENTS PUBLISHED IN JOURNAL

Carolina Forrero and Sally Fishback, second year GSPIA students, recently published their article “Human Security in Colombia” in the Josef Korbel Journal of Advanced International Studies.

STAFF WIN GOLDEN TRIANGLE AWARDS

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Pittsburgh Chapter held its 30th Annual Golden Triangle Awards last night at the University Club in Oakland. More than 135 entries were received for the 2009 competition - the most the organization has received in the past five years. Read more.

EU Representative Joins Class

On the eve of the Pittsburgh Summit, Dr. Carolyn Ban's Managing International Organizations class welcomed a member of the European Union's delegation to the G-20, Mr. Mattias Sundholm, to discuss the European Union, its role in the forthcoming summit and its diplomatic strategy toward the United States.

Based in Washington, D.C., Mr. Sundholm serves as Deputy Spokesman for the European Commission Delegation to the United States. In that capacity, he is also the Deputy Head of the Delegation's Press and Public Diplomacy Section, responsible for promoting the EU's positions and policies throughout the United States.

Mr. Sundholm spent an hour discussing the EU's history and evolution, diplomatic strategy, and opportunities and challenges presented by the future. GSPIA students took the opportunity to ask questions and learn from a practitioner in the field of international diplomacy. Most revealing, and appropriate in the shadow of the approaching G-20, were insights into the tremendous mutual investments between the U.S. and EU as well as annual contributions by the EU to the United Nations, which now equal those of the U.S. and speak to the growing global influence of the European Union.

Students Aid International Delegations

The Voices of 21 Project, eleven students worked tirelessly throughout the summer to plan and execute a program that would help students analyze G-20 events. The group's tireless efforts resulted in a showcase of student articles and interviews -- all featured on GSPIA's website.

The Voices of 21 produced thirty different articles written by eleven students and a number of interview transcripts analyzing G-20 topics. The features covered issues ranging from economic prospects in undeveloped countries to the motives of individuals protesting the G-20 Summit. The addition of interviews with a number of GSPIA and University of Pittsburgh professors -- including Dr. Carolyn Ban, Dr. Michael Brenner, Dr. Kathy Buechel, Dr. Jonathan Harris, Dr. David Miller, Dr. Tom Rawski, Dr. Nita Rudra and Dr. Alberta Sbragia -- added greatly to the academic focus of the project. The professors' commentary is featured in video clips on GSPIA's website, which had a record 4,000 hits during the project's implementation.

The Voices of 21 staff was greatly surprised to be recognized for their effort in an official forum. The U.S. Department of State featured the group's website on the official G-20 Pittsburgh Summit homepage. Danny Stoian, Special Assistant Secretary of State for Management, noted that he was pleasantly surprised by the insightful articles produced by the initiative. He was introduced to the project during a visit to GSPIA. "I'm excited to see their [the students'] opinions and research find audiences beyond the ivory tower," wrote Stoian.
For students and alumni, the G-20 Summit provided the perfect opportunity to showcase their GSPIA education to representatives of several international governments and agencies. G-20 volunteer experiences provided hands-on opportunities to put their degrees into action.

Seven GSPIA students participated in the summit events by aiding the delegations of their native countries. Chenchen Tang (China), Feiyi Shen (China), Rui Zuo (China), Joachim Boko (Benin) and Kerley Tol (Brazil) all assisted their respective governments by serving as translators, greeters and journalists during the G-20. While the work hours were long (some students worked more than 12 hours a day), each student expressed gratefulness for participating in the event.

"The G-20 Summit is one of the most unforgettable experiences of my GSPIA career," noted Chenchen Tang, a second year student. "With so many volunteers participating in the event, I was proud to represent both GSPIA and my country in such a diverse forum."

Other students found different opportunities to involve themselves in the event. Brian Bauer, a second year MPIA/SIS student, matched his internship with the G-20’s security requirements.

"The experience I gained from work at the City’s Emergency Management Agency and Homeland Security Office is excellent and eye opening, but to be working there during a high profile event such as the G-20 has been a life altering experience giving me a true insiders' view to how governmental agencies work together," he reflected. Bauer worked in the Operational Support Unit (OSU) attached to the Multiple Agency Command Center (MACC) with two GSPIA alumni (Jonathan Henry and James Stamatelos) to monitor and analyze potential threats.

In addition to student involvement, GSPIA alumni were also present throughout the two-day event. Bryan Marcus (MPIA ’02) was just one of several alumni who returned to Pittsburgh to staff the summit. "I jumped at the opportunity to return to Pittsburgh," Marcus notes. "It felt like I was going home."
As a Foreign Service Officer in charge of the Belgium and Netherlands desk at the U.S. Department of State, he coordinated all of the logistics and identification activities needed for the Dutch Prime Minister and his staff to operate at the G-20. But while he was busy coordinating official activities, he had the opportunity to introduce the Dutch delegation to some of Pittsburgh’s local fare - including Primanti Brother's sandwiches.

GSPIA Confers Honorary Degree to EU Official

GSPIA’s influence in the G-20 extended well beyond the alumni, students and faculty, who participated in the event ... In fact, the school awarded José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission of the European Union, an honorary doctoral degree in public and international affairs from GSPIA. The ceremony, hosted by Chancellor Mark A. Nordenburg, was part of an invitation-only luncheon held during G-20. Barroso was thrilled to receive the honorary doctorate, noting the University of Pittsburgh’s reputation for outstanding scholarly work.

Washington Connection

Easing the Job Search Process

As students intensely begin their job searches, the Washington Center continues to provide events and services to make the process easier.

The Washington Center will provide its monthly alumni briefing on October 14. This month, two international alumni will speak about their experience with the U.S. job market. Natalia Kirpikova (MPIA ’99) and Asha Williams (MID ’07) will discuss their job hunting experience as non-U.S. citizens. The event is meant to provide insights for international students who hope to remain in the U.S. after graduation. All students are encouraged to attend; those unable to come to the event can listen to briefings on GSPIA’s website. The podcast for the September alumni briefing is currently available.

Student Spotlight - Shannon Fairchild, MPIA/GPE

Ask any GSPIA student or recent graduate and they will agree, finding an internship is stressful! There’s a variety of things to consider when conducting your search: location, security clearances, references, money, and timing to name but a few. And that’s if you are single! If you’re married or have children, your search is ten times as difficult. Needless to say, I was extremely grateful—and relieved—when I received an internship at the U.S. Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

The CBO is awesome. It is a highly-respected, nonpartisan agency that provides Congress with potential revenue and spending effects of...
proposed legislation. The CBO is a comparatively small federal agency made up of approximately 230 highly-educated individuals. I don't think I came across anyone with less than a graduate degree!

I was one of fifteen people selected to participate in the CBO's summer associate program. I was assigned to the state and local government unit where I investigated how state governments were using American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds and performed extensive research on the effects of proposed legislation to amend bankruptcy laws. To accomplish this feat, I attended congressional committee and subcommittee meetings, read a ton, and conducted interviews with Capitol Hill staffers and experts in the field. By the end of the summer, I was an expert on housing finance issues and the municipal bond markets - matters I had relatively no clue about when I arrived in D.C.

When I wasn't pounding the pavement and heating up phone lines, I was enjoying the company of my coworkers. We frequently talked about the latest issues over Indian takeout or wine and cheese. I missed my husband and dog a lot, but spending the summer in D.C. was an invaluable experience that I will never forget. So, if you have a support network or find a way to get away for a few months, do it! It's worth it! Your future career will thank you.