

My CGS Story

by Leah Bader (Class of 2017)



My name is Leah Bader and I'm currently a sophomore, soon to be junior, here at Penn State. I am pursuing a major in Anthropology and two minors – Global Health and Humanitarian Engineering & Social Entrepreneurship. I knew that my summers would be consumed by summer jobs and research trips abroad till graduation, so when the opportunity to participate in an internship program with multiple cultural perspectives during the semester popped up, I was more than willing to try it out.

When our internship director, Sarah Lyall-Combs, first informed me that I had gotten this internship and would be working for the Center for Global Studies this semester, I was excited, but terrified. I was excited to see what I would be doing and how all of the various disciplines and cultural activities I could experience while working here would relate to my field of study and how relevant and relatable this internship would be to my future goals overall. I was terrified because this was my first internship experience and I had no idea what was expected of me going in. I wasn't sure what tasks I would be doing, so I wasn't even a hundred percent confident I was qualified to do them. With this in mind, Sarah made it easy for me. She eased me into the position with a light workload in the beginning to ensure I got a handle on things and I had countless other resources with experience (including fellow interns) that I could rely on.

So what did I actually do this semester? Well, I learned how to write and compile a good newsletter – something I struggled with in the beginning, because I always felt like I wasn't writing enough or I didn't have a topic to write about. I blogged about my experience as an intern and I created countless flyers for various lecture series. I felt much more comfortable with the latter as I had at least some experience with poster design in the past. The biggest series the Center for Global Studies put on this semester, at least in terms of work for the interns, was the *World Stories Alive!* story time series. *World Stories Alive!* features stories, poems/songs, and a culturally-relevant craft activity in different languages and from different parts of the world on Saturday mornings at the Schlow Library. Our jobs, as interns, was to coordinate with the various speakers that were lined up and to create a handout for kids and their parents that consisted of the poem/song lyrics and other phrases in both the native language, transliterated, and English, so that they were able to follow along. We were also in charge of preparing the craft activity – sometimes this meant we only had to supply the materials for the craft, but other

times this meant researching and brainstorming ideas on our own when we worked with an unimaginative speaker. While I'm not one of those people that thoroughly enjoys working with children, I did enjoy experiencing the various languages and helping out when the crafting activities called for it.

In addition to all the lecture series, newsletters, and press releases, I had several other opportunities that allowed me to fine tune my professional skills. In February I, along with one of my fellow interns, was able to interview Sean Peoples, the director of *Broken Landscape: India's Water-Energy Choke Point*, about the various environmental and health hazards that result from the current method of unregulated rat-hole coal mining in Northern India. He was able to shed some light on these issues and map out what he believes to be the next steps toward progress and regulation in the industry.



I also had the chance to present a research paper I wrote with two other students at the inaugural Global Studies Undergraduate Research Symposium held at the University of Pittsburgh this April. During this conference my fellow student investigators and I were able to present out literature review, research, and our findings on the water savings ability of greenhouses being utilized in resource-constrained settings. We presented to fellow students,

from both Pittsburgh and Penn State, and various professors and discussion facilitators, while being able to sit in on other students' research presentations as well. All in all, the conference was a great chance to practice our professionalism and public speaking skills, while participating in lively discussion and receiving constructive criticism about our project.

I am not done being an intern here at the Center for Global Studies. I will continue my role next semester and hope that whoever the new interns are, they are as easy to work with as were the current interns. Ben Meck sort of took on the role of "Head Intern" this semester, making sure we all coordinated our schedules and covered for one another when we had to cancel or were indisposed. Ben became the "dad" of the group, reminding us all to turn in our newsletter pieces or just adding some downright corny, "dad" humor to our conversations. Ben will not be returning next semester, because he is graduating this May and I wish him the best. Bridget Greco, our social media intern, is also graduating and will be sorely missed. Unlike the rest of us, Bridget is actually able to navigate social media and knows not only how to post updates and events, but also how to make the posts look interesting. I'm hoping that Sarah will designate another intern, the "social media" intern next semester, because I will be lost without Bridget. Finally, Alanna will not be returning as an intern next semester either. While she is not graduating like the other two, she has a full course load and busy schedule and is unable to make the time commitment. While I did not work with Alanna as much as I did with Bridget

and Ben, she was knowledgeable about the inner workings of the Center and was very helpful in the beginning whenever I was confused or unsure of a task.

This leaves only me. I will be the only intern returning next semester and I am again excited, but terrified, not only to see what Sarah has in store for me in the fall, but to meet my new, fellow coworkers. I'm sure the upcoming fall will hold many surprises, just as this spring did, and I'm excited to see what lecture series and other events the Center will be sponsoring and what the new semester holds in store for me as an intern at the Center for Global Studies.



Presenting at the first Pitt-Penn State undergraduate symposium!
L-R: me, Nolan O'Connor, and Sara Warnquist