

# My CGS Story

by Alexandra Gatlin (Class of 2014)



Going into my final semester of my senior year, I sought an internship experience to supplement my schedule as a part time student. I hoped for an enriching experience that allowed me to engage with the Penn State community and gain professional experience that was closer to the career path I am seeking as a graduating student. As I reflect on my semester with the Center for Global Studies, I can truthfully say that my experience was exactly what I had hoped for. Working with the Center, I became more involved on campus as well as in the community, and I have been able to reference my experiences with the internship in all of the job interviews I have had as I prepare for life after graduation.

I believe my time with the Center for Global Studies has been a real asset to my growth both as a student and as an emerging professional. In particular, the position allowed me to enhance my abilities in research and community organizing. When completing tasks for the Center, I did a lot of my work from home. This was nice because I could squeeze in work with my busy schedule as a student and as an intern. While this gave me a lot of freedom, I also had to manage my time carefully so as not to miss any deadlines. I was able to develop my organizational and time management skills, which are important qualities to maintain in the professional world. A lot of the tasks I performed both during my office hours and at home included performing research regarding the less commonly taught languages at Penn State as well as at Commonwealth campuses and other Big Ten schools. This tied in closely to my course of study as an international relations major and a Spanish major. I believe that cultural experiences and intelligence are essential in our increasingly globalized society, and engaging with different cultures and languages is the most effective way to incorporate this into one's education. In my research, I mastered searching the internet to find the necessary information, along with communicating with staff members who had access to the specifics about these courses. Subsequently, I would organize the information into accessible tables or charts that allowed for the data to be reviewed easily. These skills could be applied in a variety of capacities, and I think the experience served as an excellent booster for my personal inventory of professional skills.

Community organizing was also essential to my position as an intern, spanning a

number of responsibilities. I managed the Center's social media pages, posting on Facebook and Twitter about upcoming events around the university and in the community sponsored by the Center. Aside from being behind the social media, I was more directly involved with organizing the *World Stories Alive!* series and an after-school club at a nearby charter school.

Formatting a handout and helping to create a captivating presentation were required for successful events. These experiences provided me with the opportunity to develop skills I will use in the future. I did more experimenting with formatting and drafting different forms of documents, both through the research I performed as well as in composing the monthly newsletter and the weekly handouts for *World Stories Alive!*. I can now appreciate the value of an organized and aesthetically pleasing document, both for the work that goes into formatting as well as its usefulness once perfected. I think this attention to detail will be admired as an asset by future employers. Working with deadlines and communicating with fellow interns were also essential to completing tasks, and are now abilities I have experience with and would feel comfortable discussing with future employers. Having an experience to reference as evidence of possessing certain skills is much more appealing to employers, and I believe I am able to share my experiences confidently, while showcasing my abilities as an employee.