The Carleton College Global Engagement Initiative

A Mellon-funded initiative supporting Carleton’s efforts to integrate global learning across the curriculum.
How can students work productively on complex, trans-regional issues? How, for instance, might they say something useful about the migration crisis, or the spread of Zika, or the influence of Bollywood on world cinema? Such undertakings often require multiples forms of expertise: they draw on different forms of local knowledge (minimally, culture and language); they require depth in multiple disciplines (area studies, economics, political science, and more); and they cry out for historical perspective. Moreover, they require that most elusive element on the Carleton campus: time.

The Global Issues Seminar (run as IDSC 398) helps students take a crack at such complex issues, and it addresses the time problem by spreading work over all three terms of the senior year—usually culminating in a presentation in the Spring term. Now in our third year of assembling research teams, we’ve brought students from different majors together in order to blend their expertise; at the same time, they learn to communicate their ideas and methods across disciplinary lines. The results have been electrifying.

“Because I have created a very interdisciplinary course of study for myself […] I was really excited to have the chance to connect with students from different majors I’m also interested in. I think that collaboration is at the heart of academics.”
— Liza Davis ‘16 (Geology/Archeology/Medieval and Renaissance Studies)

Student teams have worked on such topics as the representation of physical geography of Asia Minor in ancient texts (students from Geology and Classics); the “sense of place” in the public debate about copper-nickel mining in a shared US-Canadian watershed (Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Math); the adaptation of meditation across cultural borders (Chemistry, Cognitive Science, Computer Science); the changing representation of environmentalism in the context of the Glen Canyon Dam (History, Chemistry, Geology).

Although originally devised as an alternative to comps, IDSC 398 is now typically a separate-but-related-project. Students receive two credits per term, and the teams are overseen by faculty directors—this year, Scott Carpenter, Stacy Beckwith, and Trish Ferret. Interested students and faculty should contact GEI.

“[IDSC 398] gave our whole group the opportunity to be involved with the community (or the real world) in a way that our general coursework had not allowed.”
— Camila de la Vega ‘16 (Political Science/International Relations)
Teaching Networks

Not everything faculty do has to translate into immediate “deliverables” for the classroom. Our new teaching networks provide an informal and low-threshold way for faculty to come together around shared interests.

Networks typically select one of their members to convene the group, and activities may include the sharing of resources or the development of reading groups—all the way up to the joint sponsoring of events or the hatching of new curricula.

Currently, teaching networks exist in the areas of migration and refugees, public health, post-colonialism and national identity, Middle East connections, and social inequality. Write us if you’d like to join one, or to start a new network that aligns with your own interests. GEI can help to organize and advertise, and we can offer modest support.

Team Teaching

Faculty often wish their students had more interdisciplinary experience—or that they were better able to forge connections across majors. But isn’t it the cobbler’s child who always runs barefoot? Put otherwise, how often do faculty themselves model the exciting encounter between disciplines?

One way to do this is through team teaching—whether it take the form of dynamic duos in front of the classroom, or a series of visiting “interlopers” from other departments, or some other academic mashup. GEI has sponsored a number of team teaching gigs (between History and English, for instance, or in the new methods course for area studies).

With the LTC and others, we can play the matchmaker for interested faculty, and we can work with the Dean’s Office to provide “back-fill”—the not-so-glamorous term for replacement instructional staff. That way, participating in team teaching doesn’t necessarily mean sacrificing an existing course. Talk to us!

Global Issues Forum

As a student-led event series, the Global Issues Forum (GIF) gives students the opportunity to come together to discuss topics with a global focus.

2016-17’s first GIF took the form of a panel discussion on education around the world, featuring students with OCS and internship experience across three continents. Panelist Sam Schnirring ’19, who had just returned from an English teaching internship in Myanmar, said that the GIF “provided me an outlet to think critically about my own experiences abroad and to engage with peers who have had similar experiences.”

For GIF questions or ideas, contact GEI associate Mikaela Auerbach.
BY THE NUMBERS...

Curriculum innovation grants awarded by GEI (2014-2016) 43
Carleton faculty teaching on off-campus programs (2015-16) 22
Students participating in off-campus studies (Class of 2016) 346 (70%)
Students participating in community and civic engagement (CCCE) (2015-16) 1,029 (52%)
Academic Civic Engagement (ACE) courses taught (2015-16) 48
Students placed in summer internships abroad (2016) 32
Students completing Carleton fellowships abroad (2016) 30
International students at Carleton (2015-16) 208 (10%)
Alumni living abroad (Confirmed addresses as of fall 2016) 1,132

Top...

International student home countries (2015-16)
1. China (86)
2. South Korea (16)
3. India (14)
4. Canada (13)
5. Japan (8)
6. Mexico (8)
7. Singapore (7)
8. Vietnam (6)
9. Pakistan (4)
10. Australia, Brazil, Hong Kong, Nepal, New Zealand (3)

Off-campus study destinations (Class of 2016)
1. UK (69)
2. Australia (45)
3. Spain (39)
4. New Zealand (35)
5. United States (33)
6. Hungary (29)
7. France (23)
8. Italy (23)
9. China (21)
10. Japan (20)

Alumni living abroad (Confirmed addresses as of 2016)
1. Canada (169)
2. UK (135)
3. Japan (101)
4. China (73)
5. France (61)
6. Germany (42)
7. South Korea (41)
8. Hong Kong (38)
9. Singapore (33)
10. Australia (30)

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