Advising Times

ENGAGEMENT BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

This issue features short profiles of your student peers. Their experiences illustrate several opportunities for learning outside typical course environments: research and creative projects; study abroad; internships; externships; service. Academic advisers and others are ready to help YOU plan for this kind of learning too.

Why should you make it part of your undergraduate experience? You might . . .

Clarify academic and career interests
Gain independence and confidence in your ability to cope

Fulfill a requirement
Immerse yourself in a new place or culture

Get practical experience for your resume
Build new relationships and network with others

Engage with your chosen field in a new way
Discover possibilities which you did not know existed

Solve real problems in a new environment
“Connect the dots” between courses, experiences, the future

How do you find out about the opportunities? Each profile in this issue gives you an idea, but typically . . .

Your adviser or professor says: “You should apply. I’ll write a letter of recommendation.”
A friend shares something they heard about—a good internship site, a place in a faculty member’s lab, etc.
Someone in your residence hall tells you about a service project sponsored by a student organization.
You see a poster on the Career Connection bulletin board in University Hall or in your department.
You read your email and your major department’s web site or see an article in the Independent Collegian.
You go to an informational session sponsored by your department, Study Abroad, or Career Services.

No matter what type of engagement opportunity you are considering, there are important steps to keep in mind.

1. Once you have decided that you want to conduct research, study abroad or away, complete an internship/externship, you need to do some homework. Ask questions. What types of internships are out there? Where can I study abroad and who on campus can help me figure it out? Who should I start talking to about my research interests? This first step can take time and effort—make sure that you give yourself plenty of time to research and evaluate all your options.

2. Many programs have deadlines to apply or participate. Even if there are no formal deadlines, you need to make time to iron out all the details before your experience begins. Many study abroad/away programs and internships have firm deadlines, and they can be several months in advance of going away. Start planning EARLY!

3. If you expect your new experience will earn you class credit, what steps have you taken to verify this outcome? Have you talked to your faculty adviser about signing up for internship, research, or independent study hours? Have you met with an adviser to discuss how your courses abroad or away will be registered as UT courses?

4. Some opportunities that you are exploring have a financial cost. Have you looked into scholarships, travel grants, research stipends? If you hope financial aid will help pay, have you talked to Rocket Solution Central?

LEAVE NOTHING TO CHANCE. Do your homework early on your selected engagement opportunity. That way you will have a great time knowing all the details are in order. PLAN, PREPARE, LEARN, and ENJOY.

See Student Services Center website for current walk-in schedules: http://www.utoledo.edu/offices/studentservices/index.html
DEGREE AUDIT TIPS

Have you ever noticed that your degree audit lists both your earned credit hours from your UT transcript and applied credit hours? What is the difference?

Earned hours are the all credits for courses you have passed at UT plus the credits you have transferred to UT.

Applied hours are the credits earned plus the credits registered in the current and future term (s) which are being used or applied to the requirements of your academic program.

Why might some earned credits not be applied on a degree audit? Some students earn credits for developmental courses that do not apply to requirements for a degree. Some earn credit in the same course more than once, but the credit can count or be applied to requirements only once.

If you started in one major and then changed, some of the work you took previously may not apply in the new major.

The key to remember is that it is the applied hours that matter when it comes to graduation. Please see an adviser if you have questions or concerns about the difference between applied and earned credit hours!

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

A First-Year Student First: Chemistry Major Jonathon Tomko

Jon came to UT this Fall really interested in chemistry. He had job shadowed his older brother, a grad student in chemistry, and learned that he did not want to have a career synthesizing chemicals. Jon’s plan is to focus on forensic toxicology and do chemistry in a state or national crime lab.

Jon did, however, take his brother’s advice to get involved with the UT student Chemical Society. At a meeting he heard that two volunteer tutor coordinators were needed; he applied and was selected. In his first semester at UT Jon is now finding and recruiting tutors—undergraduates, grad students, faculty at other schools—who tutor UT students taking undergraduate Chemistry courses. He responds within 24 hours to student inquiries and connects the students with tutors through email.

What has Jon gained through this experience? He is quick to answer: Time Management and Networking Skills—both necessary to make his volunteer service successful for the tutors and students, but applicable to everything ahead of him as well. He’s learned it’s not hard to talk to faculty members. He is meeting people on and off campus and learning about cultures new to him. Jon recommends that his fellow first-year students start networking right away to learn what they can do.

For a long list of Tri-College departmental major organizations for undergraduates go to: http://www.utoledo.edu/offices/studentservices/pdfs/Student_Organizations.pdf

AN “EXTRAORDINARY WORKSHOP”

Jeremy Pellington’s “Summer School” at MoMA P.S. 1

From his sculpture professor, Tom Lingeman, Art and Film major Jeremy Pellington has been learning the importance of travel in gaining exposure to new kinds of artists’ work. In 2010 Pellington viewed performance artist Maria Abramovic’s exhibit “The Artist is In” at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Last spring Jeremy read online about a five-day workshop MoMA was offering with Abramovic in August but did not imagine himself participating.

So, Jeremy is grateful to his Film professor and adviser, Tammy Kinsey, who knows his work and interests, and knows the opportunities available. Prof. Kinsey urged Jeremy to apply to the Abramovic workshop—a chance to meet, learn, work with an artist Jeremy finds inspirational. The application required a letter of intent and recommendations from a professor and an artist. But, unlike the typical application, this one did not require samples of Jeremy’s work. There was no application fee. And there was no charge for the workshop. The artist donated her work to a select group of twelve participants of varying ages from the US, Europe, Turkey—dancers, new media artists, a scientist, photographers, Jeremy.

Five-hour sessions guided by Abramovic and her choreographers were devoted first to body and mind exercises and then to developing and working toward public performances before large audiences of students, artists, famous musicians and dancers. Jeremy says that this has been “a really big deal” for him, affecting how he spends his time and the way he lives. He learned a process for preparing his mind and body to do his work. He found he could perform for others and enjoy it. He is more open to trying other forms of art.

Jeremy says: “Be on the lookout for things like this! The opportunities are there.”

PSYCHOLOGY EXTERNSHIPS

Kandyce Ruiz and Michael Saloiye find Career Paths

Senior Psychology major Kandyce Ruiz had no clue that as a first-year student she could have firmlyed up her career path and started working closely with professors to have research experience and an basis for requesting letters of recommendation for graduate school. She wants other students to learn how to use resources like Dr. Mojisola Tiamiyu’s Psychology Externship course which she completed at St. Pius School. After observing teachers and seeing results from working one-on-one with children, she is inspired to study for the GRE, apply to masters’ programs, and become a school psychologist. To add to her portfolio, Kandyce is currently running computer-based studies with Dr. Rose and doing a Research Practicum with Dr. Tiamiyu.

Michael Saloiye, NSM Chemistry grad and now M.Ed. student in the LAMP program, came to UT “the most reserved kid”, and became a leader through three years as an RA in Parks. He started in Pharmacy, but had a passion for Chemistry and changed majors. Michael became curious about teaching science, and his experience in the Psychology Externship under a mentor/teacher and as a Science Olympiad volunteer at the school helped him decide. He believes the externship was a unique opportunity that set him apart in landing a Woodrow Wilson fellowship, designed for career changers, leading to certification in a STEM teaching field, and paying $30,000 to complete his Master’s degree here at UT. Michael’s advice: “Don’t be afraid to change your major! It can make all the difference.”
STUDY ABROAD

English and Spanish Major Kaylee Henman and Film Major Lydia Kane in Spain

Both Kaylee and Lydia illustrate the importance of using specific goals to guide their planning for a study abroad semester. They also demonstrate the importance of being open to possibilities once the experiences are underway. Each is now employed as an ambassador in the UT Center for International Studies and Programs, presenting on Study Abroad opportunities and helping students plan their trips. Since they met the challenges of living and learning abroad, they have confidence that they can meet their challenges now and in the future, at home or abroad.

“Everyone goes to Barcelona,” says Lydia. So in the city where she went to start learning the art of documentary film-making and take Intermediate Spanish I she also met people from all over the world. She had hoped to film Barcelona cab drivers, but had to be flexible in collaborating with students from three other US schools in making a documentary on Ultimate Frisbee. Equipment had unfamiliar settings. The group had just two weeks to shoot and edit their film. But Lydia was grateful that UT had prepared her well for the work. One of Lydia’s goals was to be as independent as possible, so she opted to live in an apartment rather than with a family. She wanted to live on her own, meeting needs by buying what she could carry from the market. Forced to speak Spanish to succeed in the culture, she has become resourceful and outgoing. Lydia hopes to intern abroad with a production company and says: “I would go in a heartbeat.”

Kaylee’s primary goal was immersion in the Spanish language in order to improve her speaking skills. So she chose to live with a host family in Alicante and was completed included in their lives. Not surprisingly, Kaylee experienced homesickness and the roller coaster of adjustment. Big surprise: People in Spain speak five different languages, but English is not one of them. Kaylee has new appreciation for international students at UT because it is hard to prove yourself to the native persons. She persisted, making friends and volunteering for the Official School of Languages as a tutor for older students and adults in English conversation. In an intercambios or “exchange” program, she was placed with a Turkish girl, helping her improve both her Spanish and English. She has become more open-minded and aware of the diversity of cultures and what she calls the “realness” of culture for people, returning with a strong commitment to a career in the international community outside the US in a Spanish-speaking country or on a military base. She hopes to combine her interest in health with her language proficiency, enrolling next semester in Intro to Communication Disorders, perhaps as the start to a career in Speech Therapy with a bilingual focus. Kaylee is soliciting the submissions of UT’s 140 students past or presently studying abroad for an online travel writing journal. You can email her for details at kaylee.henman@rockets.utoledo.edu.

Below: Kaylee in Nice, France, on Spring Break 2012

INTERNSHIPS

Geography/GIS Major Yujin Lee and Environmental Sciences Major Alex Friend—Summer 2012

In December after graduation Yujin Lee will return to her home in Korea and begin her job search. In Korea an internship is an important credential, and Yujin’s competitive internship at the National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C. gave Yujin her first opportunity to work in an organization, not just study at a university. In the Geography and Planning Department the chair Patrick Lawrence sends emails to students about internship and career opportunities. But it was Yujin’s professor Beth Schlemper and adviser David Nemeth who encouraged her to apply and wrote letters of recommendation. She had developed relationships with these professors through classes, visits during office hours, and participation in the department’s GAP Club.

Yujin worked under the director of the Explorers Program. The “explorers” are the 100+ people researching around the world for the National Geographic Society. They return annually for a week to share their research at the Explorers Symposium. Yujin’s work included compiling cultural, social and historical data; creating posters and print materials; doing set-ups and working on the AV team for the presentations. Her many computer software and programming classes made her a welcome resource. Yujin believes experiencing relationships in an organization will help her make fewer mistakes and know how to react when she begins her career. And before she was just thinking about GIS and maps. Now she is open to other kinds of work in her field.

Alex Friend has been busy building a resume since he first enrolled at UT. He values the opportunities he has had to build leadership skills and work with others. He is a UT ambassador, representing the university at events sponsored by President Jacobs, and after dancing in Dance Marathon in his first year, he worked his way up to Director of the Dance Marathon, overseeing 35 committee chairs for an event that raised $68,0000 in last spring. He ties his leadership development back to his fraternity which initially required service or involvement in one campus activity.

Alex’s major, Environmental Sciences, requires an internship, and he knows employers want to see some applied experience in the field. But he recommends students start their internship searches much earlier than he did because he found one only just in time. In May-July, 2012, Alex interned under a horticulturist in Reynoldsburg, Ohio: building a rain garden, removing invasive vines along a river bank, and teaching residents how to garden in community plots. This internship filled a notable gap in Alex’s background; he had taken no botany courses. And he was able to apply much of his favorite course in Conservation Biology, reinforcing his career interests in urban agriculture, conservation, and water testing. Additional benefits included making connections in Columbus, working in the public sector with people of diverse backgrounds and ages, and seeing the benefit of an MBA alone or in combination with a Master’s Degree in Public Health or Occupational Health and Safety.
TESTING WITH SUCCESS

General Test Preparation

To do well on tests you must first learn the material and then review it well before the test. To better learn the material, take good notes in your class lectures and from textbooks. Review your notes soon after class and again, briefly before the next class. Every week be sure to schedule a longer review period to include new material covered that week. Pay careful attention to what your instructor says will be on the test. Then, organize your notes, texts, previous assignments, tests, quizzes. Create a hierarchy of what will be on the test. Estimate how many hours you will need to adequately review the material. Draw up a schedule that breaks down the studying into manageable chunks of time and material. Practice by testing yourself on the material. Be sure to exercise, eat and sleep well. Avoid studying when overly fatigued and reserve the most difficult material for times of the day when you are most alert and focused. For other helpful strategies for testing success, check out www.studygs.net.

Learn to manage the stress of exam prep at a free workshop. Choose from Nov 27, 28, 29, noon-1 pm at the Counseling Center, RH 1810.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Majors and Minors Led Jasmine Townsend and Chad McElvany to Undergrad Research

Chad thought his required internship in his Renewable Energy minor was all set up for him but scrambled and found a research project in the lab of Physics professor Randy Ellingson. Jasmine learned about the opportunity to do research in her Physical Geology class, hoped to work on a novel, and then was awarded a summer research stipend for “Experimenting with Artisan Book-Binding.” Both would say it’s really important to talk to advisers and professors sooner rather than later. Research requires a mentor, someone who knows your ability and is willing to shepherd you through the development of a plan, the set up of your project, and see you through to the final results and presentation of your findings.

Chad’s major is Applied Physics. His project led him to develop and build a device to record the current generated across glass slides covered with thin films, part of the research being done on quantum dots being used to build solar cells. For some undergrads, internships apply already learned skills. Chad developed new skills: doing the research, sorting out the science, writing the paper complete with graphics and using computer software. He has already presented his research once in Columbus and may take it this year to Posters at the Capitol. Part of his poster is pictured below. Chad’s goal is to combine his years of experience in home construction with the science of renewable energy and develop the tools to retrofit houses for alternative forms of energy. He hopes to do other research on vertical wind turbines with applications to houses and cities.

Majoring in Creative Writing and minorin Japanese, Jasmine created ten books, their binding, original works, and printing in the Department of English book arts laboratory in summer 2012. Jasmine’s study of Japanese has inspired her to write with Japanese themes and one of her books uses Japanese Stab Binding learned in her Art and Process of the Book course. You can see her work pictured below. She has the special satisfaction of completing the books, especially those in hard cover—opening them and holding them—and of doing binding and learning how to self-publish. She is assembling a box of tools. Her future plans include study in Japan where she can hear Japanese daily and, someday, to live there.
IN THE WORDS OF AN ADVISER: DR. JERRY VAN HOY

I wish students knew the importance of professor and adviser office hours. Every semester professors lament that their office hours are not well utilized by students in their classes and in their majors. It is not uncommon for students to tell me that they avoid office hours because they do not want to bother me. It is also true that office hours may be scheduled at times inconvenient for students. But please understand that we have office hours to encourage students to seek our help and advice outside of class. You cannot “bother” us during office hours! This time is set aside for our students. The benefits of seeking out your professors during office hours far outweigh any inconvenience in doing so. Seeking out professors and advisers in office hours may help with coursework you are struggling with. You can check up on how you are progressing towards your degree or ask other questions. But there is another good reason to use office hours: it allows professors to learn about you as a person. One day you may need references for graduate school or jobs. The more we know about your educational and career goals, your background, and even your struggles and successes, the more persuasive our recommendations.

The Department of Environmental Sciences offers undergraduate degrees in Environmental Science, Environmental Studies, Geology, and Biology with an Ecology focus. The department also offers a 5 year dual degree program leading to a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science and either a Master of Public Health or a Master of Science in Occupational Health.

The department offers many opportunities for students to learn outside of the classroom through undergraduate research, internships, and volunteer service. Majors in the Department of Environmental Science can be found conducting exciting research alongside faculty and graduate students in the newly renovated Bowman-Oddy laboratories, the Stranahan Arboretum, the Lake Erie Research Center, or the Plant Science Research Center. In addition, all Environmental Science and Environmental Studies majors complete an internship prior to graduation. Popular internship sites include the Toledo Zoo and the Cleveland Botanical Garden. Volunteers at the Stranahan Arboretum do general land management and help maintain the Oak Openings native plant gardens. These experiences give students insights into career interests and opportunities and the hands-on experience needed to be competitive in the workforce.

Non-majors can select from Department of Environmental Sciences courses to fulfill a Natural Science requirement for the UT Core/general education: Physical Geology, Physical Geology Lab, Geological Hazards and the Environment, Down to Earth Environmental Sciences, Environmental Problems Lab, Marine Biology, Plants and Society, Microbes and Society.

For more information on the Department of Environmental Sciences, visit their extensive website at http://www.utoledo.edu/envsciences/index.html.