

IBA STUDENTS VOLUNTEER WITH PROJECT HOPE

Five IBA students volunteer their time for Project Hope. (Top) from left to right, freshman Chibuzo Nwakama, sophomore Ashley Segura-Roman, freshman Anamar Blanes, freshman Crystal Padilla and senior Tracy Vo participate in an activity.



MARK YOUR
CALENDARS: IBA
SUMMER PROGRAM
STARTS: JUNE 4TH

Photos by Brinda Shetty

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REMARKS FROM THE SENIOR CAPSTONE SPEAKERS

Senior Hannah Tykol

"I think it was important to share this presentation with the IBA community because often times people who do bench research don't understand what kind of work is done within qualitative reasoning. During my journal club presentation class in IBA so many people had questions about how data is collected and analyzed, I thought this information would be helpful to IBA individuals. I would recommend social sciences research because it really gives you a broader understanding of the public issues that affect individuals other than yourself. I really love the public health approach to my specific type of research and the fact that I am attempting to better the lives of many individuals. I think my least favorite part of this research is the stigma often surrounding how it is conducted. Many people think social sciences research is unnecessary and I really want to change that."

Senior Tracy Vo

"I decided on my capstone project when I realized how much of an impact going abroad through the MHIRT program was in helping me decide my graduate school and career plans. I intended to spread the word of how great the MHIRT program is for students who are low-income, first-generation, and interested in public health research, and Iowa Biosciences Academy had the perfect audience to spread the word. Overall, I wanted to share my experience with others in hopes of inspiring students to get out of their comfort zones and go abroad."

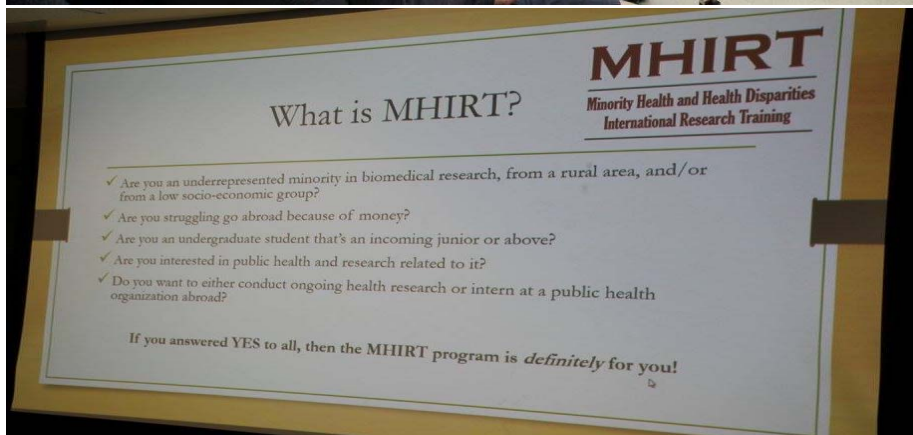
Senior Michael Dominguez

"Presenting to an audience outside your field always presents challenges. However, I enjoy this added challenge because it requires me to spend time contemplating on different ways to explain and understand difficult topics." "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough." - Albert Einstein



IBA SENIOR CAPSTONE SEMINARS

Three IBA seniors, Michael Dominguez, Hannah Tykol and Tracy Vo (pictured left to right), gave 20-minute presentations on Wednesday, April 12. Tykol presented "What is qualitative research?", Vo presented "My Experience Abroad in The Gambia with the MHIRT Program" and Dominguez presented "Decoherence from surface spins of nitrogen-vacancy defect spins in diamond."



Photos by IBA Marketing
Coordinator, Steve Kehoe

STUDENT TRACY VO CONDUCTS RESEARCH ABROAD

You always hear at study abroad fairs and during freshmen orientation events that undergraduates should go abroad at least once during their undergraduate career because it's a once in a lifetime opportunity. I never found it feasible because of the cost and planning it would take to go abroad and the trouble of fitting it into my four years here. I was so fortunate to have found The Minority Health and Health Disparities International Research Training (MHIRT) program of the College of Public Health, which gave me the chance to travel to The Gambia this past summer to intern and conduct my very own research project.

The Gambia is a tropical West African country with a population of about 2 million. There were several different ethnic groups so everyone spoke at least 3 languages and 95% of the population is Muslim. It's often called "The Smiling Coast of West Africa." As soon as I got there, I understood why it was called this. Smiling faces were

everywhere. The atmosphere was warm (literally too) and friendly; everyone looked out for one another. I had no issue adjusting to the country's culture and climate.

During the first month of the program, I interned at an NGO called The Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (GAMCOTRAP). The organization's current focus was on female genital mutilation (FGM) and current works were on enforcing and educating rural communities on FGM myths and the newly passed law that criminalizes FGM. I did a lot of office work and received training that educated me on the issues surrounding FGM to facilitate a workshop discussion. The second half of the program was focused on a research experience I had developed the previous two semesters with the help of my mentors and the MHIRT program faculty. This pilot study dealt with figuring out how effective cloth filtration was in removing fecal coliforms in drinking water. I went to rural villages to collect survey data and water samples

with a research team consisting of my in-country mentor and two public health students from the University of The Gambia. Cultural activities and public health experiences were also integrated throughout the program, such as exploring Gambian culture and popular tourist destinations, experiencing Ramadan and Eid (post-Ramadan celebration) activities, cooking traditional dishes, and seeing firsthand the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of healthcare in a rural area.

In the end, I made great memories and friends (within and outside of the program), ate and learned to cook tasty Gambian dishes, learned bits and pieces of the spoken languages, and learned about the country's public health issues and what international research is like with my research experience. My entire summer was definitely life-changing; I truly enjoyed every moment of it and would love to live it all over again! I would strongly recommend this program to anyone eligible and interested in public health abroad!

Upon returning and receiving

(Top) Vo conducts research in The Gambia during a summer. (Bottom) At left, Vo was surrounded by smiling faces while she was there, including the children in the towns that she visited while conducting her research. (Bottom) At right, a view of The Gambia, a tropical West African country where Vo spent her time.



opportunities to present my project to several different people, I encountered this question: “How is it ethical that you were studying something that could potentially be harming these people instead of helping them?” Taken aback, I didn’t know how to answer this fully, but the first thought that came to mind was that when it comes to developing an ethically sound project, anthropological ideas need to be considered. My background in anthropology

helped me a lot. I understood my standing in the community, who all viewed me as the expert from a developed country. I had learned in my global health courses about issues with studies where researchers tried to implement a new practice in a community, only to find out that the practice wasn’t sustainable or the community was angry that it was introduced to them in the first place. When I developed this project, I thought a lot about this—I didn’t want to introduce a new practice nor

change peoples’ habits. I just wanted to study what was not being studied enough, and looking at cloth filtration in its natural setting was the best way to approach my research question. Returning to the question I had received, the project I developed wasn’t centered on directly helping people; I wasn’t in those communities to magically cure everyone. I was there as a researcher and a learner from this experience, which gave me so much to think about when it comes to ethical research.

Story by: Tracy Vo

GRADUATING IBA SENIORS: REFLECTIONS ON PASTS AND ANTICIPATIONS FOR FUTURES

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION: Attend Imperial College London to get a Master of Research in Systems and Synthetic Biology.

FAVORITE MEMORY FROM LAST SEMESTER AT IOWA: Defending Honors Thesis in biochemistry and getting positive feedback from mentors and people Niko looks up to.

FAVORITE IBA MEMORY: Traveling to San Antonio for 2014 ABRCMS conference with Meaghan Rowe-Johnson, Hannah Miller and Edwin Sagastume. It was Niko's first national conference and a great experience overall.

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO AFTER GRADUATION: Traveling to new places for a time and relaxing



Senior **Nicholas McCarty** in Alajuelita, Costa Rica, holding a fig.

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION: Obtain a position as a Research Associate or Process Engineer at a pharmaceutical company.

FAVORITE IBA MEMORY: Traveling to Baltimore and getting the opportunity to meet other student researchers while placing top two at the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers National Conference.

ADVICE FOR CURRENT IBA STUDENTS: Determine what you want to do after graduation and attempt to join the best labs to help you accomplish this goal. If you don't find what you are currently researching interesting, then switch! It is not a bad thing. You would be amazed at all the research accessible on campus.



Senior **Edwin Sagastume** enjoys the ABRCMS conference in San Antonio, TX with graduate Hannah Miller and Senior Nicholas McCarty.

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION: Attend the School of Public Health at University of Iowa for Masters of Public Health. Hannah will also be working on level nine of the Stead Family Children's Hospital as a registered nurse.

FAVORITE IBA MEMORY: The holiday dinners! They were a great time to de-stress and enjoy good food.

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO AFTER GRADUATION: Working with students who are really committed to public health as well as working with some of Hannah's favorite kiddos in the hospital full time.

ADVICE FOR CURRENT IBA STUDENTS: Go to all the IBA events. This past semester Hannah didn't get to go to many due to her clinical schedule, and she felt like she really missed out.



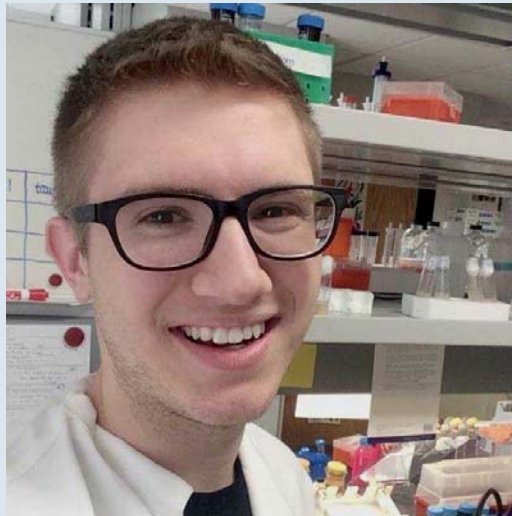
“Senior **Hannah Tykol** says, “Herky is not only an icon who represents the University of Iowa and the sports teams, but he also makes a lot of kiddos’ days in the hospital include a lot more smiles.”

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION: Moving to Germany to pursue a PhD at The European Molecular Biology Laboratory in Heidelberg.

FAVORITE IBA MEMORY: Going to The Allied Genetics Conference in Orlando—thanks for paying IBA!

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO AFTER GRADUATION: Moving to and living in Europe.

ADVICE FOR CURRENT IBA STUDENTS: Network whenever you can. You never know who is going to help you get that scholarship.



Senior **Timothy Fuqua** enjoying his time in lab at the University of Iowa.

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION: Attend the Medical Scientist Training Program at the University of Wisconsin to pursue the MD/PhD.

FAVORITE IBA MEMORY: A group of us volunteered at a Science Camp last summer for elementary school kids and it was a blast.

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO AFTER GRADUATION: Traveling and spending time with family and friends before the start of medical school.

ADVICE FOR CURRENT IBA STUDENTS: Use the resources available to you. Lori, Vincent, Meaghan and Brinda are excellent at looking over application materials and providing advice and expertise.



Senior **Maya Amjadi** in front of a castle in the country of Georgia where she traveled during winter break 2017.

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION: Attend Vanderbilt University to pursue a PhD in Biomedical Engineering.

FAVORITE IBA MEMORY: The Scholar Transition Proposal because it helped reinforce his interests in pursuing a career in research. The proposal helped him realize how much he enjoyed the designing and carrying out a research plan.

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO AFTER GRADUATION: Taking time to relax before pursuing his graduate studies and traveling.

ADVICE FOR CURRENT IBA STUDENTS: Take advantage of as many opportunities as possible. And even though it sounds cliché, strive for failure. Most successful people do not get lucky on the first try. Having many failures means that you have tried many times. Eventually you will strike gold.



Senior **Paul Taufalele** standing in front of a temple in Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand during his study abroad experience.

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION: Attend Suffolk University to pursue PhD in Clinical Psychology. She will be studying ACT, mindfulness and doing research with minorities.

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO AFTER GRADUATION: Moving to Boston and getting to live on the East Coast.

ADVICE FOR CURRENT IBA SENIORS: Remember to have fun and do things that take you out of your comfort zone.



Senior **Alexandria Miller** gives her Lessons Learned talk at the IBA graduation ceremony.

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION: Attend graduate school at the University of Iowa Biochemistry Department.

FAVORITE IBA MEMORY: Meeting new people

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO AFTER GRADUATION: Starting graduate school

ADVICE FOR CURRENT IBA STUDENTS: Explore your options and find something you really enjoy.



Senior **Maria Nuñez Hernandez** performing experiments in the biochemistry lab.

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION: Take a gap year and work in the labs she has been working with and volunteering for various public health-related organizations. Then Tracy plans to attend graduate school for a Master's of Public Health focused on epidemiology after that.

FAVORITE IBA MEMORY: The winter retreats. The topics vary from social justice to workshops dealing with microaggressions or imposter syndrome. Tracy really enjoyed learning and working through the different issues that students face.

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO AFTER GRADUATION: Narrowing down what she really wants to focus on and preparing for the graduate school application process. Tracy is also looking forward to doing more things that she loves like art and reading just for fun.

ADVICE FOR CURRENT IBA STUDENTS: Maximize your time at the University with IBA. IBA offers so many different resources. Use them to enrich your undergraduate research experience.



Senior **Tracy Vo** drinking coconut water on the beach in The Gambia. She aims to be as relaxed as she was in this photo.

PLANS AFTER GRADUATION: Attend graduate school at the University of Michigan



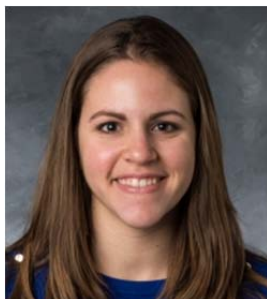
Senior **Michael Dominguez** (center) thanked IBA for all of their support at the IBA Graduation Ceremony. And shared that he was grateful for the people that he has met through the program.

IBA and LSAMP MAY AND SUMMER BIRTHDAYS

Tim Fuqua May 23rd



Anamar Blanes June 12th



Rikki Laser August 1st



Camille Jaime August 5th



Evan Lamb August 2nd



Callie Shannon June 4th



Sadie Moore July 17th



Angela Olvera July 27th



Niko McCarty August 12th



Tracy Vo July 22nd



Not pictured:

Marina Gibbs August 31st

Gocale Nicoue July 27th

Jade Rivera August 7th

SEMINARS BY DEPARTMENT

Microbiology: <https://medicine.uiowa.edu/microbiology/events>

Biology: <https://biology.uiowa.edu/about/seminars>

Physics: <https://physics.uiowa.edu/resources/events/calendar>

Chemistry: <https://chem.uiowa.edu/news/colloquium-seminar-schedule>

Psychology: <https://psychology.uiowa.edu/>

Biochemistry: <https://medicine.uiowa.edu/biochemistry/news-events/seminars>