

World Minded

A PUBLICATION OF THE REVES CENTER
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AT
WILLIAM & MARY

VOL. 17, NO. 1 , FALL 2024

Flourishing

INSIDE:

**HIMALAYAN UNIVERSITY
CONSORTIUM**

FRIENDS FOR A LIFETIME

FROM IRAN TO GLOUCESTER

**AFGHAN FEMALE
TACTICAL PLATOON**



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The Reves Center for International Studies advances the internationalization of teaching, learning and research at William & Mary, ensuring an international dimension is present in the university's priorities. Global education, support for international students and scholars, and the enrichment of our global community are at the heart of the Reves Center's work. Established in 1989, the Reves Center is today one of the premier international centers in higher education.

William & Mary is the number one public university for undergraduate study abroad participation, with more than 55 percent of the university's undergraduates studying outside the U.S. before graduation. Approximately 900 international students, scholars, and their families from 60 places of origin come to William & Mary. The Reves global engagement team builds and supports international initiatives across the university.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

World Minded: The Flourishing Edition highlights the stories of William & Mary people living fulfilling lives. This edition explores what flourishing looks like, how it grows and sometimes changes throughout an individual's career. The stories highlighted here shed light on the connections between students and faculty, faculty and staff, the university and the community. In all cases, global engagement is key.

The people featured here include William & Mary faculty, for example, a history professor who has led thirteen W&M study abroad programs (so far) and the Reves Fellows who conduct faculty-student fieldwork in places like Kamakura Japan and the Republic of Georgia. The students in this edition include the recipients of the 2024 International Student Achievement Awards, a PhD student at the Batten School, and a Freeman intern. The community connections are far reaching, from Williamsburg to China, Japan and Nepal.

What does flourishing look like in these instances? Consider Redeit Hailu '24, for example. Through our Freeman Fellowship program, Redeit worked as an intern at the We women foundation in Chaing Mai, Thailand where she embraced the intersection between economic development and women's empowerment, where she immersed herself in culture by relying on local perspectives. Flourishing in Redeit's case lines up with her burgeoning career in development. Princeton University selected her as a Princeton in Africa 2024-25 Fellow. In Redeit's story, there is also something a bit less tangible but equally important: a sense of clarity, an



Teresa Longo

*Associate Provost for
International Affairs*

*Executive Director, Reves Center for
International Studies*

alignment of values, and an attentive in-person way of engaging the world.

In some cases, flourishing also lines up with world-changing events and lifelong commitments. This fall, with support from W&M Vet, the Whole of Government Center for Excellence and the Society of 1918, the Reves Center hosted members of an Afghan female military platoon. In a panel discussion in front of a rapt audience, Rebekkah Edmondson and Mahnaz Akbari spoke about the challenges they faced, or rather embraced, together in Afghanistan; and with W&M's Kathleen Jabs, they spoke of their common bonds as women in the military. Edmondson and Akbari are now setting up an NGO that will support the resettlement of Afghan War allies and their families. While theirs is not an easy story, a flourishing spirit is nonetheless strong.

At the Reves Center for International Studies, we strive to cultivate globally minded students, convene hearts and minds from across the world, and captivate global audiences. As you read this edition of *World Minded*, I hope you find evidence that our efforts are working, that they uphold a flourishing community, one that also includes you.

Thanks for reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Teresa Longo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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ON THE COVER

Redeit Hulu '24 at "the Big Buddha" at Wat Huay Pla Kang (Courtesy photo)

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Professor Frederick Corney



Frederick Corney specializes in the history of Russia, specifically in the revolutionary period through the 1920s. He is especially interested in historiographic and cultural issues, notably historical memory, and Soviet film. He is currently working on a broad study of historical memory in modern Russia.

He has also led thirteen study abroad programs for William & Mary.

Above: Frederick Corney, Professor of History (Photo Credit: Steven Salpukas); Opposite: W&M Program in Cambridge (2005) program directors Fred Corney; Colleen Kennedy, (now emerita) associate professor of English; Jeremy Lopez, then assistant professor of English (Reves archives)

You were the program director in Vilnius this past summer. Was that your first time in Vilnius?

Yes, it was actually my first time in the Baltics. It's only the second time our program was there. We had to switch it from St. Petersburg because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It's a workable solution for our Russian-language students to be exposed to Russian in a practical setting.

Do you have a wish list? A country you haven't been to that you'd love to visit?

You know, I've directed a number of these programs. Now, I'm probably getting to the point where I'm unsure how many more I will do. But in terms of going to a place that I've never been, there are no places I wouldn't want to see. I would love to go to Australia, to our Melbourne program. I have family connections in Australia. I'd also love to do the New Zealand program that my colleague Andy Fisher set up a while back

Do you remember the first W&M program you led?

The first was the Cambridge program in 2005. Then in 2006, I led the St. Petersburg program. I went back to Cambridge in 2007, then Prague in 2008, St. Petersburg in 2010... followed by Cambridge, Prague, St. Petersburg, Potsdam, St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, St. Andrews, and Vilnius... Yikes.

You've more than carried your weight with William & Mary programs over the years. Had you ever led a program before you came to W&M?

At my last university, I directed a program in Moscow. I took nine students, and there was almost no institutional support whatsoever for various internal reasons. We had none of the safeguards that we have in place here at William & Mary, thanks to Sylvia [Mitterndorfer]* and her team at Reves. But it was an interesting exercise in getting to know how a program works – or doesn't work -- when you have no institutional backup.

That probably shaped how I approach these programs.

I tend not to over-manage them. Lots of things are going to happen, and I'll manage what I can.

I try to give the students space. They're abroad, some of them for the first time in their lives. They're experiencing life abroad, and I would hope that they don't want me -- an old professor -- in their pocket at every turn. Still, if something urgent happens, I know that back here at W&M I have people like Nick, or Sylvia, or Molly or Susan who have dealt with probably every issue that can come up.* I know I can call them and say, "I need help here." And I have.

So that takes a big part of the potential stress out of it – knowing you're not going to be stranded.

What about being a program director appeals to you?

You get to know the students in a different way. You get to know them a little bit better than you do in class. You're in different settings with them. You're on excursions, at dinners, with them. And I probably become a little less formal with them too -- within limits.

Do you design the curriculum for the programs you lead?

Yes, although I do use a template approach to my courses that can be adapted for pretty much any site. I focus on history and memory - my own field of research in relation to Russia – namely, how a state and its people construct usable pasts.

For me, the way in which a country designs and shapes its own cultural memory or its official narrative over time is very interesting, and the students seem to find it very interesting as well.

I often tell the students when we're



wandering around the city, "Look up. Keep your eyes open. If you see a statue, take a picture of it, and we'll discuss in class what its significance within the culture is or was." That is infinitely easier than it used to be with the technology we have now.

You can do a lot of those kinds of things with photographs. And probably half the group will be really taken with this methodology. I'll be snapping pictures with my iPhone, and they'll send me the photographs they take as well. I have accumulated literally thousands of images and videos in this way from the programs I've led.

This methodology works very well for programs that are focused on the history and culture of the particular country, but it also works very well for those that involve local language instruction. It helps unlock the language culturally. It is really adaptable to any country and program focus whatsoever.

For instance, in Vilnius, Lithuania this past summer, we took a closer look at the horrendous Jewish experience in Vilnius during the Second World War. There are quite a few commemorative sites there, although not as many as you might expect, as well as in Riga, Latvia and Tallinn, Estonia, for that matter. Plaques, museums, art installations mark the deportation of the Jews from the Baltic republics to the Nazi death camps in the East.

One student on the program wrote her final research paper on these sites. We had a local tour that included many of them, and we visited them ourselves as

*Reves Center staff: Sylvia Mitterndorfer, Director of Global Education Office; Director of Global Partnerships; Nick Vasquez, Associate Director, International Travel & Security; Molly DeStafney, Senior Associate Director/Deputy Director of Global Education; and Susan Manion, Advisor, Global Education Office .



Top: Jewish figure near cafe, Vilnius, Lithuania (2024); Below: Stolpersteine, Vilnius, 2024; In the catacombs in Vilnius. Opposite: Students on the beaches of Karkle, Lithuania, (2024). Photo credits: Fred Corney

a class. We examined our photographs and discussed them in class. We asked what it took for that particular statue to be there at a particular time, and what it signified. Especially interesting in Vilnius were several sparsely drawn, black-filled outlines of Jewish figures on walls in the Jewish quarter. A commemoration of the loss of East European Jewry. Every time I walked past one of these outlines I'd take a new picture. Sometimes it would be next to a café, and somebody would be sitting right next to it at a table having a cup of coffee. Seemingly oblivious to the fateful image nearby. We also searched for and discussed so-called Stolpersteine (stumbling stones) around the city. About twenty years ago, a German artist began placing brass plaques commemorating Jewish individuals in many cities around Europe. Vilnius has its own examples, and are set in front of houses from which Jews were deported to Auschwitz.

How do you structure the programs?

These weeks go by very, very fast, and one of the balances I try to get right is not to over manage them.

But I do tend to get excited about things when I'm in a new place like the Baltics. When I get there, I see places that I want to show the students, and I'll say, "Okay, we're going to go here. We have to go here." But I always try to build at least one weekend into every program when they can leave and go somewhere on their own or in groups. I didn't manage this with Vilnius this summer though... Each program has its own dynamic, its own pace and rhythm. Students are in class every day doing languages in some of these programs. They have their day divided up. I try not to encroach too much on that day.

What do you think are the qualities of an effective program director?

I think you've got to be pretty calm, pretty even tempered. I don't engage in doom scenarios in our orientations

before we go. It is an easy – and very human - thing to do. If you want to sit around driving yourself crazy about the potential things that could go wrong, you won't enjoy it at all. Instead, you strategize for the potential problems, and set up safeguards and scenarios through Reves, and then you will know what to do if something does go south.

I think it's essential to convey that sense of calm and flexibility to the students. I try to convey, "I'm organizing this. Everything's going to be fine, and if it's not, we'll work on our feet and do something else."

The expectations I set out in the one credit course at WM in the spring* are very important. I think good behaviors abroad can be modeled in that course to a certain extent.

Every now and then a colleague will reach out to me for advice on how to put together a new program.

And the first question I ask is, "Is this sustainable without you? Because you might have to be doing this every year for it to survive. If not, you have to think of how to get more individuals involved in its management. And the other question I ask is, "Can you get enough students?" Some of the places that you would think would absolutely have enough students might not.

You studied abroad as a student.

Yes. I was an undergraduate in the north of England, in a really unusual university program. It was a 4-year translating and interpreting program. We did booth-interpreting, and lots of translation into and out of the

I often tell the students when we're wandering around the city, "Look up. Keep your eyes open. If you see a statue, take a picture of it, and we'll discuss in class what its significance within the culture is or was."



target languages. Mine were German and Russian at that university. As part of that program, we were required to spend a year abroad.

So, I spent six months in Munich, working at a company as an intern translator. Then I spent six months learning Russian in a Center of Russian Studies near Paris, full of Russia émigrés and exiles.

And we're going back now 40 – almost 50 -- years. It was a different time. I was in Munich and Paris on my own entirely. Little contact with family back in England. No social media (I still don't...), and of course no cell phones. There was one visit a semester from a professor from our university. That was all.

Where did you live? In dormitories?

When I arrived at the train station in Munich, I saw a board where they posted available rooms. And that's how I got a room. And then in France we lived in a kind of chateau run by

*INTR 299 - W&M Summer Study Abroad Program Preparatory (1 Course Credit): This course is designed specifically for students going on one of the W&M Summer Study Abroad Programs and is intended to enhance a student's cross-cultural understanding and experience, and to cover a variety of pre-departure questions. This course includes substantive academic content.

Paris 1975



the Russian priests, which was a real experience.

I still remember that year abroad very well, and am still in touch with old friends from that group. It was a life-changing year abroad, and I think these shorter programs have the same impact for some students, especially if it's their first time out of Virginia, or heaven forbid, of the United States.

I've heard this before - that study abroad is life changing. It can mean different things. Can you describe what to you was life-changing? Did it change your vision of yourself? Increase your confidence?

Oh, confidence. Yes. Completely.

I'd learned German in high school, and I'd had a year and a half of German at university. But when I got to Munich, it was the first time that I really felt that my German was being challenged and I could

feel it improving exponentially. I was working every day from 7:30 to 4:30 in a German office with Germans, speaking only German and trying to struggle through the first couple of months speaking bad German, it should be said.

And, more importantly, for the first time in my life I was left to my own devices.

I was on my own. No money coming in. My parents had no extra money available, so I just had my grant, my stipend from my university.

To make a bit of extra money, I gave English lessons in this small town outside of Paris. That allowed me to feed my life-long love of French cafes.

In Germany, I had a small salary, and a nightlife of all things! And then in Paris, I was with a group of students from my university, so that was a little community that we had. But I got to know some French people. I actually spoke quite a bit of French while I was

there, maybe more than Russian. I got to know Paris really well, and I fell in love with the city. I go back as often as I can.

So, all this stuff I did on my own, and I think I came back a quite different person, much more confident. And both languages improved a lot.

Maybe more sophisticated? You're a 19-year-old from England. And all of a sudden, you're thrown into this new world. So, sophistication may not be the right word, but maybe worldliness?

I'd never use 'sophisticated' in relation to me, but maybe an openness, a curiosity.

We were complete rubes. Where I grew up near Portsmouth, in the south of England, very few people went to university. Suddenly, I'm walking around Paris, making friends there, and spending a lot of time with people who didn't look or talk like

Top: Photos of Fred Corney and his fellow students Opposite: Fred Corney photobombs a student's photo in Vilnius. (Courtesy of Fred Corney)

I tell this to the students who are 19- and 20-year-olds, worried about their careers: I didn't get to mine until I was 32. You might find yourself doing something later that you had not even conceived of at this moment in time.

the people I grew up with. I realized I liked being out of my element. I like being in different countries where nobody knows me.

So maybe a bit of worldliness is the right word. It's the idea that there's a bigger world than the one in which you grew up.

What was your career path after your experience abroad? How did it impact your next steps?

Well, I worked as a translator after university for a couple of years in Sheffield, and then at a pharmaceutical company in Frankfurt, Germany for about five years in the '80s.

I'd held on to this vague idea about going back and doing something more with Russian, maybe with Russian history. I had the four-year degree in German and Russian and had come out with reasonably good German and Russian, which still needed work – as languages always do. But I'd always had this idea of going back to get a PhD in Russian. And as the eighties took shape, especially with Gorbachev coming into power, Russia was getting to be a really interesting place to study. So, I applied to do a PhD in Russian History at Columbia University or a PhD in Slavic Languages and Literatures at Yale.

Yale rejected me, Columbia accepted me. I'd already been to New York in 1979 and had fallen in love with the city. And I went there thinking I'll give it a year. I had a year's funding, and if I washed out after a year, I thought, I'd go do something else. It would at least give me a chance to look around the world a bit more (I got that taste in Munich and Paris). But then I ended up really enjoying it and to my utter surprise I completed my PhD at Columbia in 1997.

Where does your heart lie professionally? Do you consider yourself a historian, translator, linguist?

I tell this to the students who are 19- and 20-year-olds, worried about their careers: I didn't get to mine until I was 32. You might find yourself doing something later that you had not even conceived of at this moment in time. I love history. I was chair of the history department for almost six years, and my department is great. But had I serendipitously gotten into Yale -- at that time I was learning Polish as well as Russian -- I probably would have gone to Yale and studied Slavic languages and would have been doing that instead. Some of my closest colleagues and comrades here are in the Russian department. These are the people that I work most closely with on these study abroad programs. Indeed, they're the ones who did all the legwork setting up the old St. Petersburg and current Vilnius programs.



Essentially, I just come and benefit from their good work.

After Columbia, there was the question of what do I do now – the job thingy? And I decided to try to get a job in academia. There are few better jobs than academia, if you like talking about ideas in a classroom full of smart students – something you can do mightily at this university. It's been a joy to be able to do that for the past twenty years.

And I still get enthusiastic about that -- good responses to good questions from smart students. Sometimes I get better questions to my initial questions. That's the thing. There's always the student here who will surprise you with an insightful response to something you've said in class. I remember those students still. Students who catch me unawares with their agile brains. That's a pretty good payoff from a class. I'll keep doing that as long as I can. ☺



(left to right) Liam McLinda '25, Kate Marston '25, and Lhundup Lama of local conservation organization Third Pole Conservancy pose in front of the Annapurna mountain range during a hike to Tilicho Base Camp, where they will conduct surveys and prepare to ascend the climb to Tilicho Lake. (Courtesy photo)

W&M celebrates Himalayan University Consortium membership

The new partnership provides opportunities for collaborative, transnational climate change and conservation work in Nepal and other Himalayan countries.

BY LAURA GROVE

The ampersand has long been at the heart of William & Mary's identity, symbolizing strength and versatility gained through interwoven disciplines, perspectives and ideas. A new membership in a collaborative organization will facilitate interdisciplinary opportunities for the W&M community to aid in tackling some of the most pressing global challenges.

The Himalayan University Consortium (HUC) of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain

Development (ICIMOD) is a multinational research network with the mission of making the Hindu Kush region of the Himalayas "greener, more inclusive and climate resilient." In an April HUC Steering Committee meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal, Associate Professor of Religious Studies Patton Burchett presented a charter signed by William & Mary President Katherine A. Rowe to endorse the university's new membership.

The collaboration is one of several partnerships advanced by the Reves Center for International Studies to provide faculty and students with opportunities for hands-on learning

and research that focuses on critical global issues.

"By joining the HUC, W&M accelerates access to these opportunities," said Reves' Executive Director Teresa Longo. "Our presence in the consortium underscores W&M values – curiosity and respect, for example – within the global context."

ADVANTAGES OF COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

The HUC benefits both local communities and the global population while enhancing student experiences via multicultural exchanges. To date, the consortium comprises 107



The 2023 Community-Based Strategies for Freshwater Management team enjoys an educational jeep tour of Bardiya National Park, Nepal. Photo by Sapana Lohani; R: Kate Marson '25 poses on a suspension bridge on the trail to Pisang, a town where she will conduct surveys on the human-carnivore conflict. (Photo by Sapana Lohani)

universities within the eight Hindu Kush Himalayan countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan as well as other regions in the world.

“The consortium works to strengthen connections between knowledge-generating and decision-making institutions, creating new opportunities for transdisciplinary and transboundary research collaboration and enhancing mountain-specific research,” Burchett wrote in an email.

W&M’s membership will provide researchers from a wide array of disciplines with access to a broader network of collaborators and local knowledge within the Hindu Kush region. Mutual benefits of HUC membership include faculty research contributions, student research opportunities and network building.

Burchett, a Reves Faculty Fellow, looks forward to HUC opportunities for both faculty and students within the interdisciplinary Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (AMES) program, in which he serves as an instructor, and throughout the wider W&M community.

“I’d love to see people in the sciences excited to work in the Himalayan region,” he said, “and I’d love for people who are already working in the region in other

disciplines to be excited about how their research can integrate with the sciences – something I’ve been learning myself.”

W&M’s involvement in the HUC stems from the Nepal Water Initiative (NWI), a multidisciplinary research effort led by scientists and scholars from W&M’s Batten School of Coastal & Marine Sciences at VIMS, the Global Research Institute (GRI), the Institute for Integrative Conservation (IIC) and the Religious Studies Department.

The NWI seeks to evaluate environmental threats to Nepal’s water resources and empower conservation leaders to advance community-based efforts to protect water resources and promote sustainable livelihoods.

IIC Lead Geospatial Scientist Sapana Lohani has been deeply involved in the NWI since its inception in 2019. Having experienced the benefits of multidisciplinary research first-hand, she spearheaded the initiative to join the HUC.

“We are looking for collaborators who are willing to work together for conservation purposes in Nepal,” she said. “The HUC is a very good platform for us to address conservation issues and broaden our impact by working with other willing entities, including academic institutions,

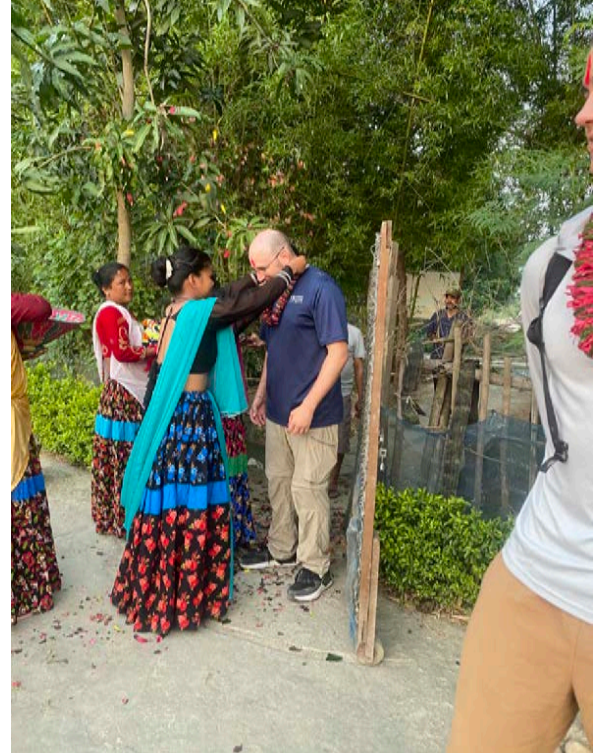
conservation organizations and local communities.”

Lohani explained that the IIC seeks to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into conservation projects, as local people have in-depth, long-term knowledge about their own ecosystems. Conducting multidisciplinary research will enable W&M to contribute to conservation solutions led by Hindu Kush people, conserving the Himalayan ecosystems that benefit both the local and global communities.

“The main motive of this membership was collaboration with conservation in our minds and communities in our hearts,” said Lohani.

IIC Director of Research Erica Garrouette pointed out that involvement in the HUC expands opportunities for immersive field experiences for students.

“Research in the Himalayas gives students an incredible experience,” said Garrouette, “because not only do they get to interact with fellow W&M students and faculty who are guiding them through the research, but they also have opportunities to interact with other students from other universities, especially from the areas where the work is being done. There’s a multicultural exchange of knowledge.”



Left: Cecilia Elsis '26 shows a photo to schoolchildren while working on the Nepal Water Initiative. (Photo by Dylan Mantovani '26); Right: Joseph F. Baca '24 is welcomed to an evening feast arranged by the local community for the 2023 Community-Based Strategies for Freshwater Management Team in Nepal. (Photo by Sepana Lohani)

In their research, W&M students work side-by-side with students from academic institutions in the region, members of local communities and researchers from all over the world. They build relationships that both enhance their experience as students and build pathways to conservation careers.

STUDENT RESEARCH IN THE HIMALAYAS

The IIC is currently working on several research projects in Nepal. For example, two students furthered the research of the Nepal Water Initiative this year, and the project will continue next year.

Additionally, over the summer, two students worked with a local partner to gain a better understanding of human-wildlife conflict in Nepal. The project focuses on how snow leopards, bears and other carnivores influence pastoralist communities. This research will continue in 2025, when students will compare strategies that have been implemented in the United States with approaches that are being considered in high-elevation areas of Nepal.

This semester, IIC researchers will also team up with W&M Assistant Professor of Kinesiology Julius Odhiambo for an interdisciplinary public health project in Nepal that evaluates the link between conservation and maternal health.

“HUC membership allows us to figure out where there’s alignment internally, and then also to expand that

collective impact externally,” said Garrouette. “And who doesn’t want to go to Nepal?”

The HUC is composed of thematic working groups, encompassing a wide range of conservation topics. In these groups, researchers from the Hindu Kush region and around the world collaborate on regional and transboundary projects, joint publications, sharing and dissemination.

“How valuable the HUC is going to be is directly related to how much we put into it,” said Burchett. “The best way for us to benefit from it is if we have faculty at the university that join some of the HUC’s thematic working groups and take advantage of what the consortium has to offer.”

Lohani noted that membership in the HUC yields opportunities for W&M to contribute to meaningful outcomes.

“I see HUC as a great resource for collaborative learning experiences from local communities, researchers and experts from the Himalayas,” said Lohani. “We in W&M can contribute on policy formulation and/or policy translation. It can be in the form of student-exchange and/or faculty exchange but there is a lot of potential. We, as science nerds, cannot agree more that policy translations are the best outcomes of science and scientific research.”



Photos clockwise from top: The W&M cohort of the Human_Carnivore Conflict Team rest at Green Lake while backpacking between villages to survey local people. (Courtesy photo); Jack E. Hayes '24 introduces himself to a household's domestic cow during survey work in Lamjung, Nepal. (Photo by Sapana Lohani); The NWI Research Team takes a break from driving at a waterfall lookout. (Photo credit: Dylan Mantovani '26); The Human-Carnivore Conflict team poses in front of Gangapurna glacier in Manang, with the hospitable owner of their residence while in the field (Courtesy photo)



William & Mary hosts members of Afghan female tactical platoon

BY EMMA HENRY '25

Originally appeared in **THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE**, SEPT. 28, 2024

Members of an Afghan female tactical platoon appeared at William & Mary this week to talk about mental toughness, resilience and what it's been like since the U.S. withdrew from Afghanistan.

The panel, hosted by the Reve Center for International Studies, drew dozens of attendees to W&M's Tucker Hall to hear from veterans Rebekah Edmondson, Mahnaz Akbari and Kathleen T. Jabs about their experiences.

Akbari and Edmondson worked directly with the first Afghan Female Tactical Platoon in Afghanistan as high-ranking members of the special unit. The platoon, or FTP, combined both Afghan and U.S. troops with the aim of working with women and children during raids. Due to Afghan cultural norms that often prohibit men from touching or speaking to

women, the FTP was an integral part of gathering information that could lead to Taliban targets.

The pair met in 2014 during one of Edmondson's four deployments to Afghanistan as an enlisted member of the U.S. Army. Prior to 2011, Edmondson was deployed to support Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Freedom Sentinel before being selected for the Joint Special Operations Command's Cultural Support Team to help integrate women into combat. Eventually, her role was to work with Akbari to train Afghan women and conduct direct-action night-raids.

Akbari, who is from Afghanistan, grew up in Iran and joined the Afghan National Army in 2011. For 10 years, she served as commander of the FTP and worked alongside U.S. Special Operations Forces. In 2021, she was forced to flee Afghanistan with 30 other members of the FTP following

the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the country.

Jabs, a retired U.S. Navy veteran, witnessed the arrival of many Afghan refugees during her time as acting secretary and deputy secretary of veterans and defense affairs for Virginia. She now works as special assistant to the president for military and veteran affairs at the university.

"What made the FTP unique was because it broke all the cultural barriers in Afghanistan," Akbari said. "We had a lot of brave, strong women, that in the past had fought against the enemy, but we didn't have the structure of the military."

Growing up in Iran, Akbari explained that there was a lot of discrimination against Afghans, so joining the military in Afghanistan was a way for her to represent her country in a powerful position and fight back against the restrictions she grew up facing. In fact, many of

L-R: Teresa Longo, Rebekah Edmondson, Mahnaz Akbari and Kathleen T. Jabs. (Photo credit: Kate Hoving)



the questions she asked women serving in the FTP revolved around their purpose in the military, and the mental energy it took to come back stronger the next day.

“The work we did was initially classified; it was very unsafe, especially for Mahnaz, to be known as this individual that was going out on night raids,” Edmondson said. “But seeing the environments that people were living in and how women were being treated, it just reinforced the need for this type of work.”

Jabs mentioned that, despite never serving in combat herself, the three women have bonded over the shared pressures they experienced as women in the military. To her, giving “forgiveness and compassion” for oneself is an essential skill to cultivate in these high-intensity situations.

Edmondson and Akbari also spoke to being women in a male-dominated culture, with Akbari adding that there was an additional layer of cultural norms, family life and motherhood for Afghan women serving in the FTP.

After the evacuation from Afghanistan, Akbari and the rest of the FTP came to the United States as refugees, with Akbari only recently granted asylum and still waiting for her green card. She reflected on the evacuation as one of the worst things in her life, especially with the knowledge that the Taliban were now ruling her home country.

Edmondson added that it is important for people to understand that, despite the lack of media about Afghanistan post-withdrawal, citizens of the country are still suffering at the hands of the Taliban and refugees are still waiting for the family reunification process.

“These people have literally given everything that one could give for our protection and for the safety of our country, and now their family members are unsafe,”



she said. “There’s still more that we need to do to support those people that have worked so hard to protect us.”

To support the rescue and resettlement of Afghan War allies and their families, Edmondson started a nonprofit called NXT Mission. Follow the fledgling group’s efforts at nxtmission.org, [facebook.com/nxtmissionorg](https://www.facebook.com/nxtmissionorg), or email FTP@nxtmission.org.

The video of the panel is available for viewing on the Reves Center YouTube channel.

Top: Rebekah and Mahnaz visited the Office of Student Veteran Engagement to talk with: Charlie Foster M.Ed. '17, director, Office of Student Veteran Engagement From left to right: Margaret Xu (Navy vet, senior); Foster; Akbari; Edmondson; Joselia Souza, Director, First Generation Student Engagement, Director, First Generation Student Engagement.; Brandon Parker (Graduate Asst. for the OSVE, M.Ed. Counseling Program, Mil-Vet track, USMC vet), Bryce Elmore '25 (Navy vet); Ian Schlueter (Navy active duty (soon-to-be vet), OSVE Intern), Angelique Echols '25 (Navy vet, President of Student Veterans of W&M); and Josue Jean '25 (Navy vet). (Photo Credits: Kate Hoving).



Redeit visited Wat Rong Khun, or the White Temple, is a Buddhist temple in Pa O Don Chai, Mueang District, Chiang Rai province, Thailand (Courtesy photo)

An internship brings clarity, direction and nuanced understanding

BY KATE HOVING

The summer before her senior year, Redeit Hailu '24 spent eight weeks as a Freeman Intern Fellow in Chaing Mai, Thailand. She worked at We women foundation, a nonprofit committed to uplifting ethnically marginalized women from Myanmar.

An international relations major, Redeit had just returned from spring semester her junior year at Charles University in Prague, studying the post-Soviet socio-economic development of the Czech Republic. She was looking for an opportunity to work abroad, something she had always wanted to do. And as much as she valued her time in Prague, she was looking for something outside of Europe.

Redeit underwent the competitive application process for the Freeman Intern Fellowship with the hope that she could gain knowledge not only about effective international development work, but also about herself and her goals. She gained all of that and more.

"The Freeman Intern Fellowship was one of the best experiences of my time at William & Mary," Redeit says. "It helped clarify and narrow the direction I want to take in my career."

As part of the application, she could rank her preferred assignment, and We women, a grassroots, nonprofit that focused on lifting ethnically marginalized women from Myanmar through educational and professional opportunities, was especially appealing. The foundation assists students in preparing for university, advising them during the application process, and supporting them during their study and throughout their job search. The foundation also provides scholarship funding for university tuition, as well as academic tutoring and coaching.

"It was the intersection of the work I wanted to do -- economic development and women's empowerment. It just happened to be in Thailand, which is a wonderful location, of course, so I ranked that as my top choice. I had never done anything focused on Southeast Asia before, and suddenly I was immersed in Myanmar politics, trying foods I'd never had, and visiting temples."

At We women, Redeit was part of a small team--the founder, Redeit's manager and some volunteers-- so she was able to do a lot of very hands-on work. "I got to hear the women's stories directly and be under the leadership of locals, and I think that was fundamental towards my understanding. It was different from what it would have been working at an American nonprofit."

In addition to teaching, Redeit worked on a very successful fundraising campaign, called Educate One Empower Thousands, which resulted in their being able to send four

The Freeman Fellowship became a great launching pad

Freeman Intern Fellowships in East Asia

A generous grant from the Freeman Foundation makes it possible for up to 24 William & Mary undergraduates to conduct unpaid internships in Asia. The purpose of the program is to provide students with a range of professional opportunities in structured, real-world settings that will allow them to clarify their career goals, enhance their career preparation, and develop their cultural competencies. Each Freeman Fellow is awarded a minimum of \$5,000 to help offset a significant portion of their travel and living expense. The duration of the internship must be a minimum of eight full-time weeks. Internship hosts include private firms, research institutes, nonprofit organizations, and other institutions in Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. The program is administered by the Reves Center for International Studies with support from Arts & Sciences.

women to university. She handled the social media and wrote blogs about the different women to highlight and showcase We women's work to their donors.

Redeit's assignment was different from the other Freeman Fellows in her cohort that summer; it was a solo assignment and remote posting "Most of the time my work was done at a co-working station, and I would see my supervisor only every two weeks. It was also the first time We women had hosted someone from William & Mary, so there was that added layer of needing to establish and then meet expectations from the school and the program."

Rani Mullen, associate professor of government at William & Mary, was the faculty director of the Freeman Fellowship program that summer and saw the impact Redeit had on the organization. "Redeit had the most challenging Freeman internship of all the 22 Fellows, the trials she faced when working on difficult issues (such as women rescued from sex trafficking), and the challenges she faced as an African American woman in Thailand. And yet she excelled at dealing with some difficult situations. Her mentor and supervisor raved about Redeit's ability to assess a situation quietly and devote day and night to solving the issue."

We women made a strong impact on Redeit, as well. "My supervisors explained that all the media and coverage that we in the U.S. receive about anything going on in Myanmar is primarily regarding the military junta and Rohingya genocide. But there are also so many different ethnic groups with their own armed militias, facing their own struggles and their own centuries of repression. And that's something I didn't know at all until I arrived in Thailand and got to communicate and interact with those communities and learn about them through our various partners. That shows the importance, I think, of awareness and understanding of the nuances you can get from the people on the ground, and that helps when it comes to looking for solutions and formulating what makes sense."

She found it essential to hear and value input from the local community. "One of the most important things my supervisor told me was that she felt that oftentimes people from the West come [to her country] wanting to implement their own ideas or solutions, and they don't listen. No matter how many degrees or international experiences they might have, nothing overrides humility and having a local experience and local understanding."

That echoed advice she had received from some W&M alumni, who had advised Redeit to seek out an in-country fellowship, as it would be fundamental to her understanding of global development. "Going through the Freeman Intern Fellowship confirmed everything that they had said. I was able to gain a more nuanced understanding and exposure to multiple perspectives, which is so important as I start my career."

And her career is on its way. Redeit was selected to be a Princeton in Africa 2024-2025 Fellow. "The Freeman Fellowship became a great launching pad."



The Princeton in Africa fellowship is a highly selective, yearlong service program that places recent college graduates and young professionals in a social-impact driven company or nonprofit NGO, with the goal of helping future leaders develop lifelong connections to the people and nations of Africa.

Redeit's fellowship, which began fall 2024, is in Nairobi, Kenya, at a nonprofit called Food for Education (F4E). A school feeding nonprofit started in 2012 committed to combatting childhood hunger and improving educational outcomes by providing nutritious school meals.

As a fundraising associate at F4E, Redeit's duties build on what she learned at We women while developing new skills. "My day primarily consists of writing and managing donor reports, writing and managing grant proposals, and scoping out new donor engagement strategies and funding opportunities. This role requires significant collaboration with other departments, and

Top: As an Ethiopian-American, Redeit would often run into many Thai locals interested in her Ethiopian heritage. She had the opportunity to present on Ethiopia to both monks and lay students during Professor Steve Epstein's Global English Class at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. (Courtesy photo); Bottom: Redeit visited Jing Jai Market in Chiang Mai, Thailand. A weekend open-air market that sells organic produce and artisan crafts, to promote an environmentally conscious shopping experience. (Courtesy photo)



it's nice to get to work with multiple teams and support different projects.”

She is learning from the management of F4E. “This is a female- and locally-led organization, and I can see the difference it makes in terms of leadership, decision-making, and advocacy compared to other organizations in international development. F4E's high level of efficiency and multi-pronged angle at creating impact throughout the value chain challenges the status quo of school feeding programs and social entrepreneurship on the continent.”

Life is very different from the solo assignment in Chaing Mai. “Nairobi is a bustling city with so much to do. Its similarities to Addis Ababa, where my family used to live, have definitely helped in terms of adjustment. Having a positive experience at F4E and living in a city with many other PiAf fellows has also helped. Additionally, skills I developed through the Freeman Fellowship experience when it comes to navigating life and work in a foreign context, especially as a young individual, have made things go more smoothly.”

As for what comes next for Redeit, her priority now is completing her fellowship successfully, but true to character, she is thinking strategically about her next step and new goals.

Getting a master's degree is one option. She knows she wants to select something about which she is passionate, but not surprisingly, she wants it to be useful. “It's not a question necessarily of what I want to pursue, but rather using the opportunities and capabilities that I have, what makes sense? What can I do that will make the greatest impact? So, until I can really identify that, I think I'll hold off on a master's program.”

Ying Liu, associate director of global partnerships at the Reves Center, manages the Freeman Intern Fellowship at W&M, and has no doubt about Redeit's potential. Citing her cultural adaptability, global experience, and strong commitment to global development and gender equality, Liu is confident, “Redeit's passion for empowering women and disadvantaged groups, along with her exceptional research and project management skills, truly sets her apart from other students. I am confident she will continue to make a meaningful impact both locally and globally.”

And Redeit has a very clear idea of the value of the Freeman Intern Fellowship. “It encouraged me to pursue opportunities and equipped me with very tangible skills for

working abroad in international development,” she explains. “I walked away so much more confident. I know I can live anywhere in the world and apply to all of these different fellowships, without really any concern or fear, because I learned I can take care of myself and still have a wonderful time.”

Redeit is currently at Food for Education in Nairobi as a Princeton in Africa Fellow. (Courtesy photo)

The building blocks of a life

BY KATE HOVING

Ima Hosseinzadeh, Ph.D. student at William & Mary's Batten School of Coastal & Marine Sciences at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), may be a long way from her native Iran, but in the labs and on the research vessels in Gloucester, Virginia, she is right at home.

She worked hard to get here, and she capitalizes on every moment and opportunity.

A daughter of commercial manager and a fashion designer, Ima didn't start life thinking she would become a marine biologist, examining microscopic organisms at the mouth of the York River, but through careful consideration and analysis by her, her parents and mentors, she found her calling. And with her characteristic determination and intellectual curiosity, she has persisted in pursuing that calling, despite logistical, geopolitical and bureaucratic obstacles.

Ima grew up and went to university in Tehran in a very different environment from the one she inhabits now. "I'm from the capital city of Iran, which is very crowded, with heavy traffic and pollution. We have some days in the year – not many, but some days -- that schools are closed because of the air pollution."

When considering potential undergraduate majors, an educational consultant advised her to consider pursuing engineering, natural resources. Of those, the field that appealed to her was natural resources-fisheries, and she started her studies at the Tehran Azad university, thinking

she would ultimately start an aquaculture business with her parents, focusing on sturgeon, a fish that is prevalent in the Caspian Sea, north of Tehran, and known (and over-fished) for its high quality caviar "Beluga Caviar".

Her education proceeded as planned, but during her master's program, Ima took a class in limnology [the study of the biological, chemical, and physical features of lakes and other bodies of fresh water]. She found the professor and the class captivating. "In our lab we were looking with the microscope at different phytoplankton and zooplankton, and I became fascinated by how these tiny, microscopic organisms—impossible to see with the naked eye—form the foundation of the marine food web. Their role is important not only for ocean life but also for the entire planet, as they drive nutrient cycles and support ecosystems that affect life far beyond the oceans".

Phytoplankton are, indeed, amazing little creatures that on the one hand are food for ocean animals. But as if that weren't enough, they utilize photosynthesis (taking in light energy and carbon dioxide from the air) to make food for themselves. Through that process, they release oxygen into the ocean, freshwaters and atmosphere. Basically, more than half of the oxygen on earth is produced by phytoplankton.

And once she had discovered the magic of phytoplankton, the sturgeon never had a chance. "I'm a phytoplankton person."

Or to put it another way, whereas most of us might look at a glass on a shelf in a lab and see just some murky, green water, Ima can look at that same beaker and see

Phytoplankton.. Photo Credit: NOAA MESA Project



Clockwise from top: Ima with her parents in Northern Iran; Ima in her lab in Iran; Ima sampling in the Caspian Sea during her master's program. (Courtesy photos)

something extraordinary—the microorganisms that are the building blocks of life.

THE PATH TO WILLIAM & MARY AND A CAREER

It had always been Ima's dream to pursue a PhD, and she was accepted into a program in Tehran Iran, "but I changed my mind at the last minute."

She and her parents had been looking ahead at jobs that would be available to her in her field.

"My parents were always supportive and genuinely cared about what I wanted to be, trying to help me find a career in something I truly loved. Although in Iran, the most secure and prosperous paths are often in fields like medicine, civil engineering, and computers—not in marine science—they believed in my passion and encouraged me to follow my interests, which meant so much, especially since it's not as common in our culture."

To have the best opportunities in marine science, she would have to explore programs abroad. She had the intellect and the education to get accepted in any program, but as an Iranian citizen, getting a student visa could be a challenge.

"At first, I wanted to go to Canada, because it would be easier to get a visa; many Iranians go to Canada." But as she began researching universities, she learned that even in Canada, her career options were limited. "It's more difficult to find positions for bachelor's or even master's programs, much less PhD programs."

Her next thought was Scandinavia. But obstacles kept arising – whether from the lack of programs and positions available or in the difficulties in securing a visa.

At that point, she realized she needed to focus all her efforts on one country, and that needed to be the U.S.

As always, her parents were fully committed to supporting her choices. "My parents always encouraged me to follow my dreams, even if it took me to the farthest parts of the world. I now understand how lucky I am; talking with others has shown me that many parents, especially for daughters, not just in Iran but from

various countries, often aren't as supportive of their children moving abroad. It's a unique kind of support that's meant so much in my journey."

She discovered the Batten School had everything she was looking for: comprehensive and interdisciplinary research opportunities (Coastal & Ocean Processes, Ecosystem Health, and Natural Resources); a highly regarded Ph.D. program; state-of-the-art facilities; and the unique combination of scholarly research and education with regional, national and global advisory services.

But finding the right program with the best career potential was just the first hurdle. She still needed to be accepted and get a visa.

Because the U.S. doesn't have an embassy in Iran, Ima had three

*The feeling I have
about my country is
that it is stuck.*

Just stuck.

*The government won't
let the
country breathe.*

options for her visa application: Turkey, Dubai or Armenia. She went to Armenia because she could get the earliest appointment there, but even so, it took months.

"It's not as simple as just requesting an appointment—you need to secure a visa and spend a lot of time online, hoping an appointment becomes available. And when it does, you have to act fast to grab it before someone else does," Ima explains. "I started searching for an appointment from October 2021 until January, and finally found one for May 2022 in January 2022. Not all appointment dates work for students, though, since they need to schedule it around the time they receive their admission and I-20 forms (which can be different in any university), and not too close to the program start date, as background

checks can take months, sometimes even a few years. This delay can cause students to lose their spot at schools, making it extremely difficult to find the right appointment date. Sadly, these challenges often discourage professors, who understand these obstacles, from accepting students from Iran.

William & Mary sent the good news of her acceptance with an offer letter in March. It said they would send her I-20 [Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status] in June, which is the standard turnaround time.

The problem was that she needed it for her embassy interview in May. And with some universities, that might have meant the end of road, but not W&M.

"I told them I couldn't change the appointment, but Linda Schaffner, Dean of Academic Affairs at VIMS responded right away, telling me, 'It's totally fine. We will send you your I-20 sooner so you can go to the embassy for your interview.'"

It all fell into place: Ima got her I-20 in time, she received her visa, and she headed to Virginia.

A NEW ENVIRONMENT: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Ima arrived at William & Mary in August 2022.

In Iran, Ima had concentrated on phytoplankton physiology, but here, her focus is more on ecology, examining the interaction between phytoplankton and shellfish, specifically oysters.

Because her research involves both phytoplankton and shellfish, although doctoral candidates usually have just one advisor, Ima has two: Assistant Professor Nicole Millette (the phytoplankton expert) and Bill Walton, Acuff Professor of Marine Science and Shellfish Aquaculture Program Coordinator. She welcomes the atypical arrangement.

"I have two different ideas, two different labs and a broader range of colleagues."

Ima works mostly in the lab in Chesapeake Bay Hall, but you will also find her in the algae room in the new Acuff Center for Aquaculture



I became fascinated by how these tiny, microscopic organisms—impossible to see with the naked eye—form the foundation of the marine food web. Their role is important not only for ocean life but also for the entire planet, as they drive nutrient cycles and support ecosystems that affect life far beyond the oceans.

where they grow the phytoplankton for shellfish.

Oysters are filter feeders, and their survival depends on phytoplankton. But she is looking at how that may change with different variables. She is also looking into whether local farmers can use the local phytoplankton species as a food for their shellfish.

“The lab uses filtered York River water, and they filter it very well. But I believe there will be some differences and changes over time that affect their nutritional value like fatty acid, the C:N:P [carbon-to-nitrogen-to-phosphorus], and other different parameters that are important for the oyster’s diet.”

Ima is not only in the labs. The Batten School has provided ample opportunities for fieldwork as well.

“I went to the field right after I arrived here, looking at how chlorophyll-a concentration, phytoplankton composition and abundances can be varied in oyster bags. We explore the differences, because although oysters are a filter feeder, there’s some research that suggests they are also a selective feeder. In other words, they filter, but they have preferences.” Ima is identifying the different treatments and the species to which the oysters are attracted.

SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATIONS: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE LAB

Along with her insights into oysters and phytoplankton, Ima has been able to observe differences between her life and work at W&M and her work and life in Iran.

“There are very big differences [between Iran and the U.S.]. Doing my research here I can feel that. And when I talk to other Iranian students, they have the same feeling.”

That is why Ima has added a new goal in addition to earning her Ph.D. She wants to write a book about Iranian women in science.

“It’s hard to be scientist in Iran — not only for women, of course — but for women, it’s worse.” They have fewer options, few opportunities and less available funding.

“For my master’s program, my parents and I paid most of the funding I needed for my research. The tuition, fees, even my chemicals. It is so expensive.” There is some minor government support for education, but getting it is a long process — up to a year — and if you do get it, it doesn’t cover everything.

“I have a friend, who is a pharmacist. She’s working on research at one of the best schools in Iran, and she mentioned that while her program has enough funding, it’s not just about money, you can’t simply order

the equipment or supplies you need. I’ve experienced the same challenges myself, due to sanctions and political restrictions, the necessary resources are rarely available, making it almost impossible to find everything required for research. And it’s getting worse over time, making scientific progress even more challenging.” As there are fewer and fewer opportunities for young scholars in Iran, they — like Ima — are increasingly moving to other countries for study and work.

She was home in January 2024 for a brief visit and was shocked to see how in the less than two years she has been away, life has become harder for the Iranian people. “It’s getting worse and worse, even since I came here. Inflation is much worse, and the sanctions are so hard on ordinary people.”

Ima was at W&M during the protests in Iran associated with the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini. The large-scale protests have subsided, but the reasons behind them have not gone away. And even with recent elections, Ima has little hope that anything will change, especially for women.

“The feeling I have about my country is that it is stuck. Just stuck. The government won’t let the country breathe.”

And that makes her even more determined to write her book, to

Top: Ima, Professor Millette and Professor Walton in the Algae Room in the Acuff Center for Aquaculture. Completed in 2022, the Acuff Center for Aquaculture is a 22,000-square-foot shellfish hatchery that supports collaborative research, education and advisory teams within VIMS’ Shellfish Aquaculture Program. (Photo credit: Kate Hoving)



show what she has seen and learned since she left Iran. “This should be written down somewhere so people understand the obstacles that a woman scientist can face in Iran—challenges that students here might never even imagine. It could help them appreciate the freedom they have to follow their dreams without those barriers.”

Not long ago, after she had returned from a research cruise, a friend asked her how it had gone.

“I told them it was great. It was awesome.”

They were incredulous, she remembers. “You’re the first person to say that.”

Ima was confused and thought maybe they were referring to some other cruise where there might have been some disruption or problems.

They responded, “It’s not easy being on a research cruise. It’s stressful. Didn’t you find it hard?”

To Ima their question was immaterial. “I told them it was an awesome experience, because it was what I had always wanted to do, and I was grateful I could do it. And I also appreciate that there are so many people who can’t.”



This page: In the two top photos, Ima shows the two kinds of Algae nutrient media; Ima, Professor Millette and Professor Walton examine the cultures in the Algae Room in the Acuff Center,

Opposite: Nicole Millette, Ima and Bill Walton just outside the Acuff Center. (Photos by Kate Hoving)





Forging relationships to last a lifetime

How a caring support system can open hearts and career paths

BY KATE HOVING

Marjie Harris and Peter Lambert have participated in the Reves Center’s Global Friends Program since 2012. One of the first students with whom they were matched returned in May for her 10th reunion. Chen Jin ‘14 was returning to W&M for the first time since she had graduated, and seeing Marjie and Peter was at the top of her list of things to do. “It’s the main reason for coming to the U.S.—to visit William & Mary and Marge and Peter. I made such a strong bond with them, and I really love William & Mary.”

The Global Friends Program has a transformative impact on everyone involved in the program—from participants to Reves staff—and Marjie, Peter and Chen wanted to come to the Reves Center to meet with Eva Wong, director of ISSP, and Mona David-Starman, who manages the program, interviewing and matching students and community members.

Eva has seen the long arc of the program over her years at the Reves Center. “I’ve had the privilege to see so many relationships develop over the years. I’ve seen students who come as freshmen. They graduate and they come back. And I also get to see, along with Mona, so many relationships.”

And in many cases, these relationships are enduring.

“It’s so affirming, when hosts tell us, ‘I just attended the graduation

of my student.’ Or, ‘I attended a wedding.’ I’ve also heard, ‘They’ve had a baby, and we want to see it.’”

Global Hosts are drawn to the program for multiple reasons. Marjie and Peter had been involved in AFS Intercultural Programs—the high school program that involves homestays. They didn’t host the students, but they were, as they describe it, “aunt and uncle types.” They found it rewarding, but when they retired and moved to Williamsburg from Maine, they realized they would enjoy working with older students.

“Shortly after we moved in the fall [2011], there was an article in the Virginia Gazette about Global Friends,” Marjie recalls. “And I said to Peter, ‘Those are my college students. Let’s do it.’”

They now consider their experiences as hosts one of the most

Above L-R: Eva Wong, Peter Lambert, Chen Jin, Marjie Harris and Mona Starman in front of the Reves Center. Opposite page: Chen Jin, Peter Lambert and Marjie Harris in the Reves Room. (Photo credit: Kate Hoving)



enriching things they've done since moving to Williamsburg. They currently meet with three graduate students (from Bangladesh, Iran and Nigeria). Marjie thinks to be a successful host, "You need to be interested in learning about other cultures and meeting different people, and we really are. That's what attracted us to the program. It's just such a door into the world."

Mona adds an important component. "In selecting Global Hosts, I look for people who have an open heart and are willing to be open to other cultures. Because for me, it's very important that students get paired with people who will respect them, no matter who they are or where they come from. Our hosts are really welcoming to any culture and students."

A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR ALL CONCERNED

In January 2012, Marjie and Peter were matched with Chen, who was a freshman.

Chen was looking for ways to involve herself in life at W&M. "I just signed up for a lot of Reves Center activities. I really want to thank the Reves Center for holding so many different activities. I had my first ski lesson and ski class on a Reves ski trip."

Chen was also trying to find opportunities to meet local people and to learn about the local culture, so she signed up for Global Friends."

No one could remember where they had their first meeting, but they agreed it was outside, and that was by design.

"I advise the students to meet outside somewhere, so they can get a sense of the people and feel comfortable with them. And it's the same for the host, so they can get to know the student. And eventually, whenever the hosts invite them to their home, the students can accept and feel comfortable."

Marjie interjects warmly: "We felt comfortable with Chen right away."

"Generally, most hosts do," Mona concurs. "I have wonderful hosts. I really do."

Their meetings involved all sorts of activities, including the time Marjie helped Chen bake a birthday cake for a friend. There was clearly a lot of laughter and relaxed fun no matter what they did together and often included Chen's friends and other students. "I always have cookies and brownies in my house for karaoke, break time or teatime," Marjie says. "We have this karaoke place

in our basement. It's nothing fancy, but they really liked it."

Chen also stayed with them for a few days at that LPGA Tournament at Kingsmill. "She'd never been to a golf tournament. Peter took her out to the front yard to show her what a golf club was, and we thought she was just a natural at it."

But one activity they did was especially memorable for Chen: "They showed me Acadia National Park."

Marjie and Peter invited her to go to Maine with them. "We have a place in Deer Isle, and Chen came up there one summer," Marjie remembers. "It was fun introducing her to lobster and driving a boat. It's a very rural part of Maine. Chen was game for anything."

"That's the first national park I visited in America," Chen says. "Now I visit a lot of national parks in China."

FULLY ENGAGED IN LIFE AT W&M

In addition to participating in the Global Friends Program, as she mentioned, Chen was determined to get as much as possible out of her time at William & Mary.

"I wanted to do something to conserve nature since high school, so the first thing I did when I came

to William & Mary, was to take different classes about the environment and environmental issues.” That led to her decision to be a double major in economics and environmental science policy.

She also took advantage of W&M’s study abroad programs, participating in two exchange programs: one in Kanazawa, Japan; and one in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Chen’s spring semester program in Iceland, entitled Sustainability for Community, was especially meaningful. “I really love the exchange programs at William & Mary. Before I came, I had read on the website that William & Mary has very high ratio of students in exchange programs. I wanted to study abroad in Reykjavik. I lived in an eco-village.”

There were six students in her program, and two were from William & Mary: Chen and Yilin Yang ’15.

The experience was illuminating. “That community was so very different from my past experience. I think I didn’t notice I liked the vibe of the community until I was trying to create or do the same thing in China. I tried to get people together, especially nature educators, and live in a community, and to show how people live their lives with nature.”

ACADEMIC INSPIRATION

Chen credits Beverly Peterson ’72, MA ’81, Ph.D. ’94, adjunct associate professor of English, for inspiration to pursue her passion. “She told me in a freshman seminar class about the ethics of climate change, and even though I just had one class with her, I made such a strong connection with her.”

She had hoped to meet with her again on her visit to Williamsburg for her reunion, but she couldn’t find her on the W&M website, as she had retired. With a little research, though, it was possible to contact her and, she remembers Chen very well and very fondly:

“She was in a freshman seminar I taught in Fall 2011. That semester, I named the seminar “Everything’s Cool.” Chen is correct in recalling that one of the purposes of the class was to examine the ethics of climate change. Another purpose was to consider communication strategies that would improve the way scientific findings are communicated to a lay public.

“One of the first papers Chen wrote for my class examined a community’s claims that pollution from a railroad had caused a young girl’s cancer. She did a fine job of contrasting that claim with a claim from a different community that claimed a company was polluting ground water. Chen pointed out the responsibilities of private industry and government to protect the public’s health, and she said that one of the communities had done a better job of conducting scientific research to back up their claims. How’s that for a thoughtful analysis from a freshman international student?”

“I also remember that on the last day of class, another student spontaneously asked that the other students give a round of applause to Chen for the contributions she had made to the success of the seminar.”

Chen completed her degree at W&M in just three years. Marjie and Peter have fond memories of Chen’s graduation.



The actual ceremony was affected by a terrible downpour, but Chen’s parents stayed with them, and they enjoyed sightseeing, including an impromptu Segway ride in Yorktown.

“Chen was the interpreter,” Marjie remembers with a laugh. “She wore her neck out going back and forth. It was like a tennis match, sitting at the dining room table.”

Chen wasn’t sure she remembered the Segway ride, but she does remember they had a wonderful stay. “They thanked Marjie and Peter for being my parents in America.”

A SENSE OF SECURITY AND POSSIBILITIES

After graduation, Chen returned to China to pursue her career in environmental education. She now lives in Guangzhou, the capital and largest city of Guangdong province in southern China and is doing what her heart and her W&M experiences prepared her to do.

She has become a leader in environmental education, a new field for her country. “Nature education in China has just been developing over the last 10 years,” Chen explains. “It’s very new, and people need more information and more communication and sharing.”

China Nature Education Network, her current employer, is the perfect vehicle for her. “It’s an NGO platform to support and empower the nature education field in China. We provide workshops and forums for nature educators--both organizations and individuals-- as well as hold events for the public to let them know what nature education is and why it matters.”

As the reunion at Reves was coming to an end, Chen remembered something else about how this meaningful friendship began.

“I almost forgot, but when we first met, I felt very anxious. I didn’t know how they would feel, if they’d feel differently about me. I just didn’t know what would happen.”

But her fears were allayed. “They were very kind. I really felt they loved me for no reason. It felt so safe.”

Top: Chen at the opening ceremony of a rural library. (Courtesy photos)

For more information about the Global Friends Network, visit the Reves Center’s website.



Photos clockwise from top: Chen on Amne Machin Mountain, where the snow line has descended 108m over the past five years; At the highest point of Three Rivers Source National Park; Watching animals in a national park in China; Group photo in Iceland. (Courtesy photos)

BRINGING THE WORLD TO W&M

Throughout the year, the Reves Center hosts visits of scholars, experts and leaders in various fields from across the world. These are some of the recent connections that were made on campus.

MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOWS AND THE W&M WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

Thanks to Cyndy Huddleston '83, M.Ed. '86 and her husband, Jon Huddleston, B.A. '82, J.D. '86, three of the 2024 Mandela Washington Fellows spent an afternoon with incoming freshmen members of the W&M Women's Basketball Team while visiting the campus in June. Cyndy is friends with Coach Erin Dickerson Davis, who agreed to the meeting in the middle of pre-season training.



Back row L-R: Aislinn Gibson '27; Marley Long '28; Natalie Fox '28; Sophia LeGoullon '28; Emma West '28

Front row L-R: Chichi Mlingwa (Zimbabwe); Nicolatte Matuku (Zimbabwe); Nafisa Atiku-Abubakar (Nigeria); Cassidy Geddes '27; Bella Nascimento '25; Monet Dance '27

(Photos by Kate Hoving)

"Over the summer, I had coffee with Cyndy and wanted to pick her brain about opportunities for our student athletes to grow and learn outside of basketball.

When she spoke to me about the Mandela Fellows and the amazing things they had accomplished or were on the verge of accomplishing, I thought their perspective and experiences would be an incredible learning opportunity for our young women.

Our young women left their meeting with the Mandela Fellows inspired, filled with gratitude, and with their eyes opened to different points of view.

I'm so thankful for the experience. "

—Coach Erin Dickerson Davis



The women met on the court at Kaplan Arena, accompanied by Cyndy and Don Huddleston. (Photo credit: Kate Hoving)

"I got great feedback from the players. They loved getting exposure to people with different experiences and backgrounds and loved the positive energy and different perspectives that the Mandela Fellows brought."

*—Jacob Lofton '24
Director of Basketball Operations,
Women's Basketball*



After starting the conversation, Huddleston let the players and Lofton to talk among themselves. (Photo credit: Kate Hoving)

CAMBODIAN MUSEUM DIRECTORS & W&M SCHOLARS

The Reves Center, in conjunction with the Presidential Precinct, hosted nine visitors coming from Cambodia in late August through the U.S. Department of State's premier professional exchange program, International Visitor Leadership Programs (IVLP). The project was entitled Strengthening Skills in Protecting Cambodia's Cultural Heritage. In addition to tours and sessions with curators and scholars at Colonial Williamsburg and Jamestown Settlement, the visitors met with the W&M Bray School Lab staff.

The keynote was "Political, Ethical, and Legal Dimensions of United States Heritage," delivered by Dr. Michael Blakey, National Endowment for the Humanities Professor of Anthropology, Africana Studies, and American Studies, and Founding Director of the Institute for Historical Biology at William & Mary.

Troy Wiipongwii, Adjunct Lecturer and Director of Innovation Entrepreneurship in conservation for the Institute for Integrative Conservation, spoke about his work to develop computational tools that identify lands for sustainable food production, estimate how much food can be produced in those areas and quantify how many people can be fed a healthy diet from sustainable Indigenous food systems. Wiipongwii brewed some IndigineTEA for the visitors. IndigineTEA is one of the first Indigenous-owned Yaupon tea companies, committed to fostering ecologically sustainable regional food systems and supporting economic development through collaborative efforts.

IVLP DELEGATION MEMBERS

Ms. Vinea Chamroeun
Technical Officer, Authority for
the Protection of the Site and
Management of the Region of
Angkor

Mr. Vitharong Chan
Director, National Authority for
Sambor Prei Kuk

Ms. Sopheara Chap
Deputy Director, National Museum
of Cambodia

Mr. Sopheakmakara Chum
Deputy General Director,
Authority for the Protection of the
Site and Management of the Region
of Angkor

Mr. Touch Hab
Secretary of State, Ministry of
Culture and Fine Arts

Mr. Kamsan Heng
Director, Secondary School of Fine
Arts

Mr. Samnang Huot
Director, Department of
Antiquities, Ministry of Culture
and Fine Arts

Mr. Oudom Ngin
Deputy Director of Minister's
Cabinet, Ministry of Culture and
Fine Arts

Mr. Sam Oeun Pheng
Deputy Director General, National
Authority for Preah Vihear



Before their departure, the delegation posed for a photo at Phi Beta Kappa Hall with Troy Wiipongwii, Katalina Li-Kroeger '25 and Karen Walker, Presidential Precinct. (Photo credit: Kate Hoving)



Clockwise from top left: Dr. Blakey giving his presentation; Troy Wipongwii shares samples of IndigineTEA; After the keynote, the delegation spoke informally with Dr. Blakey, Teresa Longo and Dr. Joseph Jones, Associate Teaching Professor in Anthropology (Photo credit: Kate Hoving); Maureen Elgersman Lee, W&M Bray School Lab Director; Tonia Merideth, Oral Historian at the Bray School Lab; and Colonial Williamsburg employee Janice Canaday speak with the delegation about partnership work between William & Mary and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. W&M Bray School Lab is a unit of Strategic Cultural Partnerships. (Photo credit: Danny Devlin); Katalina Li-Kroeger '25 talks with Mr. Hab while sampling the IndigineTEA (Photo credit: Kate Hoving)



Reves Center's 2024 International Student Achievement Awards

Each year, the Reves Center bestows International Student Achievement Awards of \$700 each on W&M and VIMS international students who have been nominated by faculty or staff as having distinguished themselves as exemplary in their academics, leadership, and service to the community.

Amit Seal Ami, Graduate Student (Bangladesh) Field of study: Computer Science



a row and was the web chair for W&M CS Symposium 2022.

Amit has volunteered as a sub-reviewer in top-tier conference and has contributed to open-source software by reporting and fixing open-source security analysis software flaws. Amit was awarded the Commonwealth of Virginia Engineering & Science (COVES) Fellowship in 2022. As the COVES fellow, he worked closely with the Joint Commission on Technology and Science (JCOTS) to improve existing security policies for information technology in the state.

Amit's record of service and leadership is unparalleled among graduate students. He is on track to graduate in spring 2025, and based on his research, teaching, and service record, is well positioned to join as a faculty at any of the top CS departments in the U.S.

—Adwait Nadkarni, Class of 1953 Associate Professor of Computer Science

Amit has impressed me with his technical skills at software engineering, deep interest and motivation in learning about security, and maturity that would put him on a par with more senior graduate students. Amit's research improves the security of software used by billions around the globe. His work has led to the discovery of over 20 critical flaws in highly popular security tools used by thousands of developers in the industry and has had an impact on the security of most consumer software we use, be it mobile apps on our phones, or cloud services that enable them.

Amit has actively mentored junior graduate students and undergraduate students. He was instrumental in developing an outreach program for connecting W&M CSCI faculty with students at his alma mater, the Institute of Information Technology, University of Dhaka (IIT-D), in Bangladesh. The program has enabled IIT-D students to perform their capstone project with W&M faculty as research advisors. This program continues to benefit both students at IIT-D as well as our graduate outreach efforts at W&M CS.

Amit has mentored more than 20 undergraduate students in semester projects for software engineering classes. Additionally, he was invited as one of the Graduate Panelists at the W&M CS Symposium for two years in

Si Chen, Graduate Student (China)

Field of Study: Educational Policy, Planning, & Leadership with a concentration in Curriculum & Learning Design



Si is a conscientious, diligent contributor, who also exhibits peer leadership. He willingly supports his classmates by offering support through peer-review of their writing, and he is an excellent presenter in class, having served on occasion as a co-teacher and as a guest lecturer.

Si has published two peer-reviewed journal articles as a co-author, with another three first-author papers under review, and two papers in progress. He has presented at five refereed academic conferences as a solo or first presenter and presented two research studies at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference. This is an exceptional level of scholarly productivity for a doctoral student. Si served as the managing editor for the William & Mary Educational Review in the 2022-2023 academic year, and he also served as a peer-reviewer for the AERA Annual Conference.

Recognizing that attending academic conferences is essential but costly Si proposed and then organized the CLD & K-12 Post-AERA 2023 Panel in which professors and doctoral students who attended the AERA conference in 2023 shared experiences with students who did not attend. This was an extraordinary learning opportunity for the panel presenters and participants alike, and it was one more step in our efforts to build a community of scholars among our doctoral students across areas of concentration.

As a voluntary graduate intern at the W&M Studio for Teaching & Learning Innovation (STLI), Si has contributed to campus-wide teaching and learning at W&M through multiple projects, such as being the single author of “A Policy Brief of Regular and Substantive Interaction,” which relates to federal regulations for online teaching; leading a program evaluation of the

summer session courses offered at William & Mary’s Washington DC Center from 2018 to 2023; and engaging graduate students with STLI events and offerings. He also recently led a STLI workshop titled “Getting Started with Performance-Based Assessment” for W&M faculty members.

Si has enthusiastically and expertly served as a volunteer fitness instructor at the W&M Student Recreation Center since fall 2022 and has been recognized as the Fitness Instructor of the Year in 2023. As a first-generation university student himself, Si has been a mentor for First Generation Limited Income (FGLI) Students at W&M since October 2023.

Si is one of the strongest international students with whom I have worked in my 20+ years at W&M, and he is among the top doctoral students, domestic or international, with whom I have worked. In sum, he is intelligent, diligent, committed, open to feedback, self-directed, genuinely kind, honest, humble yet strong, principled yet forgiving. I am not alone in my regard for Si. I have direct knowledge that Si’s program faculty unanimously agree that Si is among the best of our current and past students. Si’s future in academia, research, and teaching is very bright.

—Christopher R. Gareis, Professor, School of Education

Dorothy Gao '24 (China)
Field of Study: Economics & Environmental Policy



As Dorothy's professor and supervisor of her independent study on "Macroeconomic Implications of Climate Change for Developing Countries: Case of Indonesia," I had the privilege of working closely with her during the fall semester (2023) and witnessed her exceptional intellectual capabilities, unwavering curiosity, and profound passion for environmental studies and climate economics. Dorothy is talented, determined, and highly motivated.

In her study, Dorothy investigated the relationship between the use of fossil fuels, focusing on crude oil and natural gas, and greenhouse emissions and the energy transition required for achieving Net-zero emissions by 2050. What truly impressed me was her ability to synthesize and incorporate a vast array of scholarly papers into her research paper, showcasing her dedication to thoroughly understand the subject matter. The depth, clarity, and meticulousness of her writing surpassed that of her peers, reflecting her exceptional commitment and effort. Academically, Dorothy has consistently stood out among her peers due to her remarkable capability and dedication, and her strong research and analytical skills.

Beyond her academic achievements, Dorothy has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to the area of environmental sustainability. During our time working together, I witnessed her unwavering enthusiasm for global environmental policies and her active engagement in various sustainability initiatives. Dorothy's passion for sustainability extends beyond the classroom, as she has actively participated in numerous events, seminars, and workshops related to sustainability, environmental studies, and economics. Of particular note, Dorothy had the honor of representing the youth as a delegate at the

27th Conference of the Parties (COP 27) in Egypt. Her ability to bridge theory and practice, and her unwavering dedication to making a tangible difference in the world, is truly inspiring.

It is important to emphasize that Dorothy's exceptional qualities and achievements are even more remarkable considering that she is an international student. Despite the challenges of studying in a foreign country, Dorothy has consistently excelled academically, displaying a deep understanding of complex economic theories and their practical applications. Her ability to navigate cultural and linguistic barriers is a testament to her adaptability as well as relentless pursuit of excellence. Moreover, I should also add that Dorothy's international perspective brought a unique and valuable dimension to our discussions.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse Dorothy for the International Student Award. Her intellectual prowess, dedication to research, and active involvement in sustainability initiatives make her an exceptional candidate. Dorothy's passion, drive, and commitment to creating a sustainable future are commendable, and I have no doubt that she will continue to make significant contributions to the field of economics and environmental studies, positively impacting the global community.

—Shahrokh Fardoust, Ph.D., Research Professor, Global Research Institute, and Visiting Scholar in Economics, Non-resident Scholar at the Middle East Institute

Richard Homenya, Graduate Student (Ghana)
Field of study: Experimental Psychology



international students and worked with students after their arrival to assist with their integration into campus.

Richard is a rock star, and I have no doubt that he will be immensely successful in the future. His time at William & Mary has served to boost him into the international research arena, and I am looking forward to following his accomplishments.

—Joanna Schug, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Studies Director, Psychological Sciences

Richard studied psychology as an undergraduate at the University of Accra in Ghana and had been working for the government of Ghana to produce research studies intended to inform policy decisions. Richard shared his concerns with research done in his group, noting that there was often a mismatch between the research questions the agency was tasked with addressing and the methodology used in the research. In his view, the methods used (such as self-report surveys developed for use in North America) were not suited to Ghanaian contexts. Richard was eager to learn about cross-cultural research methods with the goal of developing research methods that would be relevant within a Ghanaian context.

Richard has excelled in his graduate study at William & Mary. He has learned about many areas of research that examine the mutual construction of culture and psychology from various perspectives. Many of these areas of study involve East-West comparison, but do not incorporate perspectives from sub-Saharan Africa. He was eager to start on a research project to replicate some key findings from cross-cultural East-West work and extend them to West Africa and has made amazing progress in the past year and a half. Last summer, Richard traveled to Ghana for two months to collect data for a series of cross-cultural projects.

He has also shown himself to be an excellent mentor and leader. At William & Mary, he manages the participant recruitment system for our entire department, while also managing undergraduate research assistants in my research lab. After a successful round of applications to PhD programs, he has also been highly involved in mentoring students in the department who will be applying to PhD programs next year. Outside of our department, Richard has also served as an International Student Peer leader for the Reves Center. In this role, he provided pre-arrival support and mentoring to incoming

Miguel Montalvo, Graduate Student (Colombia)
Field of Study: Marine Science



mentoring students in his first year at VIMS. He is a member of the VIMS Diversity and Inclusion committee (a dean-appointed position) and has become very active in this work. He brings his particular experiences and perspectives to this and all his work with characteristic empathy, humor, and care.

—Eric Hilton, Professor; Chair, Natural Resources, Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Even with a non-traditional background for a VIMS student (an undergraduate degree in Marketing!), Miguel has excelled in his program. He is a pleasure to have in the classroom, is engaged, and always willing to discuss a topic and brings to it his perspective and experience. It is truly a learning experience for both him and the instructor!

Miguel's dissertation research is a broad-based examination of the phenomenon of elongation of the rostrum across teleostean fishes -- basically what makes a billfish a billfish, and how many ways can you make a billfish. What I really enjoy about how he developed this project is that he first takes a 50,000-foot view of the problem, approaches it in a systematic and comprehensive manner, and then drills down to pick apart different aspects of the morphology and evolution of billfishes, drawing upon different disciplines, including systematics, taxonomy, ontogeny, microscopy, histology, and paleontology. His dissertation will be a holistic treatment of billfish evolution and will contribute to the better understanding of these remarkable fishes. He has the drive, curiosity, and skills that will ensure his career in marine science blossoms.

Miguel came to VIMS from an internship at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), working as a data analyst for the museum's outreach and marketing teams, in which he (among other activities) examined and curated audience interaction data to better inform strategic decision making for outreach programs.

Miguel is a gifted communicator of science. He has a natural demeanor that is welcoming, and his enthusiasm is contagious. I have seen him in the field, in the classroom, at Marine Science Day, and in front of an audience, and no matter the context the group he is with invariably comes away better informed and energized about marine science. Further, out of his own desire, Miguel began

Nick Zhou, '24 (China)
Field of Study: Psychological Sciences



Nick has a clear record of academic achievement. He has been on the Dean's List each semester. In addition to excelling at his coursework, Nick has been a research assistant in two research labs. In my lab, Nick has contributed to multiple projects, and has taken the time to go beyond standard research assistant duties. For example, Nick programmed a series of tasks used in an ongoing study examining self-control and regulatory abilities. He scoured the literature to find the best way to design the tasks and created them in a program that he learned on the fly. Nick is also completing an honors thesis, for which he received an honors fellowship. He is presenting his project at the annual conference of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America this spring. He also received a F.U.S.E. scholarship for a competitive internship placement at Pace University's Counseling Center.

Nick stands out as someone who seeks out opportunities, rather than simply excelling at the opportunities presented to him. Many of his service and leadership activities show that he is passionate about helping others and improving mental health. Nick has served as a Wellness Ambassador at the Wellness Center, where he advocates for various wellness initiatives on campus. He is the Treasurer of the Psi Chi Honor Society and was a Panelist for an International Student Wellness Workshop. Nick has volunteered as a Crisis Counselor at Crisis Text Line, helping countless individuals in times of need. He has also worked as a Childcare Assistant at Williamsburg Campus Childcare, working with young toddlers. In line with Nick's minor in Computer Science, he was also the Lead Organizer of Cypher VII: William & Mary's Seventh Hackathon.

— Meghan Quinn, Assistant Professor, Psychological Sciences

2024 Reves Faculty Fellows

Each year, a committee of faculty and Reves staff awards Reves and Drapers' Faculty Fellowships to support faculty-student research and collaboration on internationally-focused, engaged scholarship. The initiative is open to full-time William & Mary faculty in all academic units.

Proposals are invited from faculty with significant experience in the international arena as well as those seeking to expand the focus of their work to include international, global, and/or trans-national approaches.



JONATHAN ALLEN
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
BIOLOGY

Project: Testing the role of larval cloning in outbreaks of Crown of Thorns Starfish on the Great Barrier Reef

Crown-of-Thorns Seastar (COTS) outbreaks are responsible for more than 40% of the loss of coral cover on the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) through their intense and unchecked predation on mature corals. One leading hypothesis explaining COTS outbreaks is that increased agricultural runoff has led to eutrophication* of the waters on the GBR. Eutrophication has, in turn, led to increases in the abundance of phytoplankton. Like most reef animals, larval COTS feed on phytoplankton in order to complete their development, and increased levels of phytoplankton improve larval success and ultimately increase outbreaks of COTS on reefs throughout the Indo-Pacific. But unlike most animals on the GBR, COTS possess an additional trait -- larval cloning -- that makes them uniquely suited to benefit from nutrient addition via runoff.

In collaboration with Dr. Maria Byrne at the University of Sydney, Allen's research laboratory has demonstrated that 1) larval cloning occurs in COTS as a normal feature of development and 2) larval cloning doubles in frequency when larvae are reared under high food conditions. In a recent review, this discovery was cited as a fundamental piece of new knowledge that has generated a suite of new questions surrounding the biology of COTS. The goal is to build on this international collaboration and investigate exogenous (environmental) factors and endogenous (maternal investment) factors that influence the rate of cloning in this keystone coral predator.

SCOTT ICKES
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH



ALEXANDRA JOOSSE
ASSOCIATE TEACHING
PROFESSOR, PUBLIC
POLICY



Project: Assessing feasibility and impact of implementing a mother's lactation room at a commercial flower farm in Kenya

Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) is critical for child growth, development, survival and maternal health; however, 56% of mothers in low- and middle-income countries do not practice EBF through the recommended six months of infancy. Scaling up coverage of EBF to 90% can prevent 820,000 of 5 million annual deaths among children under five years— one of the most effective interventions for child mortality prevention. Mothers discontinue EBF for various social, cultural, and economic factors. While women's workforce participation reflects gains in women's empowerment, maternal employment outside the home is a crucial driver of early EBF cessation.

In Kenya, child mortality remains high, and improvements in both EBF rates and survival have stagnated over the past two decades. Concurrently, the proportion of mothers engaged in formal employment has increased. Employment, coupled with

rapid changes in urbanization and internal employment-based migration are expected to have major effects on social support and networks, which are known to influence infant feeding decisions. However, the impact of these interventions has little evidence outside of high-income countries. .

This project has two main objectives: 1) implement and evaluate a workplace breastfeeding support intervention at a commercial flower farm in Kenya, where many mothers are engaged in low-wage employment associated with poor breastfeeding outcomes; 2) more generally, evaluate the role that a new mother's social network has on her decision to practice EBF. In achieving these two objectives, this research will inform policy and strategy regarding how to increase EBF in this context, and other similar settings.

HIROSHI KITAMURA
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
HISTORY;
DIRECTOR OF
INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS



Project: US-Japan Baseball Oral History Project

This project aims to deepen our understanding of the political and cultural relationship between the United States and Japan through the lens of baseball. By conducting videorecorded oral history interviews with players, coaches and experts who have bridged the two countries on and off the field, the research team will seek answers to the following questions that scholars, journalists and fans have asked over the decades: How and why did baseball become such a popular pastime in both the US and Japan? Is the sport played similarly or differently in the two countries? How has baseball helped shape diplomatic and international relations? Does sport and popular culture play an important role in bridging and dividing countries—or not?

This oral history project builds on a symposium that I helped organize with a group of faculty and students last October, entitled “The 150 Years

of US-Japan Baseball Diplomacy,” on the W&M campus. Over the past four months, they have interviewed five pioneering baseball players and have begun releasing their videos curated on an online archive (www.youtube.com/@USJBDP). Through the Reves Faculty Fellowship, the student-faculty research team will accumulate new interview content, expand the digital archive and deliver original and useful knowledge to scholars, students and the public.

The timing of this research trip to Japan summer ‘24 coincides with the Williamsburg-Kamakura youth baseball exchange. The research team will interview the coaches and players involved in the exchange to better understand how baseball fosters cross-cultural interactions among young publics and assess whether such events on the ground help deepen international relations.



DANIEL MALINIAK
ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR,
GOVERNMENT AND
PUBLIC POLICY

Project: Transitions in the South Caucasus

The Republic of Georgia is in a time of great transition. Georgia has been granted EU candidate status even while the U.S. has sanctioned Georgian officials for corruption as a signal of displeasure with a stall in democratic reforms. The country is facing an important, hotly contested election in the fall of 2024. Tens of thousands of Russians remain in Georgia, all while Russia illegally occupies 20% of Georgia, and central to the campaign will be foreign policy, Western criticism, and concerns about the ties of politicians to Russia. This project touches on three key aspects of the transitions of this small country in the South Caucasus. First, they will interview and document the stories of Russians in Georgia to better understand their experiences. Russians who fled to Georgia did so for several reasons, and these interviews aim to preserve their stories and experiences. Second, they will work with NGOs and the development community to better understand both the

work being done to support democratic institutions and the challenges faced in the presence of Russian disinformation and highly polarized politics. Finally, they will work with environmental NGOs to better understand and provide support for conservation efforts. In particular, they will look at how Georgian environmental NGOs are trying to use the resources and expertise of Western donors and experts while navigating the complexities of their politics and the trade-offs rural communities are making between conservation and economic development.

This project builds on an earlier Reves grant that has provided structured, high-impact learning through research experiences to 27 students, provided 73 credit hours of directed research, and allowed 11 students to conduct impactful, policy-relevant research internationally.

For a list of previous faculty fellows and ways to support the program, visit www.wm.edu/offices/revescenter/globalengagement/revesfacultyfellows

2024 Drapers' Faculty Fellows

A limited number of fellowships are provided through the generosity of the Drapers' Company. Founded over 600 years ago, the Drapers' Company is incorporated by Royal Charter and is one of the Twelve Great Livery Companies in the City of London. Supporting education has been one of the primary aims of The Drapers' Company for centuries and continues to be the main focus of the Company's grant making today. The Drapers' Faculty Fellowship, administered by the Reves Center, provides support for archival research by the fellows, with the potential involvement of W&M graduate and/or undergraduate students at institutions in the United Kingdom.

PHILLIP ROESSLER
PROFESSOR,
GOVERNMENT



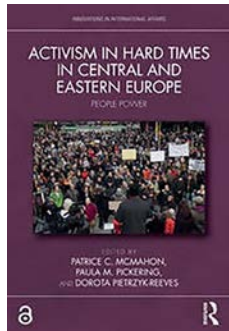
Project: The Origins and Impact of British Colonial Policy on Smallholder Agriculture in Africa

Prior to the spread of European imperialism, land-extensive smallholder agriculture prevailed in tropical regions. Imperial conquest led to the importation of new agricultural practices—most notoriously the diffusion of slave-based, foreign-owned plantations in the Americas. In West Africa, however, settler plantations not only failed but were discouraged by British anti-slavery activists, such as Foxwell Buxton, who saw local cash crop agriculture as “the real remedy” for the slave trade. On the whole, the British adopted liberal policies toward smallholder agriculture in most—but of course not all—of their colonies. (In Southern Rhodesia and Kenya, the colonial state favored settlers, which represents an important and illuminating comparison). The general British approach in Africa stands in stark contrast not only to policies in the Americas, but also within Africa—vis-à-vis the more coercive and illiberal agricultural policies

in French and Portuguese colonies. This research project will conduct archival research to better understand the origins and consequences of British championing of indigenous smallholder agriculture in Africa.

The primary goals of this project entail: a.) undertaking original archival research on the origins and debate around British colonial agricultural policy in Africa in the 19th century and its legacies for tens of millions of people across the region; and b.) engaging with UK audiences on the forthcoming book -- *Seeds of Change: The Cash Crop Revolution, Colonialism, and the Making of Modern Africa* -- on the long-run impact of the cash crop revolution across countries in Africa. There is much critical interest in Britain on the legacies of colonialism on economic, social and political processes in former colonies.

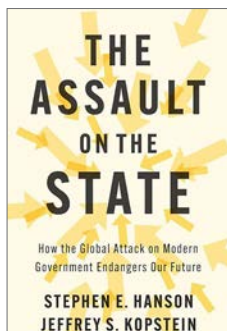
Recently Published Books by W&M Faculty



ACTIVISM IN HARD TIMES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: PEOPLE POWER

Co-edited by Paula M. Pickering, Richard S. Perles Professor of Government, along with Patrice McMahon and Dorota Pietrzyk-Reeves

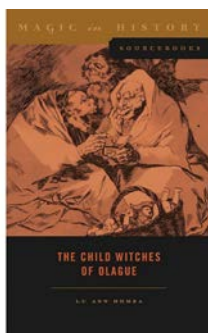
“Activism in Hard Times in Central and Eastern Europe” elevates the voices of civic activists from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and analyzes a wealth of information to generate new insights into how activism in the region manages to be vibrant, diverse, and consequential. Because of these countries’ unique historical trajectory, CEE activists have, in important ways, leap-frogged their counterparts in the West. Responses by CEE activists to the recent “hard times” – the shrinking of public space for civil society, democratic backsliding, polarization, and Russia’s war in Ukraine – provide important lessons for others confronting similar challenges around the world. Published by Routledge



THE ASSAULT ON THE STATE: HOW THE GLOBAL ATTACK ON MODERN GOVERNMENT ENDANGERS OUR FUTURE

By Stephen E. Hanson, Lettie Pate Evans Professor of Government, and Jeffrey S. Kopstein

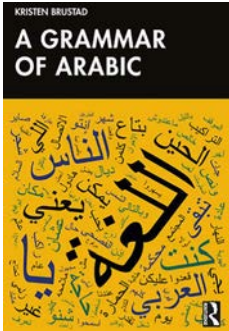
In “The Assault on the State,” political scientists Stephen Hanson and Jeffrey Kopstein offer an impassioned plea to defend modern government against those who seek to destroy it. They dissect the attack on the machinery of government from its origins in post-Soviet Russia to the core powers of Western democracy. The dangers of state erosion imperil every aspect of our lives. Hanson and Kopstein outline a strategy that can reverse this destructive trend before humanity is plunged back into the pathological personalistic politics of premodern times. Published by Polity



THE CHILD WITCHES OF OLAGUE

By Lu Ann Homza, James Pinckney Harrison Professor of History

“The Child Witches of Olague” features translations of newly-discovered archival documents from Navarre, Spain. It reveals what happened in the tiny village of Olague when witchcraft accusations surged there in 1611-1612. Published by The Pennsylvania State University Press, “Magic in History” series.



A GRAMMAR OF ARABIC

Corinne Stokes, Assistant Professor of Arabic Studies, served as co-author/contributor

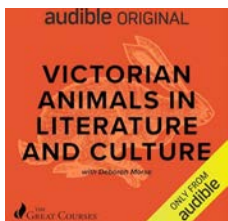
“A Grammar of Arabic” is a non-traditional reference grammar that is structured around patterns of Arabic language usage rather than prescriptive rules. Using data from Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic and dialects spoken in Morocco, Egypt, Sudan, the Levant, Iraq and the Arabian Gulf, this grammar models a new framework for studying varieties of Arabic comparatively. Published by Routledge.



JACOB VAN RUISDAEL'S ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPES

By Catherine Levesque, Associate Professor of Art & Art History

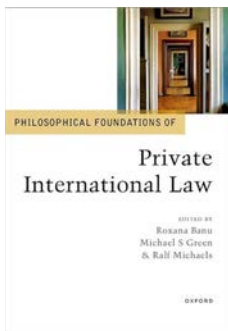
The 17th-century Dutch artist Jacob van Ruisdael is one of the foremost landscape painters of his time. This study examines how Ruisdael's paintings, though fictive, pay close attention to the complexities of familiar environments that can be fruitfully considered “ecological.” His depiction of nature's dynamism and generative force provided an alternative vision at an important moment when the lived landscape, increasingly manipulated and controlled, was most often considered property and investment. Published by Amsterdam University Press.



VICTORIAN ANIMALS IN LITERATURE AND CULTURE (AUDIO BOOK)

By Deborah Denenholz Morse, NEH Eminent Professor of English

“Victorian Animals in Literature and Culture” is a series of eight lectures that center on the literary and cultural representation of animals in the Victorian era and beyond, into contemporary fiction. The lectures are concerned with animal welfare and animal rights as well as literary and cultural representation. Published on Audible for Great Courses.



PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW

By Michael S. Green, Woodbridge Professor of Law

The first interdisciplinary engagement between private international law (the conflict of laws) and philosophy. The book brings philosophers in conversation with private international law scholars to demystify the analytical tools of each discipline in relationship to the other. Published by Oxford University Press.

Alumnus Abroad

A Q&A WITH **BEN PRATT '95**

Where were you born? What do you consider your hometown?

I was born in an Army hospital in Würzburg, Germany, 90 km away from a small military base in northwest Bavaria, called Wildflecken. We moved back to the US about 3 months after I was born. So I have no recollection of Wildflecken except passing through on a family holiday when I was a teenager. We eventually settled in Williamsburg when I was 3 years old. The Burg is my hometown.

Why did you choose to attend William & Mary?

The combination of highly regarded liberal arts education and a low in-state tuition couldn't be beat. At the time, there was a budding Japanese language program in which I was interested. In hindsight, the Japanese course was a major inflection point for my life path and career.

What was your major? Did it prove useful in your future career(s)?

My major was East Asian Studies, focused on Japanese culture. The courses were beyond useful; they were the foundation of my career in Japan and international business.

Did you have a favorite course or professor while you were at W&M?

My Japanese teachers, Mariko Nakade and Lawrence Marceau, were a significant influence on the life path I took. They, along with the great teaching assistants, not only provided exposure to a culture outside of what's typically found in Williamsburg, they created a fertile environment for nurturing long-term friendships.

Did you have a favorite memory or memories of your time at W&M?

The best times were associated with social fun and exploration. The strongest memories are of times with friends in Yates Hall, Reves Center dorm, the Japan House, Greene Leafe, Paul's Deli, College Deli, and off-campus trips to music venues in Norfolk and Virginia Beach. Amazing musicians, including Sting, Tom Petty, Dave Matthews, Bruce Hornsby, came to campus during my youth.

Did you study abroad as an undergraduate? If so, where did you go – was it a W&M program?

My interests and academic focus were on Japan, and at the time, W&M's Japanese program and network were budding. There were no existing sister-school programs



I can remember, but we had the freedom to blaze new paths. I attended International Christian University in Tokyo for my junior year with financial support from the Japan-America Society. The experience was a major inflection point for me, and then I knew I would make my way back to Japan again. In my mind, I put a stake in the ground and told myself I would take a stab at making a living here, working with the language and cultural exposure that W&M afforded.

How do you think your experience at W&M has affected your life and decisions you have made?

The experience was fundamental to my life path. The exposure to cultures and concepts was the foundation for a broader goal to enter into international business in some way. Given my background and aspirations, I felt it important to first learn of and gain practical experience in a foreign country and then focus on business. The experience in one foreign culture established the framework and practical perspective from which I could more fluidly live and work with other cultures.

What are you currently doing professionally?

I'm co-founder and COO of HekaBio K.K. (www.heka.bio). We are a Tokyo-based healthcare innovation in-licensing and commercialization platform. Japan's rapidly aging population demands the latest in technologies to support a high standard of health, yet medical device and pharmaceutical gap and lag (as compared to the US/

EU) continue to worsen. Our team's strong global network and intercultural business experience position us well to deliver on our motto, "Miracles through Partnership."

How did you find yourself in the health technology (if that's an apt term) field? Was it a specific intention or serendipity – or a combination of both?

While studying for my MBA in Marketing and Entrepreneurship at University of Southern California, a friend of mine asked if I would attend a biomed roundtable he was coordinating. That was where I met an HR manager from Edwards Lifesciences. They were recruiting their first interns after their spinoff from Baxter, and I was fortunate enough to take a position in the Business Intelligence Dept where my Japanese ability could also be helpful. I thought I might stay at Edwards for three years or so because I was keen to jump into the world of venture business. But, Edwards afforded many opportunities for growth, and three years turned into thirteen. During that time, I was able to make contributions in market research, new product marketing, strategy and operations in global as well as Japan region roles.

What about the field do you find engaging?

Directly contributing to saving, extending or dramatically improving the lives of thousands of people is quite fulfilling. Big wins feel very big, and the most difficult workdays are a little easier to tackle when I know I'm doing it for patients who greatly need the technology we bring to them. To me, it's a career that's hard to beat, and the cross-cultural aspect adds a greater sense of adventure.

From 1995-1997 you were a coordinator for international relations at the Japanese Ministry of



Education. How did you get that job, and what did it entail?

My Japanese teacher at W&M told me about the JET program, to which I applied and interviewed through the Japanese embassy in Washington, D.C. At the time, approximately 3,000 college graduates from around the world were assigned to teach English in schools or manage international relations programs in city halls across Japan. I was in the program for 2 years in Hiroshima prefecture. I taught English at local schools, managed events promoting

Ben Pratt with his family.. (Courtesy photo)

international understanding, and helped to manage sister-city relationships. I cherish the time lived in rural Hiroshima. It was true exposure to Japan outside of gigantic Tokyo.

Do you have any current projects/passions you would like to tell us about?

I have had an affinity for the ocean for as long as I can remember and have enjoyed surfing and windsurfing for decades. The common love of water sports has been a thread to lifelong friendships both in the US and abroad. More recently, I have added prone (surf) foiling and wing foiling to my water-based hobbies. These hydrofoil-based sports are very new to Japan and are not only an addictingly adrenalin rush; they draw people together. Whether when at the beach with fellow “foilers” or when approached by curious onlookers, it’s a natural conversation starter with folks I would otherwise very likely never meet. How fun is that?!

You’ve lived in Japan for many years now. Does it feel like home now or do you still feel connected to Williamsburg (or someplace else in the U.S.)?

I have lived in Japan for 24 years and am happy to call it a home. Williamsburg is my hometown, where I enjoy visiting family and friends, reconnecting with my roots. Otherwise, southern California is also a favorite place for me to live. There isn’t one place that meets all personal needs and preferences, but I’m fortunate enough to stay close to the people and places where I have lived over the years.

You have been a wonderful advocate for the Freeman Fellowship Program and its W&M students. When did you get involved in it? Are you currently hosting student interns this summer?

We have hosted interns from the Freeman Fellowship Program for 7 years, including through the COVID pandemic. Around 2016, I decided to become more active in W&M’s alumni program and started by coordinating a local gathering in Tokyo. Through interaction with W&M’s University Advancement Department, I was introduced to Prof. Stephen Sheehi who was leading the program at the time. I cannot express enough how impressed I have been by the program and interns who have contributed to HekaBio’s mission over the past few years. The level of intellect, analytical ability, and personability each intern has shown is inspirational.

Do you think international experience as a student is helpful in future life and career?

The college years are excellent for exploring faraway places and diving deep into less familiar cultures. It’s the first time in life when one can easily, safely manage travel alone and enjoy getting lost and reorienting. The international experience is as much a study of things foreign as it is a study of oneself and what humanity is all about. I think international experience is more important now than ever before.

Do you have any advice for current students?

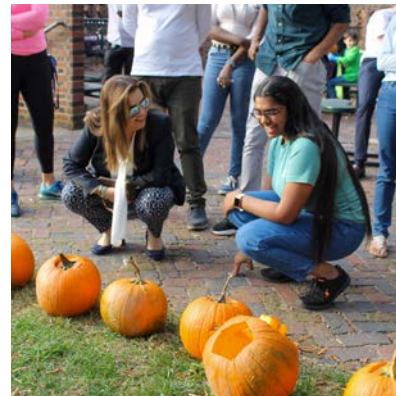
Follow your heart, steeped in what inspires you

Find the biggest problem of interest, get close to it, and chip away at it

Show the best of humanity in your day-to-day interactions

Don’t take life too seriously. 🌍

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(Summer '25 unless noted otherwise)

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- Greece:** Athens/Nafplio
- India:** Bengaluru/Goa
- Italy:** Florence
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