MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Dear Friends:

I am particularly pleased to introduce this issue of Maryland International. It focuses on our students and the ways in which their international experiences—whatever their shape—have changed their lives. Whether they have studied intergenerational poverty in El Salvador, examined Singapore as a model for economic development, helped to construct schools in Honduras, or analyzed Malaysia’s gas and oil policies, the impact on their lives and career trajectories is unmistakable.

The University is particularly proud of its collaborative work with Prince George’s County to secure study-abroad scholarships for students for whom financial constraints typically preclude participation in life-changing education abroad experiences. This issue also features a Smith School Global Immersion Program that allows students to hone international business skills while participating in cultural activities designed to facilitate cross-cultural understanding. UMD service learning programs also raise students’ international awareness: in 2012, more than 20 UMD students traveled to Honduras to help to build schools and develop leadership skills. And, the article on dance highlights the ways that students can discover genuine insight into culture and identity though the exploration of physical movement.

As students come to new appreciations for what it means to be a global citizen, UMD faculty are not to be outdone. Several new campus collaborations cross research boundaries—including some with old, new, and quite unexpected partners. UMD’s Institute for Systems Research will jointly undertake a series of renewable energy projects with an Italian research partner. In a recent, high-profile ceremony, UMD launched a Global Change research center in partnership with Beijing Normal University in China, with the goal of establishing a worldwide knowledge network and focusing global attention on global climate change. And among the first for our campus, a UMD faculty member was recently invited to participate in an international conference on ecological restoration, held in Pyongyang, North Korea.

Jonathan Wilkenfeld
Associate Provost and Associate Vice President
for International Programs
Students Helping Honduras (SHH)

Each year, SHH sends a growing number of students to Honduras and raises funds to help build new schools. Currently, the students at UMD are hoping to raise $25,000 to complete their new project, Pimientera Elementary School.

Smith Students Embark on Global Immersion Experience

Students from the Smith School visited Singapore and Malaysia during winter break to gain an appreciation for the culture, customs, and practices of the region, and to develop an understanding of how Singapore has emerged from a tiny port on the southern edge of Malaysia into a world financial, urban planning, and educational leader.

UMD Launches Global Change Research Center with Chinese University

This spring, officials from both the University of Maryland and Beijing Normal University and representatives from the Chinese government officially launched the new Joint Center on Global Change and Earth System Science.

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With a population of only five million people, Singapore may be a small dot on a world map, but for those who look for examples of success in public policy, business, education, community development, crime control, and urban planning, Singapore is a role model. In less than 50 years, Singapore has grown from a tiny port on the southern edge of Malaysia into one of the most developed Southeast Asian nations.

Forty-four students from UMD’s Smith School of Business visited Singapore and Malaysia this past winter break to gain an appreciation for the culture, customs, and practices of the region, and to develop an understanding of how Singapore has emerged as a world financial, urban planning, and educational leader.

The 12-day study-abroad trip to the region included visits with several UMD alumni: Michael Yap, the Deputy CEO of Media Development Authority, stressed to the students the importance of creativity and entrepreneurship within the economy; Melissa Bailey, who graduated from UMD with a B.S. in Biological Engineering, shared her experiences on helping to launch Corporate Executive Board’s Asia Pacific headquarters in Australia and the recently opened office in Singapore. They provided insights to the students on the difficulties of establishing an office in a new country. The group had the opportunity to learn more about broadcasting and network business by meeting with a BBC anchor and UMD alumnus Sharanjit Leyl, who is responsible for “Asia Business Report” and “Newsday” for BBC World News. The students were also able to network and socialize with highly successful individuals from different areas of business, as well as several Smith School graduates, including Vickum Nawagamuwage, who started a private equity fund, and Ivan Szpakowski, who analyzes the commodities market for Credit Suisse.

Students developed a better understanding of Singapore’s economic success through a visit to the Economic Development Board (EDB), the lead government agency for planning and executing strategies to enhance Singapore’s position as a global business center. For a glance into the political system, students toured Singapore’s Parliament; they also visited ExxonMobil, the largest foreign manufacturing investor in Singapore; Asia Pacific Breweries, producer of Singapore’s award-winning Tiger Beer and ranked one of the top companies in Asia with a reputation for being a top value creator for its customers, consumers, and shareholders; and Marina Bay Sands, the world’s most expensive stand-alone casino property worth $8 billion.

The journey to Malaysia provided some

The true value lies in seeing the world from a different vantage point and being a part of the culture. Learning through a textbook is like telling a farmer about life in the big city; how can you ever truly describe a distant land without seeing it for yourself?
memorable experiences as well, including a visit to the Petronas Towers—one of the most recognized symbols of Malaysia whose steel and glass facade is an iconic part of the city’s skyline. Wholly owned by the Government of Malaysia, the Petronas Corporation is entrusted with the responsibility for developing the country’s oil and gas resources and adding value. It is also the most profitable company in Asia and the 13th most profitable in the world. Arif Mahmood, Vice President of Corporate Strategic Planning, explained some of Petronas’ economic strategies and its significance to the Malaysian economy.

To round out the experience, the group visited several common tourist sites, including the Kuala Gandah elephant sanctuary, where students learned about the rapidly decreasing Malaysian elephant population and the many different ways to help rescue them. They got to feed and bathe elephants, make sandbags, paint the security house, and prepare food. It was a truly unique experience for the group to better understand the local culture of Malaysia and experience the rural lifestyle of its people. As a former Global Immersion participant remarked: “The true value lies in seeing the world from a different vantage point and being a part of the culture. Learning through a textbook is like telling a farmer about life in the big city; how can you ever truly describe a distant land without seeing it for yourself?”

Adapted from an article by Douglas M. Kletter, Smith student.
This spring, the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSOS) formalized a partnership with Beijing Normal University (BNU) by establishing the Joint Center on Global Change and Earth System Science. At the inauguration ceremony, leadership from both institutions joined faculty, students, and representatives from the Chinese government to officially launch the cooperative research center. Although the two institutions have a long history of cooperation, this new partnership establishes a powerful resource to track and predict global climate change.

Cooperation between the University of Maryland and BNU began in 2005, during a period of rapid advancement in geographical research, especially in remote sensing and earth observation technology. Former UMD President C. D. (Dan) Mote, Jr. and Chuansheng Liu, Secretary General of BNU at the time, drafted the initial bilateral agreement between the two universities. Professor John Townshend, Dean of BSOS, and Professor Peijun Shi, Executive Vice President of BNU, further developed the cooperative efforts with support from Guanhua Xu, the former Minister of the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) of the People’s Republic of China.

The collaboration has regularly included the exchange of graduate students who specialize in earth system sciences as well as other academic concentrations. Last year, when the need for a deeper level of cooperation became apparent to leaders at both universities, UMD President Wallace Loh visited BNU and met with Minister Yuan Guiren (Ministry of Education) and former Minister Xu Guanhua (Ministry of Science and Technology). During the meeting, a proposal for the Joint Institute on Global Change and Earth System Science was developed.

During the ceremony this spring, Townshend was formally appointed as the center’s co-director to work alongside Shi, his BNU counterpart. “The future of the 21st century will be defined by collaboration between these two nations,” Loh says, commenting on the historical importance of the expanded research partnership. Liu reinforced the significance of the joint center, pointing out that its formation was the “first step of many to establish a worldwide network of knowledge.” All of the speakers echoed the importance of strong U.S.–China relations, especially in the effort to attract global attention to the issue of global climate and land change. “The [collaboration between the U.S. and China] is the most important bilateral relationship in the world. To work together on this major issue [of global climate change] will attract the attention of the international community,” notes Chaochen Li, Minister Counselor of the Chinese Embassy.

When fully developed, the center will support the sharing of information and research data related to monitoring agriculture, land use, and land cover change. Researchers from UMD’s Department of Geographical Sciences and Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science will collect and analyze data, to then be stored at a new data center in Peking, China. Early projects of
UMD Launches Global Change Research Center with Chinese University

The joint center will include the establishment of an international remote sensing database, relaying information collected from state-of-the-art satellites to researchers at both institutions.

“Maryland has long experience in the use of satellite imaging to measure land cover and other aspects of global change, wide expertise in aggregating this data, and expertise in how these changes ripple through the various parts of the environment,” Townshend explains. “Beijing Normal’s expertise serves as an excellent complement to our strengths, as evidenced by our continued successful collaboration.”

By Andrew Roberts, BSOS

UMD Pursues Renewable Energy Projects with Italian Partner

The Autonomous Province of Trento, Italy, and the Institute for Systems Research (ISR), a unit of the A. James Clark School of Engineering at the University of Maryland, recently launched a series of joint international research projects in solar power, cell-based systems, and ultra-low power systems. These collaborations are part of a partnership cemented through a framework program agreement between the province and the University of Maryland.

As part of this relationship, the province and ISR solicited white papers for joint projects in bioengineering/biomedical devices/bio-microsystems; renewable energy and storage/nanomaterials; and microsystems. Nineteen UMD faculty from 11 organizations across campus submitted proposals, as did 20 different researchers from four different organizations in Trento. The Scientific and Technical Committee (CTS) of the Province of Trento selected a premier group of international researchers to provide detailed reviews and offer recommendations to the CTS, which made the final decisions. “I’m sure this is the first important step for strengthening the cooperation between the University of Maryland and the Trentino System for High Education and Research,” says Mariano Anderle, Trento’s Director of International Relations.

Implementation will involve exchange of researchers between the province and ISR for portions of the projects, in support of the research internationalization goals of the University of Maryland and the province. Initial funding for each project is for one year, but it is anticipated that the projects will continue beyond this time. A permanent joint management group with two representatives from the Autonomous Province of Trento—Anderle and Alberto Lui, Deputy Director of International Relations for the province—and two from the University of Maryland—Reza Ghodssi, ISR Director, and Jeff Coriale, ISR’s Director of External Relations—will provide management and implementation of the agreement.

“We are excited to begin this new operational phase of our partnership with the Autonomous Province of Trento,” says Ghodssi. “The research projects promise to break new ground and will serve as the catalysts for new relationships among faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and students in both Maryland and Trento.”

By Rebecca Copeland, ISR
Djuan Short:  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY INTERNATIONAL AMBASSADOR

For UMD senior Djuan Short, studying abroad was an important component to enhancing her education. But unwilling to burden her family with the costs of financing an international trip, Short applied for and received a Prince George’s County International Ambassador Study Abroad Scholarship (see opposite page for more information). As one of four recipients this year, Short traveled to El Salvador to gain a better understanding of social and cultural factors that expose children and families to intergenerational poverty. “As a student of psychology, human development, and black women’s studies, I have learned that intergenerational poverty is critical to the development of an individual because of the influences it has over education, literacy, and socioeconomic status,” she explains. Short believes that studying how these factors contribute to the migration of a group of people can help in designing better programs to assist with an individual’s development and transition to a foreign place.

In addition to furthering her studies, Short felt her experience abroad profoundly impacted her personal life as well. “This trip was an opportunity to give ourselves completely to a new environment that would change and impact our personal lives—making uncomfortable situations comfortable,” she says. As the only African American in her group, her racial identity made her stand out to the people in the village where she stayed. When reflecting on her experience, she says, “In an American context, the ways the women in El Salvador interacted with my differences would have been deeply disconcerting. It was powerful that because I was abroad, I felt more similar to these people than different because our stories were very close, and we carried the similar scars of our ancestors.” Short felt a kinship to the villagers in El Salvador while working in the field harvesting corn alongside them, much like her ancestors would have lived in the segregated South of the United States.

Her experience abroad has only strengthened her desire to work in the social services field, in a public or private agency within the African American or Latino community, working with child welfare services or a maternal and child health clinic. Following a trip to Europe with the Maryland Alumni Association after graduation in May, Short plans to attend the University of Pennsylvania, where she will pursue her Master’s of Social Work, focusing on child welfare, and then continue her education with a doctorate in social work.

LEFT PHOTO: In the Milpa, Short helps to harvest crops for the community.  
RIGHT PHOTO: Short, alongside other students and members of the community, make homemade limeade for the international food exchange dinner.  
Photos courtesy of Djuan Short.
Education Abroad Supports Prince George’s County International Ambassador Scholarships

Earlier this year, four University of Maryland students, who are also high school graduates of Prince George’s County Public Schools, were selected as the seventh cohort to receive the prestigious Prince George’s County International Ambassador (PGCIA) Study Abroad Scholarships.

A joint effort of the Office of the County Executive for Prince George’s County (OCE) and UMD’s College of Education, in collaboration with UMD’s Education Abroad office, these scholarships are awarded to promising students who have a demonstrated interest in international experience, as well as financial need. The goal is to expand opportunities for the students of Prince George’s County to learn globally relevant skills. “The truth is that global competency is a necessity in the 21st century. It is clear that our students will be competing with everyone from everywhere for everything. If they are to serve as tomorrow’s leaders, they must gain exposure to the world today,” says P. Bai Akridge, Director of the PGCIA program.

Students with high financial need often do not participate in such critical education opportunities. Indeed, they are the most underrepresented in college study abroad programs. For example, less than three percent of UMD’s most financially needy (e.g., Pell Grant eligible) students study abroad. “Unfortunately, too many in our African-American, Hispanic-American, and Native-American communities, and those with financial needs, see study abroad as an unaffordable luxury. Programs like this one make study abroad affordable and attainable,” says Akridge.

The PGCIA Study Abroad program was launched as a pilot in 2008-2009, enabling eight students to study internationally. This year, the program has been endorsed and funded by the Hon. Rushern Baker’s Office of the County Executive. The OCE has been joined by UMD’s Office of the Provost, who has also contributed financially to the scholarships. A total of 31 ambassadors have been supported with individual scholarships valued from $1,000 to $1,500.

The current cohort—which includes Allen Aderotoye in Business Economics, Philip Redway in Sociology, Djuan Short in Psychology, and Dan Tran in Engineering—will travel to Australia, Brazil, El Salvador, and Korea, respectively. As a part of their award, the student ambassadors have a community service obligation to share their experiences through outreach activities in public schools, serve as mentors to college-bound high school students, and/or volunteer in internationally-oriented organizations in Prince George’s County. A partnership with Prince George’s County Public Schools enables these ambassadors to speak about the program to current public high school students at schools throughout the county.

This unique international learning program is administered by the International Center for Transcultural Education at the University of Maryland’s College of Education, in collaboration with the UMD Education Abroad office. Visit www.international.umd.edu/studyabroad/6190 to learn more about the program.

By P. Bai Akridge
During a 2011 service trip, several UMD volunteers began to tire from hours of construction, but after witnessing a young girl named Vanessa carry a single cinderblock half her size to help build a new elementary school, they were inspired to redouble their efforts. The girl’s school had been a rundown building made of bamboo, without sufficient supplies for all the students or protection from inclement weather. Today, her classes are held in a new concrete school called las Flores Elementary—with functioning restrooms, supplies, and a roof over the children’s heads.

Students Helping Honduras (SHH) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2006 by brother and sister Shin and Cosmo Fujiyama. Looking to spread SHH’s presence throughout the United States, Cosmo Fujiyama traveled to various campuses and found what she was looking for at UMD’s 2009 First Look Fair through a chance meeting with Sam Tiburzi. After an informational meeting the very next week, he eventually became the president of the new UMD chapter. “It is amazing how a five-minute meeting can change your life. Before meeting Cosmo, I couldn’t point Honduras out on a map—today my work there has become my greatest passion,” he says.

Each year, SHH’s UMD chapter has sent students to Honduras to begin construction on a particular school. Upon their return to the United States, the chapter immediately begins fundraising for its completion. Construction began on Las Flores Elementary in January 2011 when 11 UMD students traveled to Honduras. Throughout the year, the students organized fundraisers—from bake sales to volleyball tournaments—to purchase construction supplies to allow the Honduran families in the area to continue construction. Just one year later, the UMD students were able to return to the completed school and view their accomplishment. Tiburzi describes the experience of seeing the finished school as “the most rewarding experience I have ever known in my life.” He also elaborates on the opportunity here at UMD to create change: “Our ability to organize around the Las Flores cause is truly representative of the power that a small group of focused students can have to change..."We will never stop working to present the children of Honduras with the most basic gift we can give—the gift of opportunity."

Sam Tiburzi, President of SHH at Maryland
Empowering Young Leaders to Create Change

the world. We will never stop working
to present the children of Honduras
with the most basic gift we can give—
the gift of opportunity.”

The UMD chapter continues to grow
steadily every year. On the first service
trip in 2010, UMD sent two members,
followed by 11 in 2011, and 21 in 2012.
The growth of the group itself has led
to an increase in fundraising ability and
campus-wide prominence. This year
their fundraising goal is at its highest,
set at $25,000, which is needed to
complete their new project, Pimientera
Elementary School, for nearly
100 children living there. Along with
contributions from Virginia Tech, UMD
SHH has raised $24,000 this semester,
with their most recent contribution of
$2,500 from their largest event, the
5k HonduRUN, with Alpha Omicron
Pi. The event honored the late soror-
ity and SHH member Kayla Libby, who
built a reputation for her dedication to
helping others. Her roommate Stefanie
Sequeira recalls Libby’s eagerness
for her trip to Honduras: “I know how
excited she was for SHH, it was what
she talked about most.”

The event planning was spearheaded
by incoming SHH President Nahal
Mottaghian, who was ecstatic about
the opportunity that came with a
campus-wide 5K. “It’s a great way to
show other students on campus what
an awesome cause we are supporting,
and hopefully get more people involved
in SHH,” Mottaghian says. In April, SHH
also placed third in UMD’s Do Good
Challenge, with a prize of $1,500, and
further promoted their cause across
campus. Mottaghian also specifies
it’s not just about raising money. “The
trip to Honduras is a once-in-a-lifetime
experience. It’s something I think
everyone could fall in love with.”

SHH continues to spread to campus-
es across the United States with more
than $1 million raised thus far, offering a
great opportunity for students to expe-
rience the world while helping those in
need. SHH has set a bold set of goals:
to build 1,000 schools in rural areas of
Honduras by 2020, to help Honduran
children reach their potential, and to
work to end poverty through education.
SHH will never lose the determination
to create change as long as children
like Vanessa struggle to fight for their
education, even if it means carrying
cinderblocks one by one.

Visit www.umdshh.webs.com for
information on SHH at Maryland.

BY Bryce Ziskind, SHH
If you wanted to learn the cultural history of the Spanish Andalusians, you could Google it, read the Wikipedia page, maybe check out a library book, or watch a YouTube video to gain some degree of insight—or take it a step further, and enroll in a course on flamenco dance!

Miriam Phillips, Assistant Professor of Dance in the UMD School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies (TDPS), believes that dance, because it is a personal physical experience, can instill comprehension of an entire culture. The oppressed Andalusian people, including the Gypsies, who were socially and economically marginalized for centuries, channeled their emotional frustrations into the proud, passionate dance style known as flamenco.

“Dance is embodied culture,” says Phillips, who specializes in Dance Ethnology and Movement Analysis and is noted for her work with the art of flamenco. When she received a prestigious Thomas J. Watson Fellowship in 1981, she was able to study in Spain, India, and the Middle East—an experience that launched her work.

“A culture’s dance is the encapsulated expression of their history and ethos. The phrasing and body movements in dance are an embodiment of each culture’s world view—their social values, economics, environment, and belief system—all represented in their dance patterns,” she says. It’s a perspective that guides TDPS’s philosophy on the School’s World Dance program.

It is also an artistic experience that can add tangible value and enrich lives. MFA Dance candidate Kwame Opare’s class on West African dance is full of

Miriam Phillips, also known as “La Miri” in flamenco circles. Photo by Bonnie Kamin.
barefoot UMD students dancing to the pulsing beat of Opare’s native drum. Their animated movements embody West Africa’s largely subsis-tent communities where the gods and the dance are connected to life forces—water, rice cultivation, fishing, and climbing palm trees. With its bent knees and forward inclining torso, there is a clear connection to the earth and natural world.

Opare, whose critically acclaimed work speaks to social issues around the world, has traveled to Ghana with the support of TDPS to research West African dance styles and their methods of teaching children. Not only has his research informed his choreographic and creative processes, but he has also applied that research to teaching elementary school-aged students in underprivileged Baltimore City. His students learn the dance techniques, but more importantly, they learn to understand and appreciate their heritage, giving them a new perspective and a more confident way of approaching the world.

Xuejuan Feng, another TDPS MFA Dance candidate and Chinese Folk dance teacher, is investigating the dance and movement patterns of Chinese and American women. Believing these movements are a reflection of each culture’s values, she explores qualities of delicacy, restraint, boldness, and space as a means of contrasting and comparing the two dissimilar worlds. As a Chinese woman living in a country that challenges her to move and act like one of its own, she can appreciate the value in learning to “walk the walk” of American women. But even more valuable is sharing with her students the cultural insights gleaned by simply appreciating the difference between the two worlds and their dance styles.

So, the next time you’re wondering what made the ancient Romans tick or why the Vikings had such wanderlust, put on your dancing shoes, and check out their movement and dance rituals for some genuine insight.

By Missy McTamney,
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

PHOTOS BELOW: UMD faculty and students learn about other cultures through the art of dance—from flamenco to traditional Chinese dance styles. Photos by Nicky Everett, Enoch Chan, Long Pan, and Enoch Chan (from left to right).
Beginning with forest fires that swept through North Korea in the 1950s and exacerbated by a nationwide famine in the 1990s that led to further deforestation when trees were used for firewood and bark for food, the country has been plagued by ongoing environmental crises. Recently, Margaret Palmer, Director of UMD’s National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center, was invited to join a small group of international scholars to give presentations on ecological restoration options at a Forest and Landscape Restoration conference in Pyongyang, North Korea, earlier this semester.

The landmark meeting, sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in collaboration with the Pyongyang International Information Center for New Technology and the Environmental Education Media project in China, was the first international conference in North Korea since Kim Jong Un took power in December. The conference included 14 scholars from eight countries, more than 70 North Korean scientists, and officials from the Ministry of Land and Environmental Conservation, the State Science and Technology Commission, and the Central Botanical Garden.

Many of the presentations were focused on reforestation, agro-forestry, soil rehabilitation, and climate change mitigation. Palmer noted one presentation by North Korean scientist Han Jun Choi, who demonstrated the extensive effects of deforestation in North Korea through data that indicated the average temperature in the country had increased by 1.9°C over the years while globally the average increase was much less, at 0.74°C. However, a majority of the reports focused narrowly on forest restoration and were qualitative in nature.

Although Palmer and the visiting scholars participated in the conference, there was little opportunity for interaction between them and their North Korean counterparts, who did not join the delegation on the field trips that followed the conference. The international group visited several sites, including a museum, a tree nursery, and a model farm. Palmer noted strong evidence of river and stream
degradation, but the main emphasis was on ecological research related to agriculture. “In terms of challenges, I would say that even if we can work with the North Korean scientists to move things forward scientifically, the situation on the ground is difficult—both in terms of socio-cultural capacity to understand the problems and solutions, as well as the availability of materials and technical support to implement restoration actions,” explains Palmer.

With political tensions on the rise, Palmer expressed concern about the likelihood that collaborations between UMD and North Korea will soon occur. “Science should be a place of common ground, somewhere where we all talk the same language,” she says. Nonetheless, the conference represented a first step in that direction.

A national reforestation program mandates that every North Korean citizen spend one month per year planting trees in an effort to restore the deforested landscape. All photos courtesy of Margaret Palmer.
To submit story ideas and photos, please contact the editor, Vivian Hayward, at vhayward@umd.edu or 301.405.4312