“Simple exchanges can break walls down between us, for when people come together and speak to one another and share a common experience, then their common humanity is revealed.” – President Barack Obama

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Belle Abroad: Seven Questions with Jasmine Jones (Interdisciplinary Studies Major, Class of 2021)

1) Where did you go, and what did you study?

2) What were your favorite things about London?
My favorite things about London were all of the different museums, double-decker buses, and landmarks from the Harry Potter films. I’m a huge Harry Potter fan! I also loved discovering Primark Department Store. If you know me, then you know I love shopping and Primark was three floors of nonstop shopping!

3) What was your proudest personal moment? What did you learn about yourself?
My proudest moment was knowing I made it to study abroad. I am the first in my family to ever go abroad or even leave the country. Growing up, I would always hear “Jazz can’t do this” or “Jazz can’t do that” but in reality I learned that I could do anything. This was definitely a dream come true.

4) What surprised you most about living in London?
The most surprising thing about London is how much it is like America. I thought that I was going to have to adjust to so much, but really, the only major thing I had to adjust to was the time. And I had to get used to their pigeons! The birds in London are not like birds in the States. They aren’t afraid! They will walk right beside you.

5) Before leaving the U.S., what was your biggest fear and how did you deal with that?
My biggest fear was flying. My flight to London was the first time I ever rode on a plane. I kept Psalm 23:4 in mind. It says, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.”

6) What was it like being in London when all the news about COVID-19 hit?
At first, it was a panic! I felt like I was in a movie, and everything was moving so fast. The night President Trump announced that the U.S. would ban flights from Europe, folks at Bennett texted me and we came up with a plan. I woke up early, packed all my clothes, went straight to the institution, and told them, “My college said that I have to come home immediately.” Then, I was on the first flight out of London. It was an adrenaline rush for sure, but I made it home safe and sound!

7) What advice would you give your Sister Belles who are thinking about studying abroad?
Sisters, you can do anything you put your mind to! Please study abroad! Even though my stay was cut short, this was still an experience of a lifetime! Words can’t explain!
Studying abroad in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil was by far the best experience I have ever had. During Spring semester 2019, I studied Portuguese, psychology, social politics, and communications through the CIEE program. For me, it wasn’t only about traveling and enjoying the beautiful beaches and amenities Brazil had to offer, but also learning about different cultures and people. My biggest adventures came when I explored new places and tried new restaurants everyday. While I was there, I was proud to work on a service project with the Saúde Criança organization to improve housing for a family in need, and we presented it to them. I learned that everyone faces adversity, no matter where they live in the world, and I have grown to appreciate that lived understanding. I know that my experiences in Brazil will help me as a social worker. All in all, I recognize that I was blessed to be there, and I wouldn’t give up my time abroad for anything in the world. I had the amazing chance to experience the most out of life, and it makes me want to travel even more!
Professor Jeffries Journey to India

Professor Tamara Jeffries recently returned from a two-week faculty development trip to India.

She was selected to participate in highly competitive program sponsored by the Council of American Overseas Research Centers and the Institute of Indian Studies. More than 120 faculty members from minority-serving and community colleges applied for the program. Jeffries was one of 16 people selected.

The trip took her to New Delhi, Jaipur, Agra and Lucknow to study the various economic, cultural, social, and environmental pressures confronting some of India’s major cities.

The focus of the trip was urban sustainability—but viewed broadly. “We heard a lot about water and sanitation issues, but we also spent time at some really dynamic women’s organizations and creative spaces.”

“Sustainability also includes culture and family,” Jeffries explains. “Organizations there are making sure that cultural practices are preserved and protected. And there’s an overlap with women’s issues because women are often the ones producing the work.”

Each of the cities that Jeffries visited has a textile culture—block printing, embroidery, weaving and other crafts using highly skilled techniques. That work is done by hand and is of incredible quality. It’s the kind of thing that can get produced off-shore, cheaply and less skillfully. When that happens, people lose a means of making a living and the skill dies out.

So sustainability also means that women are educated and able to contribute to their families and communities. NGOs (non governmental organizations) are trying to find a strong market for the goods so that women can get paid a fairer wage to keep making their products.
In the tour, Jeffries visited some of the regions poorest slums to see firsthand the conditions of families. “One community of ‘ragpickers’ has 200 families living in dwellings of scrap metal with fabric for doors. It was literally across the street from a high-rise apartment building.”

“The most powerful thing is seeing that the community had built a school in the middle of all that. Clearly the desire for children’s success is universal.

“At one point, some of the community members in one of these communities showed up with piping hot samosas and tea for us. It was powerful evidence that no matter their conditions, people can have dignity and express generosity.”

Jeffries also met several young women who were interested in media. “We follow each other on Instagram now! I’d love to make connections between them and my students in the journalism department.”

She will also encourage students to apply for the AIIS language learning programs and scholarships.

“Being in another country — especially if you really stay open to the full experience — can be eye opening and life changing. I want my students to experience the world.”

International Game Night

On February 26, the Center for Global Studies hosted International Game Night in the Player Hall Lounge. Students played games, including Pictionary and Charades, with a global spin. There were prizes and snacks. International Game Night provided a great opportunity for students, faculty, an alumna, and staff to interact and for the Center to promote different study abroad programs and scholarships.
Bennett Visits Howard University

During the spring semester 2020, Dr. Hayes and Ms. Akiwumi have visited three Global Studies Programs at sister colleges. They visited Elon University (January 27), Howard University (February 19), and Meredith College (February 24). The goal of these visits is to build relationships with global education colleagues and share best practices.

American University of Cairo Visits Campus

Ms. Sarah Shalash from American University of Cairo (AUC) came to Bennett College to speak to students, faculty, and staff about the amazing study abroad opportunities their institution offers. The exchange program agreement between both institutions allows for Bennett and AUC students to engage in global education opportunities in each others culture.
Bennett College Recognized
On February 18, Bennett College was recognized as one of the Fulbright HBCU Institutional Leaders for 2018-2019. Bennett was one of 19 HBCUs to receive this recognition for partnering with the Fulbright program.

Fulbright-Hays Proposal Submitted
On February 18, Bennett College’s team of Anne Hayes, Penny Speas, Gwendolyn Bookman, Sylvia Nicholson, Sofyan Essarroaui, and Sarah Akiwumi submitted a Fulbright-Hays proposal titled, “Women and Democracy in Morocco: A Global Perspective on Civic Engagement, Leadership, and Women’s Empowerment.” The purpose of Bennett College’s proposed 4-week Group Project Abroad (GPA) is to advance the understanding of Women and Democracy in Morocco. Bennett’s participant team will be comprised of a thirteen member faculty and administrator group from Bennett College and the Early/Middle College (K-12).

Given Bennett’s mission and history as a women’s HBCU committed to civic engagement and social justice, this proposed Group Project Abroad would elevate and internationalize Bennett’s faculty and administrators’ knowledge of women, activism, and democracy. After a 4-week experience in Morocco designed by Sofyan Essarroaui in June 2021, participants will complete one of the following activities that will integrate themes of Moroccan women, civic engagement, activism, and democracy: 1) Developing a new course or curriculum design; 2) Redesigning an existing course or curriculum; 3) Designing a faculty-led study abroad program to Morocco; 4) Developing a creative exhibition on the GPA’s theme; examples include: a) Making a documentary video; b) Creating a photography exhibit; or c) Creating a series of drawings, paintings or mixed media; 5) Developing a co-curricular student leadership or student engagement project. Participants will formally present their projects at the Bennett College Moroccan Women and Democracy Symposium on September 29, 2021.

Stay tuned! The College will hear if we received the grant in September 2020.
Chinese New Year
by Amy Kao, Chinese Instructor from Taiwan

Chinese New Year also, known as the Spring Festival, is the most important festival for Chinese people all over. Families get together to celebrate the new year by the lunar calendar. For me, this is the only time I can meet all the relatives, have a reunion meal, and do the celebration activities together. Together, we share the joy and blessings and wish everyone a good year.

This year was a special experience for me because I had the opportunity to share the Chinese New Year culture at Bennett College. Thanks to all the support from the Center for Global Studies and Sodexo staff, the celebration was a success. We wanted to let students experience a bit of the Chinese New Year. We had a Chinese New Year meal, decorated the dining hall, and provided a photo booth area. I also designed paper for spring couplets and a board explaining the meaning of different foods during the New Year. This was a wonderful event, and I am very grateful for the support. The positive feedback we received from students and faculty makes me believe it was a success. I am so glad I had the opportunity to share my culture with everyone.

Chinese New Year Celebration in the Bennett College Dining Hall on January 29, 2020
When I enrolled at Bennett College in 2010, I had no idea I would study abroad. I always had a love for foreign languages and traveling, but I did not know I could incorporate travel into my collegiate experience. As I was meeting some of my new sisters, I became intrigued about their journeys in Africa, Europe and Latin America! It was not until I heard Dr. Malveaux and the Director of Global Studies speak in ACES that I knew I wanted to travel abroad.

As an only child, my parents were nervous when I told them I could be living in Russia, Tanzania, or Israel for a year. After speaking with the Director and my father, I choose to study in Japan. The Director of Global Studies assisted me every step of the way. Bennett paid for my passport, let me use Rosetta Stone to learn Japanese and helped me secure the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship. The preparation to study abroad took many steps, but in September of 2012 the hard work paid off.

With GlobaLinks, I participated in a host family program, made traditional Japanese noodles at a volcano, went on tours of traditional castles, ate unique foods, and stepped on a forbidden temple ground. I lived on the southern island of Kyushu near Okinawa in Beppu. Many of the people there had never seen an African American individual. I was able to participate in a Peace Exchange in Kyoto, teach English to elderly locals, do karaoke with my peers and teach them about Black and American culture.

While there, I attended Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. As a business major, it aligned with my studies. This was an international school that hosted students from all over the world. Some of my best friends till this day are from Botswana and Uzbekistan. My courses had an international focus that incorporated cultural nuances on marketing, consumer engagement, and econometrics. The true challenge came in when some of my professors did not speak English, and I was still in the process of learning Japanese.

Going to Japan had a monumental effect on my life. When I returned to Bennett, I choose International Business as a concentration. The experience motivated me to obtain my MBA and work towards candidacy for a dual Ph.D. /J.D. program. I would recommend that every student study abroad and talk with the Center for Global Studies to debunk myths and fears about the process. There are an array of options from country, focus and time length to choose from. As an alumna, I encourage you to take part in this opportunity because after college it is harder to find time and they are more expensive. Trust me this experience will set you apart!
Did You Know?

- Center for Global Studies has passport scholarships. All students who have never had a passport are eligible. Email Sarah Akiwumi for details.
- Check out these study abroad scholarship deadlines. Click Here

Global Studies Happy Hour Online
Join us on Tuesdays at 11 am!

March 31 at 11 am: Fulbright Scholars Info Session
Learn what it means to be a Fulbright Scholar and the ins and outs of the program. Speaker: Sofyan Essarroaui

April 2 at 11 am: Capitalize on Your Journey Abroad!
Learn how to market your experience to your next employer. Speakers: Dr. Hayes and Ms. Akiwumi

April 7 at 11 am: School Life in Taiwan
Learn about what it’s like to be a college student in Taiwan. Speaker: Amy Kao

April 14 at 11 am: Girl Chat (HerStory Abroad Series)
Come hear the study abroad adventures of your fellow classmates and get your questions answered. Speakers: Jasmine Jones, Taylor Johnson, and Naaliah Askia-Green

April 21 at 11 am: Secure the Bag!
Learn tips on how to apply for scholarships and saving for your upcoming adventure. Speakers: Dr. Hayes and Ms. Akiwumi

COME SEE US!
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We are available for ONLINE advising appointments!

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Photo credit: London, by Jasmine Jones ’21