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Spring 2017, Global Perspectives Column: Interim Associate Vice Provost for International Programs

UNH Global Education Center

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UNH Global

Global Perspectives Column: Interim Associate Vice Provost for International Programs

Wednesday, March 22, 2017

Despite the numerous articles evoking the benefits of mindfulness, i.e., being in the moment, we, in America, remain goal driven. Our lexicon is peppered with words such as measurable outcomes and deliverables. We focus on the endpoint; in the Center for International Education and Global Engagement (CEIGE) this endpoint is a destination for scholars and students coming to study or work at UNH or UNH students traveling to a destination to study abroad. However, reflecting on my experience as the Interim Associate Vice Provost for International Programs these past months, my conversations with international scholars and students, and the brief exchanges I have with students waiting in the hall for their appointments with education abroad advisors, I am aware the destination is merely the starting point of a journey. A journey that starts with finding oneself in an unfamiliar place with possibilities that are tempered by fears of the unknown. The challenge is to be open to new ideas, people, and situations, to be willing to acknowledge missteps and learn and to step forward into the moment.

In this issue of *UNH International Educator* people share stories of their journeys--of social innovation and self-discovery in Rwanda, a courtship that spans continents, and of a dream that is being realized in life steeped in Japanese history. Juxtaposed with these stories is the lead article



Hood House in 1934 (Milne Special Collections and Archives) and inset photo of Kerryellen Vroman

about the presidential executive orders on immigration that cannot portray the individual journeys of those affected by the regulation changes, the anxiety of living with uncertainty and struggling with international travel limitations - not knowing when you can see your family or can travel for research activities that are integral to your career. Through the meetings held on campus in the week following the announcement of the first executive order, I had the opportunity to meet many of UNH's international students and scholars. In talking with the students and scholars I was struck by the reality of President Huddleston's statement in his letter to the UNH community; "We simply cannot be successful in our academic and research mission without the world-class students and scholars who come from more than 75 nations to study, discover and innovate across the disciplines at UNH."

As this is my first column for the *UNH International Educator*, I expect that some of you are wondering who I am and what my goals are. The latter I will explore in future columns. Writing this column, I have been thinking about my own personal journey that has brought me to UNH's Center for International Education and Global Engagement, where I feel at home. It may have something to do with having an office in Hood House, a "modern infirmary" built in the 30's to provide healthcare to students. I started my professional career in an even older healthcare building in New Zealand. However, my feeling at home is more than my physical location; it is that my journey seems to have naturally brought me to my current position. I am a daughter of immigrants, a first-generation student, my graduate studies were abroad, and after emigrating to Canada I came to the USA through the provisions of the NAFTA agreement. Because of my belief in the unique learning and personal growth that students experience through travelling, working, and studying abroad as a faculty member I have taken students abroad. Now I am fortunate to be in a position where I can contribute daily to UNH becoming increasingly internationalized through dynamic programming and services that will promote "more international curricula, greater engagement of faculty and staff in international activities, more opportunities for students to study abroad and greater numbers of international students and faculty on campus (Report of the President's Panel on Internationalizing UNH, 2011)." Now I begin a new journey, which with your support of the Center for International Education and Global Engagement, we will proactively sustain and grow UNH's global engagement and preparation of students to be mindful citizens of the world.

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