

What's Next: Water Sanitation in Panama

UNH senior taking her engineering skills to Central America

Wednesday, May 17, 2017



JOANNA LEWIS '17 WILL SPEND THE NEXT TWO YEARS IN PANAMA WITH THE PEACE CORPS.

When Joanna Lewis '17 was thinking about what she would do with her newly minted degree in [environmental engineering](#), she didn't turn to a big firm or local municipality. She joined the Peace Corps.

In July, Lewis leaves for Panama, a country, she says, that came with the job description. "I was looking for a job where I could use

SERIES:

THE PLACES THEY'LL GO 2017

SUBSCRIBE TO THE UNH TODAY NEWSLETTER

SUBSCRIBE TO UNH TODAY RSS

RELATED LINKS

UNH Among Top Peace Corps Volunteer-Producing Schools

First of a Kind

Scholarships help make international education accessible

The Sea Is Her

my environmental engineering skills and that happened to be in Panama,” Lewis says, adding that a desire to become fluent in Spanish drew her to Latin America.

Her interest in environmental issues was groomed while she was in high school; engineering classes were part of the curriculum. “I had the opportunity to take engineering for three years — we all had to take tech classes. I took engineering and found out I really liked it,” Lewis says.

That foundation led her to connect with the UNH chapter of Engineers Without Borders when she was a freshman. She has since been part of a team that has traveled to Peru three times to work on a project that will bring clean drinking water to the rural mountain community of San Pedro de Casta.



JOANNA LEWIS '17 (RIGHT)
CARRYING WATER PIPE IN PERU.

“Working with Engineers Without Borders introduced me to doing development work in places that really need the help, and I really fell in love with how practical and actionable every decision you make has to be and how creative you have to be working with so many design constraints,” Lewis says.

The Maryland resident also learned that visiting the community once a year wasn't enough for her. She wanted the work to be ongoing, to witness the progress, to be a part of that.

“I really liked the idea of living in the community like I will with the Peace Corps,” Lewis says of her decision to join the volunteer organization. “I hope it will lead to more sustainable and integrated community-driven projects. Whether that's establishing

a water supply or cleaning an existing one, I have no idea. But I'm looking forward to whatever role I'll play."

See where other CEPS graduates landed:

[Payback: Thanh Dinh '17 Passes Along Support and Encouragement](#)

[An Astronomical Goal: CEPS Alumus Aims for the Stars](#)

[Job? Check: CEPS Graduate Leaps Into her Future](#)

WRITTEN [Jody Record '95](#) | Communications and Public Affairs |

BY: jody.record@unh.edu

PHOTOGRAPHER [Jeremy Gasowski](#) | Communications and Public

Affairs | jeremy.gasowski@unh.edu | 603-862-

4465

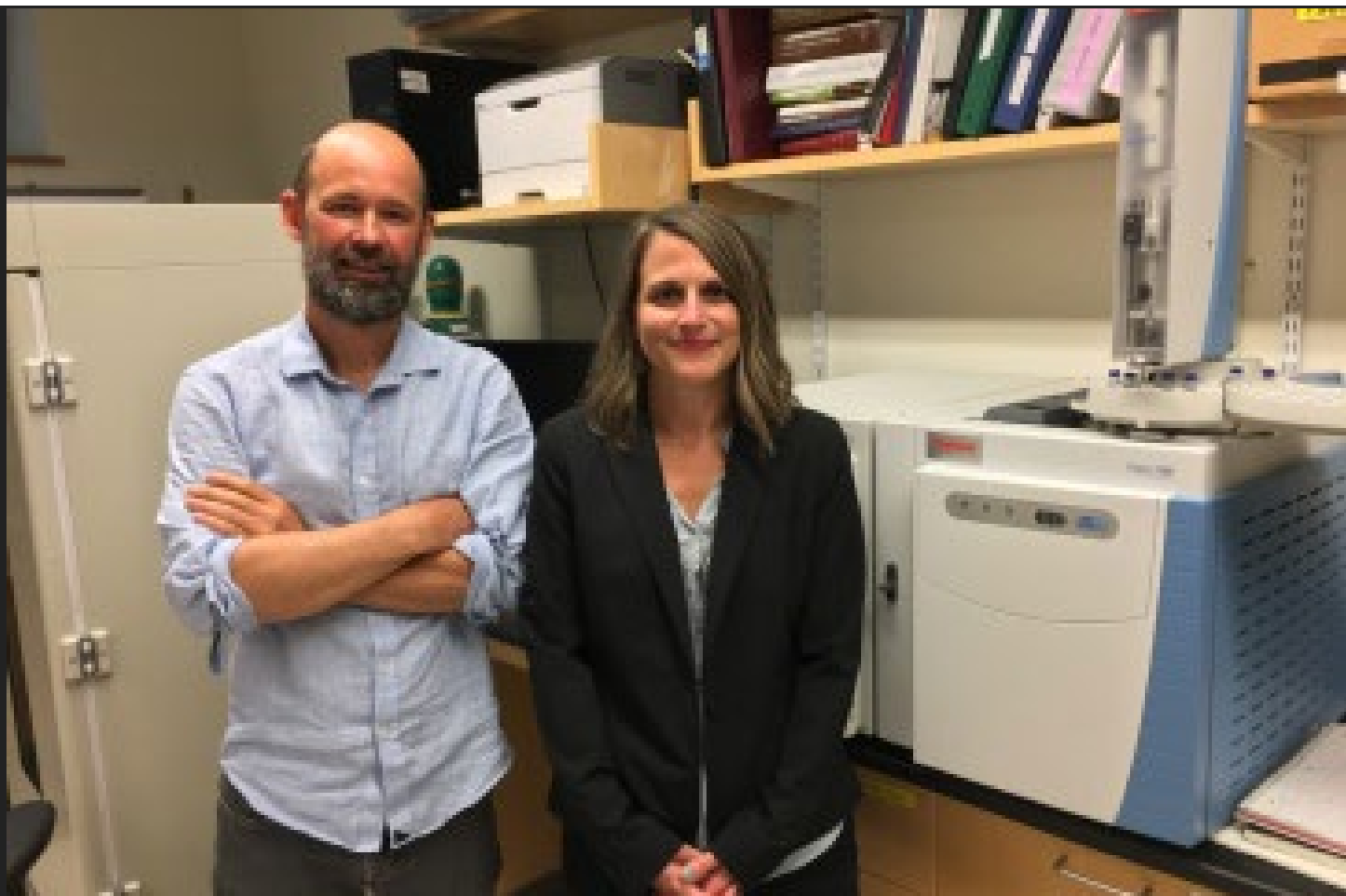
THE PLACES THEY'LL GO 2017

RELATED ARTICLES



December 15, 2021 | THE COLLEGE LETTER

Rolling Up Our Sleeves



September 17, 2021 | GRANTS AND CONTRACTS NEWS

UNH Scientists Receive \$1M to Support Critical Soil Sustainability Research



September 24, 2021 | COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Inspired to make an impact



University of New Hampshire

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of **UNH Communications and Public Affairs**.

Email us: unhtoday.editor@unh.edu.

MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION **CONTACT US**



UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234
Copyright © 2022 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)

