Pushing Boundaries:
Introduction to the Global Service-Learning Special Section

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Welcome to the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning's* special section on global service-learning (GSL). In this introduction we describe how we each came to the field of GSL – some of its emphases and values that drew us to and sustain our commitment with this work, discuss some highlights of what GSL practice can learn from other bodies of literature and practice, share a few thoughts on the interplay of the local and the global, identify five themes distinguishing domestic service-learning (SL) from GSL, and introduce some noteworthy past and current work on GSL including the globalsl.org Web site aimed at advancing GSL research and practice. We end by describing the evolution of and process we used for this special section on GSL and introduce the two articles selected for this Journal issue.

Kiely, International Relations, and Intercultural Learning

Kiely's first encounter with community-based service-learning was as a faculty member and administrator when, in 1993, he co-founded a GSL program that involved U.S. college students in Nicaragua. His experiences with that program led to a focus on GSL for his doctoral studies (Kiely, 2002, 2004, 2005). Similar to situations on many campuses, Kiely was asked to be part of that initiative because he was one of the few members of the campus community fluent in Spanish and experienced with study abroad and international relations. In other words, at that time he had no SL background (nor a GSL field upon which to draw). But his familiarity with international relations and study abroad, his interest in facilitating intercultural learning, and the potential synergies he could see evolving from connecting pedagogy, community-based research, institutional change, and community capacity-building, drew him to want to pursue work in GSL. Interestingly, even now when there is a growing body of GSL literature, his visits to campuses often occasion a rare or even first-time meeting between the campus offices of study abroad and service-learning. Slowly, campuses are investigating strategies for institutional change such as inter-office cooperation to create the capacity for a

well-informed commitment to GSL (Day Ong & Green, 2014; Tryon, Hood, & Taalbi, 2013). Until such efforts are solidified, the growth of each field independent of the other as well as that of GSL precludes best practice in course and program design.

Hartman, International Development, and Community-Driven Work

Hartman first encountered GSL in 2002 as a staff member at Amizade Global Service-Learning, a non-profit organization dedicated to community-driven service across cultures. He was hired because of his background with domestic SL and the organization's interest in deepening its GSL capacity. Similarly to Kiely's ongoing experiences in Nicaragua, Hartman found his experiences in Peru to be transformative (Kiely, 2004) – fundamentally disrupting his understanding of the world and renewing how he saw his place within a global context. Working with communities around the world, he not only learned about their strengths and the challenges they faced but how to consider those challenges from a global political-economic structural lens that led to understanding about extraordinary resource differentials, oppressive national and regional histories (Mellom & Herrera, 2014), and complex international interdependence (Keith, 2005).

What Can GSL Learn from Related Literatures and Practices?

International Education

Despite their customary separation into distinct campus offices and reporting lines, it has been and remains the case that the study abroad and the service-learning communities have a great deal to contribute to and learn from one another (Brewer & Cunningham, 2009; Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Pusch & Merrill, 2008). In fact, Kiely's (2011) contribution to the Bringle, Hatcher, and Jones book, International *Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Research in International Service Learning* (2011), highlighted many of these opportunities for cross-fertilization.

What can GSL learn from international education? For one thing, international education has a deep history of looking systematically at intercultural competence development and how it relates to program factors such as homestays, pre- and post-immersion coursework, peer- and faculty-facilitated learning, and other course and program dynamics. The research establishes the extent to which systematic reflective learning processes grounded in a process of careful challenge and support are correlated with advances in student intercultural competence development – and not simply going abroad as the determining factor (Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012). This work and many others from the international education literature can inform GSL courses and programs that necessarily, due to the nature of the experience, integrate student intercultural competence development in their goals.

International Development

What can GSL learn from international development work? Political-economic analysis is more evident in the international development literature and practice (Escobar, 1995; Esteva & Prakash, 1997; Heron, 2007; Korten, 1990; Griffin & Weiss Block, 2013; McMichael, 2008) than in the SL (and even in the international education) literatures. To the extent that political-economic structural and cultural analysis does exist in the SL/GSL field, it only occurs in the critical (Mitchell, 2008; Porfilio & Hickman, 2011) and Freirean (Deans, 1999) SL models where critical consciousness is marked by, "a critical and historical problematization of society and one's relation to it" (Deans, 1999, p. 21), and in GSL programs evidencing best practices.

In addition, international development work emphasizes capacity building more than direct service, likely because of the explicit costs involved with international development efforts (Swords & Kiely, 2011; Tiessen & Huish, 2014). An exemplary program committed to capacity building in international work is Northwestern University's Global Engagement Studies Institute, which grounds its work in the asset-based community development model (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Patel, Arnston, & Hanson, 2013). As GSL programs continue to become more popular, they can draw on the international development literature, research, and practice, and by doing so, strengthen the connections between these two paradigms.

The Global and Local Intersect

As researchers and practitioners operating within international education and international development frameworks that explicitly interrogate how local and global structures affect international development efforts, we have witnessed the significant impact these structures have in and on local (domestic) community-university interactions. Free trade agreements in the Americas, for example, are as bound up with social hope and challenges in communities near Free Enterprise Zones in the Dominican Republic as they are tied to decreases in working class wages and community stability in parts of North Carolina. In other words, we live in a deeply, inter-connected globalized world (Lechner, 2009), where thinking through the lens of the global economy and global rights commitments in local communities is equally relevant inside and outside of our home countries (Shackford-Bradley, 2013).

Most of us wear t-shirts, shorts, and jeans produced through vast global supply chains. As we work in specific international communities, we are necessarily pushed to reflect on our complicit roles in the context of globalization. We must not only look for positive benevolent opportunities to act but also embrace the challenging responsibility of doing no harm and understanding better our roles, however unintentional, in harmful structural arrangements adversely affecting the partners we work with as well as the communities to which we belong in both the global south and north (Cameron, 2014; Hartman & Kiely, 2014).

What's Distinctive About Global Service-Learning?

Given our backgrounds and the ways in which GSL work resonates with our values and priorities, we have identified five ways global service-learning stands apart from much domestic service-learning: (a) GSL is committed to student intercultural competence development; (b) GSL has a focus on structural analysis tied to consideration of power, privilege, and hegemonic assumptions. (c) GSL takes place within a global marketization of volunteerism; (d) GSL is typically immersive; and (e) GSL engages the critical global civic and moral imagination.

GSL is Committed to Student Intercultural Competence Development

The long-standing assumption that study abroad programing will advance student development of intercultural competence strongly influences GSL practice. As mentioned above, study abroad researchers have recently established that going abroad is not a determinative factor in intercultural competence development; rather, intercultural competence and more broadly intercultural learning (Kiely, 2011), must be continuously nurtured in a systematic process of reflective challenge and sup-

port (Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012). Only careful attention to numerous forms of border crossing (Kiely, 2004, 2005), coupled with systematic reflective practice relating to each area of desired learning, deepens students' intercultural competence. While within the study abroad paradigm, intercultural competence is considered a desired outcome, within GSL, intercultural competence development is considered absolutely necessary for cooperative and reciprocal engagement with community partners (Hartman, Morris Paris, & Blache-Cohen, 2014).

GSL Focuses on Structural Analyses

GSL is disruptive of students' settled understandings and expectations. It regularly leads them to profound and transformational questioning (Kiely, 2004, 2005). To what may be a greater extent than is the case for domestic, non-immersive service-learning, students are driven to see the world and their assumptions about it in new ways. This opens a special reflective space for discussing political, economic, social, cultural, and historical structures and how they normalize our experiences and assumptions. This can happen in domestic SL, but research and experience simply suggest that the degree of dissonance and openness to transformational learning may be deepened through immersive GSL (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Kiely, 2004, 2005). Robust GSL practice that maximizes dissonance and transformational learning can systematically illuminate the role of these structural components in everyday life, an opportunity leveraged by employing the international development paradigms and thinking mentioned above.

GSL Takes Place within a Global Marketization of Volunteerism

As with the international education and international development literature, tourism studies literature also has contributed to our understanding of the role of economic exchange within GSL programming. In the tourism sector, youth travel is growing, and higher education study abroad and volunteering represent the largest growth markets within youth travel (STAY WYSE, 2012).

Scholarship on the marketization of doing good has generally received more attention from Australian (Hammersley, 2014), Canadian (Andreotti & De Souza, 2012; Biehn, 2014; Tarc, 2013; Teissen & Huish, 2014), and European (Smith & Font, 2014; Mdee & Emmot, 2008) researchers than U.S. researchers, and when it has been cited in the U.S. it has been in tourism studies literature (McGehee & Santos, 2005) rather than the GSL or international education literatures.

The United States international education sector –

populated by businesses and nonprofit conglomerates to a much greater extent than by community-driven nonprofit organizations – is increasingly moving into the volunteerism "market" not out of socially benevolent motives but for profit maximization (Hartman & Chaire, 2014). This marketization fundamentally affects participating students' understandings of what "doing good" looks like (Cameron, 2014). As one writer (Forte, 2014) has summarized:

> Biehn examines the new imperial ideologies present in narratives manufactured by the websites of youth-centered volunteer abroad organizations. These narratives serve to instill neoliberal, capitalist understandings of the issues of global inequality and poverty in prospective volunteers, resulting in the depoliticization and decontextualization of such issues. Biehn finds that ideas of "change" and "good" are ubiquitous and yet are left undefined, that claims of "helping" and "immersion" are questionable, and that the utility of international student volunteering lies not in the benevolent donation of unskilled western youth labor to underprivileged communities, but in the production of ideal neoliberal subjects.

As university strategic plans identify "internationalization," "global citizenship," and "civic engagement" as ideals to be pursued (and often measured in terms of quantity rather than quality), program staff and faculty members new to international education as well as to study abroad offices may reasonably turn to third party providers in the international education market who often know a great deal about developing trips abroad but have little or no background in community-driven service, community-university partnership, and other nuances of community-engaged work. Unfortunately, this phenomenon has adverse community impacts. Because of documented harms to children and communities, the United Nations Children's Fund and Save the Children have recently organized a global initiative to combat orphanage volunteerism in particular, while encouraging ethical forms of global engagement (Hartman, 2014).

One of the potential positive by-products of the marketization phenomenon is that it may cause us to look with fresh eyes at the extraordinary resource inequities between our universities and domestic partner communities. Best practices like ensuring fair wage compensation for community knowledge (Amizade, 2014) and asset-based community development interventions (Water for Waslala, 2014) have been embraced and practiced for many years by the NGOs engaged in this work (Chambers, 1997).

The Association of Clubs in Jamaica, for example, which ejected[1] two study abroad organizations from Petersfield, Jamaica, ultimately achieved the devel-

opment of a community-based participatory budgeting and homestay sharing system that integrates a community tourism development model with ongoing service-learning programming (Hartman, 2013). The partnership, in other words, proceeds through transparent and community-directed budgeting, community direction regarding programming and learning opportunities, and weekly community meetings discussing upcoming decisions on where visiting students will serve, stay, and learn. Imagine, for a moment, community partners having transparent access to program fees (tuition) and how those fees relate to faculty and staff support, community development, and mutual learning!

GSL is Typically Immersive

While some SL programs use global-related analyses in tandem with their local engagement efforts (Battistoni, Longo, & Jayanandhan, 2009), including our own, most SL courses and programs do not involve an immersive experience. However, we know that immersion plays a significant role in fostering the disruption or dissonance identified as an essential element in the transformational learning process (Kiely, 2004). In practical terms, students on immersive international programs cannot have a "critical incident" and then return immediately to the comforts, distractions, and often culturally hegemonic spaces of their own homes and communities (Hermann, 2011; Langdon & Agyeyomah, 2014). Instead, their disruption and dissonance are sustained to various degrees for weeks or months at a time (Kiely, 2002, 2004).

GSL research and practice regularly refocuses our attention on the extent to which domestic SL often occurs across cultures and takes place in the context of oppressive histories and contemporary cultural marginalization. As is common practice during alternative breaks, when an immersive SL program takes place in the Navajo (Diné) Nation in Northeast Arizona or the (Lakota Nation) Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, students work across cultures in the context of a colonial/imperial history that has clear contemporary effects. In a sense immersive service in one of the United States' 566 federally-recognized indigenous nations may be considered a variant of GSL; the contexts are culturally, historically, and spiritually distinct and even recognized as separate nations by the United States. But what about immersive SL with predominately white communities in rural Appalachia, predominately black communities in New Orleans, or predominately brown communities of uncertain "documentation" in Southern Arizona? Such efforts may be thought of as variants of GSL, too.

GSL Engages the Critical Global Civic & Moral Imagination

The above notwithstanding, we are not invested in attempting to create a hard line between what is and is not classified as GSL. Such an effort would need to be undertaken in the context of continuously developing understandings of what is meant by "nation," "the self," and "globalization," and "ethical action" – and so our understanding of what fits within the GSL category will continue to develop. However, one possible demarcation is whether or not ethical consideration takes place in light of domestic or global citizenship – are you a citizen of a nation or a citizen of the world? We have been particularly impressed by efforts to enact "thicker" (Cameron, 2014) forms of global citizenship. Domestic citizenship and global citizenship are not mutually exclusive. One may have global commitments that extend beyond national belonging without negating it.

When organizing literacy tutoring with refugees in a U.S. city, do we do this work because we are good Americans interested in an open and pluralistic democracy and/or because the U.S. is just one nation within a world we feel part of – a world in which we think of ourselves as global citizens working toward an as yet unimagined tomorrow (Falk, 2000), a tomorrow where every person has opportunity to experience human rights and is recognized for depth of dignity? That is, when we are engaged with GSL however defined, are our reflections about ourselves as domestic citizens or global citizens or both?

As is hopefully apparent, GSL has no shortage of challenging questions and conversations that deserve significant theoretically and methodologically rich attention. We feel fortunate to have contributed to some of the emerging research in this area, including Green & Johnson's (2014) edited volume, where we shared our understanding of a critical global citizenship that emerged through student interviews, applied practice, and the social and political theory of rights and citizenship in global context (Hartman & Kiely, 2014):

> Our understanding of a critical global citizenship follows from student articulations of their experiences, accepts our postmodern positions, and allows for diverse, currently unknown or unknowable efforts toward building a better world. This kind of global citizenship therefore admits that we do not have precise answers but calls us to humble, careful, and ongoing action to better acknowledge common human dignity. It continuously reminds us of the possibility of our own, perhaps unintentional or unwitting, complicity in perpetuating structures of exclusion (such as states) and patterns of oppression. (p. 237)

The significant tension within this understanding of global citizenship is deliberate. We are working in complex territory. Sometimes the complexity causes individuals and institutions to exit – or leads to critiques of this kind of work that are rhetorically strong yet oversimplified (Biehn, 2014; Illich, 1968; Zemach Bersin, 2008). Yet these critiques are also often appropriate, particularly when program planning and partnership is unreflective, under-theorized, or grounded in nothing more than student or faculty desire for one small moment in time (a one week or one month "intervention" with no mindfulness regarding community return). More nuanced critiques of flawed practice approaches or inherent tensions include Cameron (2014), Crabtree (2008), Erasmus (2011), Grusky (2000), Larsen and Gough (2013), Madsen-Camacho (2004), Prins and Webster (2010), Sharpe and Dear (2013), Talwalker (2012), and many others. Learning from and building with these and other researchers and practitioners, we are working to co-create a community of practice that couples reflective practice with consequential action.

Field-Building Efforts

We are humbled by the work that precedes our contributions to the study and practice of GSL. For example, other journals have published work in the area of GSL. The *Metropolitan Universities Journal* dedicated a special issue to International Service Learning (ISL) in 2000, and the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* devoted a special issue to ISL in 2013 that represented some of the research and conceptual frameworks that emerged from the first ISL Summit held at Washington University in St. Louis (Mlyn & McBride, 2013). NAFSA: The Association of International Educators has begun to grapple with internships, service-learning, and volunteering abroad from the lens of the study abroad community (Nolting, Donohue, Matherly, & Tillman, 2013). We would be remiss to not mention the International Partnership for Service-Learning's (IPSL) early work in the 1980s and 1990s reflected in the numerous publications of GSL pioneers Berry (1990), Chisholm (2000), Berry and Chisholm (1992, 1999), Tonkin (2004) and many others. Indeed, there are scores of other colleagues engrossed in the work of GSL.

In 2011, *International Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Research* was published, the first clear effort to comprehensively integrate international education, study abroad, and service-learning (Bringle, Hatcher, & Jones, 2011). This volume brought together insights from a core group of researchers regularly attending the annual conference of the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE). We hope to see more collaborative and scholarly efforts like these from diverse disciplinary and cultural lenses to both broaden and deepen our understanding of an evolving and dynamic GSL field.

In writing this introduction, we have perhaps revealed our rationale for co-founding the Web site globalsl.org. It had become clear to us that significant bodies of research were developing that related to GSL. These fields, intentionally or unintentionally, have contributed to understanding, influencing, and giving credibility to GSL, but few scholars or practitioners previously had navigated among these different discourses. One aim of the Web site was simply to gather these literatures in one place with open access. Guest bloggers (e.g., Slimbach, 2012) have helped us to see other literatures, program examples, areas of practice, and reflections.

Recently, we have moved forward with our home institutions (Kansas State University and Cornell University) and other founding sponsors – Duke University, Northwestern University, and Washington University in St. Louis – to formally support globalsl.org's efforts to continue collecting related research and practitioner tools, support knowledge mobilization, and serve as a field-gathering space. One of our founding sponsors insightfully pointed out that in this profoundly transdisciplinary space, the nature of blog entries necessitates concise communication about key components of academics' and practitioners' practice while acknowledging their often robust but divergent literatures.

While we find these many convergences exciting and promising, we look forward to further collaboration with other global networks doing important work to advance the role of universities in serving community-driven and justice-oriented goals around the world (GACER, 2014; GUNI, 2014; Talloires Network, 2014). In cooperating with the leaders behind the past ISL Summits held at Washington University and Northwestern, and the one to be held at Duke University in March 2015, we have been able to draw deeper connections between that community, the cohort of GSL scholars regularly present at IARSLCE, researchers and practitioners who have attended the Cornell-New York Campus Compact–Amizade GSL Institutes, and some of the regular participants in the Forum on Education Abroad. Along with our Web site co-sponsors, we are eager to more explicitly develop a community of practice in this area, and globalsl.org will feature questions and commentary on that theme in the coming months.

One of the steps we have taken is the piloting of a multi-institutional, quantitative and qualitative pre- and post-survey examining intercultural learning, global and local citizenship development, and critical

thinking in relation to a variety of high impact practices (Hartman, Toms, Reynolds, & Lough, 2014). These practices include domestic SL across cultures, ISL, immersive and non-immersive SL programs, and study abroad absent community engagement. Part of the rationale for beginning this initiative stemmed from feedback at Northwestern University's ISL Summit (2013) suggesting that research and evaluation tools need to be more broadly available. This evaluation effort builds on Niehaus' (2013) analysis of the influence of specific program factors on student experiences of alternative spring break programs.

As this research, field-building, and conscious effort to develop a community of practice takes place at globalsl.org, we are pleased to announce that a series of GSL institutional profiles will be published there in November 2014. In addition, we look forward to increasing the diversity of scholars who continue to share syllabi as well as teaching and community partnership resources through this site.

Evolution, Process, and Selected Articles for this Special Section on GSL

Over the past decade we have seen an expansion of publications and research in GSL and we are indebted to IPSL and other early pioneers' leadership to create a robust discussion on what constitutes quality GSL pedagogy, programming, and practice. Inspired by that history, accumulated scholarship, and set of specific tensions, we proposed to the editor of the *Michigan Journal* a special section on GSL. Once approved, we disseminated a call for articles through networks with which we were familiar, framing GSL in light of the definition we employ in our forthcoming book (Hartman, Kiely, Friedrichs, & Boettcher, 2015):

> Global service learning is a community-driven service experience that employs structured, critically reflective practice to better understand common human dignity; self; culture; positionality; socio-economic, political, and environmental issues; power relations; and social responsibility, all in global contexts.

We received nearly 50 responses to this call for article submissions. After peer and editorial review, we have identified two particularly strong pieces that are published in this fall issue (V 21, N 1), with other articles-in-process queued for the spring issue (V 21, N 2). The first article in this issue, by Janice McMillan and Timothy Stanton, draws on decades of preparation and years of reflective-practitioner effort to carefully balance student learning and community partnership goals in Stanford University's program in Cape Town, South Africa. Indeed, the quality of reflective critique and careful integration of interna-

tional development thinking, de-centering of student career goals, and establishing the importance of an explicit ontological project in GSL, makes this a model program. McMillan and Stanton's piece provokes deep thinking about how we conceive of service as a way of being, and also provides examples of curricular components that are instructive for practitioners beginning new GSL programs or refining existing ones.

The second article, by Nora Pillard Reynolds, breaks new ground through a methodologically sound process of gathering community perceptions of a GSL partnership in rural Nicaragua. Her analysis, guided by multiple translations, member checks, and other indicators of deep commitment to careful understanding of community voices, differentiates perceived project outcomes from university versus community participants, undermines any simplistic conception of GSL outcomes as positive or negative, and uses Fraser's theory of social justice to analyze the importance of not only redistribution of resources but also recognition of and representation by the community. Reynolds is one of an exciting group of rising scholars pushing the GSL field forward vis-à-vis community partnership research (Arends, 2013; Nelson, 2013; Toms, 2013), student assessment (Niehaus, 2013), and tracking GSL as part of a larger phenomenon of increasing international volunteerism (Lough, 2012).

We close with a sense of the enormity, the promise, and the potential perils of the field. As is clear from the discussion above, none of this is "merely academic." GSL practice must be engaged with the utmost of care. When done poorly, GSL can have adverse effects on communities. When done well, GSL can have powerful effects on community members, students, and faculty.

We look forward to continuing to grow with this rapidly advancing area of research and practice, online and in-person, through IARSLCE pre-conferences, Cornell-NYCC GSL Institutes, and the upcoming March 2015 ISL Summit at Duke and the fall 2016 Summit at Kansas State University. We thank article authors and the scores of peer reviewers for making it possible to continue advancing this field-building effort through these special sections in the Michigan Journal.

Notes

[1] The community organization experienced the two study abroad organizations with which they had worked to be focused on profit and student fun at the expense of community impact and student learning. Members of the community discussed the issue and asked the organizations to leave. Years later, the same community organization began a partnership with Amizade, which has lasted more than a decade.

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