

# Where Are They Now? Updates From Past Student Authors

We are pleased to provide the following updates from some of the student authors whose research appeared in our first two Undergraduate Research Special Issues. These updates serve as testimony to the ongoing impact of the study abroad experience, and inspire everyone involved with study abroad, administrators, faculty, and students, to value the distinctiveness of study abroad learning.

**Heidi Boutros writes:**

“I am currently at Oxford [as a Marshall Scholar] reading for an MPhil in International Relations. My undergraduate experiences abroad shaped my academic and professional interests and brought meaning and an understanding of practical realities to my studies.”

**Brian Hoyer first contacted us from Monrovia, Liberia, and once he returned to the US, he emailed:**

“...as I write this message, I am visiting a friend from Congo who has recently been resettled in Tennessee. He is here with 6 small brothers and sisters. I met him while doing my thesis research and he was one of my main translators and friends. I helped him during the long path to resettlement and it is great to see him again. You know you are heading in the right direction when you can no longer define the times of the day you are working or playing! My interests and passion have converged with my career goals and therefore I am happy to report that despite the fragile state of our world I am doing well and remain optimistic.”

*Brian continues:*

“For the past 2½ years, I have been working at an International NGO in the New York area. I have focused on our partnerships in Africa and following hurricane Katrina I transitioned into the Emergency Response Department full time. My work has taken me to places as diverse as Mississippi, Pakistan and Liberia to work on various health and post emergency

reconstruction projects. I am thankful for my recent work experience which has again pushed me back toward academia. In Spring 2007 I will begin a graduate program at Columbia University in International Affairs with a focus in African Studies and humanitarian affairs.

“I remain committed to a career in the humanitarian arena with special interest in reforming/improving the industry and staying focused on dignity for the displaced. I continue to draw upon my undergraduate international experiences in my current work. These past experiences are a part of me at every step in my life. Not only did the international experience help me find a job but I also continue to draw upon the primary and secondary research skills I acquired several years ago.”

**Kevin McAdam writes:**

“Last year, under the auspices of a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship, I completed a degree in Poverty and Development Studies from Universidad Alberto Hurtado in Santiago, Chile. I have spent a lot of time this year speaking about the Ambassadorial Scholarship program and my experience in Chile to various Rotary clubs and at several conferences. I am currently living in Denver, CO, working as a research analyst for a private financial planning firm. And, within the next several weeks, I should begin to hear back from the law schools to which I applied last month; I plan to matriculate next fall.”

“I am thankful for both my undergraduate time abroad (in Geneva) and for the opportunity to get published in *Frontiers* (as well as to speak at the Forum conference in Santa, Fe). I’ve had the opportunity recently, in the context of my law school applications (and, specifically, while writing my personal statement), to connect the dots of my intellectual progress, from travels before college, to International Studies classes at Boston College, to service opportunities in Boston, to a broader-view of poverty and international organizations in Geneva, to my thesis and the *Frontiers* article on water scarcity and human rights, to my studies last year in Chile, to my future plans in law school and, thereafter, as a lawyer. While I don’t think the path I’ve taken is the only one I could have, I’m not sure how I would have ended up where I am now were it not for my time abroad in Geneva and the important academic formation it lent itself to as I began

my thesis research there and expanded it into a much larger “Scholar of the College” project back at Boston College. I see my semester in Geneva as a very critical point in my growth; it was then that I was first able to introduce the more visceral experiences I had previously had traveling (in Africa, Asia, and Latin America) to an informed analysis of international affairs. I have benefited from this fusion of practical experiences with, and theoretical understanding of, poverty and development; I hope it will serve me well in a legal career in this area.”

**Michael Stambolis-Ruhstorfer writes:**

“It’s possible to say that my undergraduate experience abroad was a deciding factor in what I’m doing today because I’ve been living in Toulouse, France since graduation. I’m currently teaching as a graduate assistant and getting my Masters in American Studies at the Université de Toulouse: le Mirail. In addition, my current research, which will lead me through my Masters and into the PhD program, is based largely on the research I conducted as an undergraduate during my abroad experience. “

**Amy Walter writes:**

“I am currently pursuing an M.A. in Latin American Studies at the University of Chicago. While my current research is not on the exact topic I undertook during my undergraduate semester in Chile, that study abroad experience continues to inform my understanding of the region. It was also an important factor in my decision to pursue a graduate degree in Latin American Studies, and I hope that my future career will involve fieldwork in the region. “