



GLOBAL LEADERS OF PENN STATE

Global and International Studies
Monthly Email Newsletter

In this newsletter:

Welcome

Page 1

GLIS at Work Alumni Panel

Page 2

Upcoming GLIS Event

Page 5

GLIS Student Spotlight

Page 6

Education Abroad Spotlight

Page 8

WELCOME

by Abigail Picozzi, Managing Editor

Hello! Welcome to the April edition of the Global and International Studies Newsletter for the 2023–24 school year. We're so excited to continue sharing stories from the GLIS community! In this issue, we are featuring the recent GLIS at Work Alumni Panel, a GLIS Student Spotlight on Prachi Soni, and a spotlight on an embedded study abroad experience from this semester.

If you have any feedback or would like to submit a story, please email glis@psu.edu. We look forward to hearing from you, and cannot wait to continue sharing stories and experiences in GLIS!



PennState
College of the Liberal Arts

GLIS AT WORK EVENT: ALUMNI PANEL

by Abigail Picozzi

On March 19, four GLIS alumni joined us via Zoom and in-person to share their experiences using their GLIS degree in the professional world. Moderated by Megg Reddy (GLIS '25), this event allowed current GLIS students to ask questions, receive advice, and hear stories regarding life post-graduation.



Erin Mullin '15
GLIS and Spanish
Majors, Labor and
Employment
Relations Minor,
English as a Second
Language Certificate



Julia Sykes '16
GLIS and Latin
American Studies
Majors, Master of
Public Policy and
Social Work



Nicholas Bambino '18
GLIS Major, Schreyer
Honors College,
Master of Regional
Planning



Kayla Prag '22
GLIS and Public
Relations Majors,
Spanish Minor

How has your academic background prepared you for the challenges you face in your current position?

Erin: The GLIS program has changed drastically, but I think there are still commonalities between my undergrad experience and the rest of the panelists. One of the things that was most helpful for me post-college, was the experience I gained in research. The work, papers, research, and readings for classes gives you a lot of administrative experience that is super helpful for policy research across the organizations I worked for domestically and internationally. The research I've completed has given me networking opportunities and a strong basis for post-grad work.

Julia: I would agree with that. A lot of the readings, paper writing, and research has prepared me to have a critical-thinking background for all of the career jumps I've had since graduating from Penn State. It has greatly improved my writing, which is a core skill for any job.

GLIS AT WORK EVENT: ALUMNI PANEL (cont.)

by Abigail Picozzi

Did you graduate with a job already lined up? If no, how did you find it?

Kayla: With a lot of PR (Public Relations) agencies, you start by applying for an internship and then have the potential to be offered a full-time position, which I was lucky to receive. Each hiring process is different and I had difficulty figuring out what I was going to do post-grad, but there was so much support from the Penn State community which helped ease the stress of the process. I found the PR internship through the College of Communications which connected me with an alum who helped me through the application process. I've been there ever since, almost two years. I work alongside quite a few other Penn State alums, so it's very nice to have this community.

Have you faced any unexpected challenges/barriers in your career? If so, how did you overcome them?

Nicholas: I graduated in 2018, and it took me until the following December to find a decent job. I found the job search very difficult. My first job was with Blue Apron, which is a meal kit company. It was my first full-time role and I started to quickly learn it was not the career path I wanted. It was a solid first job to have, but until the pandemic, I didn't have enough time to think about what I'm really interested in, so I had lots of self-reflection during the pandemic where I considered my passions and where I wanted my career to take me.

Julia: I would echo being self-reflective and finding something you're passionate about. It's important to evolve during your first job so that you can develop a clearer picture of what you want your life to look like.

Erin: I never had an internship and I spent my last semester at Penn State abroad, so I was worried I was setting myself back by not having an internship on my resume. After graduation, I left State College and moved out with a friend, from there I worked part-time as a babysitter where I could use my Spanish knowledge while doing freelance work for an immigration law firm. I wanted to try different things so I could figure out what career path I wanted, because GLIS provides such a range of opportunities. I continued on my career path and chose a career in HR (human resources) working with native Spanish-speakers. It's important to reach out to mentors to make connections and help reflect on what you want to do—the Penn State alumni network is very helpful and can help you make these connections.

GLIS AT WORK EVENT: ALUMNI PANEL (cont.)

by Abigail Picozzi

What is one transferable skill you learned at Penn State that you use now?

Kayla: Critical thinking and problem solving. If you can think critically and work through problems, colleagues and higher-ups will greatly appreciate it. Professional careers take a lot of strength and resilience, and it takes grit to be able to balance personal problem-solving and professional problem-solving. These are the kind of traits that can't be taught, so I was lucky to develop them at Penn State.

Nicholas: Openness. Be open to trying new things. Try to be involved in as many initiatives as you can, which is something I definitely took from my time at Penn State. Be willing and open to jump in and help with new projects whenever possible.

Erin: interacting and adjusting to others. Everyone has had professors with certain standards that can feel unrealistic or unattainable, and professors may not give you the grade you think you deserve. Know the expectations of whoever you report to. Know the expectations of the clients and industry. Adjust your work style to fit the needs of who you're working for, and understand the expectations to be successful.

What are some of the advantages provided by a GLIS degree?

Kayla: Since you don't have to specialize in a niche sector of the job world, it's definitely an advantage over other majors. I personally felt like I really benefited from having the flexibility to take classes across the college rather than specializing in just one area. It gave me the opportunity to have experience in a whole range of classes and topics, which gave me a ton of flexibility in my job search. I still don't know exactly what I want to do for the rest of my life. Take a step back and realize you have an advantage by not being tied back to an ultra-specified career and be open-minded to trying lots of new fields and positions. At work, I try a range of things so I can figure out what I like and what I really want to do. There's so much you don't know in college, you don't need to have everything figured out now.

Nicholas: For most entry level jobs, a more general job is an advantage. A lot of places are just working for someone who's gonna show up, be a team player, and be willing to work. GLIS reinforces these skills and provides grads with a solid foundation to build other professional skills.

UPCOMING GLIS EVENT

by Valentina Vallejo

GLIS Spring Celebration
April 17, 2024 | 4:30–6:00 p.m.
233 AB HUB-Robeson Center

Mark your calendars for the upcoming GLIS Spring Celebration! Following the success of last year's event, we're expanding the festivities to include all GLIS students.

Join us as we honor our graduates and present awards in recognition of their outstanding achievements. The celebration is not only a platform to applaud our graduates but also an opportunity for GLIS majors to mingle and build connections within our community.

While we're still in the planning stages and details are forthcoming, we wanted to encourage you to save the date. Your participation will be key in making this celebration a resounding success. Stay tuned for more details!



GLIS STUDENT SPOTLIGHT W/ IUG PROGRAM

by Olivia Bratton



Prachi A. Soni '24

GLIS and Political Science Majors

Master of International Affairs

Data Analytics and International Security Concentration

Tell us about your integrated undergraduate-graduate program (IUG). What are its benefits?

The Master of International Affairs program is tailored to address the multifaceted demands of today's global economy. The program includes an intricate interplay of diplomacy, trade, politics, and international markets which are shaping our world.

One of the program's key strengths lies in the flexibility and interdisciplinary approach, since the field of international affairs is inherently multifaceted, the curriculum is tailored to students' specific interests and career aspirations. Moreover, the program expands both qualitative and quantitative skills which are necessary in today's job market.

Not only does the program have flexibility and a comprehensive curriculum that provides insights into the complexities of global interactions, but the program also connects students with experts, practitioners, and alumni in the field of international affairs. Students have an opportunity twice a year to visit both New York City and Washington, D.C. where current SIA alumni work and provide us with valuable insights on their careers as well as advice for navigating the job market.

I am very glad that I took advantage of the Penn State integrated undergraduate/graduate program. Not only am I able to complete three degrees within five years but it was also a great decision financially, as I also maintained our undergraduate tuition.

GLIS STUDENT SPOTLIGHT W/ IUG PROGRAM (cont.)

by Olivia Bratton

How has the IUG Program interacted with your GLIS major?

Entering as a GLIS major definitely made the Master of International Affairs program way easier to navigate. I think that GLIS provides the perfect foundation for the program. A lot of the concepts and issues that we discussed in our basic GLIS classes or the pathway courses that we take are then further built upon on at a graduate level. I believe that GLIS students have an easier transition into the program because of the background they have.

How do you hope to utilize the skills and resources you have gained through the IUG program?

All the skills that you gain through the Master of International Affairs program are transferable to a variety of different careers. For example, the program enhanced my ability to think critically and analyze complex issues to formulate well-reasoned arguments. Moreover, the program emphasized my research and writing skills, develop the ability to conduct thorough research, analyze complex data, and communicate findings effectively. Lastly, the program enforces both qualitative and quantitative skills which are crucial skills, especially for students with a liberal arts-focused background. Also, I was able to develop coding and data analysis skills. I gained a practical application of quantitative skills through research projects, case studies, and data analysis exercises. This allowed me to apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios and enhance my ability to interpret the world around me.

EDUCATION ABROAD SPOTLIGHT

by Lauren Forbes

GLIS 400Y Embedded Program Lisbon, Portugal

Over spring break, I had the awesome opportunity to go on GLIS 400Y's embedded trip to Lisbon, Portugal! I am extremely grateful to have been provided with funding from the Liberal Arts fund, which made the finances of this trip more reasonable. As someone who was initially apprehensive about doing a full semester abroad, this seemed like the perfect experience for me! Though we spent only a little over a week in Lisbon, I had experiences that will last a lifetime, as well as left the trip with a bunch of new friends!

By taking this trip to Lisbon, I was able to really visualize the concepts we've discussed in class. We took part in lots of cultural Portuguese experiences, like taking a walking tour of the main downtown area of Lisbon, and taking a day trip to Sintra to visit the castles there! I was able to learn so much about Portuguese culture just through interacting with locals. I definitely left the trip with an enriched understanding of Portuguese culture and customs. We learned through many different avenues: group lectures, walking tours, trips to museums, and even over dinner. At the end of each day, we also got free time to explore on our own. My favorite part of the trip was the Fado dinner, in which we got to hear Portuguese folk music live! I was able to enjoy this dinner with the new friends that I had made, making a great conclusion to our trip.





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