



GLOBAL LEADERS OF PENN STATE

GLOBAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PROGRAM

Monthly Email Newsletter



In this newsletter:

Welcome

Page 1

Internship Spotlight

Page 2

Student Spotlight

Page 3

GLIS Announcements

Page 6

Why GLIS?

Page 7

WELCOME

by Lauren Forbes, Managing Editor

Hello! Welcome to the October edition of the Global and International Studies Newsletter for the 2024–25 school year. We’re so excited to continue sharing stories from the GLIS community! Since this is our first for this school year, I am so excited to introduce some new faces! First, I am Lauren and this year's managing editor! This month, I will reflect on my summer internship experience. This role is so exciting to step into and I can't wait to work with my awesome team: I want to welcome back Megg Ready, who is interviewed GLIS Major and UPUA Student Body President, Zion Sykes. I also want to introduce Cynthia Wang and Mar cayla Connell, who this month are writing about why they chose GLIS!

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

SUMMER INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

By Lauren Forbes

U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program

Lauren, a fourth-year GLIS major and Political Science / World Literature Minor, spent this past summer interning in Washington, DC at the State Department! Below is her reflection on the experience, and how the internship aligned with her goals and future employment opportunities.

“This summer, I had the privilege to participate in the U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program. Words cannot express how grateful I am to have been selected to intern and the opportunity to learn so much about working for the federal government! From the second that Secretary of State Antony Blinken swore my cohort in, I knew I would be in for a remarkable summer!

Each intern in the program gets matched with a specific office within the State department, and there are only one–two interns per office! I appreciated this aspect because it allowed me to really integrate with my colleagues and also allowed me to get hands-on experience in my office. The internship program also provided housing for the summer and travel costs so that it could be equitable for all participants!

Some of my favorite memories from the summer were getting sworn in by Secretary Blinken, interacting with various diplomats and foreign missions, visiting different embassies, and even attending the Seventy-Fifth NATO Summit! The Summit was by far my favorite experience of the summer– I got to see prime ministers and presidents in real life! This internship is special because the various offices were encouraged to allow us to get a full experience. I was never doing “intern” tasks like grabbing coffee or making copies– I was trained to do the same duties and given responsibility– the same as the full-time employees.

The application for next summer’s program is opening soon, and I would be happy to talk to anyone who has questions about the application or security clearance process! My email is lef5298@psu.edu”



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

by Megg Reddy

Zion Sykes Student Body President

Can you share your journey leading up to this role?

It all started when I got involved with the student government through a collaboration that they did with Student Affairs called the Student Advisory Board on Student Poverty. And I didn't even know there was a student government. I had yet to learn it was done through the student government. But then I met and saw those same people who explained that we're all part of this thing. And I was like, oh, that's pretty cool. But I'm not gonna apply to it. But then I had two people, my first year, who I call my mentors, and coincidentally, both told me that I should do this. And I was like, you know, maybe I should. So I decided to run that first time, and I won. After that, I really liked doing all that I had; I got to sit on the Borough Council as a student representative and had the chance to lead a committee.

I just had so many incredible opportunities. And, as I stayed in and continued with the organization, I found there were so many other ways that I could go about assisting Penn State move forward, in a sense. And then, after two years, I was like, You know what? Let's just try something different again. So I thought about it a lot. I looked at all the stuff that comes with the role of president, and although it is a lot, I'm learning that day four of this year already; over the summer, even though I had a lot to do, there's just so much impact that you can have. I've been learning about so many different experiences people have, other problems, different things that they love about Penn State, you know, and getting to assist in trying to better that for the next group of people who come here, having the opportunity to speak directly to the class of 2020, at convocation, it's just been such a once in a lifetime experience I feel to have like, to be able to have such an impact and really just try and do what I want to do, which is, help people. I've been trying to say, like, I don't know, one thing I want to do is make sure people are heard, not through what I say, but just what they see me do and what I do for them.



Zion Sykes

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT (cont.)

What are your primary goals and initiatives for this academic year?

One of my main goals is to reestablish stronger connections between the student government and other student governments and different organizations, clubs, and colleges. When we have that kind of collaboration, we work best. For example, this student advisor brought in student poverty, which had many different groups come together, including many different people from other places. There were countless sorts of boards of authority, all where you need those different perspectives to come together and form something new. Like another thing, I can't see what's behind me, but you can, so I need that perspective.

How do you plan to engage with the student community and ensure their voices are heard?

One thing that I'm really excited to start doing is a blog post with my vice president. We were going to be writing a presidential, vice presidential blog post to update people on what we're doing and give them a chance to interact with what we have. We also want to go out and do the meetings and events. Just trying to make sure that people see that I want to be involved with what they're doing, asking them what they need. I've been meeting with various organizations' offices all summer to let them know I'm not just talking. I want to understand how we can help determine what projects we need to work on. I assist different organizations with the issues they've been having by meeting with them and surveying the field to see what's going on.

As a GLIS major, what drew you to this field of study?

It seemed fun! I was initially majoring in international politics, but I realised I could do political science, which focused more on what I specifically liked in political science. But then I also saw that global and international studies let me focus on something different. Wealth and Inequality, in particular, are my pathways. I thought that was an exciting aspect of the global system and how we uplift everybody here, trying to do as good as possible. It's given me a lot of perspective on the economic aspects of things and some political science theories as to why things are the way they are. It is such an all-encompassing major that I can go deep into something specific but still get experience with many different things. It allowed me to fit into the languages I love and learn about culture. I think that GLIS will enable you to find the perfect fit for you regardless of your passion.



Zion speaking at the 9/11 memorial service on campus

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT (cont.)

How will your GLIS background influence your approach as student body president?

The biggest thing about GLIS is that it teaches you to be open to many different perspectives and ways of thinking. It teaches you to look at things from not only our perspective but also allows us to look at various angles and see the bigger picture, which I think is really important when you go about many of these nuanced issues, sometimes like how different groups anchor at each other. How do I go about this in a viewpoint-neutral kind of way? How do I continue to advocate for all the students and undergraduates here? I'm not just XYZ groups and student body president; I'm everyone's. It's helped me understand how to not just fit into a mold but how we can reshape it to improve.



Zion speaking at the President's New Student Convocation on August 24, 2024

GLIS ANNOUNCEMENTS

GLIS Spring Celebration

Friday, April 17, 2025 | 5:30–6:45 p.m. EDT

233 AB HUB-Robeson Center

Mark your calendars for the GLIS Spring Celebration! 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!



Join the team! Content Writers Wanted!

Global Leaders of Penn State, the GLIS major newsletter, is looking for students to join the newsletter team as content writers. If you want to get involved and join the team, email us at glis@psu.edu.

WHY GLIS?

by Cynthia Wang

Cynthia Wang '26 Global and International Studies Culture and Identity pathway

Cynthia Wang was admitted to Penn State in the fall of 2022 as a linguistics major. She had a passion for language but had no clue what aspect of language she wanted to work in. During the fall semester of her sophomore year, she felt that linguistics was possibly not the field she wanted to be in. She found linguistics to be more of a scientific study and she struggled in science related fields.

During the fall semester, she changed her major to GLIS. She chose the Culture and Identity pathway which allowed her to explore global economic, political, and cultural processes. The GLIS major gave her a new interest in global issues and the desire to make more of an impact on global issues. Her dream job is to work as a foreign service officer or to work at a government organization, so she can continue her interest in global and international studies and make an impact in the world.



WHY GLIS?

by Marcylla Connell



Marcylla Connell

Marcylla Connell '26 Global and International Studies Culture and Identity pathway

In the fall of 2016, Marcylla Connell stepped foot in University Park as an incoming freshman. A tumultuous year in American culture and politics, feelings of precarity and contentiousness in regards to police brutality, mass shootings, and student debt, were exacerbated on the college campus.

Originally majoring in psychology, Marcylla Connell knew that she wanted to help people. Fascinated about the world around her, she sought a psychological understanding of why people believe and do what they do, and how to help them improve their lives.

As time passed, and the polarizing 2016 election arrived, Marcylla became extremely passionate about civil rights. Experiences of racism and misogyny on campus, only fueled her desire to combat oppression. She became increasingly interested in the welfare of the collective, rather than the cognitive mechanisms of the individual.

Feeling lost and frustrated about her academic future, Marcylla's mom suggested that she research Penn State degree programs that are more aligned with her new interest. Taking this advice, Marcylla typed in 'Penn State' + 'Human Rights' + 'Culture' + degree on Google. The first search result that popped up was the Global and International Studies website.

With her attention captured, she clicked immediately and began reading about the amazing interdisciplinary nature of GLIS' program. Marcylla's eye began to light up. Finally she could learn about global politics, cultures, and languages! The following semester, she enrolled in GLIS 101, to audit the program and loved it! She is excited about the future and hopes to apply her knowledge and understanding of global cultures and processes, to combat human rights violations, particularly against women.



Lauren Forbes
Managing Editor
GLIS major
Global Conflict pathway
Political Science and
World Literature minors
Fourth-Year



Marcayla Connell
Content Writer
GLIS major
Culture and Identity pathway
Fourth-Year



Megg Reddy
Content Writer
GLIS major
Culture and Identity pathway
Fourth-Year



Cynthia Wang
Content Writer
GLIS major
Culture and Identity pathway
Teaching English to Speakers of
Other Languages and Political
Science minors
Third-Year



***Global Leaders of Penn State* is looking content writers!**
If you are interested in joining the team, please email us at glis@psu.edu.



This publication is available in alternative media on request. Penn State is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, and is committed to providing employment opportunities to all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability or protected veteran status. UBR CLA 24-1001