Southern Africa Gains from IU’s Innovative Internship Programs

A program counselor working on AIDS prevention and education in South Africa, Aloma Foster, spent two months with the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention in San Francisco. Foster was able to visit the Black Coalition on AIDS, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, Ward 86 of the San Francisco General Hospital and the Wedge Program. She came away with a clearer understanding of the holistic approach used in treating AIDS patients. She also discovered that educational programs are often culturally specific and require prevention and education strategies tailored for specific populations and communities. Foster believes that for AIDS education to be successful in South Africa, a similar model must be followed.

A mediator for the Cape Town City Council, Chris Ferndale, was hosted by the city of Gary, Indiana, where he spent time with many of the city’s departments pursuing issues of dispute resolution and government transparency. Assigned to the Director of Economic Development, Ferndale found that many of the issues facing Gary are similar to the economic development questions in Cape Town. An issue of particular interest to Ferndale was the introduction of casino gambling in Gary, a development strategy being considered by Cape Town. He had an opportunity to survey firsthand Gary’s casino boats with the Gary Mayor Scott King and financier Donald Trump.

Thanks to Indiana University’s innovative South African Internship Program (SAIP), Foster and Ferndale and 48 other mid-career professionals have been able to participate in internships in cities across the United States, including not only San Francisco and Gary but also Denver and St. Louis, Cleveland and Indianapolis.

The internship program, which has been run by IU’s Center for International Education and Development Assistance (CIEDA) since 1995, has been so successful that the U.S. government has begun to pay close attention to it.

This March, in fact, the United States Information Agency awarded a contract to CIEDA to create a new exchange program, the South Africa Regional Internship Program, that will bring mid-career professionals from Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Botswana to the U.S. for two-month internships.

The goal of the new program is to support democratic and economic reforms in southern Africa by training professionals in the areas of public administration, international trade, judicial reform, and journalism. The interns will join organizations across the United States in order to gain hands-on management skills in their focus areas.

The new regional program will be modeled after SAIP, which continues to grow, having achieved widespread support in South Africa and the American communities interns have been placed.

The internships provide a broad array of professional skills via hands-on training, short-term management workshops, and periodic seminars. In all cases, CIEDA program officers work with local host organizations to design placements that match the needs of the interns as demonstrated in their applications.

Program officers target organizations that can devote the time and personnel necessary to train an intern over a relatively short period of time. As closely as possible, the host agencies selected to participate in SAIP perform tasks and functions similar to those performed by the interns’ employers in South Africa.

Upon their return, SAIP interns have contributed to the development of South Africa—whether by improving...
reductive techniques at Leaf College in the Western Cape, adapting AIDS education methods in rural Natal, or helping facilities managers prepare for Cape Town's Olympic bid—and strengthened the bonds that tie our two countries together.

In addition to providing the participants with useful professional experiences, SAIP also facilitates a valuable cultural exchange between Americans and South Africans. Interns and hosts come to recognize the similarity of the challenges facing our two countries through host family living arrangements, informal social gatherings, and day-to-day exchanges at the workplace.

The “home stay” is a critical dimension of SAIP. Living with an American family allows interns to learn more about American culture and share their knowledge of South Africa with the host family. During the two-month stay, an intern is hosted by two or more families. The “family” may consist of parents and children, a retired couple, a single parent household or an individual willing to share his/her hospitality.

SAIP interns view the home stay as an important part of their American experience. In their evaluations, they repeatedly commented on the value of living in an American family setting. “I accompanied my host families to social functions, book clubs, dinners, etc. I made some very good friends,” said Rooksana Omar.

Such people-to-people exchanges are opening doors to future programs in South Africa. Because of a need identified by SAIP participants, the IU Center on Philanthropy in Indianapolis was recently invited to coordinate a funding school in South Africa that would be administered as multiple workshops in Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban.

If all goes according to plan, the school will help develop fund-raising capabilities for nonprofit community organizations that continue to be constrained by limitations in funding from the south African government.

The Department of Education, Training, Arts, and Culture in Northern Cape Province has asked CIEDA to assist in developing the administrative capacity and curriculum design for an emerging community college. Northern Cape Province, which does not have a university within its borders, is struggling to retain its educated youth who are attracted to universities in South Africa's urban centers.

CIEDA is working with public and private partners to determine how the linkages between the Northern Cape and Indiana University can contribute to tertiary education development in the Northern Cape.

The IU Office of International Programs is committed to strengthening its growing professional programs in southern Africa, and we are excited that these programs are contributing to lasting economic and democratic reform in the region. — Steve Driehaus Program Officer CIEDA

Global Center Trains Students for Study in Less-Developed Countries

In late spring 1996, IU Bloomington's Center for the Study of Global Change (formerly the Indiana Center for Global Change and World Peace) received a three-year grant from the Ford Foundation to support a seminar on research in less-developed countries.

The year-long seminar is designed to stimulate students to think critically about their own research by (1) examining a broad range of theoretical and methodological issues, (2) addressing practical concerns of the foreign researcher abroad, and (3) confronting the ethics of research.

Students become familiar not only with the research process but also with the relationship between research methodology and research product. In the second semester, the focus is on research design and proposal writing. There is a strong emphasis on active participation and regular attendance throughout the two semesters in order to create a “community of scholars”.

It is intended primarily for social science and area studies graduate students at the pre-dissertation stage. The seminar series is especially appropriate for those students who plan to complete a preliminary dissertation research design by the end of the spring semester, to incorporate that design into a proposal for support for pre-dissertation exploratory research during the summer, and subsequently to submit a fully developed dissertation research proposal to funding agencies in the fall.

The 1996-97 seminar was co-directed by N. Brian Winchester, director for the Center for the Study of Global Change, and Diana Pritchard of the Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies.

It featured presentations by faculty and doctoral candidates from different academic disciplines and area studies programs, many of whom had recently returned from research trips abroad. Fifteen students participated in the 1996-97 seminar. They represented six different academic disciplines and two professional schools and their interests included virtually every world area.

Students who actively participated in all sessions and fulfilled the assessment criteria were eligible to apply for pre-dissertation exploratory research grants funded by the Ford Foundation and awarded by the center. The awards included round-trip airfare to the country of their fieldwork and $1,000 for research-related expenses.