

SEWANEE **AROUND THE GLOBE**

The newsletter for the Office of Global Citizenship

| *Preparing students to shoulder the responsibility of global citizenship*

July 2019 Edition



OCCU Spring 2019 News

The Organization for Cross-Cultural Understanding (OCCU), which is led by Moe Pwint “Mandy” Tu, C ‘21, and involves many other international students, including Tu “Scarlett” Pham, Máté Szurop, and Yousra Hussain, has focused on a year-long project on Representations, addressing the issue of asking a single student (or person) to represent her entire country or culture, the problem of a single story.

From the beginning, Mandy had this to say: “When you throw in the single stories that are being told about countries that are not the United States, and about people (especially people of colour) who are not of the majority population in media and literature, we face a huge problem. How can we expect our multicultural students to bear this burden, and how can we, as a campus, ease it?”

“First, we can talk about it. We can bring the issue to attention. This is what OCCU is striving to do with our year-long project.” But her goals go far beyond just drawing attention. Through this project, Mandy and the OCCU hope to make Sewanee “a more inclusive, understanding community.” Representations is geared at getting people to know each other on a personal, not just superficial, level, to encourage people to be genuine in their interest in others and to avoid stereotypes.

The OCCU organized multiple events with these ideas in mind. It all began with a panel involving two professors and two students. From there, they added the Representation Station, which allowed anyone in the community to share what they do - or do not - represent (for instance, yes to Bangladesh, no to all of South Asia); this was set up in McClurg, so it reached a particularly wide audience, giving many food for thought. Mandy also organized an interactive event which allowed participants to probe this topic in a personal way and practice meaningful interaction. She wrapped up the year with both a presentation at Scholarship Sewanee chronicling the project and an end-of-the-year reflection event with all members of the organization.

As a result of Mandy and the OCCU’s dedication, they won a Student Government Association award for Best Initiative to Raise Cross-Cultural Awareness on Campus. Not satisfied to rest on their laurels, they will continue their work in the coming school year, interacting more with faculty and staff to reach a wider audience, and working to make Sewanee a better place for international and domestic students alike.

Faculty Spotlight:

Serkan Karadas, Economics

by Diego Ortega, C ‘22

Serkan Karadas found his passion for teaching during his time studying economics in the United States. Originally from the province of Tokat in Turkey, Karadas moved to Istanbul at a very young age. In high school, he found interest in the quantitative subjects and decided to pursue these at the college level, but the exact major he would apply himself to was still a mystery. After hearing of a friend’s experience, Karadas chose to go to college in the United States. With the support of his family, Karadas moved to Wisconsin and enrolled at Beloit College. It was at Beloit that he found his niche for economics: “I really enjoy the quantitative side of economics and its relevance to daily life,” Karadas said. “It was an answer to my questions.” He went on to earn



bachelor's degrees in both mathematics and economics.

During his time at Beloit, Karadas had the opportunity to teach Turkish. From this experience, he got a feeling for what it would be like to have a career in teaching and found that he quite enjoyed it. He further explored his new interest for teaching while pursuing a Ph.D. in economics at West Virginia University.

After graduating from West Virginia University, Karadas was committed to pursuing a career in teaching. He looked for a university where he would have opportunities to complete research, but more importantly

he wanted a community of students who re interested and engaged in learning. After a welcoming tour, Karadas found that Sewanee was the right fit.

The end of this year will mark Karadas's fifth year at Sewanee. He currently teaches three different classes and conducts numerous research projects, which mostly center on how politics influence economics. One of his most recent projects focuses on members of Congress and whether they trade stocks with an informational advantage.

It's been almost twelve years since Karadas first moved to the United States, and the passage of time has allowed for both educational and personal growth: "So many motivated immigrants come to the United States because they have the drive and skills to grow," Karadas said. "People notice your hard work and help you along the way...and sometimes help comes from where you least anticipated."

Study Abroad Blog Post

Lindsay Fox

Fall 2018



As my program comes to an end, it is difficult to form a complete picture to sum up everything. We just finished our longest leg of the sea component, having spent 15 days on the open ocean, and we have a little under two weeks left. This program has felt very timely in my life, and everything I have learned both at Sewanee and throughout my SEA semester have felt incredibly connected. I kind of imagine everything as a complicated, and growing, food web where all elements feed into a different field of learning. Whether I am mastering the hard skills attributed to deck procedures and lab work, or learning the cultural significance of a document like the Treaty of Waitangi, the program takes my view of an interdisciplinary learning style to new levels. I am very much still immersed in this time and this community, but some recent time on land has given me an opportunity to reflect on what I have learned. During this experience I have also solidified the art of journaling, a skill I thought I would never possess. This has allowed me to record moments and reflections in the absence of picture taking. I generally didn't bring my phone above deck and I think it died early on in the voyage. While the sea sickness almost got the best of me and the weather was seemingly always against us, I will be forever thankful for this opportunity to go to sea and study such a wonderful country. I look forward to continuing to research both maritime culture as well as resource management in New Zealand when I return to our special mountain home within a landlocked state.

Global Citizen Spotlight: Peter Kusek, '01

Each day that Peter Kusek, '01, enters his place of work, the World Bank Group (WBG) in Washington, DC, he sees the words “Our Dream is a World Free of Poverty” carved in stone, an enduring testament to the nature of the issue and to the elusive solution.

For Kusek, the search for a solution to that problem and the nature of global citizenship are linked to the same idea: connection. Global citizenship “means taking a keen interest in and concern for what is happening in our world...It also entails an understanding and appreciation that our actions in one country affect citizens of other countries, and conversely, actions elsewhere in the world affect us. And it is very personal, and it affects our daily lives.” As he sees it, our actions are interconnected “economically - through what we buy; culturally - through where we travel and with whom we engage through social media; politically - through how our elected representatives interact with their counterparts in other parts of the world; and environmentally - through how much energy we consume, how much trash we produce, and what we eat.” We don't live in a bubble; our actions affect others in ways we may never fully know - including poverty. Kusek, a native of the former Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia) with eight languages at his fingertips (with skills ranging from native - Slovak - to basic - Bengali), is well equipped to see this bigger picture.

His time at Sewanee set the tone for what was to come. While it's easy to think that small-town life can be limiting, Kusek was not bound by Sewanee's borders; he connected with the wider world. He spent a semester abroad in Germany; one summer, he traveled to St.



Petersburg and Moscow, Russia as part of the Biehl Program of International Studies (now the Biehl International Research Fellowship), where he “analyzed the effectiveness of Russia’s university programs in business, economics, and finance”; and another summer, with the support of the Tonya program, which provides funding for students who accept unpaid internships, he interned with the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic. His coursework across the liberal arts, including his economics major, “provided unique insights into the functioning of a human mind, which [he] has found critical for understanding the causes and possible solutions to various global issues”; combined with his summer internships, this helped to pave the way to his first job out of college with the DC-based think-tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), working on economic reforms in East and Central Europe.

After his job at CSIS, Kusek went on to graduate school at Princeton, earning a Master in Public Affairs in Economic Policy and International Development, and continued his international work, often better connecting people to their communities and to jobs. In Tanzania, he volunteered with the Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA), working “to increase the effectiveness of FINCA’s microfinance programs.” In Bangladesh, he “developed a study on constraints to scaling up women enterprises from micro to SME [Small and Medium Enterprises] level” and made policy recommendations, among other things. Since his graduation from Princeton, he has worked at the World Bank and does an array of things there, including “leading the Applied Research Program on global investment at the WBG Macroeconomics, Trade, and Investment Global Practice.”

Directly and indirectly, Peter Kusek’s work influences thousands - perhaps millions - of people. He led the publication of WBG’s Global Investment Competitiveness Report 2017-2018, which “has been downloaded over 25,000 times by users in more than 180 countries.” He has been cited in media such as *The Economist*, *The Guardian*, and the *Deutsche Presse*, among others, and he presents at conferences such as the G20 and WTO. A recent project in Ethiopia has led the government there to make reforms related to fiscal incentives.

With such a wide reach, it would be easy to lose sight of the small picture, the individuals behind the numbers. For Kusek, however, that’s at the fore: global citizenship means to “[d]eeply and sincerely treat all people with utmost respect regardless of where they come from, what...their socio-economic background [is], and what they do.” In one

morning, he talked to a laid-off executive working at a grocery store to “clear his head,” a Pakistani chemistry-professor-turned-Uber-driver, and an Indian manager at WBG who went from working the fields in India to being the first in her family to graduate from college. “All this is to say that the paths of our lives are diverse and unpredictable. We need to treat each other with respect.” And that’s what Peter Kusek does.

Although his work focuses on finance, investment, and economics, it’s all in the service of people, of humans living their lives all around the world. “A World Free of Poverty” is a lofty goal but one well worth working towards. “I keep on my pin board at work a random picture of a group of 3 school kids somewhere in Africa,” Kusek wrote. “They are wearing rugged clothes. Their hands are muddy. They are smiling and giggling. They are being kids. The photo reminds me that the aim of our work is to improve the lives and livelihoods of generations to come.”

International Student Spotlight

Livia Eva Karoui

by Diego Ortega



Home Country

Italy (Milan)

Year

Junior, C'2020

Major & Minor

A politics major with a history minor, plus a certificate in Civic and Global Leadership

Honors & Awards

Order of the Gown | Biehl Fellowship

Fun Fact

In 2018, Livia lived on three different continents: she spent time studying abroad in Africa, living with her family in Europe, and studying at Sewanee in North America.

Why Sewanee?

There were two unique aspects of Sewanee that drew Livia in: the resources the university could provide and the lifelong relationships she could establish. During her time at Polam Hall School, a boarding school in the UK, Livia enjoyed close friendships with not only her peers, but her professors as well. Livia made it a priority to ensure that, during her college years, she would be able to be as close with her professors as she was in high school. Fortunately, out of all of the universities she was considering, Sewanee expressed the most interest in her. Livia also wanted to pursue a major in politics, and she saw Sewanee had the most diverse course offerings out of any of her choices. She has already taken advantage of the resources here at Sewanee by spending a semester in Ghana and completing an internship in Uganda with USAID and Johns Hopkins, and she'll be returning to Ghana this summer on a Biehl Fellowship, which she hopes to use to research a new bill proposed in Ghana that would allow more women to work in the government.

Hobbies & Interests

Livia definitely keeps herself busy on the Mountain. She is committed to more than five extracurricular jobs and activities, including a philanthropy internship. This internship, in partnership with the South Cumberland Community Fund, allows her and six other students to manage a \$30,000 grant to support local non-profits. In addition, Livia is involved in Sewanee's Rotaract club, serving as international chair. Livia is also an Arcadian fellow, a politics tutor, a work study in Sewanee's Politics department, and a member of one of Sewanee's local sororities, Theta Pi.

Favorite Place on Campus

Livia likes Morgan's Steep the most, as it's one of the more peaceful spots on campus.

Best Class at Sewanee

"World Politics with Dr. Patterson, but really, any class with Dr. Patterson," Livia said. World Politics, though a tough class, helped Livia understand the challenges at play in world politics. Livia also loved Dr. Patterson's Foreign Aid and Development course.

Advice for Current & Future Sewanee International Students

"Involve yourself with different organizations, and don't hang out with only international students. It can really make a difference if you make yourself a strong part of the community." - Livia Karoui