

July 2020 Edition

As Sewanee moves toward a semester ripe with hope and new challenges, Sewanee Around the Globe highlights the value of global citizenship as a tool for easing the world's discord. Read about Sewanee's efforts to remove roadblocks to global citizenship; Dr. Sherry Hamby's research on trauma recovery; Debieona Harris' C'21 study abroad experience; Felix Bivens' C'99 startups and research; Daniel Gabriel's C'18 update on Harvard and advice for current students; Dolly Prince's C'22 international student profile; and find out where we moved!

Global Citizenship: Now More than Ever

The year 2020 will be remembered as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, social mobilization in response to the George Floyd killing, and the results of the upcoming U.S. presidential election. Neither pandemics nor protests against racial (and other forms of) inequality are new, but the U.S. and the world are approaching a point of inflection. As the COVID-19 pandemic has spread throughout the world, many countries have tightened border controls. Consulates have stopped or slowed their visa services, global trade dropped three percent in the first quarter of 2020 and is expected to decline by 13-20 percent in 2020, immigration is impeded by national restrictions, and international tourism is expected to decline 60-80 percent this year. The U.S. has also questioned international institutions such as the World Health Organization for their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. is not alone in these trends; in many countries, nationalism and its accompanying insularity are on the rise.

Years from now, historians will judge whether the above trends prove a short-term adjustment or a fundamental shift away from global exchange and cooperation, but there is evidence that they are part of a long-term shift in the direction of disengagement. Concerns about the ability of the U.S. to lead globally have worried policymakers for decades, but, according to an article by Richard Wike written in

January, 2020, prior to the pandemic's spread in the U.S., the tide of global opinion of the U.S. is shifting from lack of confidence in U.S. leadership to anti-Americanism. A survey of people around the world by Pew Research indicates that 37 percent perceive that the U.S. is less involved in global issues, while only 14 percent find that the U.S. is more involved. The decline in global engagement correlates with a shrinking percentage of people who view the U.S. favorably. Simultaneously, confidence in U.S. leadership and international institutions is eroding.

Rather than being the direct cause of political shifts, the COVID-19 pandemic gave wind to existing political forces in the U.S. and elsewhere that already called for more isolationist and protectionist policies. The shift toward greater nationalism and insularity is troubling for many reasons including the fact that many of the challenges that the U.S. and other nations face are global problems. Those challenges include climate change, poverty, and pandemics such as COVID-19. The level of commitment by the U.S. to addressing these challenges is an open question, but concerted effort to combat these problems cannot be done on a unilateral basis, as COVID-19 has proven. As John Ikenberry noted in a recent Foreign Affairs article, "The coronavirus is the poster child of these transnational dangers: it does not respect borders, and one cannot hide from it or defeat it in war." The pandemic has exposed global vulnerabilities, but reducing global cooperation will not make us more secure. Border controls are not going to impede the spread of pandemics, so we must coordinate information flows and policy responses among nations to overcome such public health challenges. International institutions such as the World Health Organization can play a key role in facilitating global cooperation and coordinating domestic responses to COVID-19 and future pandemics.

Anti-globalization sentiment and policy shifts toward isolationism have real effects on college campuses such as our own. Many international students cannot receive visas or purchase airline tickets to come to our campus. In the fall 2020, Sewanee is set to welcome its largest incoming class of international students -- thirty-six students -- but many will not be able to arrive on campus. Continuing international students are reluctant to go to their home countries for fear of being unable to return to campus due to travel restrictions. Conversely, Sewanee's students in the U.S. cannot leave for study abroad programs because of travel advisories and travel bans related to the pandemic. While these are disheartening developments, the rise in international student interest in Sewanee and the fact that three out of four students scheduled to study abroad in fall 2020 prior to program cancellations plan to do so in spring or fall 2021 provide encouragement. Thankfully, our students retain their interest in global engagement.

Sewanee's global exchanges in the form of welcoming international students and participation in study abroad make significant contributions to student intellectual development and value formation. An important study published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) (among other studies) shows that sustained interaction with people who have identities that are different from our own fosters a greater sense of self, empathy for others, and the ability to understand and identify with others' perspectives, a form of intercultural agility. Study abroad is just one vehicle for engaging people with various identities and advancing intercultural agility. Bringing international students to our campus achieves similar ends by further pluralizing the voices in our academic discourse. The ability to understand and work with people who differ from ourselves is vital for addressing global challenges such as pandemics.

It is equally important in the process of addressing racial tensions such as those that have come to the political forefront with the Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of the George Floyd killing. Reports by the Pew Research Center, among others, indicate that people in the U.S. have surrounded themselves with people who share their own views, including on social media. Tolerance, much less mutual recognition, of other persons' views is declining, a trend that is underlying and exacerbating racial tensions and deepening social inequality. Redressing structural inequities and personal prejudice -- hidden or overt -- will require greater intercultural agility and empathy for the perspectives of people with varying backgrounds and experiences.

In recent years, Sewanee has waded knee-deep into these waters. Until the pandemic forced the cancellation of study abroad programs for the fall 2020 semester, Sewanee was poised to send its largest group of students abroad on semester-long programs. The Sewanee Pledge guarantees that students may apply their institutional financial aid to their participation in semester-long study abroad programs, a substantive commitment to fostering global citizenship. Moreover, the Office of Global Citizenship offers courses before students depart for, and after they return from, abroad to help them improve their intercultural agility. The Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation is addressing the University's historical relationship to slavery and its legacies, a means of promoting transparent dialogue on difficult questions of racial and class inequality. This spring, the Carnegie Foundation recognized Sewanee's Office of Civic Engagement for its work with students to address social problems in the region, a local form of global problem-solving. Finally, the College has adopted a general education requirement that focuses on improving students' ability to understand and empathize with the perspectives of people from a variety of identities. That general education requirement goes into effect this fall. The Office of Global Citizenship will

continue to search for new ways to foster the formation of global citizens among our community members.

Such steps will not solve the pandemic or the problem of racial tensions in the U.S. but they help to lay the groundwork for global citizenship and a set of values focused on global problem solving. Perhaps at this moment, we need global citizens who engage with the world on an equal basis and with humility even more than we need global leaders. Meantime, while global travel has become difficult, there is plenty of good work to be done locally to address global problems. The U.S. and the world requires global citizens now more than ever.

Dr. Sherry Hamby: Advocacy, Research, and Resilience

Some psychologists and social scientists eschew “advocacy research,” but Dr. Sherry Hamby, Research Professor of Psychology at Sewanee and a leading expert in childhood violence, embraces it. As she notes, “Cancer researchers aren't neutral about cancer--they aren't indifferent as to whether their new medical treatment makes tumours grow or shrink.” Consequently, her research work attempts to stem the use of violence, and she contends that “it is very important to be explicit about having a social justice orientation [in research].” Much of her research has focused on the causes of violence and recovery from trauma.

Hamby's research and social justice approach are particularly relevant to understanding two of the greatest challenges that the U.S. (and other parts of the world) currently confront: COVID-19 and systemic racism and racial



violence. While COVID-19 and events linked to structural racism are in many ways distinct, they both have created trauma and both have exposed deep-seated social inequity that exists in the U.S. and within each community. How do individuals and communities recover from such experiences and address social divisions?

According to Hamby, “the most important element [to overcoming trauma] is ‘meaning making’ --- connecting to something larger than yourself.” For this reason, she is encouraged by the outpouring of people who have joined the Black Lives Matter demonstrations and “to see the changes the protests have already produced, from arresting the officers responsible for killing George Floyd to removing the Confederate emblem on the Mississippi flag.” Such participation and tangible results help to shift the focus from individual trauma to collective action and accomplishment.

The creation of meaning is a crucial way to develop individual and community resilience. Hamby notes that “another important component of resilience is self-regulation, and that is probably seen best in coping with the pandemic.” The pandemic has disrupted our everyday routines and altered where we spend most of our days, so it is important to develop new patterns of behavior to structure our lives. Like many people, Hamby has begun to garden again and her family has set aside two nights a week for family activities. “These are small changes, but they help create a sense of order and stability as we adjust.”

Dr. Hamby developed her research interest in violence and recovery beginning with a job in the psychiatric ward of a nursing home while in high school. Hamby found that she had a “knack for interacting with the residents there.” Additionally, Hamby “had seen the impact of witnessing or experiencing victimization on virtually everyone [she] knew, and [she] wanted to help reduce that burden.”

Since coming to Sewanee in 2004, Hamby has been actively involved in researching and publishing her findings on violence and resilience. She has published widely and extensively in academic journals and is a frequent contributor to news outlets, including *The New York Times*, CBS News, and *The Atlantic*, among many others. Hamby also consults with states on policies related to youth and violence, connecting her research to policy advice and advocacy.

At Sewanee, she has included many undergraduate researchers in her projects, thus training future generations of advocacy researchers. In addition, she runs a conference

titled “ResilienceCon,” which “focuses on research, prevention, and intervention on violence and other adversities.” The conference, and much of her research work, link research with advocacy. In this way, Hamby notes a clear global citizenship orientation in her work. Not only does she promote advocacy research but her conference “creates inclusive spaces for scholars everywhere to work together to support social justice.” Hamby’s research approach is refreshing, and her findings include important lessons for individuals and communities to develop resilience in the face of the current tumultuous context.

Navigating the Country of “Teranga” and Hip-Hop as an African American Woman

by Debreiona Harris C'21

In the spring semester of 2020, I was fortunate enough to enroll in the inaugural SIT Study Abroad program, **Senegal: Hip-hop, African Diaspora and Decolonial Futures**. I chose this specific program not only to fulfill my minor in African and African American studies, but also to experience a new style of learning through music.

Because music is important in my daily

life, I wanted to explore the history and importance of hip-hop to the people of Senegal. I also wanted to investigate how their music has impacted their society and communities. Prior to arriving abroad, I had little to no knowledge about hip-hop in Senegal or Senegalese culture. Also, due to my positionality as an African American woman who is only fluent in the English language, I knew trying to understand Senegalese lyrics and communicating with Senegalese people would pose a challenge. However, after researching my host country I quickly became at ease after reading many articles that stated, Senegalese people refer to their country as the land of hospitality,



also known as “Teranga” in their native language of Wolof. After learning this, I became even more eager to immerse in this new country, culture, and lifestyle.

Through my program, which was unfortunately canceled mid-semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was able to conclude that hip-hop artists and youth advocates have transitioned



his musical genre from solely entertainment to a political tool for activism and lifestyle by leveraging their access to the eyes, ears, and minds of Senegalese communities. Hip-hop has always provided a way for individuals to illuminate obstacles within their communities and express their positionalities--and this holds true amongst Senegalese hip-hop artists who shed light on corruption within their government, enforce cultural norms regarding gender, and address the lack of necessary knowledge within youth education systems and many other struggles.



Overall, I am thankful that I was able to experience seven weeks in a new world, make new friends, try amazing cuisines, learn a new language and culture, and ultimately gain cultural competence. I hope in the near future students will have the opportunity to study abroad, learn, and explore a life beyond their norm!



Global Citizen Spotlight:

Felix Bivens C'99

Whether discussing Felix “Skip” Bivens’ recent collaboration with Ugandan peace-keeping troops or the community garden he has developed in his hometown of Fayetteville, TN, one concept that repeatedly emerges is “interdependence”.

For me, global citizenship grows out of our mutual interdependence... [and] this interdependence requires that we be attentive and engaged citizens, locally, nationally and globally. The local and global crises we face at this moment in history can only be faced if we are able to think and act at all of these levels simultaneously. Education is



one of the best mechanisms to prepare us for this kind of thinking and collaboration.

When Felix first came to Sewanee as a student, his goals were to get good grades, take the LSAT and then get into politics. He succeeded in achieving good grades while here, though his post-graduate plans shifted once entering the real world. Instead of working for more high-profile, top-down, bureaucratic change, Felix explored different career paths and continuing education experiences, which led him to almost every continent on Earth, and even back

to Sewanee again for two non-sequential tenures as the Assistant Director of Outreach and later as the Assistant Dean of Students. Similar to many others in this community, it was Felix's trajectory-shifting work with Dr. Mohiuddin that “solidified [his commitment] to working globally on issues of poverty, environment and social change.”

Today, with his most recent startup consulting company, The Regenerative School (better known as Rē) which he co-founded in 2018, Felix and his partner focus on not just fostering “development” and “sustainability” around these global/local issues, but

instead take it one step further: “The regenerative approach asks how do we as a species make our planet better by being here: how do we design practices and systems that add to the health and abundance of the environment and our communities?”


Our interdependence as global citizens requires humility and willingness to listen and learn from each other, no matter the nationality, background or level of education of those we are working with.

One of the ways Felix fosters connections is through participatory research. Just as his connections made at Sewanee continue to open up new, less evident doors or paths, so does this more hands-on approach to research, which were a primary goal of another startup, Empyrean Research. In a recent post on his Empyrean Research blog, Felix highlighted an Appalachian land ownership study from the 1970-1980s that on the surface resulted in few policy changes — but with a deeper dive, it did generate “unanticipated outcomes” as well as “connections and networks in the Appalachian region which are still active today.” With Empyrean he has used similar models across the globe to encourage more action based, participatory research.

Over the past five years Felix has collaborated with the United States Institute of Peace “to bring participatory research methods into peacebuilding.” Much like the Appalachian study, his work has yet to result in a major, high-profile policy change, yet it has “helped to validate and leverage the work these youth peacebuilders were already doing so that their efforts were more recognized by community, police and government officials.”

‘Participatory action research is a process which grounds people in the reality of their communities and combats efforts of intentional misinformation. People working together to understand and to transform their own communities from the grassroots is a powerful antidote of the messages of fear, confusion and helplessness which permeate both the news media and social media channels at this point in time.’

Even though this pandemic is a symptom of a more insular and tribalist shift in global politics over the last few years, the interconnectedness of every person on our globe has never been more manifest. But much like the outcomes of Felix’s participatory research, much of the positive change that needs to occur as our globe heals must come from the grassroots level — and that might just look something like helping to restore a community garden, or undertaking a peacekeeping mission with your next door neighbor or a family member.



A portrait of Daniel Gabriel C'18, a young Black man with short, dark hair, smiling warmly at the camera. He is wearing a light pink button-down shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with green foliage.

Alumni Spotlight: Daniel Gabriel C'18

When Daniel Gabriel C'18 begins as a student at the lauded Harvard Medical School this fall, the plan for now is to attend class virtually from his apartment in Atlanta. But for Daniel, effectively engaging in work from hundreds, or even thousands of miles away, has always been a strong suit. Like a true Global Citizen, Daniel has always sought out ways to engage authentically and meaningfully with his temporary homes, as well as his home community in Nigeria.

While an undergraduate at Sewanee, Daniel was inspired to help start The Elpis Initiative, a program for promoting education and knowledge around mental disease back in Nigeria. Today, he is still involved with programming that has helped to implement mental health awareness curricula in high-schools across Nigeria.

Daniel also sought many opportunities to work towards positive change right here in Sewanee before his graduation in 2018. One of his favorite courses was Karen Proctor's

“Collaborative Leadership and Social Change”, which served as a major impetus for him to get involved locally. This class inspired Daniel to help organize town-hall style meetings with Vice-Chancellor McCardell, and provided a platform for less heard voices on campus.

In addition to his inspiring professors and peers, Daniel commended his holistic liberal arts education for setting him up for success as a medical student. The confidence Daniel gained in his ability to write, as well as collaborate with others, all helped pave the way for his achievements in the medical world.

For current Sewanee students, Daniel’s sage advice would be to “visit Career Services at least once a semester for a check in, no matter what your goals are.” Their “willingness to go above and beyond and connect you with resources is top-notch” and definitely played a vital part in his path beyond the Mountain. He also encourages students to “find a mentor that can help encourage you and also help you find some self-care” which are both vital to thriving here at Sewanee.

This summer, you might think Daniel would take a break and rest on his laurels before the many long nights of studying for medical school that lie ahead, but instead he is taking an optional online oncology course and started a YouTube channel that provides advice for others considering applying to medical schools (TheDanielGabriel).

Amidst travel bans, visa issues and an unceasing pandemic, Daniel is still very excited to “keep [his] eyes open and get back to class” at Harvard next month. He is still unsure where his studies will take him next, but he is sure of one thing, this pandemic has brought to light the importance of communication both amongst nations, within nations, and our need to “make healthcare as more equitable for all”. Oh yeah, and “telemedicine is definitely not going anywhere”—who knows, we might find ourselves here on the Mountain ringing up Daniel back in Nigeria for some telemedicine healthcare one day.

Sewanee Around the Globe continued on next page.

International Student Spotlight

Adedolapo "Dolly" Prince

by Diego Ortega

Home Country

The United Kingdom (London)

Year

Sophomore, C'22

Major & Minors

A Math (or, as they say in London, maths) major with Spanish & Economics minors

Honors

Order of the Gown

Fun Fact

Dolly has met and presented a speech in front of the Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton! The speech was about pressure from school and students' mental health.



Why Sewanee?

Certain she would pursue a degree in the United States, Adedolapo (Dolly) Prince searched for universities that offered a similar experience to colleges in the United Kingdom. Growing up in London, Dolly felt that college would be a good time to branch out and move away from her home country. With the goal of finding a school that matches the culture of Oxford University, Dolly met with an advisor who guided her in the right direction. Dolly discovered the University of the South, which her advisor described as the most similar to Oxford. Thrilled by the possibilities, she took a chance and only applied to Sewanee. After receiving a letter of acceptance, Dolly made the big move to the United States. At first, coming from London, Sewanee took some adjustment; however, Dolly fell in love with Sewanee's culture and says the culture is healthier than Oxford's.

Hobbies and Interests

To say Dolly is involved on campus is an understatement: she holds positions in over ten

clubs and organizations at Sewanee! Most notably, Dolly is the secretary and sophomore representative of the Honor Council, of which she says, “It’s got to the point that I don’t think I can ever leave until I’m a senior because of how invested I’m into it and the things I’ve learned.” She is a member of the Theta Pi sorority, where she serves as a junior social chair; she also holds the co-director position of the BlacQueen Organization, which is affiliated with the Black Student Union and “offers support for black women and faculty on campus.” Additionally, Dolly founded the Math Club and is a math tutor/grader for the department. In admissions, Dolly is an international student ambassador, a tour guide, and a newly appointed Arcadian leader. Lastly, Dolly is on the Student Title IX Committee, is a member of the women’s rugby team, and has her own radio show. Dolly has established herself as an important member, not only of the sophomore class but of the entire Sewanee community.

Favorite Place on Campus

Dolly loves the outside classroom at the top of Carnegie; she says the stars are beautiful to watch there at night.

Best Class at Sewanee

Her favorite class has been music tech because she has been producing music since high school and the class gave her a new layer of understanding music production.

Advice for Current & Future Sewanee International Students

Don’t have expectations for Sewanee. Remember it’s not everyone’s fit, so take it as it is and see what you can do. -- Dolly Prince

We've Moved!

The Office of Global Citizenship is now located
in the Watson House at 143 South Carolina
Ave.



Contributors: Scott Wilson, Marcus Murphy, & Andrea Del Balso