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Abram Henry '11 chosen for internship with U.S. Department of State

Summary: The Spanish and international studies major has "deep passions for Latin America."

(November 17, 2010)-When students arrive at the University of Minnesota, Morris, they might not think they'll end up working in Washington, D.C. in the U.S. Department of State. But more often than you might think, Morris sends talented students from the small town of Morris to the nation's capital, where they have a unique opportunity to gain experience for future careers. Abram "Abe" Henry '11 is a great example.

Henry is a double major in Spanish and international studies from Hastings who has worked as a tutor and teaching assistant while at Morris. He chose to look for an internship with the State Department because he has "deep passions for Latin America" and he's "always wanted to work in diplomacy." The Department of State is the principal foreign affairs agency within the government's executive branch of government. The secretary of state is the president's lead foreign policy adviser. The department also provides services to citizens and to noncitizens seeking to visit or immigrate to the United States.

In January 2010, Henry applied for an internship on the Department of State's "Gateway to State" website, and then waited to hear whether or not he got the position. In May, Henry was told he was accepted into the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

Ready and excited to start, Henry moved to D.C. in September and started working under a counselor and a foreign affairs officer on development issues in the Western Hemisphere. Since then, he has been meeting and networking with various people in the field of diplomacy and learning new things every day. The challenge of working with such prestigious and talented people on a daily basis has been something that Henry has embraced.

"Here," he says, "if I make a mistake, the consequences could affect the things others are doing. That dynamic has really helped me get ready for life after college. I can honestly say I have learned something from everyone I have met and talked to here."

In addition to his work in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Henry is also taking a directed study course with Paula O'Loughlin, professor of political science. The directed study involves regular journaling of what his experiences entail, as well as research work on international organizations while in D.C. It's nothing new to O'Loughlin, who has helped countless students find such opportunities in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere. Says O'Loughlin, "Abe's one of the many students we've sent to Washington, D.C. to gain experience for future careers."

Henry is extremely thankful to the entire Spanish faculty and O'Loughlin for all their help throughout the process of applying for and receiving the internship. Upon his graduation from Morris, Henry hopes to work in Latin America on diplomatic issues and eventually go on to study international relations in graduate school.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.