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Global Issues Honor Consortium students to present research

Summary: Morris will host students from Tougaloo College, Dillard University, and the Twin Cities campus.

(October 8, 2010)-Morris will host the Global Issues Honors Consortium (GIHC) on October 15–16, 2010. Students from Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi, Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and Morris will present capstone seminars on research developed during their GIHC experience. The campus and community are invited to attend the presentations that will be held in Imholte 112 beginning at 9 a.m. on Saturday, October 16.

Critical thinking, research, writing

GIHC is a rigorous honors program oriented toward global issues. Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the program seeks to increase the number of qualified, well-prepared students from under-represented groups in graduate and professional programs in global studies fields. Emphasis is placed on critical thinking, research, and writing skills. Since the program's inception in 2006, 14 Morris students have participated, including the 2010 participants, all seniors: Lacey Marie Albers, Canistota, South Dakota Samantha Esguerra, Minneapolis Nicholas Houlson, St. Paul William Lo, Chanhassen Nhia Vang and Pahoua Vang, Gem Lake.

For the past two years, the 2010 cohort participated in activities preparing them for graduate study. Three seminars were offered at Morris. A summer workshop brought them together for six weeks at the Twin Cities campus. The cohort conducted community service and traveled together to Ghana. The capstone seminar, an individual project, concludes the program. Topics include Albers' exploration of "Conquest and Paternalism in Native American and Ghanaian Mental Health: A Call for Cultural Sovereignty and Development in Clinical Practice" Esguerra's research on "Medium and Memory: Che, Obama, and Contemporary Ghanaian Art" and Houlson's investigation "Comparing Beliefs Across Space and Time: Ghana, Mali, and China."

Experiencing Ghana

Lo notes that while research opportunities honed important critical thinking and academic skills, the opportunity to experience Ghana was the most "life changing" aspect of GIHC.

"Prior to Ghana, I had never thought too much about the African continent," shares Lo. "While I understood that poverty, diseases, and other development problems surround different countries on the continent, this trip brought with it first hand experience of going up close and confronting some of those issues—witnessing poverty, the legacy left by the slave castles at slave coast, and learning about health issues such as malaria and HIV/AIDS. These experiences changed my view of the world, who I am as a person, and made me realize that we are really privileged living in the United States. As a person, you really have to be open in order to see just how rich and beautiful Ghana is despite all the problems it is currently facing."

In Ghana, the students helped a rural school build a wall for an incomplete library toured slave castles and the Slave

River and visited historical museums, the Kwame Nkrumah memorial, and Kumasi's central market. They studied at the University of Ghana at Legon. Most importantly, says Lo, for five weeks they immersed themselves in Ghanaian culture.

Bart Finzel, professor of economics and management, served as Morris's GIHC director. "Students who have completed the GIHC and the research abroad component report having a greater appreciation for social movements, the courage to look at events with a critical eye, a greater passion for social justice, and an enhanced academic confidence to enable effective engagement around these concerns," he states.

While creating the GIHC program was "a great deal of work"—developing curriculum, designing reading lists and activities, fostering skills—the program is well worth the effort, says Finzel. It complements Morris's liberal arts mission and employs diversity's strengths. GIHC "connects students to the world," he says, "and keeps them grounded in their heritage, culture, and communities."

Solomom Gashaw, associate professor of sociology, Argie Manolis, Office of Community Engagement coordinator, Tap Payne, professor of theatre, and Hilda Ladner, assistant to the chancellor for diversity and Office of Equity, Diversity, and Intercultural Programs director also served important roles in the GIHC Morris program.

For more information about the GIHC or capstone presentation details, please contact [Finzel](#) or [Pilar Eble](#), coordinator for International Programs, at 320-589-6094.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris, provides its students dynamic opportunities to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate the diversity of global citizenship. A model for life, the renewable and sustainable Morris experience prepares graduates for lives of leadership and service. Celebrating its 50th anniversary, learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.

Photo: GIHC 2010 cohort in Ghana

First row: Edwin Bonfil, Twin Cities Second: Pahoua Vang, Morris Nicholas Houlson, Morris William Lo, Morris Whitney McDowell, Tougaloo Abdul Omari, Twin Cities graduate student Third row: Nhia Vang, Morris Larissa Miralles, Twin Cities Lacey Marie Albers, Morris April Fitzpatrick, Tougaloo Samantha Esquerra, Morris Fourth row: Iman Hassan, Twin Cities Dr. Rose Brewer, Twin Cities director Kumasi resident Jessica Fremland, Twin Cities Khirsten Echols, Tougaloo Johnathan Rabb, Twin Cities Not pictured: LaDaryl Watkins, Tougaloo

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