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Landwer Finds Worldwide Experiences Begin at UMN Morris

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
MORRIS

Landwer finds worldwide experiences begin at UMN Morris

(October 23, 2024) Growing up in Gilbert, Maggie Landwer '25 had several colleges nearby. But when it came time to decide where she wanted to go to college, Landwer wanted to venture a little bit farther away from home.

That same wayfaring spirit launched Landwer into three separate study abroad opportunities as a student at the University of Minnesota Morris—to Latvia, Germany, and Peru.

Landwer had saved for college, but was also named a Prairie Scholar. That, in part, helped pay for her study abroad opportunities.

The most recent was a summer research project with Morton Gneiss Endowed Professor Michael Zavada, who was invited as a Fulbright Research project at Universidad Nacional del Altiplano de Puno (UNA). Along with undergraduate and graduate students from UNA, Landwer was one of three UMN Morris students to participate in the project, spending six weeks in the Puno region of Peru.

“The research was focused on water quality in the inner Puno Bay where it's very contaminated with E. coli and coliform. We also did a heavy metal analysis where we worked with a government agency to analyze fish from the lake.”

This study abroad trip was more focused on research than her previous experiences, with Landwer collecting data and running data analysis.

“When we started, we spent about five to six hours each day going around the [Lake Titicaca] bay, collecting all of our samples. After that, we were focused on getting all of that data into spreadsheets and creating graphs and charts and rough GPS locations of all the areas that we visited.”

Landwer was very excited by the hands-on experience, and felt this was the best trip she's been on, so far.

“Morris is a fantastic college for opportunities, for students to get great experiences,” Landwer exclaimed, after admitting that as a high school student, she had never heard of UMN Morris.

“I was looking at Twin Cities, Mankato, NDSU. But I didn't know if I wanted to do big universities either. Then I got recruited to run track here and it was the first time I've ever heard of Morris. But the really fun thing about that was anyone that you speak to has either attended Morris or knows someone who attended Morris and they've always had great things to say about it.”

Landwer was looking at a civil engineering path, but entered her first year at UMN Morris as a biology major.

“Then I was at home for one Thanksgiving and went out to Theodore Roosevelt National Park. As I was sitting there, I was thinking that it'd be pretty cool if I could do research in a state or national park as a career but I don't know if biology is really for me. So, I thought maybe I should get an environmental science degree. This whole [research] experience in itself led me to think this is what I want to do. I'm very much looking into research careers and more data collection.”

Landwer is just starting to consider her options for what's after graduation.

“I'm starting to think of my own research projects that I can conduct and where I want to go after I graduate. That's a little bit scary—I don't know what I'm gonna do, but ... I've left my mind open to the possibilities.”







