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Macaulay Honors College and CIEE Launch Innovative Integrated Study-Abroad Model

Inaugural custom program includes two international experiences and domestic coursework to study public health and global water issues

New York, NY - (June 12, 2014). The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), and Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York, have partnered to create new international learning opportunities that will strengthen students' college education and better prepare them in an increasingly competitive global workforce. The innovative study-abroad model centers on the intersection of global public health and clean, available and safe water. To help solve real life problems, Macaulay students will study in locations where water affects the public health and vitality of communities and countries.

"This is the right path for higher education in the 21st century – experiential, interdisciplinary, and global," says Ann Kirschner, university dean at Macaulay Honors College. "We believe this program will give students from multiple academic disciplines the opportunity to develop a deeper global perspective that truly enhances their education."

Macaulay and CIEE launched the partnership in January, when 21 students traveled to the CIEE Study Center in Santiago, Dominican Republic, for a four-week term on public health and water. Students explored challenges to providing safe drinking water, safe food, and environmentally sound sanitation in the Caribbean and Latin America. In Santiago, students met with local health experts and toured facilities and nonprofit organizations, including the Santiago Water and Sewer Corporation, where they examined strategies for combatting water-borne diseases. In addition to this academic work, students explored new cultures, with excursions to the north coast and Batey Baranguana, ensuring that the program was both academically and culturally rich.

"In a new country ... we are always studying local people, trying to affirm or challenge our perceptions," said Linda Luu, a Macaulay student who participated in the Dominican Republic trip. "What we often forget is that they are also studying us, trying to do the same with their perceptions of Americans. In many ways ... we are ambassadors of our own country, and that can be both scary and empowering."

For the second part of their international education, these students will attend a six-week summer program at the CIEE Study Center in Gaborone, Botswana, following their junior year in 2015. This component of the custom Macaulay model will include rigorous coursework on public health and water quality, internships that will help students develop valuable career skills, and comparative intercultural workshops that will allow students to reflect on cultural similarities and differences of their previous international experience.

The inaugural program ensures that students from a range of academic majors have the opportunity to integrate a science component into their learning. Participating students will study abroad in two different locations over their four years – once during their sophomore year and again during the summer before they graduate college. The study abroad experiences are supplemented by research and coursework in New York City, before and after travel.

CIEE and Macaulay are committed to developing additional integrated academic models in more international locations that enable students from an even broader array of academic disciplines to participate. This effort reflects their shared goal to expand study-abroad opportunities, especially for STEM majors and other nontraditional academic disciplines.

“Dean Kirschner is a leading advocate for expanding international education, and she challenged CIEE to help her achieve a bold vision for internationalizing the student experience at CUNY Macaulay Honor College,” says James P. Pellow, CIEE president and chief executive officer. “She insisted on a four-year integrated experience for Macaulay’s high achieving honors students that was accessible, interdisciplinary, academically rigorous, and comparative. Her vision was that the Macaulay model would allow students to develop a truly global perspective, both academically and interculturally, over several years and several academic courses. We think this program achieves these objectives, and we look forward to expanding it in 2015.”

CIEE: Council on International Educational Exchange

Founded in 1947, CIEE is the country’s oldest and largest nonprofit study abroad and intercultural exchange organization, serving 300 U.S. colleges and universities, 1,000 U.S. high schools, and more than 35,000 international exchange students each year. CIEE operates 60 study centers in 40 countries, sponsors international faculty training programs, teach abroad programs, and various specialty and custom programs for secondary, postsecondary, and international students. Visit ciee.org.

Macaulay Honors College

Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York offers exceptional students a personalized education with access to the vast resources of the nation’s largest urban university and New York City. Selected for their top high school records and leadership potential, Macaulay students receive a full-tuition scholarship, a laptop and technology support, and an Opportunities Fund to pursue global learning and service opportunities. Macaulay students enroll in one of eight CUNY senior colleges (Baruch, Brooklyn, City, Hunter, John Jay, Lehman, Queens, and Staten Island). Visit macaulay.cuny.edu.

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