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macaulay profile:

Geoffrey Mercene '15

Brooklyn College

Before Geoffrey Mercene walked through the doors of Macaulay, he was planning on a career in medicine. Everything changed, however, after three summers in Panama with the Global Brigades providing medical, public health, and environmental services and education to rural communities.

“The Global Brigades service trips challenged my way of thinking about how to address health issues,” he says. “I gained an admiration for the Brigades’ holistic approach to solving health disparities, which helped me decide to explore the field of public health.”

With his newfound perspective, Geoffrey pursued a Brooklyn College Rosen Fellowship, which took him to Mangan, a small farming town on Panay Island in the Philippines, where his mother was born. While there the Horace W. Goldsmith Scholar and Lisa Goldberg/Revson Scholar focused on modernizing healthcare for a local clinic by digitizing and analyzing medical records. In addition, his goal of learning how to address widespread health issues led him to use the Opportu-

nities Fund, which also funded his participation in the Global Brigades, to study in the Dominican Republic with Macaulay’s Global Challenge of Health and the Future of Water program.

It is the Philippines, where both his parents were born and studied to become nurses, though, that continues to draw him back. He is re-learning Tagalog and is slated to spend the summer of 2015 in the Philippines as the head of the logistics committee for a service trip helping communities hit by natural disasters. Geoffrey is also the founding treasurer of Mabuhay, the Filipino Club at Macaulay, which educates the Macaulay community about Filipino culture and connects the college to the Filipino experience and community. His senior thesis explores the health of

communities in the southern Philippines where mining activity is very active.

“I would have never imagined myself doing some sort of work in the Philippines in my undergraduate years,” says Geoffrey.

“In fact, when entering Macaulay, I expected that I would have to wait years, possibly a decade, to even have the opportunity to do work in the Philippines. That said, the networks I developed and the access to opportunities through Macaulay have allowed me to already pursue my dreams.”