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Dr. Ann Marie Legreid

Chair, Internationalization Advisory Council

White Hall 102A
304-876-5011
alegreid@shepherd.edu

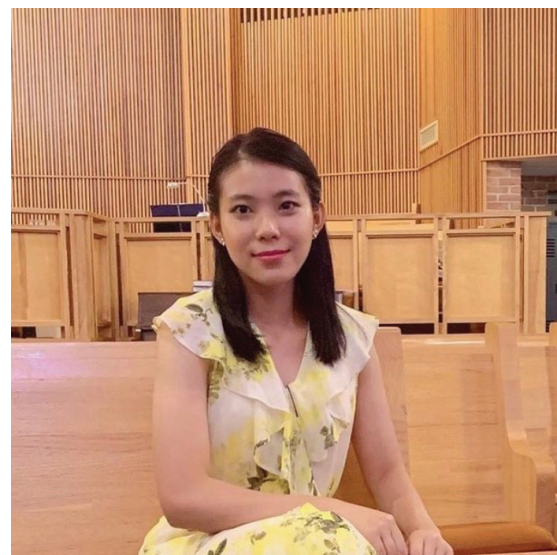
From Myanmar to West Virginia: One Student's Journey

Ja Seng Nsang was born in the beautiful country of Myanmar (formerly Burma) and came to the U.S. with her family members in search of education and opportunity. She is completing her bachelor's degree in business administration and serves on the Executive Board of Shepherd's Theta Epsilon chapter of Phi Beta Delta. She was asked to share some details about her background.

I have four sisters, and I am the oldest one. While I was completing elementary school in Myanmar, my parents decided to immigrate to the United States because they wanted their five daughters to achieve a high level of education and build successful careers. My country has great natural resources like precious stones and minerals such as gold, zinc, tin, copper, rubies, and jade. Even though my country has precious natural resources, we still lack in education and political stability. That is why my parents worried about our future in Myanmar; my family came to the agreement of moving to the United States after I graduated from elementary school. My family arrived in the United States in 2013. The United States is indeed a beautiful country that has great opportunities for people who want to succeed. As I was pursuing my education in the United States I realized that I can achieve my dream as long as I work hard for it because I know that scholarships will be offered if I need them, and the school's advisor or teachers will always be there to answer my questions.

Why did you choose to study at Shepherd University?

Shepherd University offers the business program that I am looking for and the university has a beautiful campus. Shepherd University has a small campus, so it makes it easier to communicate with professors and my advisor face-to-face whenever I need help.



Nsang Ja Seng

What have been some of the challenges to you as an international student in the U.S.?

The challenges I face living in the United States are my language barrier and cultural differences. English is not easy to learn; it does take time and effort to speak and write professionally. It was tough for me not to be able to communicate with the American people because of the language barrier and cultural differences. Instead of complaining about it, I decided to learn the language and the culture.

What are some of the benefits and pleasures of being an international student here?

Shepherd University's international student program welcomes me warmly and helps with my school work whenever I need help. Through this international student program, I get to meet and communicate with students from different countries and get to learn about their cultures. Besides my school work, I get to learn so many things about other countries' cultures by participating in a panel for international students, a cook-off, and cultural walk. Also, I had an opportunity to meet with my country's ambassador and other countries' ambassadors through the help of Shepherd University's international student program. I would like to say that I am blessed to be a member of Shepherd University's international student program.

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What advice do you have for American students considering a study abroad experience?

Studying abroad is the key to self-discovery and personal growth. Studying abroad gives you better learning opportunities, where you can receive the best quality education, by learning new skills and expanding your knowledge.

It makes you see things from another point of view, which transforms you into a more open-minded person. If you study abroad in a country where they don't speak your native language, you will have a great opportunity to learn their language and culture. Lastly, a study abroad experience can have a great impact when you apply for jobs.

What are your long-term goals (career)?

My long-term goal is to become an interior designer because I love being creative and want to make indoor spaces functional, safe, and beautiful. After I finish my business degree at Shepherd University, I want to attend an interior design school and get hands-on experiences. ■

Challenges and Opportunities: New Study Abroad Director Takes the Helm

Dr. Samuel Greene, assistant professor of political science, took the helm as director of study abroad this past spring. When asked about his overarching goal as director, he responded:

My goal is to develop a variety of affordable study abroad opportunities to help students from a wide range of majors to be able to study abroad in programs that work for their courses of study and budgets.

What appealed to you about this position?

I had the privilege of participating in a number of study opportunities as an undergraduate, and then took my master's degree in the United Kingdom. These experiences certainly helped with my personal and academic growth as well as language acquisition and set me on a rewarding international career path. I think this position is a good opportunity for me to give back (recognizing the support I received from many sources, particularly as an undergraduate).

**What are some of the initiatives for this year?
What are your longer-term goals?**

I am currently looking to develop more international partnerships and affiliations in Europe, Latin America, and Africa to complement our existing partnerships, as such partnerships often provide the most affordable opportunities for



Dr. Samuel Greene

student exchange and can often support faculty-led study trips in greater cultural immersion. I am also working to create options for majors that historically have been underrepresented in study abroad at Shepherd, such as many disciplines in the sciences. Over the long term, I would like to work to increase the number of students from Shepherd who study abroad and develop more of a culture of study abroad in the student body. As the cost of study abroad is a significant obstacle to many Shepherd students, I hope in the long term to have a number of different options available with a similar cost to Shepherd's tuition and room and board.

What study tours are scheduled for 2021?

Due to COVID, and particularly quarantine requirements for travelers from the United States in many destinations, I expect few if any study

tours to take place in summer 2021. Individual student study for longer periods of time might still be possible in the spring and summer depending on destinations. However, I am already working with a number of faculty members on plans for summer 2022 (and perhaps spring break 2022). Stay tuned!

What about international internships?

Many students and staff may not know that some of our current partnerships and a number of our partnerships in development allow for internships in English, not just in business, but in a wide range of fields, both as part of a semester study and also over a summer. This is a fantastic way to both gain valuable intercultural experience as well as useful work experience in a student's major or minor. ■

Art Historian Shares Art Treasures through Study Abroad

Dr. Chris Coltrin is a specialist in art history, specifically 19th-century European art history, and he is enthusiastic about having his students see art in galleries and museums in places like Paris and Amsterdam. In his nine years at Shepherd University he has led four summer study tours. He began with short-term tours of two weeks to Italy and Spain and Paris and Amsterdam, then expanded to month-long tours. He has led two of the longer tours, traveling from Paris to Athens and stopping in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy.

I did the shorter tours first, and I just felt like I wanted something more substantial for my students and I started planning the monthlong trips and we have been doing those about every three years as a department.

What attracted you to planning and leading tours?

One of the reasons I became an art historian was the prospect of taking students to see actual art. I was a history major as an undergraduate, and switched to art history in grad school partially because the art historians tended to travel and see what they were studying more often than historians did. At that point I just thought the idea of traveling sounded fun, but after I started taking students on trips after having taught them about those places, it has become my favorite part of teaching.

What are some of the challenges of leading a study tour? Rewards?

The challenges are that Shepherd doesn't pay you to lead a tour; you have to be willing to simply invest a lot of your time knowing there's no extra paycheck coming your way. This isn't quite as big an issue when running the shorter trip for a week or two, but on the monthlong tours not only am I not being paid for my time, but I am losing money because I can't work at home or conduct my own research. And I'm apart from my family for a month, so my wife becomes a single parent. One of the real pressures of running a tour is trying to get students to sign-up and encourage them to save their money for something like this. And of course you sometimes have issues while on tour, if for instance a student gets ill or ends up



in hospital—that can be challenging. However, I keep planning tours because I certainly feel that the rewards for the students outweigh the challenges for me (though again, my wife might disagree). Not only can the trip change student lives, but it also enhances my connection with my students and it impacts the classroom once we get back to Shepherdstown. Students who spent the month traveling through Europe with me are much more comfortable speaking up in class, for instance.

Study tours can be life-changing for our students. Tell us about a student(s) whose life was changed by the experience.

I had a number of students who were not art majors when they signed up for the tour, and then became art majors when they got back from the tour. But the ones that really come to mind are the ones who you could see what they

experienced on the tour influencing how they created art once they returned. My favorite example of this is a former student named Melanie. One of the things I made my students do before we went on our tour was familiarize themselves with Catholic saints. When wandering through European museums, you come across a lot of paintings of Catholic saints, and there's a bit of a code you have to know to understand who the saints are and how to identify them. So I make my students memorize the saints and how to identify them. It often becomes a bit of a game and the students have a good time trying to find and point out to me different paintings of saints. Melanie was so impacted by this exercise and the works of art she saw in Europe on saints, that she came back to Shepherdstown and focused her own artistic practice on re-creating photographs of saints. She created these amazing photographs which involved sculpted pieces

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which she created and then very dramatically lit images of saints in the style of the painter Caravaggio. For her capstone exhibition, she exhibited these photographs along with the sculpted pieces she created in a local church here in Shepherdstown. The combination of the sculpture photography and the setting produced what I consider to be the best capstone project I have seen as a teacher. And she certainly would not have been inspired to create such compelling art had she not gone on that trip.

What advice do you have for someone leading a tour for the first time?

The biggest challenge is to determine the demand and what the students want. I always try to plan trips that might be nice for me, but really are aimed at satisfying the student demand. I give out a questionnaire asking where students

want to go and then plan trips based on those desires. The hardest part is asking students who are already burdened with lots of debt in our current educational system to spend more money on something, but I do genuinely feel that it is worth the expense because of how life changing the trip can be. I often remind my students that if they want to spend a month wandering through Europe, this is really the only time in their lives in which they will have the freedom to do so (and have a professional art historian to take them through each museum). I think it's best to plan trips to places where you have some kind of expertise so the students can benefit from your knowledge and influence.

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Let's see, on my very first trip on the very first day right after we landed in Rome, and right

after we gave the students a few minutes to wander on their own in the center of Rome, I had a student who fainted and had a seizure in the middle of the road, and I ended up waiting in an Italian hospital not really knowing what to do or what was going on. So that was a bit of an adventure. But luckily for me, since then I've only had a couple minor illnesses and nothing nearing hospital visits. I've had the chance to simply do a lot of amazing and fun things with both my students and my colleagues because of these trips. I've helped make fresh cheese in Amsterdam, hiked along the top of one of the tallest mountains in the Alps, and even rode a donkey up the switchback trail to the top of a Greek island cliff. So there are numerous things that I would undoubtedly never have the chance to do on my own that traveling the students has given me. ■

Music, a Magic Carpet to Anywhere

Dr. David Gonzol, Professor Emeritus of Music

Dr. David Gonzol, recently retired from Shepherd's School of Music, brought a unique blend of musical talent and international expertise to the classroom. He was asked to tell us how he intertwined the two in his teaching.

I began teaching elementary music in a school with about 700 students, moved to being an adjunct undergraduate lecturer at four different schools, and, after being awarded a Ph.D. in music education, taught at colleges and universities in Minnesota, in Idaho, and, lastly, in West Virginia—that is, at Shepherd University, where I was for 15 years. While in Minnesota I earned my certification in Kodály (KOH-dye) music education and also in Orff Schulerwerk music education at the University of St. Thomas. Eventually I taught Kodály certification at De Paul University, in Chicago, and at Shepherd, what I consider my chief achievement.

But when I first began teaching I also began learning the music teaching methods that Zoltán Kodály and Erzsébet Szőnyi (his right-hand woman at the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest, Hungary) had developed, mid-20th century. Kodály saw that unless they taught Hungarian music, Hungarian culture could wither, even die. Those methods have formed the backbone of my teaching, in three ways:

(a) Singing is primary. Everyone has a voice, and everyone can learn to sing. I learned how to teach virtually anyone to sing. Just ask me.

(b) The folk songs of the country make the first music to teach. Folk songs are often some of the best music, too. Just as stones having rough edges worn away during centuries of laying at the bottom of streams and rivers are thus made wonderfully beautiful, so too folk songs become beautiful through being passed from people to people, a sort of mass-treasuring and editing process. Only the best things are left. That includes teaching music of foreign cultures, too, for Kodály emphasizes the folk music of any country. The method is supremely adaptable that way.

(c) Kodály and Szőnyi developed a host of teaching methods, so many of those using active music-making, but also music reading. One of Kodály's aims was to make a musically literate population. Today, there are many fine choirs throughout Hungary, many made up of enthusiastic young people, not professionals. My American students have often found it hard to really sing, to really read music independently, for they could no longer hide behind an instrument or only sing parts that someone had pounded out on the piano for them. Many of my best students have been young children, for they had not yet

become prejudiced to hiding from learning music or to thinking that popular music is always best.

For my adult learners, learning that "Ring Around the Rosie" is a miniature masterpiece, perfectly formed, perfectly timed, and perfectly organized—that is what often became the turning point for them. They began to see how, in simplicity, folk song can be supremely eloquent. And that is also when they began to be convinced that teaching people to sing and read music is the best basis for studying music, just as learning a foreign language must include speaking and writing that language. One teacher I taught simply wept with grief when she thought of all the years she had wasted in what we might call entertainment teaching; I did my best to console her that her future teaching career would be much better.

Internationality is, in that way, completely integral to Kodály. For one can go from the folk songs of one's own country to those of any other country. And each country emphasizes different things. Hungarian folk song often is in what we might call a minor mode, while American folk music is often pentatonic, just five tones of the scale. In Chinese folk music, a song is often made of four different musical phrases, but in America, we love to sing the same phrase twice, sing a different phrase, and then repeat the first phrase one more

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time. That's very different, that one phrase sung three times. My American students had a hard time learning Chinese folk song, for they had to think more and learn more music. Learning what musical choices different peoples make can tell volumes about their national characters. Understanding people is one of the best outcomes of learning others' music—and it helps students see far better what their own culture is truly like. Studying is understanding; it is knowing; it is the eradication of ignorance.

The values inherent in music—say, the non-repetitiveness of Chinese folk song and the (some would say comparatively less interesting) extra repetition in American folk music—can be found in other things in those countries as well, in their dance, art, newspapers, and politics. Chinese art—and Japanese images too—have long emphasized asymmetry, a non-repetitiveness. That came as a shock to Europeans a little over a century ago, but that asymmetry became a cornerstone of French art nouveau. Impatience is all around us in America today, from hyperactive movies to the way we drive. It is in politics, cooking, dancing, art, clothing, worship, theater—and music. Non-music teachers can find powerful support for any characteristic they are teaching in one cultural area by looking for it in music. The casual and simple combo of work pants and easy-to-wear shirts burgeoned in California's outfit of blue jeans with a T-shirt, which spread around the world along with casual rock 'n' roll. Cultural themes are the place to start for integrated lessons, which can pack a powerful punch.

Some lessons that integrate music can even be found in non-cultural areas, such as science. Edgard Varèse's *Ionisation*, for example, has a short musical rhythm that symbolizes an atom's gaining and losing of electrons. Varèse puts that rhythm through its paces in an ensemble with lots of percussion instruments. But examples like these are often rarer than one might suppose. Some speak of Johann Sebastian Bach's music as "mathematical," but in fact it is usually only Bach's organizations of sounds for musical, not mathematical, reasons that they are really thinking of. For example, a phrase of four measures of Bach sounds good followed by another phrase of four measures by him because they are balanced, not because of the number four. Him signing his name with a 14-note theme, for example, was because he knew that $B+A+C+H = 2+1+3+8 = 14$ —which is a verbal symbol, and not a numerical one, that has simply been assigned numbers, not through inherent quantities or numerical order, but simply because of the accident of the German alphabet.

With cultural subjects we find it far easier to integrate music—cultural themes—than with

science and mathematics. Using the music of the geographical place that your students are studying can always help them understand that place better. Europe and the United States in the mid-1960s are much harder to study—perhaps impossible—without looking at the Beatles and rock 'n' roll.

I am thrilled that two of my pieces are going into a major hymnal this year. The Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA are having the digital launch of their new collection of music and worship resources *Voices Together* on December 13. The editors sent out hymn texts, inviting composers to submit newly composed music. I composed my tune "Fides incipit" for Carl P. Daw Jr.'s hymn "Faith Begins," and the committee chose my music. They also chose a round I had made years ago, on the word "alleluia." I began the four-voice round with the first theme of the last movement of W. A. Mozart's "Jupiter" symphony, K. 551: the four pitches do-re-fa-mi. That motif comes from an old Italian Gregorian chant, "Lucis creator," thus linking Italian, German, and now American culture.

Although we have moved and I can no longer lead music at the Stephens City Mennonite Church in Virginia, I have a collection of hymn and chorale preludes that I composed for flutist Larissa West and me (on piano) to play there. I would like to publish that collection, along with other pieces I have made. I also have two pieces of music education research to fix up and publish, and I am looking forward to being involved with making music or perhaps teaching in our new community here—once the pandemic is over. I have, however, been giving one of my grandchildren Orff Schulwerk lessons—with a strong Kodály emphasis.

The French regard us as a very young nation. I have heard Germans more bluntly say that we are simply uneducated. It is too often true that we Americans value consumption over being well educated: We would rather buy a restaurant meal than learn to cook Crêpes Suzette ourselves, or watch a video of someone singing rather than sing ourselves. That makes us out of step with much of the rest of the world and with history. We are bent on being the greatest consumers in history instead of being accomplishees. We are no longer cultural leaders, and I certainly don't believe that Hollywood, despite it being a massive



Dr. David Gonzol

cultural export of ours, is often much of a good leader.

It often took heavy lifting to convince my students otherwise. But once they became accomplishees, real learners, their studies skyrocketed. I would tell them in class as they sat there, "I am not a TV." Getting them to be a class, most everyone contributing and most everyone sincerely learning, was of course nothing more than the name of the game. But it did take heavy lifting, and it was certainly worth it. What else is life supposed to be?

And now I have some spare time in my retirement to at last listen to my collection of symphonies by Ralph Vaughan Williams (English), about 200 cantatas of J. S. Bach (German), the complete keyboard music of Girolamo Frescobaldi (Italian), and all six symphonies of Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (Russian)—and more. And that's only two continents. I've been so happy, amid painting our farmhouse and taking care of the animals, to continue studying my foreign languages every day—finally now making good progress at German and French—and maybe getting back to my Hungarian and Mandarin. And reading: I finished a book on the Russian tale of Dmitri Belyaev and Lyudmila Trut's breeding, in just a few decades, of actually tame foxes (proving much about genetics) and also a history of the newspaper comics of the syndicate King Features. I am now many pages into Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. I am making progress in my second year of playing the oboe, and I continue to play the piano and sing.

Learning about the world, though story: As Madeleine L'Engle said, "Facts are limited. They don't take us very far. Story is where we look for truth." The truth is all I ever wanted to teach. Music and story tell many truths, and I am happy to have had my career around that. ■

Phi Beta Delta News

Awards Presented at National Conference (2020)

Sharon Ann Carpenter (administrative secretary senior, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences) was awarded the Edward S. Blankenship Staff Award for outstanding leadership and service to the Shepherd University chapter.

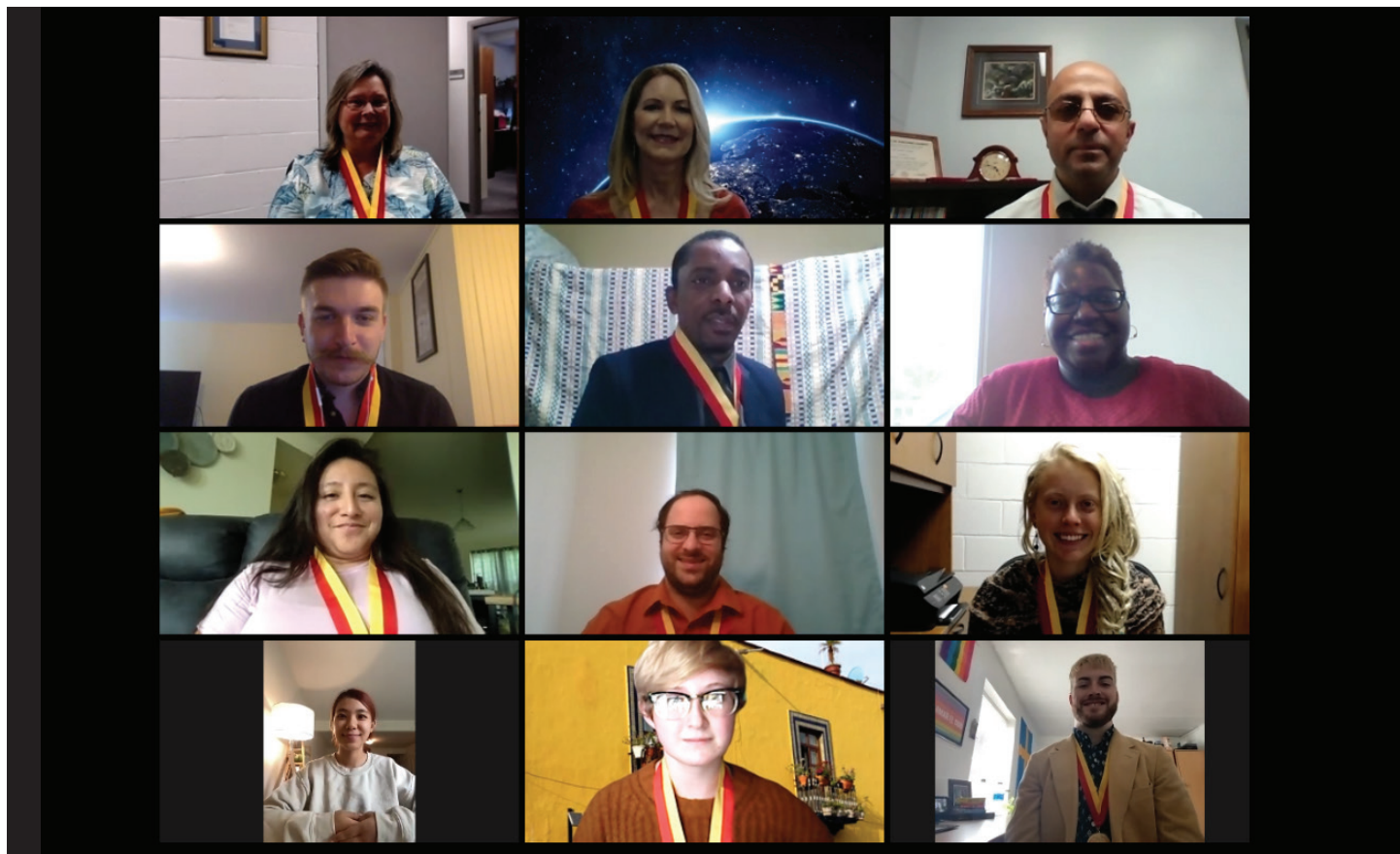
Dr. Ann Marie Legreid (Geography) was awarded the Yvonne Captain Faculty Award for Outstanding Contributions to International Education. ■

RIGHT: Dr. Ann Marie Legreid



Chapter Holds Virtual Induction

In a virtual ceremony in September, 17 new members were inducted into Shepherd's Theta Epsilon Chapter of Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars. Phi Beta Delta recognizes intellectual and professional achievement in international education, promotes the international experience such as study abroad, and supports academically based international programming such as the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Founded in 1986 at California State-Long Beach, today it is headquartered at California State-San Bernardino. It is a member of the Association of College Honor Societies. ■



Top row, Sharon Carpenter, Jennifer Penland, Max Guirguis. Second row, Konrad Turnbull, Kenrick Pluck, Evora Baker. Third row, Joselin Fuentes, Samuel Greene, Madison Hale. Bottom row, JaSeng Nsang, Noelle Kesner, Peter Proctor. Not pictured: Savannah Maguire, Abdoul Nasser, Emily Oliver, Geri Crawley-Woods, and Momodou Darboe.



Madison Hale receives Ikenberry Award

Global Studies major, Madison Hale (pictured left), received the Ikenberry Award for Human Service in May. The award recognizes “exemplary human service to Shepherd University as evidenced by campus leadership, community service, and overall achievement.” The award is named for Dr. Oliver S. Ikenberry, president of Shepherd University for 21 years, from 1947-1968. Madison completed the environmental emphasis within the Global Studies B.A. program and crafted her own study abroad experience last year, studying and traveling in Costa Rica. Dr. Jeff Groff nominated Madison for the award. “She is the most dedicated student I’ve ever met to the causes of environmental justice and sustainability,” Groff said. “She lives a lifestyle that is commensurate with her beliefs (e.g., she’s vegan and her consumer habits are informed by her consideration of environmental, economic, and cultural sustainability). She served as president of the Shepherd Environmental Organization, helping to organize and promote outreach and community service activities for years. She is an exemplary student when it comes to efforts to advance positive social change. She is also one of the kindest and most warm-hearted people I’ve ever met.” Madison was inducted into Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars this fall. Her interests include all kinds of art, hiking, cooking, gardening, and traveling. ■



Mark Your Calendar

35th Annual Phi Beta Delta Conference

via Zoom

May 2021, dates to be determined

Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars will host a fully online conference with the theme “Moving Forward: The Future of Collaboration in Our Diverse World.” Research paper and poster presentations will be shared online with videoconferencing and screen sharing technology. Presenters will discuss best practices in global teaching and learning from a diverse array of academic disciplines and global perspectives. Program details are forthcoming on the Society’s website www.phibetadelta.org. ■



Celtic Roots And Global Appalachia: The Highlands and the Orkneys

Celtic Roots and Global Appalachia is a global studies experience that allows students and the community to explore their Celtic Roots, either through travel or semester abroad study in the

M.A. dual degree program with the University of West of Scotland. The 2021 Global Appalachia and Celtic Roots study tour will take travelers to the Scottish Highlands and Orkney Islands,

the English Lakes and the Yorkshire Moors—all featured in the stories of Robert Burns, Emily Brontë, William and Dorothy Wordsworth, James Boswell, Bram Stoker (*Dracula*), and Appalachian writers Ron Rash and Denise Giardina—with Muriel Spark’s *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, Lewis Grassie Gibbon’s *Sunset Song*, and Sir Walter Scott’s *Rob Roy*, spotlighting the prominence of place through film. Travelers will visit World Heritage Sites throughout Britain, traveling to Grasmere, Ayr, Edinburgh, Inverness, Orkney Islands, Haworth, Whitby, Scarborough, and London. More here.

SIGN UP TODAY

To register for the Celtic Roots and Global Appalachia Highlands and Orkneys tour, visit www.shepherd.edu/appalachian and click on Celtic Roots and Global Appalachia or visit <https://worldstrides.com/custom/celtic-roots-global-appalachia-highlands-hebrides>. ■



Appalachian Studies: Many Gateways to Learning

Dr. Sylvia Shurbutt, Director

Two graduate students are preparing to join the University of the West of Scotland as part of their Creative Media Studies M.A. degree and Shepherd's M.A. in Appalachian Studies partnership programs. The semester abroad in the fall on the Ayr campus near Glasgow will set up the student to participate in the dual degree partnership between Shepherd and UWS, as they use the Appalachian Studies certificate as their first module for the Scottish degree

and use the semester abroad to suffice for the required electives in the Shepherd M.A.

The cultural connection between Scotland and Appalachia is strong, and the two graduate students in the Shepherd Global Appalachia program are Ellen Wade a public school teacher living in Oak Park, Illinois, and writer Karen Spears Zacharias, who will be gathering material for her next book as part of her research project

at UWS. Zacharias is a best-selling author and the 2018 WV Common Read Author, as well as a past Appalachian Heritage Writer in Residence. Wade is one of the NEH teachers who worked at Shepherd in the summer of 2018 and wanted to continue her studies here. Both Wade and Zacharias have strong interests in study abroad, and both will follow Sean Murtagh who was our first to pursue and receive this Global Appalachia dual degree program. ■

TOP LEFT: Ellen Wade on the 2019 Celtic Roots Study trip in Bayeux France, after her experience in the NEH Summer Institute for Teachers and her decision to enter the dual M.A. degree partnership with UWS and Shepherd.

TOP RIGHT: Karen Spears Zacharias, taken at the time she decided to enter the Global Appalachia program and study abroad for the dual M.A. degrees with Shepherd and University of West of Scotland.

Siriki Diabate: Refugee to Campus Citizen

Siriki Diabate is well known on the Shepherd campus as an enthusiastic and hardworking student, campus citizen, and staff member in the Office of International Affairs. He was asked to share some details about his fascinating life story.

I am originally a citizen of Cote D'Ivoire and lived there 33 years. I was naturalized as a U.S. citizen on July 20, 2012. Culturally, I am from the Madinga tribe that once upon a time had its empire all along the coastal region from Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, and Guinea all the way to Senegal and Gambia. I am from the North-west region called Odienné and my village is Guelegban. I grew up in a city called Port-Bouet located in the economic capital city of Abidjan. I am part of a family of 13 children but I lost three of my siblings. I am the sixth child of 10 children. My dad was a chief mechanic repairer at a bus transportation company called SOTRA. My mother was a stay home mother as it pertains to my African culture. But, things have changed now with women wanting to express their rights and emancipation in the Ivorian society. When I was growing up in Cote D'Ivoire, the general tendency was that women stayed home to take care of the kids and cook, men went to work to earn money to take care of the family. In Abidjan, I went to primary and secondary schools until the mid-1990s. My mother passed away in 1992 and my father in 1998.

As a naturalized U.S. citizen and living in the United States of America, I identify myself as an African American based on the census definition. However, culturally, I identify myself as an African because I was born and raised there, and I spent most of my life in Africa before coming to the U.S. in 2007 as a refugee. I hold a Bachelor of Science in political science and a Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) and will be graduating this fall 2020 with another Master of Arts degree in College Student Development Administration (CSDA). I am a Christian Catholic, married, and have four beautiful daughters.

What circumstances brought you to the U.S.?

I came to the U.S. in 2007 as a refugee. I used to be a freelancer working for a biweekly newspaper. I criticized the government and things did not work out well. I had to run away to save my life. I ended up in Ghana and my case was processed by the U.S. Refugee Coordination Program, an office based at the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana, West Africa.

What are some of the challenges of being an international student?



Siriki Diabate

Some of the challenges of being an international student are cultural difference, homesickness, and the language barrier. Cultural challenges are part of international students' lives in the U.S. because they come with totally different background experiences. For example, back home, when a teacher or a professor, or an elderly person speaks to you, you cannot look at him in the eye, no eye contact because it can be viewed as being disrespectful. I used to miss home but I ended up feeling better in the U.S. as it has become home. As for the language barrier, most international students would speak a language other than English.

What have been some of the benefits of being an international student in the U.S.?

My time at Shepherd has helped me use the skills I gained while being involved in student activities as president of International Student Union, and president and founder of Pan-African Student Union (PASU). The leadership skills created a pathway to my academic success and also impact the students I educate, mentor, and supervise today.

What is your current role at Shepherd?

My current role at Shepherd University is international outreach and admissions officer. Working with international students has led me to examine how my actions impact them. My philosophy is to present students with all the

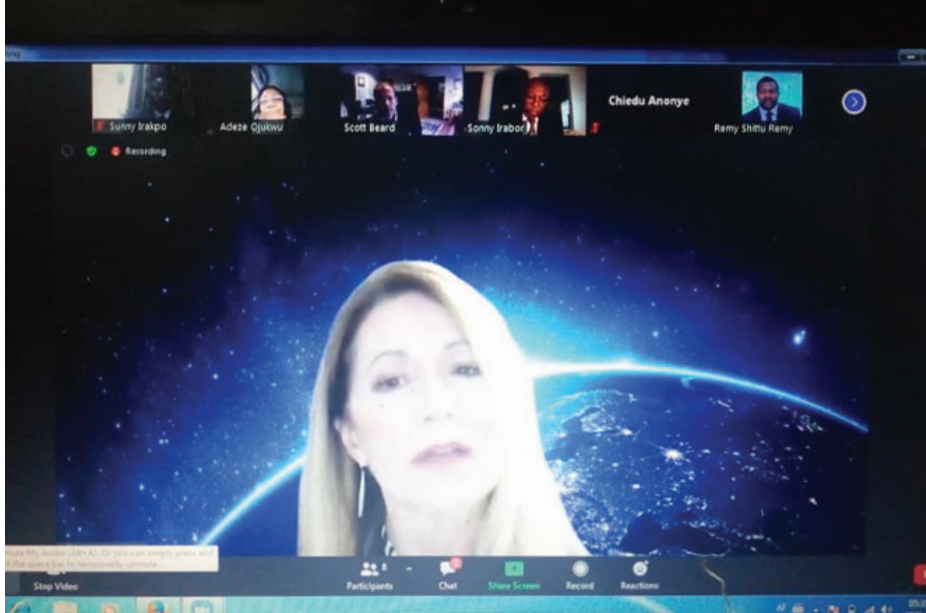
resources available for them to utilize and then encourage them to get out of their comfort zone, by empowering them and letting them experience the things they are scared of. In the future, my goal is to recruit more international students and retain them until graduation. Another goal is a platform of bilateral relationships between Shepherd University and international education partners of benefit to Shepherd staff and faculty. For example, Shepherd could send faculty members to teach in some renowned universities in the West African region.

What advice do you have for American students considering a study abroad experience?

The advice I give to American students about study abroad is that there is another world out there, folks! It is important to experience the world beyond U.S. borders. Experiencing this world is going to enrich and reinforce their global citizenship. They will benefit from not only the U.S. culture but the world culture.

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

I would like to thank the Internationalization Advisory Council for giving me the opportunity to be featured in their newsletter. As a former international student and now Shepherd University employee, I am grateful for what the university has brought to my experience all these years. Shepherd University is a place where international students feel welcome. ■



Dr. Jennifer Penland Delivers Keynote Address

Dr. Jennifer Penland was the keynote speaker at an August Zoom conference, "Building Nigeria and Her Youth Beyond Drug Abuse and Addiction for Global Impact." The conference was organized by a non-governmental organization, Silec Initiatives, a leading, progressive voice forum in the campaign against drug abuse and addiction in Nigeria. According to the research from a Silec spokesperson, drug abuse has become more prevalent in the last decade and

only continues to escalate within the younger generations. Dr. Penland stressed the value of education as "the great equalizer." She emphasized: "I would call on civic and educational organizations as well as governmental agencies to work together to combat 'situational poverty' which research states leads to 'drug abuse and addiction' AND focus on supporting initiatives that foster educating and employing the youth to become contributing civic-minded citizens of

tomorrow such as Silec Initiatives."

Last year, Ambassador Irakpo of Nigeria provided an outstanding presentation to the faculty and administration at Shepherd University, sponsored by the U.S. State Department. His interest was on the opioid crisis in West Virginia. As a result of his visit, a partnership developed between Shepherd University and Silec Initiatives with the intent to welcome students from Nigeria to study at Shepherd. ■

Office of International Affairs: Partnerships and Programs

Dr. Lois Jarman, Director

The 2020-2021 academic year began with 64 international students enrolled. This number is up from just 28 international students in the fall of 2017. We have students representing more than 30 different countries and more than 40 of our students are on visas to study in the United States.

This semester, we began a partnership with the Nigerian Community of Frederick, Maryland. Our Nigerian students met via Zoom with members of this nonprofit organization. We will partner with them on a water project being led by graduate student Nasser Aachirou who is working closely with Nigerian painter, Oniybor Collins, and his village in Nigeria. Our partnerships with the embassies of Ivory Coast and Mali are also growing. We hosted virtual community ambas-

sador chats with our students, diplomats, and members of the Shepherdstown community. We are looking forward to face-to-face events when COVID restrictions are lifted.

The Global Shepherd Students organization collaborated with the Multicultural Leadership Team and members of Phi Beta Delta to celebrate Diwali/Tihar. Rangoli artwork was created by students and culture walks were led by members of Phi Beta Delta. Everyone learned about this wonderful celebration in India and Nepal.

In addition to Diwali/Tihar, other holiday traditions were feted. Students celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month, the Taiwan Moon Festival in early October, Nigerian Independence Day October 1, and Dia de los Muertos. Traditions were discussed on the newly created YouTube plat-

form of "Cultural Coffee Chats" begun by Drs. Jarman and Wendle to address topics brought up by our international student population. Social justice and academia were other issues addressed during these chats.

The language lunch program of International Affairs continues, despite a drop in attendance due to COVID. The lunch groups for Spanish and French are meeting bimonthly via Zoom. Members of the community, students, and faculty are invited to participate.

The office of International Affairs has also welcomed two graduate student workers this semester. Nasser Aachirou and Madi Welder are working on building partnerships and branding and marketing for International Affairs. ■

Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt Honored with Teaching Award

The Appalachian Studies Association honored Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt with the Stephen Fisher Award for Excellence in Teaching. Dr. Shurbutt was nominated by students in the Appalachian Studies Program and competed against university professors from across the nation for the award. Shurbutt teaches culture and literature courses in the Appalachian Studies

Program and serves as director for the Center for Appalachian Studies and Communities. She has organized another study tour for 2021, "Celtic Roots and Global Appalachia: Highlands and the Orkneys." ■

RIGHT: Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt



Pictured (top row, l. to r.) are Dr. Aart Holtslag, director, Global Studies and Model UN advisor; Lauren Fricks, political science major, Alexandria, Virginia; Devon Hoffmeister, history major, Curtis Bay, Maryland; and Jonathan Biedler, political science major, Martinsburg; second row, Zachary Runion, political science major, Charles Town; William Prudnick, chemistry major, Martinsburg; Glen Sawyer, sociology major, Shepherdstown; and Taylor Bean, political science major, Romney; third row, Braeden Bottner, political science major, Weston; Katherine Madden, global studies major, Shepherdstown; Peter Proctor, global studies major, Huntington; and Alyssa Nazarov, political science major, Northfield, New Jersey.

Model UN Scores Big in Virtual Competition

The Shepherd Model United Nations team participated this fall in the Southern Regional Model United Nations Conference organized out of Atlanta. This was the first time the team competed in a virtual conference and the team results were outstanding. The Shepherd team represented Belarus and Fiji and won three prizes. Jonathan Biedler representing Fiji in the General Assembly Plenary won the best position paper prize

receiving a perfect score. William Prudnick and Glen Sawyer won best delegation representing Belarus in the General Assembly Plenary. The Whole Belarus Delegation, winning honorable delegation, further consisted of Lauren Fricks and Devon Hofmeister (General Assembly First Committee), Katherine Madden and Braeden Bottner (Food and Agricultural Organization), Zachary Runion (Economic and Social Coun-

cil), and Alyssa Nazarov (Commission on the Status of Women). The team also includes Peter Proctor (Fiji, General Assembly First Committee), and Taylor Bean (Fiji, Food and Agricultural Organization). These results were the outcome of dedication and preparation by the students and the support of the Shepherd University community. ■