Students attend the 2017 NC Environmental Justice Summit

Students and faculty members of our ongoing partnership with the Alabama Center for Rural Enterprise on environmental justice issues in Lowndes County, AL participated in the NC Environmental Justice Summit this month. Gino Nuzzolillo, Class of 2020, reports on his experience.

I am a link in the chain, and the link in the chain will not break here.

Standing hand-in-hand, connected physically and spiritually, dozens of community activists, leaders, and scholars from across North Carolina breathed life into this creed. They did so for each other and communities throughout the state struggling for environmental justice. Brought together by a common desire to create an environment free from pollution, exploitation, and discrimination, the Franklinton Center in rural Edgecombe County, NC, became a site for solidarity, communication, and education.

I, other undergraduates, and a few graduate students and professors had the humbling privilege to witness this take...
shape at the 19th Annual North Carolina Environmental Justice Summit. This diverse group of attendees impressed upon me the immense capacity of people, especially those most acutely impacted like poor communities of color, to, organize and respond to the violence of environmental neglect and deregulation.

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Student Reflection on DukeImmerse Trip to Mexico

Students in the DukeImmerse Rights and Identities in the Americas program traveled to Mexico for a 15-day trip to learn from a community of displaced Otomi people and others. Below, sophomore Tea Hughes reports on the experience.

On Friday, October 6th the DukeImmerse: Rights and Identities group set out for another day in Mexico City. This day was unique in that despite how the sites we visited were, they were still incredibly unfamiliar to all of us. The day was split up into two parts, the first of which will be the focus of my post. We began the day by traveling (not more than a 20-minute ride from our hotel) to a community of displaced Otomi people. The Otomi are an indigenous group of Mexicans whose human rights, including right to a secure dwelling, equal and fair work, and education for themselves and their children, have been infringed upon for centuries.

Waking up that morning, I felt a wide range of emotions. I was both excited to continue my already emotionally-tumultuous experience in Mexico, and nervous about how the Otomi's would react to our presence/ "aid". The group of 10 students and two professors boarded the bus relatively early. We started the day by picking up boxed meals of quesadillas and other traditional breakfast foods to give out to those who wanted them...

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Meet Human Rights Certificate Student Julia Kaufman, '18

This Spring the first cohort of students will graduate with the Human Rights Certificate. Throughout the year we will interview these six students to see why they chose the Human Rights Certificate and how it’s influenced their time at Duke and their goals for the future.

This interview was conducted over email with Julia Kaufman, a senior majoring in global health, by Kyra Josephson, senior undergraduate student working for the Pauli Murray Center. Julia Kaufman’s story was quite different from many others I had heard. Julia Kaufman’s family is from Tanzania. She was born and raised in the United States, but her parents come from Tanzania. She’s always been very interested in the kind of work she can do to help people, and has been involved with DukeEngage, a program that gives students a chance to engage in service learning projects around the world. She’s been involved with DukeEngage’s human rights project in Tanzania, and has been involved in other service learning projects, including one in South Africa.

The Pauli Murray Center is a place for people to come and learn about their ancestry and heritage, and Pauli’s long history of relentless activism.

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See more ➔

Apply Now for DukeEngage 2018

DukeEngage empowers students to address critical human needs through service learning. The Summer programs in Serbia and Cape Town, South Africa specifically address human rights issues.

The round 1 deadline for applications is coming up on November 1!

See more ➔
Kyra Josephson (KJ): How did you decide that you wanted to study human rights or pursue the human rights certificate?

Julia Kaufman (JK): I was drawn to studying human rights because of how self-evident and apparent they seemed to me. The idea of implicit rights we all have as humans made sense. Learning how the language and theory of human rights came to be, and how human rights are violated, defended and protected, has complicated my initial understanding in many ways, but reaffirmed it as well. I think what makes the study of human rights so important is that it is intuitive globally, yet requires dynamic dialogue, effort and activism.

Towards the Environment and Water as Human Rights

Created by Alexis Wallace, Kyle Karnuta, and Adrien Comte, as part of a study on human rights and the environment advised by Dr. Erika Weinthal.

This visualization traces the evolution of the environment and water as human rights, through codification in national constitutions and recognition in international law.

Read more →

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The Duke Human Rights Center @ the Franklin Humanities Institute brings together an interdisciplinary group of scholars, staff and students to promote new understandings about global human rights issues.