

## **Updated Message to IS Students on Study Abroad and Internships during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

April 3, 2020

Dear IS students,

I hope you are staying healthy and maintaining your equilibrium during the transition to a virtual university. I am writing with the latest news on study abroad and internships and providing advice on backup planning.

Even as you isolate yourself at home, I encourage you to recognize the value of International Studies during these uncertain times globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the need for improved global cooperation to deal with emergencies affecting our planet. In this light, the IS program's mission statement seems more relevant than ever: "to prepare effective, ethical leaders to meet future global challenges." Keep in mind that we need you to become future global leaders!

### **Current status, procedures and deadlines for study abroad and internships:**

Only virtual internships are possible this summer. All summer on-site internships and study abroad are cancelled. Applications for study abroad and on-site internships are still being accepted for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, but there is uncertainty about whether you will be able to participate due to the unpredictability of the pandemic.

If you are still interested in study abroad in Fall 2020, please inform me and Mary Burnett by April 10. When I hear from you, I will set up a Zoom meeting to complete your course transfer equivalencies. Mary will work with you individually. Please email her: [MEBurnett@ship.edu](mailto:MEBurnett@ship.edu).

If you are seeking a Summer virtual internship or Fall 2020 virtual or on-site internship, the deadline remains June 1. See the website [http://www.ship.edu/ism/internships\\_int390/](http://www.ship.edu/ism/internships_int390/) and schedule a Zoom meeting with me for more information. You also can contact the staff person in

the Career Center who handles internships for assistance with the search, resume, etc.: Alix Rouby [AJRouby@ship.edu](mailto:AJRouby@ship.edu).

**Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Study abroad due diligence and backup planning:**

- 1) Do NOT pay any deposits or applications fees or book flights yet!
- 2) Contact the host university or program provider for information on contingency planning in case classes are not held in the fall or spring semester. Are they offering admission to a later semester or different country? Will deposits and fees be refunded if the program is cancelled? Will alternative sites or online classes be offered if the epidemic flares up in the host country?
- 3) Develop a backup plan in case study abroad is not possible in Fall 2020 or Spring 2021. In tandem with submitting a study abroad application, register for classes at Ship. If you are a rising Junior, consider shifting study abroad to Summer or Fall 2021. If you are a rising senior and need to take INT 300 in spring 2021, consider studying abroad in summer 2021.
- 4) As part of backup planning, start to consider virtual internships as alternatives to study abroad. The Summer and Fall 2020 internship deadline is June 1 (see below).
- 5) Ms. Mary Burnett, the Director of International Programs is working from home and available to answer your questions, and make inquiries to study abroad programs. Feel free to email her: <MEBurnett@ship.edu>

**Internships in Summer or Fall 2020:**

- 1) If you previously were accepted as an intern, contact your site supervisor to learn whether a virtual internship will be possible as a backup.
- 2) If the global pandemic persists, I suspect that virtual internships will become more common. Seek information at the VIRTUAL Spring Job & Internship Fair on April 15, 10:30 am-2 pm. A quick search on Idealist.org shows that some virtual internships are already available. Avoid virtual internships that require you to pay fees:

<https://www.idealst.org/en/internships?q=virtual&searchMode=true>

The State Department has been running a virtual internship program for a number of years. The application deadline is in August:

<https://careers.state.gov/intern/other-programs/>

**Seniors scheduled to graduate in Summer or Fall 2020 whose study abroad or internship plans were disrupted by the pandemic:**

- 1) I may consider waiving the study abroad/internship requirement. However, I will only do this for students who make a good-faith effort to find a virtual internship as a backup.
- 2) My rationale not freely giving waivers: The U.S. and world economy is in a recession. The competition for jobs, scholarships, and grad school will be intense. I want all graduating IS majors to be competitive! A virtual internship will enhance your resume and chances of future success!

**Let me know if you have any questions:**

Please forgive any delays in responding via email. I will be holding office hours by appointment during my usual times (see below). Email me for an appointment and I will send you an invitation to a Zoom session.

Best regards,

Jonathan Skaff

Professor of History

Director of International Studies

Global Education Cybercenter

Virtual Shippensburg University

Virtual Office Hours: TTh 1:15-3:15 (except 4<sup>th</sup> Tues.), Wed. 1:30-4:30

Email me to schedule a Zoom appointment