MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings!

As we head into Spring, our new students are busy finding and preparing for summer internships and second-year students are looking for post-graduate jobs. A key aspect of the Humanitarian Assistance Certificate Program (HAP) is to help students gain the experience that will benefit their careers. One way in which we do this is by developing partnerships with organizations such as Oxfam America, which includes opportunities for internships. Take a moment to read about Oxfam America on Page 4.

I invite you to read about our great Winter Quarter events, including speakers from Save the Children and UNHCR and a day of events for International Women’s Day. Look ahead to our Spring Quarter speaker, Oxfam’s VP of Strategy Dr. John Ambler, a JKSIS alum, interviewed here.

Enjoy,
Chen Reis

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The Humanitarian Assistance Certificate Program prepares students to work in the humanitarian field. The program provides students with the theoretical and practical underpinnings for humanitarian work which is technically sound, engages with affected communities, responds to the diverse needs of affected populations and sets the stage for sustainable and inclusive recovery and development.

STAYING CONNECTED

Portfolio  https://portfolio.du.edu/pc/port?portfolio=haprog

The HAP’s DU Portfolio page is a great source for information regarding the program. You’ll find the latest forms and requirements for the HA Certificate, as well as a calendar of upcoming events. Under the “Stay in Touch!” section, please join our Listserv and receive biweekly emails on our latest news and events.

Email  haprog@du.edu

Feel free to email the HAP with any questions, concerns or suggestions regarding this newsletter or other activities.

Facebook  www.facebook.com/du.haprog

Be sure to “like” the HAP’s Facebook page and stay up to date with news both here at Korbel and around the world.

Also, we have set up a private Facebook group for alumni networking which you can join at www.facebook.com/du.hap.9

Twitter  https://twitter.com/DU_Humanitarian

Follow our tweets for the latest buzz in the humanitarian world and live-tweeting during HAP events.
The Humanitarian Assistance Program celebrated International Women’s Day one day early with a day of events on March 7. This holiday recognizes the United Nations resolution to observe Women’s Rights and International Peace, with the 2013 theme: “A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women.”

The main event was an expert panel on violence against women in the humanitarian field. Panelists included Lauren Heller Szafran, Professor Susan Weinstein and Dr. Courtney Welton-Mitchell. HAP student Christi Yoder moderated.

Heller Szafran worked with the International Planned Parenthood Federation on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) in emergencies and with the Women’s Refugee Commission on SRH and disaster risk reduction. Professor Weinstein is an adjunct faculty at Korbel and has a background which includes acting as a UNHCR Global Training Officer on gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection and as an IRC GBV Program Manager in Sierra Leone. Dr. Welton-Mitchell teaches in DU’s International Disaster Psychology program at the School of Professional Psychology and has a background which includes working with the United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) in Nepal and Tanzania refugee operations and current interests in GBV and crisis intervention.

Discussions stressed the importance of working with local communities and including men in programs in order to affect change when addressing violence against women. Dr. Welton-Mitchell noted the need to mainstream these approaches in other humanitarian programs and to recognize the inclusion of male victims. Heller Szafran discussed the role of economics and the result of empowering women through employment. Professor Weinstein also noted the need to recognize the disconnect between international humanitarian workers and local staff who may be directly affected by such violence. The student audience was very active in the Q&A discussion and represented many degree programs at Korbel.

The day was capped off by a Study Break celebration of women held in the Cyber Café with music, food and prizes awarded to GBV quiz winners. A big thank you to the local businesses which donated gift cards towards this event: Anthony’s Pizza, Bean’s Café, Belle Rosette Café, Deli Zone, Jordan’s Bistro & Pub, Kaladis Café, Mustard’s Last Stand, Nova Yogurt and the University of Denver Bookstore.

Students helped raise money for the Women’s Bean Project, a Denver-based organization which helps women break the cycle of poverty by gaining skills for entry-level employment. Learn more: www.WomensBeanProject.com

Items were generously donated by Korbel students for SafeHouse Denver for victims of domestic violence and their children. More information: www.SafeHouse-Denver.org

The day’s events were organized by a student committee (Christi Yoder, Liyam Blair, Rachel Davis, Hyshyama Hamin and David Resetar).
SPEAKER REVIEW

Every quarter the Humanitarian Assistance Program strives to bring relevant guest speakers and other humanitarian assistance-related events to Korbel. See below for a recap of events from the Winter Quarter.

Jerry Montgomery
The Life of a Humanitarian Worker: Daily Rituals, Job Hunting & Emergency Operations

Adjunct professor Jerry Montgomery led this quarter’s popular Field Operations for Humanitarian Assistance course. When not educating students on the finer details of emergency aid, the Korbel alumnus and RPCV (Uganda) acts as Senior Operations Specialist for the Department of Humanitarian Response at Save the Children. His position entails improving the preparedness and response to humanitarian needs through deploying to emergency responses and providing technical backstopping.

Jerry spoke to the greater Korbel student body on January 23, providing an insider’s view of the life of a humanitarian worker. He advised students to focus on methodology skill sets through courses and to expand expertise with internships and workshops. He also recommended moving to viable job locations after graduation to increase the likelihood of finding a job and then being prepared for 18-hour days and risky situations that must be assessed.

Learn more about Save the Children: www.SaveTheChildren.org

Jeremy Harkey
Protection in the Humanitarian Assistance Field

Jeremy Harkey spoke to Korbel students on January 29 about his career with the UN in the field of protection. Jeremy worked with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Ecuador and the Dominican Republic, where he created and implemented systems which maximized the identification and resolution of protection problems. While earning a Master’s degree in Humanitarian Affairs and Human Security, he focused his thesis on sexual violence in the contemporary armed conflict in Colombia. He recently moved to Denver, where he now consults on humanitarian research and policy.

Jeremy stressed that becoming a UN Volunteer or Junior Professional Officer is a great way to get a foot in the UN door (learn more at www.unv.org or www.jposc.org). However, he also noted that it’s good to be flexible and look outside of the major organizations which everyone targets in their job search and to that good experience can be gained from US-based volunteer work. The key to getting those jobs and internships is to network including through informational interviews.

Learn more about UNHCR: www.UNHCR.org

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SPEAKER REVIEW cont.

Scott Lea
Humanitarian Work in Iraq

On March 6, Scott Lea took time from his Iraq-based grant management position with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to speak to students about life in the field.

Prior to current position – which he noted was the direct result of networking – Scott worked with the United Nations Population Fund in the Adolescent & Youth Cluster and then in the Humanitarian Response Branch. He also helped establish a new country program in Indonesia during his Peace Corps service. His present position at the IRC supports conflict-affected communities in central Iraq and Kurdistan. The IRC is also providing extensive programming for refugees in Iraq who have fled the ongoing conflict in Syria. Scott stressed the importance of networking and recommended that students use their time at Korbel to obtain practical skills in program management, monitoring and evaluation and budgeting.

Learn more about the IRC: www.Rescue.org

ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT

Humanitarian assistance and development organizations operate all over the world. In this section, the HAP highlights organizations striving to find solutions to the humanitarian community’s most pressing problems.

Oxfam America provides emergency assistance worldwide with a focus on community-driven poverty reduction programs. Recent programs include addressing the Sahel food crisis, improving response teams to Haiti and assisting refugees in Mali.

The Humanitarian Assistance Certificate Program (HAP) has concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Oxfam America’s Humanitarian Response Department. The MoU, which establishes internship opportunities for students in the HAP, is a starting point for a stronger relationship with Oxfam America and is the first of such partnerships between the HAP and humanitarian organizations. Such partnerships are a component of the HAP’s strategic focus on enhancing the experience of students beyond the classroom through opportunities to apply knowledge and hone skills.

Learn more at their web site: www.OxfamAmerica.org
Hyshyama Hamin

What is your background?
I was born in Sri Lanka and raised in Nepal. I’ve also lived briefly in Maldives and Bangladesh. I completed my BA (Hons) degree in Development Studies from Kathmandu University with a thesis in gender and transitional justice in post-conflict Nepal.

While studying, I also worked for an NGO called Women for Human Rights (WHR) on gender-based violence (GBV) issues against single women in 45 districts of the country. After graduation, I returned to Sri Lanka and worked for three-and-a-half years as Senior Program Officer at a funding mechanism called Women Defining Peace (WDP) which provided grant support, technical assistance and capacity building to local organizations around the country on GBV and women and peace-building issues.

Why did you choose Korbel?
I was looking for a university that specifically offered a human rights degree which would allow me to choose my concentration because I felt it would be best suited to my career in gender and women rights issues. Korbel was one that not only had the degree with some very interesting courses and professors, but it also had programs like the Human Trafficking Clinic and the Humanitarian Assistance Certificate program which caught my eye. The beauty of Colorado was obviously a pull factor.

Why did you choose the HA Certificate Program?
Having lived and worked in countries like Nepal and Sri Lanka, both of which are conflict-affected and have or are at risk of facing natural disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis respectively, I felt this to be an area of deep interest. My work has been mostly development-based and looking at the program courses of the certificate program, I felt it would give me the additional skillset that would be useful working in the South Asian region. It also opens up possibilities for working in a humanitarian context in the region should the opportunity arise in the future.

What certificate program courses stood out most to you?
The course on GBV offered by the Graduate School of Professional Psychology definitely stood out for me. In addition, the Field Operations and Humanitarian Systems and Policies classes are very interesting and useful courses, and I am also looking forward to taking international law and civilian protection-related courses.

What do you hope to do with your degree and certificate?
I already know my field and area of interest is gender and addressing GBV issues, so both my degree and certificate have and will provide me with a body of knowledge to strengthen my future work in the area. I would love to work on gender-specific development and/or humanitarian projects in the future, as well as work in an activist-cum-advocate capacity on the issue especially in the South Asian region and with Muslim communities.

How do you perceive the certificate will aid you in your professional endeavors?
The certificate program will give me skills and both practical and theoretical knowledge that will be very useful for my future work, and having a certificate in Humanitarian Assistance is certainly a plus point to an MA degree both in getting jobs and in doing them well.

Read Hyshyama’s HuffPost blog entry, “Response to ‘The Islamic Solution to Stop Domestic Violence’”

More Student Profiles on Page 6
Irina Karic

What is your background?
Although my academic background is in the fields of Anthropology and Fine Arts, I let my experiences of war in my native country of Bosnia and Herzegovina serve as inspiration in my graduate studies.

While living under siege in Sarajevo, I witnessed the proliferation of humanitarian organizations establish a base level of aid that helped feed us during that most precarious time. At the end of the war, my family and I fled to Zagreb, Croatia and found safe harbor at the Center for Women War Victims. This is where we, for the first time in years, received comprehensive assistance that went beyond sustaining our bodies and helped to nourish our hearts and minds. Their foundational support and attention to psychosocial health has stuck with me and served to influence the work I have done with different refugee communities here in the US. Since then, I have worked with members of my own community to help them adjust to life in America. Also locally, I have interned with the Colorado African Organization as a community liaison between refugee students, their parents and the Denver and Aurora Public School Systems.

Why did you choose Korbel?
I sought to attain a further understanding of the principles of human rights law and to be able to engage in a scholarly research in the field of International Studies and Refugee Human Rights. I believed that Korbel would be a good fit for me because its program and professional training offered all the necessary skills with which to succeed in the life of a human rights activist. Additionally, I relished the opportunity to study under the school’s esteemed faculty and gain from their pragmatic approach and personal experiences.

Why did you choose the HA Certificate Program?
This certificate program has allowed me to further explore the concept of practical humanitarianism and its relation to refugee populations, namely women and children. Being a refugee myself who has experienced humanitarian assistance on the receiving end, I am drawn to the comprehensive approach of the courses offered within the program as they help me see humanitarian assistance from all angles.

What certificate program courses stood out most to you?
Field Operations has been one of the most engaging classes I have taken thus far. Taught by a humanitarian currently working in the field (Jerry Montgomery), it introduced me to the nitty-gritty of the operational systems in humanitarian assistance. Professor Peter Van Arsdale’s Humanitarian Aid in Complex Emergencies class, although a survey course, has helped link humanitarian assistance with human rights and development. Finally, Professor Chen Reis’ Humanitarian Systems and Policies class offered foundational yet broad knowledge of international standards and their application in real life situations.

What do you hope to do with your degree and certificate?
I would like to continue my involvement with refugee populations, namely children and their education in emergency/post-conflict situations.

How do you perceive the certificate will aid you in your professional endeavors?
Emphasis on theory and practical applications will guide my process of professionalization and help me become a well-rounded humanitarian. Hopefully such accreditation in a narrow focus will put me in a more competitive position to establish my career.

Irina working with nomadic peoples in Bhutan.

Irina working with the Teacher’s College in Paro, Bhutan.
Amanda Livingstone: United Nations Development Programme

Amanda was an intern with UNDP’s Washington, DC Liaison Office.

Why did you choose this organization?
I applied for this internship after meeting Dean Piedmont, a Korbel alum who currently works for UNDP’s Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program, on our Career Connections trip to New York. He shared his experiences as well as the hard realities of working in the field and for an organization like the UN. Getting the chance to experience how a UN agency functions on a day-to-day basis, especially the Liaison Office which is responsible for influencing development policy in government, was incredibly intriguing. In addition, it presented the opportunity to research Early Recovery and Crisis Prevention programs, which are two fields that have been of interest to me throughout my studies at Korbel.

How did you get the internship?
I got this internship by applying through UNDP DC’s website (http://www.us.undp.org/WashingtonOffice/DCInternships.shtml). In an effort to be ahead of the curve, I applied for their summer internship over Korbel’s winter break and took part in a phone interview in mid-February. Fortunately, I was told at the end of the interview that I received the internship position and was asked how soon in June I could start. They are currently pushing for interns who have communications and web design backgrounds as opposed to international relations in an effort to improve their website and other social media outlets (so having experience in both would be a major plus).

What did you do?
I was responsible for researching and presenting country and thematic program overviews to current and potential donors. These required navigating complex websites, contacting staff in country offices, meeting with country representatives, and conglomerating a vast amount of information into brief documents for distribution. I created and presented briefs on: UNDP’s Early Recovery projects in Haiti, Somalia and Yemen; demining efforts in countries where there is a UNDP presence and where there have been traces of landmines; and Crisis Prevention and Recovery programs in India, Burma/Myanmar and Pakistan. In addition, I was able to meet diplomats, country directors and members of Congress on a daily basis which definitely bolstered networking opportunities.

How has it contributed to your HA and Korbel education, and how do you think it will affect career path?
While UNDP is a development-focused organization, it has contributed to both my HA Certificate and Human Rights studies. It was able to provide me with insight as to how policy is formulated and the importance of organization presentation and activities to donors. Through discussions with my supervisors, I was able to learn the intricacies of transitioning from immediate humanitarian assistance efforts to UNDP Early Recovery and Crisis Response programs as well as how their efforts to promote the MDGs are also ways of promoting and advocating for human rights.

Interning with UNDP’s Representative Office in DC also provided the challenging opportunity to work as a liaison in connecting UNDP’s development work to the US Congress, State Department, USAID, World Bank, diplomatic community, media and general public. My supervisors were also wonderfully helpful during and after my time as an intern and have provided contacts and future job possibilities with the UN, NGOs and think tanks in the DC area.
ALUMNI PROFILE

See what Korbel graduates are doing now, how they feel their education contributed to their career development and what advice they offer to upcoming grads looking to enter the humanitarian field.

Dr. John Ambler

What is your position and career background?
As Senior Vice President of Programs, I provide overall supervision and strategic leadership for the global program operations of Oxfam America, as well as playing a leadership role within the agency. As a member of the Oxfam International Global Team, I advise on policy and strategic direction and set program priorities for the confederation.

Prior, I acted as Regional Director, Asia for CARE USA including negotiating on behalf of women with the Taliban in Afghanistan, on humanitarian access with the LTTE in Sri Lanka, and indirectly on peace building with the Maoists during the insurgency in Nepal. Before that, I was Director of the East Asia Program Development at the Social Science Research Council.

What do you find most challenging?
The most challenging part of my job right now:
• Getting people from different parts of Oxfam to work together; getting them to think across boundaries;
• Trying to be innovative in the face of budget cuts and heavier reliance on restricted funds across the Oxfam confederation;
• Adapting to changing space for civil society -- often contracting space.

What experiences have most contributed to your career development?
• Living in villages for three years: one year as a volunteer, two years as a researcher;
• Being exposed to different kinds of organizations (Ford Foundation, intellectual; CARE, more action; Oxfam, a combination of the two);
• Interdisciplinary training: psychology, economics, sociology, agriculture and liberal arts.

Any words of wisdom for Korbel students who want to pursue a career in humanitarian assistance?
• Take all different kinds of classes; they will all prove useful because many of today’s humanitarian problems require solutions that cross boundaries.

• Try to develop the humanitarian space by expanding people’s ability to claim their rights and getting governments to live up to their responsibilities.
• Work more through local organizations and social institutions, not just bringing in humanitarian supplies.
• Spend more time on repositioning these relationships and less on repositioning goods.
• Work on linking preparedness and adaptation, especially in the face of climate change, with emergency response, and link emergency response more with subsequent long term development.

Hear Dr. Ambler discuss “Averting a Worldwide Humanitarian Food Crisis: Response, Resilience and Realignment for Our Agricultural Systems” on May 13 at 5pm in Sié 150.

Are we facing a different kind of food crisis just around the corner, one that will not respond linearly to greater investment in agriculture in the way that succeeded in the past? Dr. Ambler argues that the new looming crisis in world food production has a different character than past crises and that confronting it will require a different and more diverse response. RSVP here: https://www.facebook.com/events/175958529219649/

A Career Path Discussion, in collaboration with the Office of Career and Professional Development (OCPD), will also be held on May 13 at 12pm. Reservations will become available through the OCPD.