

IGP ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Interdisciplinary Global Programs | Center For International Education | Northern Arizona University



Photo caption: Cohort 2021 at Summit this fall

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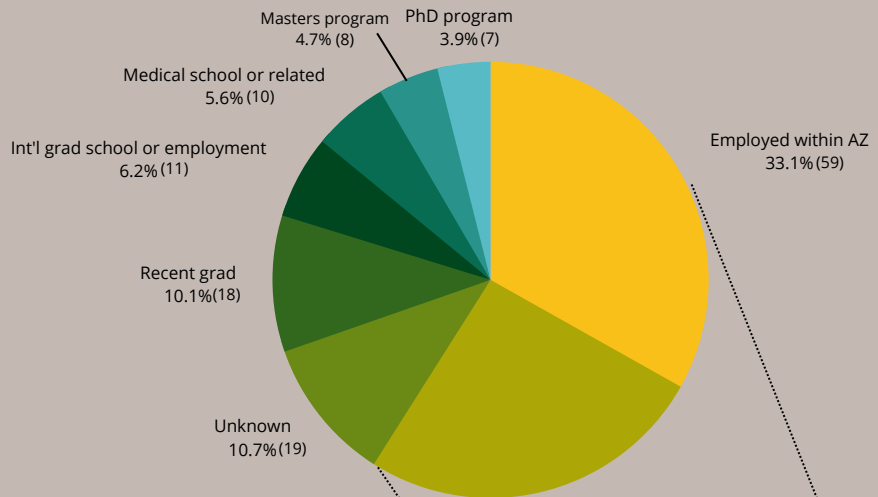
MESSAGE TO IGP ALUMNI

Welcome to our first ever IGP newsletter! We are excited to connect alumni with current students and highlight the incredible accomplishments of IGP participants.

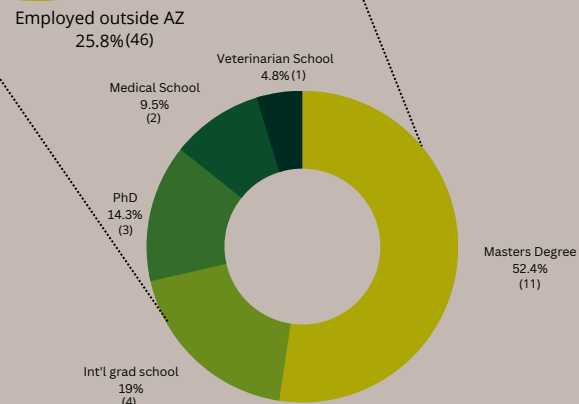
IGP continues to grow even in a time of a global pandemic. This year we welcomed 96 incoming students into IGP! In total with this new cohort, we have 235 students in IGP with Spanish and Japanese as the most popular languages of study.

In the past month, we have connected with 89% of IGP alumni. We have learned that 59% are employed in the US, 6% are employed or in school abroad, 10% recently graduated, and 14% are pursuing higher degrees (see Graph 1). Of the 105 alumni who are employed, 21 have completed advanced degrees (see Graph 2).

We are so grateful for a strong community of alumni to inspire and support our current IGP students. We look forward to working with you further in the future!



Graph 1: Status of IGP alumni



Graph 2: Advanced degrees of employed IGP alumni

MESSAGES FROM LEADERSHIP

KAREN PUGLIESI, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND UNIVERSITY PROVOST



IGP is one of NAU's most distinctive programs. We have designed the program to prepare graduates for success and impact in a globally interconnected world. I am very proud of our IGP alumni, who demonstrate through their many achievements the value of global engagement. IGP alumni are drivers of positive change in their workplaces and communities. The collective impact of IGP alumni is growing. I congratulate all IGP alumni for you for accomplishment and look forward to learning more about your journeys. Please stay connected with NAU and IGP, and share your stories!

CHRIS BOYER, DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS

IGP is one of the most exciting courses of study in the College of Arts and Letters. It allows students to combine a degree from languages or cultural studies with a major from elsewhere in the university. It gives them experience as working and learning abroad. IGP graduates are interdisciplinary, culturally adept, and well prepared to take the next step in their lives. I'm proud that they are CAL alumni.



MELISSA ARMSTRONG, DIRECTOR, INTERDISCIPLINARY GLOBAL PROGRAMS



It has been a great pleasure to reconnect with so many of you in preparation for our newsletter. Thank you Lily Palm, our IGP staff alum and master networker, for collecting so many of your stories. We are in touch with 89% of you. We had a sense that global competency was important in students career development and in making a better world, and you are the proof! We are so very proud of you. Please continue to count on IGP as your ally and support for life. Keep going!

ALUMNI MESSAGE

HOW HAS IGP IMPACTED YOUR CAREER?

DAVIN CHAMBERS, COHORT 2018, MANAGEMENT & CHINESE



IGP provided me the opportunity to fulfill my dream of going and seeing the world! The chance I got to study abroad allowed me to see not only the world through the eyes of a different culture, but myself as well. It is the confidence that I got in my travels that help me be successful in my career.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: LOGAN BACHER

Written by Dylan Rust, International Student Retention & Inclusion, Director

Interdisciplinary Global Programs (IGP) alumnus Logan Bacher is using the experiences he had at Northern Arizona University and abroad for a successful career in the renewable energy industry. Bacher, an Arizona native, stayed in Flagstaff after graduating in 2016 with a BS in Mechanical Engineering and a BA in Modern Languages with a Spanish emphasis. Now an Applications Engineer for Northern Arizona Wind and Sun, Bacher does system design, technical support, and equipment sales for solar energy and battery systems.

“My degree at NAU gave me a really solid background, and problem-solving skills and tools to apply to anything that I wanted, said Bacher.” However, he did not get much experience with solar and battery storage technologies during his time in Flagstaff. This was remedied through his time in IGP.

Through IGP, Bacher studied in Concepción, Chile. There, he was involved in a research project on solar power for thermal heating. This experience ignited Bacher’s interest in renewable energy, while he pursued Spanish language fluency.

“I feel like not only the engineering background, but the Spanish language skills that I learned at NAU still are used every single day,” said Bacher. “We work with people all over the world. I have many clients in Mexico and Puerto Rico that I still to this day get to use my Spanish with.”



Logan Bacher, Cohort 2014,
Mechanical Engineering & Spanish

“I feel like not only the engineering background, but the Spanish language skills that I learned at NAU still are used every single day.”

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: MARCO AGUILAR

Written by Dylan Rust, International Student Retention & Inclusion, Director, re-printed from CIE Alumni Newsletter



Marco Aguilar, Cohort 2016, Biomedical Science & Spanish

Marco Aguilar once thought he could not go to college. Now, he's finishing medical school using skills he learned while studying abroad through Northern Arizona University.

Aguilar, originally from Calexico, California, came to NAU to study Biomedical Science at the urging of his mentor back home. Aguilar didn't think he could pay for college, but his mentor's connections to NAU helped assure him it was possible and that he could be successful. During a trip to Flagstaff led by his mentor, Aguilar fell in love with the town and the university.

At NAU, Aguilar found a rigorous scientific curriculum and discovered IGP. IGP interested Aguilar for the opportunity to double-major, and especially to be able to do research in a foreign country while studying abroad for a year. Being able to do research in medicine at a top international university would give him experience as both a student and a scholar.

Aguilar seized his opportunity through IGP to study for one year in Madrid, Spain. He spent his first semester taking courses at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid and living in the heart of Madrid. Although he dealt with culture shock inside and outside of class, Aguilar relished learning about Spanish culture and taking courses in Spanish alongside Spanish students. "The whole country had a huge impact on me just because I knew about Spain, I knew it existed, I knew that's where my first language came from but at the same time I didn't know anything about it," Aguilar recalls.

Aguilar spent his second semester in Madrid at a hospital, where he conducted research on the prevention of schizophrenia in rats. This experience confirmed to Aguilar that he wanted to go into medicine for his career.

After graduating from NAU in 2018, Aguilar started medical school at the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara in Guadalajara, Mexico. Aguilar spent two years at the international medical school in Mexico before doing his clinical experience in the USA.

Aguilar found that the skills he developed while studying abroad benefited him in medical school, including the experience of studying in a Spanish-speaking country.

Aguilar says that his experience studying abroad through IGP has had a positive impact on his personal life as well. "I come from a Hispanic background, and you know, they're a really warm culture and it's definitely hard being away from your family for many years," said Aguilar. "I feel IGP gave me the tools to mature. Going abroad and being in Spain, it was a year of not seeing my family. Comparing that to my experience abroad in Mexico, it has been hard but a learning milestone for me because now I'm an adult. I feel the being abroad aspect makes you more independent and gives you the proper tools to learn and become a better version of yourself just to prepare you enough to go to the professional world. I feel going abroad just makes you a more well-rounded person."

Aguilar is nearly done with medical school and enjoys seeing real patients. "I feel like the thing I like most about medicine right now is the patient-to-physician relationship. You get the satisfaction, as a student right now, treating and helping these people that are in need, especially in these hard times," said Aguilar.

"The academic part of what IGP offered me was probably one of the most positive impacts that I could use in my experience in medical school abroad."

Aguilar hopes to eventually open a clinic back home in the Imperial Valley and give back to the community that helped shaped him. He hopes to be able to study surgery or plastic surgery and potentially assist patients with cleft palate.

"It is possible to become whoever you want to become," said Aguilar. "I never thought I would go to medical school. I never thought I would go to college, and look where I'm at. With hard work and dedication, you can do whatever you want."

SUMMIT 2022 KEYNOTE: JAYNE SANDOVAL

On November 15th, 2022, IGP hosted its first in-person Summit in over three years since the onset of the pandemic. Our Level 5 presenters joined us in-person and online with some of the Level 5 cohort still abroad due to pandemic disruptions. This year's Summit focused on the theme "TAKE FLIGHT," encouraging students to spread their wings outside of their comfort zones and explore new opportunities.

Our alumna keynote speaker, Jayne Sandoval's journey could not better fit this theme. Jayne is a member of the IGP Cohort of 2017. She graduated from NAU in 2020 with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and a B.A. in Comparative Cultural Studies with an Asian emphasis and a Chinese minor. Jayne took the Summit attendees on a journey that began on her homeland of the Ute Pass Valley on the Navajo Nation and chronicled her many moments of 'taking flight' that ultimately led her back home.

Jayne began her flight by joining IGP and studying abroad in Shantou, China in 2017. She was the first in her family to study abroad. While abroad she felt a growing frustration with herself as she dealt with culture shock. By a chance encounter with Indigenous peoples from First Nations in Canada, Jayne found inspiration once again for her purpose abroad. She seized every opportunity to raise awareness of Native Americans and their stories.

Throughout her many journeys, Jayne never forgot her Diné (Navajo) roots. While completing her M.S. in Energy Engineering from National Cheng Kung University on the Fulbright Program in Taiwan, Jayne recalled experiencing imposters syndrome. She wondered why she was so lucky to go abroad in a global pandemic, losing sight of the hard work she had put into her Fulbright application.

But with encouragement from her family, meeting Indigenous peoples in Hualien, Taiwan and reminding herself of where she came from, Jayne knew that she was breaking down barriers by just being abroad in Taiwan.

"Taking flight comes with every moment you find yourself in a rut or being too comfortable or too routine."



Top right photo: Jayne in Taiwan Bottom photo: Jayne presenting at Summit



Top right photo: Jayne in Taiwan Bottom photo: Jayne presenting at Summit

She recalled, "Sometimes it was just about having a presence in the room of other Fulbright scholars." It was in Taiwan after meeting with and understanding the shared struggles of Indigenous peoples in the Pacific that Jayne decided, "I am Diné first."

After her successful completion of her Master's degree, Jayne returned home.

"It took me to go far from home to truly appreciate what was here at home, bringing me closer to my culture and family."

She now uses the skills she learned during her time in IGP and abroad on Fulbright to work with renewable energy on the Navajo Nation as an Associate Developer at AES Clean Energy.

In her closing message, Jayne encouraged Summit attendees to explore new places and build memorable connections with others, wishing them all a beautiful journey when they take flight to their future destinations.

Watch keynote speeches and learn more about our 2020 and 2021 Cohorts and their work abroad via our Summit websites:

Spring 2022: <https://bit.ly/SpringSummit2022>

Fall 2022: <https://bit.ly/FallSummit2022>

IGP FALL 2022 HIGHLIGHTS



Level 1 Orientation



Summit Level 5 SPA Presenters



Summit Welcome by IGP Staff



A Successful Welcome Party!



IGP Staff Presenting at NAFSA Region II Conference



Level 4 Students in Chile



Level 4 Students in Alicante, Spain



Level 2 English Portfolio with Career Development



Student internship in Costa Rica



Level 4 Students in Germany



Level 4 Students in Hong Kong

MEET THE TEAM!



The IGP Team (from left to right): Melinda, Saki, Hannah, Priscilla, Melissa, Yuhang
Learn more about the team on our website: <https://nau.edu/igp/our-team/>

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