

Global Studies Internship Experience and Evaluation

Chelsea Cummings

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Jeff Ritchey, Ph.D.  
Thesis Chair

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Don Alban, D.Min.  
Committee Member

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Robert F. Ritchie, M.A.  
Committee Member

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James H. Nutter, D.A.  
Honors Director

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Date

*Abstract*

The thesis examines the new, transitioning Global Studies internship that is required of all GLST majors during their spring semester of Junior year. The paper evaluates the GLST internship through interviews of students who have completed their internship, those who were supervisors of an intern, and those in the GLST office. The interviews of the students and former supervisors are administered through e-mailed questionnaires and the GLST staff were interviewed personally. The purpose is to provide feedback and suggestions in hopes of bettering the internship for future interns and supervisors. Several issues were identified in the areas of the office's communication, organization, and debriefing. The changes made since the spring of 2013 have noted within the thesis.

### Global Studies Internship Experience and Evaluation

Recently, the Global Studies department at Liberty University has completely redone the internship program. They are still in the process of reformatting the internship. It is the hope of the writer that this thesis will provide feedback to the department as to what can be added, subtracted or left as is. A description of the internship will be provided and following is the assessment of the internship by three different groups of people: former interns, GLST faculty and staff, and previous internship supervisors. All names are pseudonyms in order to protect the anonymity of the participants in this study.

#### **Description of the Internship**

The internship is an overseas internship of at least 15 weeks during the student's spring semester of Junior year. The student interns with an international company for an extended amount of time. Both the company and the University have several requirements for the student during the internship. This thesis focuses on the preparatory requirements of Liberty University for an effective internship cross culturally and on the overall internship experience.

Before completing the internship, the Global Studies student has several occasions to be prepared for the experience of the overseas internship. One of these opportunities is the Global Next Steps Retreat, formerly known as Next Steps. During this retreat, students get away for three days and enjoy one-on-one mentoring by cross-cultural workers from global organizations. Academically, the students must complete several courses before going: GLST 200, 220, 290, and 385. GLST 200 is an Introduction to Global Studies, while GLST 220 is Intercultural Communication and Engagement. GLST 290 or Cultural Anthropology is followed by GLST 385, Career Preparation

Global Work. Each of these classes aims to prepare the student to live and work overseas for an extended amount of time. These courses are designed by the Global Engagement office to prepare the student not only for the internship, but also for their future career as cross-cultural workers. In fact, the internship is the experiential component to the program in order for the student to interact with what he or she has learned prior to his or her firsthand experience.

The internship consists of 15 credits during a full semester, preferably the spring semester of Junior year. The classes that the student takes are Living Abroad, Ethnographic Research, Barefoot Language Learning, and Global Studies Internship. These courses are conducted online, while the student is on the field. Additionally, the students have to fulfill their Christian Service (CSER) requirements for the semester. Lastly, the reader should note that the internship is presently undergoing a process of change, so there will be some intermediary data as a result. The first set of interns went out during the spring semester of 2013 with ten students, including the writer. In the fall of 2013, a married couple completed their internship. Currently, the spring of 2014 group of interns are on the field. From the first spring semester to the current spring semester, there have been several changes. This study will reflect these changes.

### **The Internship Classes**

The Living Abroad class, GLST 387, seeks to provide the necessary tools to give the student a successful internship.<sup>1</sup> Within this course, students are required to read and review *Ethnographic Essentials Designing, Conduction, and Presenting you Research* by Julian Murchison. Furthermore, they were required to read four language articles: Six

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<sup>1</sup>Joe Bean, "GLST 480 Living Abroad" (syllabus, Liberty University, 2013), 1.

Phase Program, The First Hundred Hours – Intro, Phase 1A Interacting in the Here-and-Now, and Use of Lexicarry. Furthermore, a project is required in this course to complete an expectations worksheet, meet with the supervisor, and review the expectations each have for the internship. A paper documenting that conversation must be submitted.

Before concluding the internship, the student is required to complete two additional assignments: the re-entry project and the CQ project. The re-entry project required the student to read *Coming “Home”: The Reentry Transition* by Ronald L. Koteskey. After reading the book, the intern meets with his supervisor to discuss the significant principles found in the book as well as to go over questions concerning the reentry process that the student filled out.<sup>2</sup> The objective of the class is to aid the student with life overseas and returning home.

GLST 388 is Ethnographic Research. This course is a research project that will be an ethnographic study of the culture where the student serves.<sup>3</sup> During the first week on the field, the student will read *Ethnography Essentials*. After reading the book, the intern is required to select and evaluate a topic to research. Then, he or she will write a research proposal focusing on a certain question that the ethnography will seek to answer. Once the proposal is submitted, the student then begins to collect data through interviews, participation, and observation. Through analyzing the acquired data, the student must then prepare a presentation of his findings. As a part of the presentation he is required to add the arrival scene, stories of cultural misunderstandings, case studies, focusing on key

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<sup>2</sup>Joe Bean, “GLST 480 Living Abroad” (syllabus, Liberty University, 2013), 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 1.

individuals, and composite descriptions.<sup>4</sup> By the end of the internship this ethnography should be completed.

GLST 389 is the Barefoot Language Learning course. This class seeks to provide the students with the tools to learn the language of the people that they are working with during their internship. Instead of being a more structured class that is focused on grammar and rote memorization, this class focuses on learning through conversation and daily interactions. The intern must read *Pro Lingua's Color Lexicarry: Pictures for Learning Languages* by Patrick Moran and several articles.<sup>5</sup> In the first week of the internship, the student is obliged to read the articles on Blackboard and explain to the supervisor what is required of them for this course and how to acquire a nurturer for language acquisition. During the second week, the student draws up a Personal Language Learning Plan, which they will follow for rest of his or her time on the field. The plan will be presented to the supervisor in case there are any realistic adjustments are needed to be made. Once the plan is finalized, the student must document his or her language learning hours in a journal with at least 150 hours. At the end of the internship, the supervisor will assess the student's language progress.<sup>6</sup> All of these activities are designed to further the student's language learning.

The last class is the Global Studies Internship (GLST 499). The course rationale as stated in the syllabus is, "The purpose of the internship is to give the student practical experience in an intercultural context where previous knowledge and training can be

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<sup>4</sup>Joe Bean, "GLST 488 Ethnographic Research" (syllabus, Liberty University, 2013), 2.

<sup>5</sup>Joe Bean, "GLST 489 Barefoot Language Learning" (syllabus, Liberty University, 2013), 1-2.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 2.

applied.”<sup>7</sup> The class has three major projects: weekly journal, cultural intelligence project, and supervisor evaluation. The weekly journal is where the student will record his or her activities, personal reflections and interactions with his or her supervisors. They must include their discussion of expectations and debriefing. The cultural intelligence, CQ, project involves the student reading David Livermore’s book, *The Cultural Intelligence Difference: Master the One Skill You Can’t Do Without in Today’s Global Economy*. Once the book has been read, the student will outline a projected plan for improving their CQ. The last project is the supervisor evaluation, which focuses on the student’s performance throughout the internship.<sup>8</sup>

### **Student Assessment**

The students are overseas, perhaps for the first time, and are the ones most directly impacted by the internship experience. In seeking to gain perspective on how effective and beneficial the internship is, they have been interviewed. Getting to the heart of the issues with the internship as well as the successes of the internship would not be possible without their input. They were questioned on several major topics pertaining to the classes, the course work, the set-up process and the required Christian Service.

### **Set-Up Process and Preparedness**

Before the student embarks on the internship, he or she must first meet with the GLST internship director. The director sits down and guides the student in contacting an organization with which to intern. The director is seen as more of a facilitator in bringing the intern together with a company with which he or she can intern. The student then

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<sup>7</sup>Jordan McManus, “GLST 499 Global Studies Internship” (syllabus, Liberty University, 2013), 1.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 2.

works with the company to set-up the internship, such as arrival and departure dates, the funds needed to complete the internship, and so on.

Jesse says, “I felt kind of lost when it came to the set-up process. Registering for classes was confusing, because I did not know what to do. It scared me in a way because I have a scholarship that depends on me having been registered for at least 12 residential credits.”<sup>9</sup> A couple of students have likewise expressed that the academic set-up was confusing or unclear, but it is acknowledged that a lot of the confusion came from the fact that the internship had been so completely redone and was unfamiliar in content. Joshua explains that at the time the first group of interns went out, the GLST office took more of a hands off approach in guiding the interns, but that has since changed.<sup>10</sup> Now, the internship process is more organized.

### **Orientation Week**

Before leaving to go to the field, the students go to an orientation week. During this week, the interns meet together with the professors involved with the courses to review the assignments, culture shock, conflict resolutions, cultural intelligence, racial stereotypes, and expectations. This week is scheduled before anyone leaves for their internship in order to enhance the experience abroad.

Concerning the impact of orientation week, Jesse, states:

I loved the personal atmosphere. It was very intimate, close and small. It was helpful, because everyone was in it together. We understood what it was like to be about to be embarking on our overseas internship. It was very spiritually uplifting as well. The professors, who taught, did an

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<sup>9</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>10</sup>Joshua East Asia, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014.

excellent job to be mentors academically, spiritually, and personally. Furthermore, I really enjoyed the conflict resolution and prejudice workshops. It addressed issues that I did not think of before.<sup>11</sup>

Overall, the students found the orientation week to have been a very positive experience that helped to both encourage them spiritually and emotionally as well as helped to equip them in what was expected of them in school work and the challenges they would experience on the field. A fellow intern, Thomas, who spent his internship in Europe, found the orientation to be a tremendous experience. He reported that the “bottom line is that this week enriched the remainder of my bachelor’s education, changed my view of others, allowed a new openness and dependence on Jesus that I didn’t have before. I was seriously grateful, and excited to multiply this mindset.”<sup>12</sup> Some specifically mentioned activities that were found to be helpful such as the expectation exercise, the stereotypes exercise, the outing to practice the ethnography skills, and the language learning activities.<sup>13</sup> Each of these activities helped the students to address issues that would be encountered while on the field as well as to help prepare them for their assignments.

Although the orientation was an immensely helpful time, there were some changes or revisions suggested. First, Leigh felt as though the syllabi of the courses were not adequately explained and reviewed. For her, the week was so emotionally and spiritually driven that by the end, the professors had to rush through the explanation of

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<sup>11</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>12</sup>Thomas Europe, e-mail message to author, February 24, 2014.

<sup>13</sup>Leigh West Asia, e-mail message to author, March 6, 2014; Rosa South America, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014; Thomas Europe, e-mail message to author, February 24, 2014.

the syllabi. She suggested that instead of explaining them on the last day, the professors should go over them on the first day, which allows the students to look over them and ask questions throughout the week.<sup>14</sup> Another issue concerned the discussion boards. Jesse felt as though the students were not adequately informed about the discussion boards in the GLST 388 and 389 classes. She stated, “We were told that we had to do them, but there was never any follow up until midway through the semester that we had to do weekly discussion boards for our language learning and for the ethnography.”<sup>15</sup> This problem was most likely due to the internship program being implemented for the first time and the change of faculty midway through the semester. For future groups of interns, it would be advantageous to lay out the parameters and expectations of the blackboard assignments. Thomas brought up another issue that he found with the orientation week. He found that the things being taught during the orientation week were not just information, but a new lifestyle. With that in mind, he expresses the desire for the teachers to emphasize how the material being taught could be used in every life situation, instead of just for a few months during the internship.<sup>16</sup> Joshua felt the same way, in fact, he expressed that because of the orientation week, he was better prepared than the students around him in his field.<sup>17</sup> Besides these three criticisms, the orientation week was a very encouraging and impactful time for the students.

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<sup>14</sup>Leigh West Asia, e-mail message to author, March 6, 2014.

<sup>15</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>16</sup>Thomas Europe, e-mail message to author, February 27, 2014.

<sup>17</sup>Joshua East Asia, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014.

**Expectations**

Similar to any new experience, a student embarking on his or her internship has certain expectations as to what he or she will experience. Expectations were addressed in the orientation week and the students were able to realize some of their subconscious expectations. Furthermore, the students were taught both what to expect from the experience and what would be expected of them by way of assignments. Jesse found that she was adequately prepared for what was expected from her, with the exception of the discussion board as mentioned previously. A great point she made was, "I did know that these assignments were required of me to complete and that it would be hard to balance ministry, LU work, and language school as well as benefitting from my experience in Europe."<sup>18</sup> Thomas and Katie likewise felt very prepared for what would be demanded of them academically by Liberty University.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, Rosa, Leigh, and Joshua did not feel as though they had been adequately prepared for what was expected from them academically. They expressed how they did not realize the extent of the work involved or how the courses were interconnected.<sup>20</sup> Leigh also explained that a contributing factor to this lack of preparedness was due to the fact that she did not know where she was going until two weeks before departing for her internship. This short notice placement caused all of her assignment deadlines to be changed.<sup>21</sup> The nature of

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<sup>18</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>19</sup>Thomas Europe, e-mail message to author, February 24, 2014; Katie Africa, interviewed by author, March 10, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Joshua East Asia, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014; Leigh West Asia, e-mail message to author, March 6, 2014; Rosa South America, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014

<sup>21</sup>Leigh West Asia, e-mail message to author, March 6, 2014.

going overseas can cause some variables within the program, so it may be best to avoid an actual date for a due date, rather it may be better to have deadlines that are after a certain amount of time there. For example, an assignment could be due two weeks after the student arrives at the internship. It seems as though the orientation week was successful in preparing some of the students for the assignments and course load that they were expected to complete, whereas others did not feel quite as prepared.

### **Class Set-Up and Course Work**

As previously explained, the classes during the internship are long-distance over the internet. Weekly discussion boards are utilized in a couple of classes to help guide the students in their learning and thinking with language and in the ethnography. The majority of the interns had access to the internet, but there were a couple of interns who had difficulty accessing the internet. Katie, a student who interned in Africa, found the online set-up difficult, because she did not have a good internet connection.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Leigh, the student who went to West Asia, struggled with finding enough time to access the internet, since security in that region was so strict. Because of security issues, only one person at a time is able to use the internet and the team leader needed it frequently. As a result, the weekly discussion board assignments were too much for her to keep up with and were ultimately unrealistic.<sup>23</sup> These two issues should be addressed by the office, since they will continue to occur.

Concerning set-up, Rosa thought that it was well organized because each week was listed with the accompanying work and the links required in order to complete the

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<sup>22</sup>Katie Africa, e-mail message to author, March 10, 2014.

<sup>23</sup>Leigh West Asia, e-mail message to author, March 6, 2014.

work.<sup>24</sup> One suggestion that Thomas had concerning the class set-up was incorporating a weekly Question and Answer survey to monitor how students are doing.<sup>25</sup> This weekly survey will allow more dialogue between the students and the professors, keeping the students accountable. Lastly, Joshua felt as though the class set-up was broad enough that it could easily fit within several cultural contexts.<sup>26</sup> Taking courses online is basically the only way the students would have been able to complete their classes. Not only did the GLST office utilize the online set-up, but it did so successfully in an organized way.

The course work did reflect an upper level work load. Jesse comments:

It was difficult to have most of the assignments due at the beginning of the semester and at the end. It was especially hard for me to have all that school work due at the end, because I wanted to spend my last days saying good bye and enjoying my last days in Europe. Perhaps if it was spread out more evenly somehow throughout the semester, the course load would be easier.<sup>27</sup>

All the other interviewed interns likewise expressed that concern. Juggling everything that comes with living and learning overseas along with the academic side of things was very difficult for them. Kate felt like the amount of work should be considered accordingly.<sup>28</sup> One way to alleviate this stress some would be to have some assignments submitted after the internship is complete. Rosa thought that the Ethnography should be one of those assignments.<sup>29</sup> Whereas it is understood that the course work is that of upper

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<sup>24</sup>Rosa South America, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014.

<sup>25</sup>Thomas Europe, e-mail message to author, February 24, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Joshua East Asia, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014.

<sup>27</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>28</sup>Katie Africa, e-mail message to author, March 10, 2014.

level classes, the ability to spread out the work more may be advantageous to the overall experience, even if that means having some things, like the ethnography, due after the internship is complete.

### **Living Abroad**

The first semester of implementing the new internship program, Living Abroad (GLST 387) was GLST 480. Following that semester the course was changed to GLST 387. The content and purpose was examined earlier in the paper. To give a holistic view, the living abroad class is meant to give students the necessary tools for interning overseas. Jesse felt as though “Living Abroad helped with evaluating everyday life and helped prepare the student for both living overseas and returning to the States.”<sup>30</sup>

In regards to the assignments, Jesse states that one of the things she enjoyed most was waking up on Saturday mornings and writing in the journal for this class.<sup>31</sup> The weekly journal was a place to record both weekly activity and the things the student was learning. She confided that the journal felt like a safe place for her to mull over the things that she experienced while abroad.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, Thomas seemed to find the weekly journal to be a good place to document his spiritual growth; it was not burdensome to him in any way.<sup>33</sup> In regards to the re-entry assignment, Jesse expressed that it was useful and helpful for her to complete; it helped to prepare her to the obstacles that she faced in re-

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<sup>29</sup>Rosa South America, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014.

<sup>30</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Thomas Europe, e-mail message to author, February 24, 2014.

entry. One of the criticisms that she did have was that she felt as though there was so much emphasis on how frequently, when people come back from overseas, they want to talk about it, but most people do not want to listen for longer than a minute, yet it was in her experience, that leaving Europe was so hard that she found herself not wanting to talk to anybody about it. Because her reaction was never discussed, whereas the other, more common one was, she felt very confused and disoriented.<sup>34</sup> It may be beneficial for several different reactions to re-entry to be discussed rather than the most common one. Rosa expressed the desire to speak with someone one-on-one about the re-entry. She suggested that a Skype date between the professor and the student could be arranged before the end of the internship so that they can discuss re-entry together.<sup>35</sup> Since, the program is growing with more and more students, this suggestion seem unrealistic. Instead, it could be that for those students whose company does not debrief them and walk through the re-entry process with them can contact their professor as Rosa suggested. Overall, it seems as though the class was very instructive and beneficial, therefore, the course succeeded in its objective.

### **Language Learning**

Language learning (GLST 389, formerly GLST 489) aims to teach the student how to use the barefoot language method in order to begin to learn and grow in the language to which intern is exposed. Jesse poses:

I feel like the language learning course should have two different tracks. One for those who are not going to be in school and would need to use the

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<sup>34</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>35</sup>Rosa South America, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014.

barefoot language materials in order to learn the language and another track for those who are required by their organization to go to formal school. It was really funky for me, because I had to tailor all of my assignments to meet my situation. I had to e-mail Dr. Bean a lot because of it. My situation was also unique, because I had been studying French for seven years already.<sup>36</sup>

She did mention that she felt as though the professor made an honest effort to work with her to tailor the assignments as needed. Four of the interviewed interns had prior knowledge of the language when they commenced their internships. Every one of them felt as though the 150 documented language hours were reasonable to obtain, and Leigh even suggested that more hours could be added.<sup>37</sup> For Rosa, because she had prior knowledge, she found it difficult to pinpoint where she needed to begin in the barefoot language program. Since during orientation week the only section of the program that was explained was the beginner level, she did not know where to begin and what learning steps to take, so she made up her own system. She suggested that “one of the professors [could] sit down individually with students who are at a different level of language learning and help us access where to pick up in the program.”<sup>38</sup> This suggestion has merit to it. Addressing the fact that some of the interns have prior learning experience and guiding them as to how to still work with the barefoot language program would be beneficial to do during the orientation week. Leigh faced a different challenge while she was using the barefoot program during her language learning. She found that it was difficult culturally to teach her nurturer the growing participator program. Because the

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<sup>36</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>37</sup>Leigh West Asia, e-mail message to author, March 6, 2014.

<sup>38</sup>Rosa South America, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014.

culture she lived in has very different teaching methods, it was hard to get the nurturer to break away from that. Additionally, that culture places a high value on respecting and submitting to those who are older, so it looked bad when, she, a younger person, tried to correct and teach someone older than herself.<sup>39</sup> The GLST program will also need to navigate how to correctly handle these cultural differences that will be encountered. The growing participator approach to language is an excellent idea, but there remains some work to be done in order make it more successful.

### **Cultural Intelligence**

Although not a course by itself, Cultural Intelligence, CQ, as designed by David Livermore was an integral part of the internship. At the beginning of orientation week, the students completed an assessment to determine their CQ in the areas of drive, strategy, action, and knowledge. The assessment additionally placed the students' cultural values. During orientation week, the students were taught what the results meant and how they could improve their scores. Furthermore, they learned how their cultural values will affect how they handle being overseas. One activity during orientation week was for the students to compare themselves to the country for which they were going to be interning. During the internship the students wrote a couple of papers, interacting with the material and the results of the assessment. An action plan was drawn up for each student so that he or she could follow the plan during his or her time overseas and therefore grow in his or her cultural intelligence. At the end of the internship, the students took the assessment a second time to see how they improved in the four aspects of CQ.

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<sup>39</sup>Leigh West Asia, e-mail message to author, March 6, 2014.

The interviewed interns assert that the assessments and the associated papers helped them to succeed in their internship. Concerning the actual assessment, Thomas and Joshua explain that they both had overestimated their CQ in the first assessment, but by the time they completed the second assessment and had been in the country for a while, their scores in the second assessment decreased, as a result of having a more accurate idea of their CQ.<sup>40</sup> Jesse and Katie found the action plan helpful, because it allowed them to responsibly pursue an increase in their cultural intelligence.<sup>41</sup> Jesse added that it helped her “to see a clear picture into my strengths and weaknesses and how to capitalize on my strengths and grow in my weak areas.”<sup>42</sup> Rosa noted that since she came up with the action plan, she was able to tailor it to her culture, making the project effective in increasing her CQ.<sup>43</sup> In conclusion, it seems as though the cultural intelligence assessments significantly aided the students in gaining an increased awareness of their cultural intelligence and helped them to increase their CQ.

### **Ethnography**

The class pertaining to the ethnography is GLST 388, formerly 488. This class was described earlier in the paper. Now, the student’s perspectives concerning this course will be examined.

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<sup>40</sup>Joshua East Asia, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014; Thomas Europe, e-mail message to author, February 24, 2014.

<sup>41</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014; Katie Africa, e-mail message to author, March 10, 2014.

<sup>42</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>43</sup>Rosa South America, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014.

Jesse shared a couple of struggles that she found when completing the ethnography:

A struggle was not knowing that there would be two papers due from the ethnography and the DBs. It should have been clearer in the syllabi. Another difficulty was in doing an ethnography about a people group who are already suspicious towards outsiders without adding the fact that one is researching them and writing in a journal about them and writing a paper. Because of that, my supervisor and I decided to not tell anyone about the ethnography. This was the best decision given the people group, but a part of me feels bad, because I went behind my friends' backs. Perhaps talking about this issue more could've been beneficial for those who were in a situation like mine.<sup>44</sup>

But not all was negative, she and the other interns, except for Rosa, who did not take this course, expressed that they felt as though writing the ethnography held them accountable and challenged them to look and search deeper into the culture. The cultural understandings that they were able to glean through the study were invaluable for their relationships with the people group and for their work with the companies. Although it was a lot of hard work, each intern strongly felt as though it was worth it.<sup>45</sup> Thomas warns that the intern needs to be realistic about the amount of work that goes into completing a project as in-depth as the ethnography is.<sup>46</sup> It seems as though there were a couple of things to work out within the course, but overall, the class was an invaluable experience.

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<sup>44</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>45</sup> Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014; Joshua East Asia, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014; Thomas Europe, e-mail message to author, February 24, 2014.

<sup>46</sup>Thomas Europe, e-mail message to author, February 24, 2014.

**CSER**

One of the graduation requirements for residential students at Liberty University is to complete a minimum of twenty hours of a Christian Service (CSER) every semester. During the internship, the students were required to use one of their weeks for the required CSER. The idea is that the 16<sup>th</sup> week is the CSER week. The idea is a good one, but there were a couple of issues experienced. Jesse struggled with thinking that the internship director was the one who would register them all for their CSER. It was not clear to her that she was responsible for registering and setting up the CSER during her internship. As a result she had to do several things mid-semester in order to correct that misunderstanding.<sup>47</sup> A little more clarity would be beneficial in this area of the internship. A couple of the interns suggested that Liberty University should not require a separate CSER for the GLST student completing their internship abroad. Their reasoning is that if the student completes the internship as required, there would be more than 20 hours of non-school related activities that could count as CSER. Doing this would also allow the student to worry about one less thing.<sup>48</sup> Allowing this to be possible for the students would simplify the student's work load.

**Supervisor Assessment**

To provide a more holistic view and feedback, the interns' supervisors were contacted. Although only two supervisors were able to participate in the study, their contribution remains invaluable. It is important to assess and review the intern's views and experiences, but it is also crucial to understand the thoughts and experiences of the

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<sup>47</sup> Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Joshua East Asia, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014; Rosa South America, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014.

supervisors. Liberty University acts as a liaison by connecting the interns with an organization. Therefore it is also important to examine the internship from the viewpoint of the supervisors. They gave their feedback in the areas of expectations, preparedness, communication, and suggestions.

### **Expectations and Preparedness**

For the most part, both supervisors who were interviewed found their interns reasonably prepared for cross-cultural work and found that the interns knew what was expected of them. George, one of the supervisors in Europe, found that his student was well prepared theoretically, but he pointed out that the daily life and experiences of working overseas has to be experienced firsthand, and therefore the student cannot be completely prepared. Likewise, he pointed out that expectations are never truly known until the intern is on the field, but he does find that talking about the expectations of the intern, the university and the supervisor necessary.<sup>49</sup> In essence, the subject should be talked about with the reality that one's expectations and preparedness can only be examined to a certain extent before going overseas. The South American supervisor, Maria, found that her intern was prepared for her expectations of the internship and was prepared to return to the States. These are two very important issues that cross-cultural workers struggle with regularly, so she was happy that her student had a good understanding of those two issues.<sup>50</sup> In conclusion, despite the fact that no one can ever truly know one's expectations or if one is prepared for living overseas until he or she is

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<sup>49</sup>George Europe, e-mail message to author, March 8, 2014.

<sup>50</sup>Maria South America, e-mail message to author, March 13, 2014.

there, it is an important topic to address and the GLST office seems to have done well in addressing these areas before the student departs to the field.

### **Communication**

Communication is essential in a work place, especially when the work place is overseas in a completely different culture. Communication between the supervisor and the University and between the supervisor and the student is invaluable to a successful internship. George has had several interns throughout the years. He noted that communication with Liberty University is typically open, because he receives an e-mail at the beginning of each intern's stay containing basic information pertaining to the internship. Additionally, because his company is a partner organization with Liberty University, he has attended several meetings where he has been adequately informed in what is expected from him as a supervisor.<sup>51</sup> Conversely, the South American supervisor relied heavily on the student to relay information to her, which was frustrating for her, because she had to continually ask the intern for information.<sup>52</sup> George also noted that frequently when it came to the student's communication to the University, he has experienced those who had excellent communication and those who had to be told by him what they should do.<sup>53</sup> Because the communication skills of the student is so changeable based on him or her, the GLST office can only hone in on their communication to the students and the supervisors.

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<sup>51</sup>George Europe, e-mail message to author, March 8, 2014.

<sup>52</sup>Maria South America, e-mail message to author, March 13, 2014.

<sup>53</sup>George Europe, e-mail message to author, March 8, 2014.

**Suggestions**

George and Maria supplied several suggestions for the GLST internship program from the vantage point of a supervisor. George had different suggestions concerning Liberty's relationship and communication with the supervisors, the student's course work, and the student's mindset. He desires a closer relationship between the program and the supervisor. He proposed that perhaps there can be a more active dialogue between the supervisors and the office. Together the supervisor and the office could think about what the intern should gain from the internship and how each of them can contribute in order to successfully fulfill these goals. Secondly, he recommended that when possible, the office should have a meeting with the supervisors with an explanation of the internship and a time of questions. In regards to the academic side of the internship, he mentioned the orientation week as well as the Cultural Intelligence work. He recommended that the orientation week would remain. Although he was skeptical at first, he found the Cultural Intelligence work to be very beneficial and thinks that it should continue to be a part of the internship.<sup>54</sup> Maria did find the amount of course work to hinder her student's ability to fully immerse herself in the work and culture that she was involved in. Her student had difficulty in time management, because she struggled with transitioning from a college schedule to a work schedule.<sup>55</sup> Along the same lines, George mentioned that he saw a major need to focus on the principles of cross-cultural work and to know that the application will be different. He stated that Liberty students in general are not well prepared to leave a professional view of living overseas to a life-style

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<sup>54</sup>George Europe, e-mail message to author, March 8, 2014.

<sup>55</sup>Maria South America, i e-mail message to author, March 13, 2014.

process necessary for a successful cross-cultural experience.<sup>56</sup> The major areas of needed improvement are the communication and relationship between the office and the supervisors, the amount of work required, and the mindset of the student, but there was positive feedback, such as the student's preparedness and realistic expectations, as well as the benefit gained by the student from the orientation week and Cultural Intelligence material.

### **Faculty and Staff Assessment**

The last group actively involved in the internship and was interviewed is the Global Studies department and the Global Engagement office. Their perspectives are likewise essential to hear their feedback. They are intricately involved and connected with the process from the initial internship meeting to set things up to once the intern returns and debriefs his or her field experience. Three key people in the GLST office were interviewed. These interviews were focused on what the goals of the internship are, what changes have been made already, and what some issues that they have identified with the internship thus far.

### **Goals**

When BJ, one of the professors involved in the internship, discussed what the goals of the internship were, she explained that a couple of years ago there was a large survey study done with Liberty's partner organizations to determine from the organizations what the characteristics, the credentials, and the skills are that they are looking for when they interview for long term employees. One major emphasis that emerged was the need for a significant immersion experience in a cross-cultural setting.

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<sup>56</sup> George Europe, e-mail message to author, March 8, 2014.

Prior, a shorter internship, only three credits, was an option, but now the GLST office requires a full semester internship, because of the significant difference between spending a few weeks on the field versus spending a few months in experience level, the relationships that develop, and the way the student processes through culture shock.<sup>57</sup> Joe Bean, another professor connected with the internship, emphasized how an objective of the GLST internship is to provide experiential learning.<sup>58</sup> The internship reinforces and causes the student to take out what he or she has learned in the classroom and to apply what was previously theoretical. Cassandra, a worker in the office, expounded that one of the major goals of the internship is to help facilitate the student's personal and spiritual growth. The office does this through connecting with the student, praying with him or her, answering questions, aiding in the reentry process, and connecting him or her to the different organizations.<sup>59</sup> The internship's goals focus on three areas: equipping the intern for his or her future, helping the student grow, and providing experiential learning. Each of the interviewees found that although it is difficult to measure success in these areas, these goals are being met through the internship experience. Cassandra expounds that the office does see a difference in practical awareness and perspective when the students return from their internship.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>B.J. Simpson, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 24, 2014.

<sup>58</sup>Joe Bean, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 5, 2014.

<sup>59</sup>Cassandra Newton, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 27, 2014.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

## Changes

Since the first group of GLST interns went on their internship, there have been several significant changes, some of which have rectified issues previously mentioned in this thesis. These changes have been in five major areas: transition, organization, preparation, academics, and after the internship. Within each section there have been a number of changes.

The difference between the spring 2013 interns and the spring 2014 interns is that the later interns have gone through the GLST program from the beginning. The 2013 interns were a transitional group. There were academic and faculty transitions, which affected the 2013 group's internship significantly. Academically, several of the students were ICST (the former program) majors and had only taken a few GLST classes. The GLST classes designed to complement the internship was not required for those ICST majors, but if a student did not take one of those classes, the experience of the internship would change significantly, since these four classes were designed to be an interconnected and integral part of the internship.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the changes in faculty were significant. Cassandra asserts that these changes and the resulting issues that were created are by no means anyone's fault; rather they are the result of a transitional time.<sup>62</sup> There were three faculty transitions that occurred during the spring and summer of 2014. First, during the spring 2013 group, a professor of one of the courses was transitioning out mid-semester and another professor was transitioning in. A new department chair was implemented during the spring 2013 semester as well. As of the summer of 2013, the

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<sup>61</sup>B.J. Simpson, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 24, 2014.

<sup>62</sup>Cassandra Newton, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 27, 2014.

office has two staff member who only focus on internships, whereas before, the former internship director was doing four jobs at once, and therefore was spread very thin. On the contrary, now, there is more man power and time to invest in the students.<sup>63</sup> All of these changes occurred during or shortly after the first group of interns went on their internship. These faculty transitions, as well as the transition between ICST and GLST a couple of years ago caused some issues during the spring 2013 internship. Since these transitions are complete, those issues should work themselves out and no longer be present in future semesters.

The organization of the program has been changed in the database. The previous database was rather unorganized and was hardly used by the time the spring 2013 interns were overseas. A new one was created that allows the office to track with the students from the beginning of the program and allows the office to connect with them more regularly. Cassandra showed the efficiency of the new database in that the GLST staff are already talking regularly with students who are going on their internships next spring.<sup>64</sup> A more organized approach will definitely improve the student's understanding and experience during the internship.

The preparation process has changed since the commencement of the new program and internship in how they connect with students, connect with supervisors, and in provide workshops. The office seeks to connect with the student as soon as possible, either during the student's freshmen year or, if not, once he or she has declared Global Studies as his or her major. By doing this, students are able to adequately prepare in time

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<sup>63</sup>Cassandra Newton, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 27, 2014.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

for their internship by beginning to discuss their next steps leading to the internship, to connect with the organizations, to identify placements, and to identify where they want to serve.<sup>65</sup> The GLST office has likewise improved their communication to supervisors. They make more of an effort in the communication and the coordination prior to the internship. Now, there is a more conjoined effort in that the office seeks to learn from the organizations and supervisors what their needs are in that specific part of the world with the goal of connecting a student who would make a good fit for them and would better fulfill those needs found in that field.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, the office is giving the supervisors more information about the type of internship that the student needs, so that they are more aware that the student is taking classes at the same time and what will be asked of the supervisors. This information is provided through letters to the supervisors and condensed syllabi.<sup>67</sup> Making these efforts should bring clarification and better understanding as to what is expected of the supervisor. Lastly, another change that has been implemented in order to better facilitate preparation is the availability of workshops. These are optional workshops that students can take before their internships with the goal to better prepare them in specific areas. Two examples of topics that they have taught on are culture shock and engaging culture. The topics of these workshops are still being developed.<sup>68</sup> The office has implemented changes in connecting with students,

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<sup>65</sup>B.J. Simpson, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 24, 2014.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Cassandra Newton, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 27, 2014.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

connecting with the organizations, and adding workshops. These three things should provide a more focused and informed internship.

The classes taken during the internship have undergone some changes as well. A significant change that Joe brought up was that the Living Abroad class (GLST 387) was an intensive, but since the course was offered before the beginning of the spring semester, it could not count as an intensive. In order to rectify that, the office has made it a semester long class like the language learning class and the ethnography class. The former intensive is now call orientation week and the students are strongly encouraged to attend in preparation for the demands of the internship.<sup>69</sup>

Changes have also been made in the ethnography class (GLST 388). Because each student has his or her unique situation and starting point in the semester, the discussion board was a difficult way to track the students' progress. In order to rectify this problem, the professor of that class now requires the student to submit a midterm report. This modification resolves the issue of time tables, but it takes out the chance for the students to collaborate with each other in experiences and ideas. Concerning the language class, the discussion board still remains. The language class has been divided up into four different areas of acquisition: listening point, total participation activities, Lexicarry, and speaking. This change enables the students to track their progress in each of the four categories with three discussion boards in each category.<sup>70</sup>

Lastly, changes in how the office connects with the student after the internship has changed. In order to aid in reentry, two sessions of debriefing are required and GLST

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<sup>69</sup>Joe Bean, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 5, 2014.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

490 is taken the semester after the internship. The first debriefing session is scheduled at the beginning of the semester following the internship and the second debriefing session is towards the end of that semester.<sup>71</sup> GLST 490, Trends and Issues, is a required class taken the semester following the internship, which will be made up of only interns from the previous semester. This class will include more debriefing throughout the semester, which will aid in processing and in application.<sup>72</sup> These two requirements will richly add to the returning student's readjustment back to the States.

### **Current Identified Issues**

Three identified issues were discovered through the interviews. First, an issue that still remains needs to be rectified by the office is the problem of housing for the students while they are in Lynchburg for the orientation week. Joe Bean explains that it is difficult to ask the students to come for a week, but they have to pay a lot for housing and cannot stay at a dorm for housing. He goes on to say that currently some people in the area have opened up their homes to these students, but since the amount of interns going overseas is exponentially increasing, this quick fix will no longer work.<sup>73</sup> Another issue is figuring out how to connect with students as soon as possible. Cassandra posed several different strategic ideas, but ultimately the student does bear some responsibility to contact the office. Thirdly, although the office is not responsible for telling a student where to go, there are security concerns. With that concern in mind, the office is trying to create policies or processes regarding where students can go. Liberty University is an institution

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<sup>71</sup>Cassandra Newton, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 27, 2014.

<sup>72</sup>B.J. Simpson, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 24, 2014.

<sup>73</sup>Joe Bean, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 5, 2014.

that is concerned with the safety of its students.<sup>74</sup> These three issues are still in the process of being solved.

A noteworthy event in the program is happening this semester. The GLST program is undergoing a full program assessment at different levels within the program: core courses and the block of courses that make up the internship. The program has been in effect for two years; this assessment will give the opportunity for discovering any concerns or needed change, before the program becomes too finalized. The assessment will also reflect if any of the identified issues from the first semester of implementing the internship sill remains or not. Any concerns revealed by the assessment can be appropriately addressed.

### **Conclusion**

Within the last two years, the Global Studies department at Liberty University was created and implemented, replacing the Intercultural Studies department. The study focused on the required GLST internship. The first group of students who completed the internship, their supervisors, and GLST staff and faculty were interviewed to assess how effective the internship is. The internship is still in the process of change. The lack of communication between the office and the students and the supervisors has been addressed and is being rectified. The lack of debriefing, likewise, was adequately rectified. The classes are continually being refined to meet the needs of the students before, during, and after the internship. Overall, the internship is becoming better and better. The Global Studies office truly cares for its students and seeks to provide the best care possible and the changes in the internship reflects this attitude.

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<sup>74</sup> Cassandra Newton, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, March 27, 2014.

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**Appendix 1**

## WORDS OF WISDOM

Each former intern who participated in this study was asked, “If you were talking with someone who was about to embark on his or her GLST internship, what advice or words of wisdom would you say to them?” Here is the list of those responses.

Jesse Europe:

My advice would be to be gracious and patient with yourself. There are lots of challenges and new experiences. Do not expect or demand of yourself perfection, because that will not happen. Instead be gracious to yourself. You are a student in this new culture and ministry; it is okay to make mistakes, because that is essential in this learning process.<sup>75</sup>

Thomas Europe:

Give it all to God, be honest and ask Him to create in you a clean heart that beats authentically. Ask for a hunger for His Word and His truth. Be honest when this isn't what your desire is and accept the amazing Gospel continually at work regardless of feeling. Ask Him for wisdom, flexibility. I would recommend this type of learning when you are continually in a new situation where you need to depend on God and others. Whenever one can get a chance to take off[f] their home culture's glasses and view the world with CQ and with The Word of God as the central factor, lives will be changed. I would recommend that they be completely open and honest and be ready to experience something that will alter their lives in every way imaginable. If they want to be comfortable, don't do it.

Also, I'd advise them to ask God to take every motive for which they are embarking on a[n] internship of this nature and redeem it so that it's all for Him. Otherwise there will be confusion. I ran into that when I realized that a lot of my motivation was based on self and on fear. God took care of that. Nothing happens overnight, but His work in and through is quality, true, right, and eternal. It's worth it.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Jesse Europe, interviewed by author, Lynchburg, January 24, 2014.

<sup>76</sup>Thomas Europe, e-mail message to author, February 24, 2014.

Rosa South America:

Be prepared to be humbled. Don't be afraid to try new foods, speak the language however little you know. Don't be afraid to make mistakes in the language learning process. Buy things to remember your culture. Love deeply and without reserve. Be open to hear from God and ask him to speak to you. Be prepared for the people to impact you more than you impact them. Do as many things as you can the way the natives do them and experience as many cultural happenings as possible. Be open minded and try not to judge. Realize that all of the feelings you are having, whether its anger, discouragement, or confusion, know that you are not abnormal for having those. When you get back state-side debrief with someone who is experienced in this process. Don't hold anything back in debriefing!<sup>77</sup>

Katie Africa:

Pray that God would use your internship for His glory and for you to see the work of God in that part of the world in the best way possible. Pray that He will open your eyes and hearts so that you will experience everything that God has for you there. Go out and talk to people and listen to them.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Rosa South America, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2014.

<sup>78</sup>Katie Africa, e-mail message to author, March 10, 2014.

**Appendix 2**

Provided is the list of questions used in the collecting of the research.

**GLST faculty and staff:**

What are the goals of the internship program? For the student? For the supervisors?

Do you find that these goals are being achieved?

What changes have been made to the program since the first semester that it was implemented?

What are some issues that have already been identified and rectified from the first semester?

What issues are still unresolved?

**Student:**

When and where did you complete your GLST internship? If there are security issues attached to location, then please answer accordingly.

**The Orientation week:**

Did the orientation week (intensive) adequately prepare you for what was expected of you assignment wise?

Did the pre-required classes and the other offered programs the Center for Global Engagement offer help and/or prepare you for cross-cultural ministry?

What are a couple of things that you enjoyed and would like to see be continued in the orientation week?

What did you not like and think should be changed or left out?

Describe in your own words how orientation week impacted you.

**The set up process:**

Did you feel like in the process of setting up the internship that you were properly guided? If not, what made you feel inadequately prepared and how can that be rectified?

**CQ:**

How did the cultural intelligence assessment make you aware and prepare you for your experiences during the internship?

Did you find the assessment insightful? If so, how?

Did you find it accurate? If not, then please explain.

Were the assignments appropriate or helpful in your internship context?  
How or how not?

Did the assignments and internship experience help you to grow in your CQ?

Did you see a difference in the T2 assessment?

**Expectations:**

Were you adequately prepared for and knowledgeable about what is expected of you as the student with deadlines, assignments, and projects?

As the intern on the field?

If not, then in what way did you feel unprepared for? How can this be changed?

**Class set-up:**

Did you feel as though the online set up of the class was appropriate for the internship? If not, why? And how can it be improved?

Did you feel as though the long distance learning was adequate to the unique challenges of being in your location/overseas/cross cultural situation? If not, then what do you think should be changed?

**Course work/load:**

What do you think the purpose of the course work was?

For the language course?

For the ethnography course?

For living abroad?

For the internship itself (the journal project, the re-entry project)

Did you find these things being achieved through the course work?

Were there any critiques about the course work? If so, how would you suggest changing it?

**Language learning:**

Did you feel as though you were adequately trained in how to use the barefoot language learning materials?

Did you find the minimum required hours (150 hours) obtainable? Too low? Or just right?

Was it difficult to find a nurturer? If so, do you think that the GLST office can help in that process?

Did you feel that you were adequately informed in what was expected of your time together with the language nurturer?

Was there anything that you experienced in the way it was set-up that could be or should be changed? If so, then how?

**Ethnography:**

What were some struggles that you faced with this assignment? Is there something the GLST office could have done to have minimized or eliminated any of those struggles?

Did you find this assignment to be beneficial? How so or how not?

Did you find this assignment to be appropriate for the objective of the internship?

Was the class structured in a way that was helpful in accomplishing the ethnography?

Were the assignments associated with the ethnography class reasonable? If not, then how so?

**Living Abroad:**

Was the journal assignment reasonable in your opinion? If not, then how should it have changed?

Did the journal assignment help you to process through the things that you were learning on the field?

Did the assignment on re-entry aid you in the process of returning to the States?

Was there something that you found was missing or lacking in the re-entry assignment?

**CSER:**

Did you know how to register for you CSER for that semester?

Was there anything that you found to be problematic that you would like to see changed?

**Preparedness:**

Did you find yourself prepared for your overseas internship experience?

Do you feel as though the Global Studies office prepared you in the best way they knew how? Please explain your answer.

**Miscellaneous:**

Can the city and or the country be used in the final thesis? If not, then how specific can the writer be?

Can your supervisor be contacted for further questions? If so, then please provide the means of contact.

If you were talking with someone who was about to embark on his or her GLST internship, what advice or words of wisdom would you say to them?

Compared to your experience, how have you seen change in the internship program as it is now?

**Supervisor:**

Concerning security, how specific can the final thesis be in your location? Note, regardless to your response, your name will be substituted with a pseudonym if at all mentioned.

Were you prepared and adequately informed about what LU expected from the student?

From you as a supervisor?

What were your thoughts toward the projects and homework that the student was required to do?

Is there anything that could be improved in the program that you saw as the supervisor?

Was there something that stood out to you that you would like to see continue with future interns?

How prepared did you find the student when they first came?

With expectations?

Cross-cultural communication?

In ministry?

Was the student's communication to LU adequate? Did he or she have a complete understanding of what Liberty expected?

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