

Summer 2020 (options drastically reduced via COVID)

Exploration Summer

Scholar and Coach	Exploration Summer projects
Vignesh Alagappan Coach: Anjali Bhatia	<p>Global Health Innovation internship at the Duke Margolis Center for Health Policy</p> <p>I worked with the African Collaborative for Health Financing Solutions (ACS) during my exploration summer. ACS provides a platform to help sub-Saharan countries achieve Universal Health Coverage. The Duke Margolis Center for Health Policy (an ACS partner) hosted me as a “Margolis Summer Intern”. My team worked with the Namibian Ministry of Health to analyze whether the Government of Namibia should extend the private health insurance scheme for government employees to cover HIV antiretroviral drugs. Antiretroviral drugs reduce the amount of the virus (viral load) present in the patient’s body. They play an important role in the fight against HIV in the region. I collected data on the procurement costs of HIV antiretrovirals from various suppliers. The team used this data to estimate the total costs of the increased coverage. We then compared this with the benefits of increasing access to HIV antiretrovirals and provided a recommendation to the Ministry of Health.</p>
De’Ivyionne Drew Coach: Richard Powell	<p>Social Media / Communication Digital Organizing Fellowship</p> <p>This summer, I am pursuing a Social Media / Communication Digital Organizing Fellowship, a remote occupation with Black Youth Project 100, a social justice organization that focuses on liberatory politic, fixating on the population most underserved: Black, Queer, and Femme Folx. This internship focuses on fostering growth in writing skills, Making Graphics, Managing Social Media Platforms, Storytelling, Working with Press Organizations, and more. I find out the first week of June if I was selected for this position, which is very likely, given that I have working with the Durham chapter of this organization, and I still have four active applications with the Vera Institute of Justice (two), UNICEF (one), and the ONE Campaign (one).</p>
Jemma Frost Coach: Nick Gatland	<p>Biomedical Engineering internship with iMPact Health and Portfolio Expansion Project Fellowship.</p> <p>I participated in a Virtual Innovation Exchange facilitated by Engineering World Health. I worked in a team of four with students from the US and Lebanon to design a cloud-based patient portal database connected to remote monitoring systems for hospitals in Lebanon. We presented our team's solution to Engineering World Health staff to be judged in a competition. From this experience, I learned a lot about working with people from other cultures, creating a solution in a group in a short time-frame and some of the key lessons required to design for low-resource settings. I will take this experience with me into becoming a better biomedical engineer and team member.</p> <p>I also participated in (and am still participating in) the Portfolio Expansion Project (PEP) Fellowship with Professor Eric Koester at Georgetown University. I am in the process of writing a non-fiction book about the intersection of access to healthcare and technology around the globe. I will be submitting my first draft at the end of the year and am hoping to publish in 2021. I have learned so much from this process so far that cannot be described in just a few sentences (you’ll have to read my book when it’s published) but I will summarize a few points. Firstly, I learned a lot about the many facets that are involved in solving problems with technology. Anyone can learn the science behind the technology but the socio-cultural factors that are required are much more important for a successful solution. This includes cultural sensitivity, community involvement, and noticing when a norm isn’t the best method to do something. The other thing I have taken away from this experience are skills such as interviewing (over zoom), networking, research, story-writing, and self-management. This experience has definitely taken me out of my comfort zone which is the only place that I could learn and improve on these skills and more.</p>

<p>Anjali Gupta Coach:</p>	<p>My summer consists of a few different parts. <u>The first aspect of my summer is research</u> with Dr. Tomi Akinyemiju from Duke’s Department of Population Health Sciences. I have been working with her for the past year and will be furthering my research this summer. I will continue working remotely on my project exploring the association between education during the life-course and breast cancer grading at diagnosis among female Nigerian patients. In addition to this project, I may also work on a project exploring the relationship between education and cancer subtype in the same Nigerian population, and/or analyze data from the National Cancer Database regarding the connection between education and ovarian stage/grade. The specific projects that I take on and the amount of time they require will depend on the results of my analyses, but those are a few potential ideas. Beyond these independent projects, I will also be continuing work on a longer-term systematic review project looking at the relationship between ovarian cancer and NSAID use and assisting with other projects in the lab as needed.</p> <p>To complement my research efforts, I will be taking two remote one-week courses in July offered by the University of Michigan. These courses are titled “Introduction to Linear, Logistic and Poisson Regression” and “Survival Analysis Applied to Epidemiologic and Medical Data.” Dr. Akinyemiju suggested these two courses as intensive opportunities to improve my statistics knowledge and build skills that I can directly apply to my studies.</p> <p><u>The second aspect of my summer is preparatory</u> – I will be drafting my Truman application and studying for the MCAT. Both tasks require long-term thought and consideration. In preparation for medical school applications next year, I am also volunteering remotely with Durham Crisis Response Center, taking on one overnight shift per week.</p> <p><u>The third aspect of my summer is running the day-to-day operations of my nonprofit organization</u>, School for a Village. We are currently in the process of growing our team and bringing on 3 new board members. We are speaking with our schools to understand ways in which we can support them (especially considering COVID-19) and working with mentors/partners to refine our strategy. We are also developing new programs that we hope to see launch in the next year and applying for grants/awards.</p>
<p>Brady Hanshaw Coach: Angie Settle</p>	<p>This summer I explored the role of structural systems of oppression within the HIV epidemic among men who have sex with men (MSM) in the United States, with a particular focus on PrEP uptake, and the COVID-19 pandemic among the migrant worker communities of North Carolina. The exploration into queer health disparity within the contexts of HIV prevalence took place within technology-based research with the Behavior and Technology (BAT) Lab at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with the most impactful piece of work being a commentary on the trauma within the PrEP continuum. I explored similar oppressive barriers to care within the migrant community of North Carolina by designing and implementing a rapid response team to mitigate COVID-19 transmission within camp outbreaks. These two projects have better defined and reaffirmed my mission to fight for health liberation by combatting health disparity among the society’s vulnerable and oppressed.</p>
<p>Kalley Huang Coach: Frank Baumgartner</p>	<p>This summer, I will research geriatric and palliative healthcare in prisons with Professor Frank Baumgartner. At the end of the twentieth century, many states enacted very harsh criminal justice policies, such as life without parole, and incarcerated hundreds of thousands of relatively young people—often for drug-related and/or non-violent offenses. As one might expect, if someone is incarcerated at 25, then they will be 65 forty years later. We are about thirty years out from when these harsh policies were adopted, so the elderly prison population will soon explode, yielding a host of human, policy, and economic concerns. My research will investigate the implications of such a demographic growth through qualitative and quantitative data analysis.</p> <p>I will also research COVID-19 in prisons and subsequent policy responses. Jails and prisons are COVID-19 hotspots and incubators for infection. Basic cleaning and disinfecting supplies, such as hand sanitizer and soap, are nonexistent, rare, or banned. Personal protective equipment is similarly scarce. Excess human contact is unavoidable, and jail turnover endangers those on the inside and outside. As a result, facilities like Rikers Island have COVID-19 infection rates nearing 10 percent. Such high infection rates are particularly dangerous because jails and prisons have a concentration of pathology. By and large, people who are incarcerated have had poor access to</p>

	<p>primary preventative healthcare and have underlying health issues that make them uniquely at-risk. My research will investigate how and why policymakers have—or have not—responded to this public health crisis by locking down facilities, shortening sentences, avoiding incarceration, releasing prisoners, etc.</p> <p>In addition, I will report at the El Paso Times, primarily covering immigration, local politics and government, and other desks as needed or wanted.</p>
Rachel Maunus Coach: Michal Osterweil	For my exploration summer, I interned remotely with More Gardens Fund. More Gardens Fund is a nonprofit that utilizes community garden spaces as centers for environmental education and social justice work. While their work is in New York City, I worked remotely from a house in Carrboro, NC.
Anshu Mohan Coach: Chip Snively	This summer I worked two separate jobs while living in Chapel Hill. I had a full time intern position at a Chapel Hill based Venture Capital Firm called Union Grove Venture Partners. On the side, I worked as one of the lead interns for a start-up social media app called 'kickit'. Through both of these opportunities, though very different, I was able to gain professional experience that I know will benefit me as I pursue different career goals down the line. At Union Grove, I developed my technical business knowledge within the venture capital landscape through my involvement in the process from sourcing companies to making investment decisions. At kickit, given the infancy of the company, I learned about the ins and outs of building a business from the ground up and ultimately how to make an idea a reality, which I am currently using as I pursue a business endeavour of my own.
Amanda Padden Coach: Sheryl Welte, Chris Paul	<p>Research on food insecurity/COVID 19</p> <p>Though the summer did not go as I had initially planned, I was able to explore new ideas and opportunities remotely. The Exploration summer planning process taught me how to prioritize my own needs, even when I dramatically shifted my plans. I also learned a lot about how to run a team and lead with compassion from Dr. Paul when I worked with him and a NCCU research team. Exploring issues of water justice with Carsten allowed me to understand my own interests better and to see what kinds of jobs existed in the field. Lastly, I spent much of the summer thinking about the oppressive systems that exist in the US and how we can imagine new ones that center the needs of vulnerable peoples.</p>
Ben Rees Coach: Kenneth Barshop	This summer, I will be working several remote internships and research positions. I will be working with Los Alamos National Laboratory on a project that is attempting to adapt causality functions to structural health monitoring and other engineering systems. I will be doing research for and writing a scoping review on developmental disability services in rural India with the Latika Roy Foundation (the organization I was originally planning on spending my summer with). I will be working as a research assistant and peer mentor for a program that helps adolescents with autism transition to college. And I am continuing work with the lab I work in at UNC on looking at the neurological basis of autism.
Elise van den Hoek Coach: Simon Miles	<p>Research project on contemporary Russian politics with Duke professor</p> <p>This summer, I was fortunate enough to be able to explore pre-existing passions and discover new ones. While I wasn't able to pursue the personal research project I had designed, I continued to work with Professor Miles on his upcoming book publication on the history of the Warsaw Pact. Digging through KGB archives from the Soviet Union, I helped him to identify an important historical finding on the role of the KGB in implementing perestroika reforms, which spurred him to publish a separate scholarly article on the issue. I also had the opportunity to work at Modern Energy, a growing renewable energy investment firm in Durham, founded by two Robertson Alumni. I had a remarkable experience, working for two separate supervisors: an Investment Officer, and the Senior Director of Policy and Market Design. Working with the investment officer, I was exposed to the world of financial analysis, constructed a model on electricity price formation, and learned a great deal about investment decision-making. In the policy realm, I researched the stakeholder process that governs electricity market regulatory frameworks, and was able to produce a memo that contained proposals to reform it. Overall, I was able to understand the usefulness of my education in Public Policy, and see how the skills I have acquired can be applied to real-world problems. However, I also benefitted greatly from expanding my scope, discovering a distinct passion for the energy world, and proving that there are many more doors open to me than I previously understood.</p>

<p>Aaron Williams Coach: Jarveal Baker</p>	<p>In my final summer proposal, I explained how this summer was not expected. Initially planning to work for a consulting firm in London for a portion of the summer and ending teaching reading/writing in Uganda, I somehow found myself in Chapel Hill working on three different projects. Within those weeks/months of rearranging a summer around COVID, I was able to find projects that I believed would benefit me both professionally and personally. These projects were: working for a startup (a relationship fostered since the beginning of sophomore year), working for a Robertson Scholar Alumnus Kenny Haisfield (Kenny Flowers), and participating in a portfolio expansion project fellowship based out of Georgetown. Each of these promised to offer me different aspects of growth, In the professional realm, I was able to leave summer 2020, with a renewed confidence in myself as well as my ability to adapt to the situation at hand. I was able to achieve my main goal this summer which was to gather a better sense of my long-term career/life goals. While this summer might not have amounted to me having a definitive answer, it definitely allowed me to see my own strengths as well as areas in need of improvement.</p>
<p>Sam Zahn Coach: Matthew King</p>	<p>Worked internships at the American Jewish Committee and at the David Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute. I also served as a fellow with the Shalom Hartman Institute.</p>