Shaping Students Global Perspective through Study Abroad

Educating students though global perspectives adds a value to students’ personal, academic and professional growth while enriching their world view. Assistant Professor of the School of Health Science, David Sharp, demonstrates commitment to his students global learning through offering a special course in nutrition: Systems and Environmental Nutrition course in Uganda. “The course is being designed as a new required course in the Nutrition department for the 2018-2019 school year but will be field tested in Uganda in summer intersession of 2017 and perhaps again in 2018 depending on interest and feedback” says David Sharp. The course targets current nutrition students. The School of Health Science intends to incorporate the course to the school curriculum.

“Students will tour an elementary school, a hospital, and a soup-kitchen or other food-aid related location (probably campus kitchen here at Kent) so that they can anchor their expectations of the nutrition and public health services available to the communities in Ohio” explains David Sharp. “Then we will travel to Uganda to discuss the various Public policies, regulations, and health promotions as they relate to food related topics and compare them to our own experiences. Sustainability will also be observed and discussed” continues David Sharp. Over a meal with student of Kampala University in Uganda, his students will discuss their respective nutrition crises such as obesity vs. food insecurity, or how each department attempts to prepare their students for these situations.

“Many of my students have not traveled internationally before, so this trip, in addition to giving them a first person view of a variety of nutritional situations that they have never experiences, will provide them with a more global perspective and hopefully a greater appreciation for the diversity of ways that an education in Nutrition can benefit themselves and their future patients” says David Sharp. He expects that this trip will make impact on the ways his students look at many elements of their own lives.

For the last four years, David Sharp has served on the board of directors of Yamba Abaana, a small non-profit that his family formed in order to provide nutrition, education, and public health assistance to a small elementary school in Southwest Uganda.

“The school, when we were introduced to it, had about 200 students, low test scores, and almost a 30% absenteeism rate. This isn’t because the students or the teachers were unmotivated, but rather than the school lacked the funding and capacity to fully protect their students from water-borne diseases and malaria, from hunger, and from dehydration.” says professor Sharp. Initial project was to raise money to purchase mosquito nets, however, through the years, they have assisted in the completion of water collecting gutters, new outhouses, a soccer field, some solar panels for providing lights at night, a kindle project to increase the availability of books, subsidizing school breakfasts, subsidizing teacher salaries, constructing a new school building. “Most recently we constructed the first well the community has ever had” says David Sharp. “This well now provides clean water not only to the more than 300 students who now attend, but also generates enough water to assist the local community as well.” he explains.

According to David Sharp, his students will spend two days in and around this non-profit so that they can see, first hand, the effects of food security, water security, and a reduction in sick days on students and discuss the utility of non-profits of any size on the health and well-being of an at-risk community.
Global Understanding of Autism

The School of Health Science offers undergraduate and graduate course: Global Understanding of Autism.

“With the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) on the rise there is a need to increase our perspective and cultural sensitivity regarding how ASD is researched, perceived, assessed, and treated in other countries” says Professor Audet. “This knowledge enhances awareness of how cultural values, economics, and policy intertwine as systems are created to address the needs of those with ASD and their families” she explains.

In summer of 2015 professor Audet first time offered Global Understanding of Autism course in Brazil for a group of Health Science students. The course is being offered during the summer intersession of 2017 at the University of Sao Paulo.

“At the University of Sao Paulo we will study with Dr. Fernanda Dreux who is a speech language pathologist and Brazilian expert on ASD” says Lisa Audet. “She is also a Fellow of the American Speech Language Hearing Association’’ Professor Audet continues.

Kent State students will study in Dr. Fernanda Dreux’s clinic for the treatment of ASD and visit regional programs designed to address the needs of those with ASD and their families. Additional cultural activities will occur so students learn about the area and the people.

Course:
Global Understanding of Autism in Brazil

Time:
Wednesday November 9th—10:00 am
Thursday November 10th—12:00 pm

Location: Room 200, White Hall