

Lam Ca

ISSUE 11: AUGUST

SUMMER WORDS

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Editor's Note

LAM₇A: A Glimpse into Our New Chapter

Three years ago, a group of passionate students embarked on a journey to create a magazine that would capture the essence of our student life at CMU-Q. Today, we, a new team of editors, are honored to carry forward their legacy. As we step into our roles, we are filled with a deep sense of responsibility and excitement, knowing that we are continuing the tradition of creativity, resilience, and storytelling that Lam7a has come to embody.

This issue marks the beginning of a new academic year, a time filled with fresh starts, new faces, and the lingering warmth of summer memories. Our campus has always been a place where diverse stories intertwine, and this edition is no different. We've curated a collection of reflections, adventures, and experiences from the summer—a season that often serves as a canvas for growth, exploration, and new beginnings.

This issue is a testament to the power of transitions. Just as summer gives way to fall, we too are in a period of change. Yet, amidst this change, one thing remains constant: our commitment to you, our readers. We strive to bring you content that is not only engaging and reflective but also resonant with the diverse and vibrant spirit of our community.

As you flip through these pages, we hope you find inspiration in the stories of your peers—those who traveled far, those who stayed close, those who discovered new passions, and those who found solace in familiar places. We invite you to reflect on your own summer experiences and how they have shaped the person you are today.

Thank you for trusting us with your stories. Here's to a new year, new beginnings, and a magazine that remains, at its heart, a glimpse into the life of every student at CMU-Q.

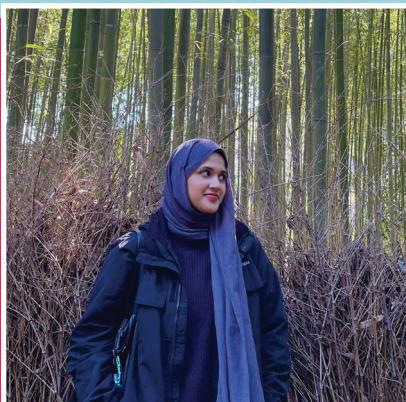
Sincerely,
Lam₇a Editorial Board

Boushra Bendou, Laiba Sameer, Mikal Tabaa, Zeina Halawa

Meet the

Boushra's Note

Last year, I had the privilege of joining Lamّa as an editor, and now, stepping into the role of editor-in-chief, I am both excited and humbled by the opportunity to lead this incredible team. We are committed to honoring the legacy of Lamّa while infusing it with fresh energy and new perspectives. I look forward to continuing the tradition of sharing your stories and capturing the vibrant spirit of our community.



Laiba's Note

One of the first things I began to cherish about CMUQ was Lamّa; it has always felt like a peek into the heart of the university- the students and their voices. Inspired by the commitment to providing a space for students to speak their mind and open up discussions, I am incredibly excited

to join the team as an editor and keep up the Lamّa tradition. Let's continue to share our stories and bridge our community!

Dania's Note

Hello! My name is Dania and I am a sophomore studying biological sciences. I am a designer for Lamّa and thrilled to have joined the team this year. I love art (obviously) I also enjoy reading and am a HUGE cat person.



Team...

Zeina's Note

Lamça is a project that strives to share the voices, passion, and creativity of everyone on campus and one I'm incredibly honored to have become a part of as an editor. I'm very excited to work alongside everyone in creating and uplifting this platform, and in turn the students' ideas, so that they can reach as many people as possible. I hope we can continue to achieve and exceed the expectations for the Lamça magazine we have all come to know and love.



Mikal's Note

I'm thrilled to join the Lamça editorial team, where the heart of our community finds its voice. It's not just about sharing stories; it's about connecting people, ideas, and emotions in a way that truly reflects the vibrant life inside and outside our campus. I'm eager to contribute to this creative journey, helping to weave together the unique perspectives that make our CMUnity so special. Together, we'll create something that speaks to everyone and brings us all a little closer.

Hiba's Note

Lamça has always been my monthly highlight—sipping coffee with friends, reading the latest issue, and chatting with the editors. This year, I'm thrilled to join as operations manager, overseeing all aspects, especially the exciting launch events that bring our community together. I aim to make Lamça a cozy space where you can enjoy coffee and catch up with peers. Let me know what you think of our events, and feel free to share your recommendations!





Reem's Note

Lam؜a has been an integral part of the CMUQ community the past few years, highlighting students' stories and experiences. The most inspiring part of Lam؜a is its legacy. Raising the student body's voices and connecting everyone through exchanging stories by any means of art and narrative is Lam؜a's vision. While these stories are

brought to life behind the scenes through our hardworking editor team, I will be working on capturing your pictures and memories at Lam؜a's exciting and awaited events. As head of marketing, I am mostly thrilled to capture your memories so they can be souvenirs that you can look back on. I can't wait to make memories with all of you. Follow us on instagram @lam7a_mag!



Najoud's Note

Hello! I'm the new creative director at Lam؜a. I've always wanted to be part of something and make my mark, especially something like this magazine that gives people a platform to show the different sides of themselves. I wrote a few pieces for Lam؜a before, and I felt that it was the one outlet in the university I could use to talk about art, and now, to actually make art while designing

the magazine (really grateful and excited!). I hope the existence of this magazine conveys that everyone has something to share, and everyone is eager to read about it :).

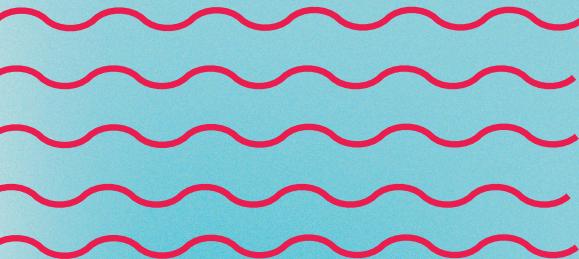


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Social

Synergies

CS Students: A Year

Last semester, a bunch of our CS students ventured out and spent a semester abroad spring afternoons, they really faced it all! Let's see what they have to say about their

Episode 1: Winter

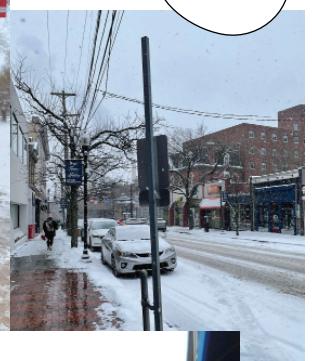
Daanish Khan, CS 2025

The semester exchange was AWESOME. From Pennsylvania to Florida, the blend of snow and temperate summer vibes were a blast. In Pittsburgh, I was able to explore hobbies I've always wanted to try: blacksmithing and baking.



Hajer Dahmani, CS 2025

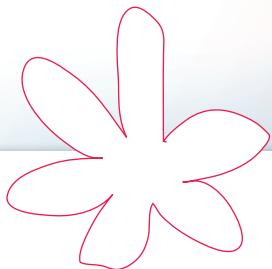
I had the opportunity to go on exchange to Pittsburgh with my CS batch in the spring semester. When we reached there, we were immediately welcomed by Pittsburgh's freezing weather and heavy rain. It was snowing heavily the first few days, which was fun as we went on walks and played with the snow. I remember vividly our first day of the semester, when everyone was covered in their heavy clothing pieces, the walk to our classes was full of snow and some of us almost slipped.



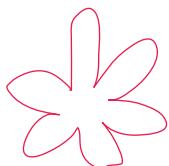
in the Life...

at the main campus in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Through snowy winter mornings to warm time there through an exclusive CMU-Q Students: An Exchange Semester in the Life.

Episode 2: Spring



In April, we were also able to drive out to see the solar eclipse, which was a surreal experience. Finally, Florida provided much needed respite during spring break, with me and boys going to Universal for a few days.



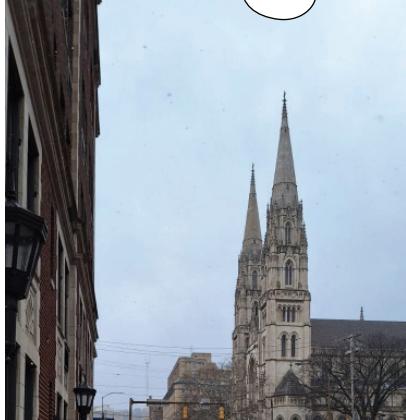
As the time went by, the weather started to get warmer and more tolerable. In fact, during our spring break, the weather was perfect and I got to travel to other cities, Boston and New York. I loved Boston because it was the perfect balance between a noisy and calm city. Towards the end of the break, I got to meet with the girls of my batch, Fatima and Aya, during their last night in New York. We went out for dinner and then explored New Times Square. It was really nice. I also really enjoyed watching an NBA game and got to see the Knicks play, which was very fun as I am a big basketball fan!



Episode 1: Winter

Iman Ouzzani, CS 2025

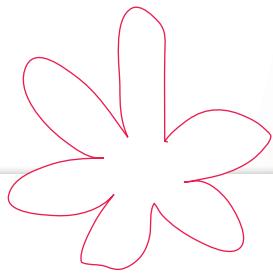
The first thing I experienced in the Pittsburgh exchange semester was the cold. The first week was the coldest, we all bundled up against the snowy cold weather, which was the complete opposite of the weather we were accustomed to. After a while, you start to enjoy it and find beauty in the snow. Beyond the weather, I guess there were other things. As a computer science major, I took the logical step and enrolled in classes that had nothing to do with my major. Why take classes to do with your major, when there is so much else to learn? My favorite classes included the history classes I took where I was surrounded by people of various academic and social backgrounds with perspectives other than my own. This made for interesting class discussions and made me realize that there was so much more I needed to learn.



Fatima Yousaf, CS 2025

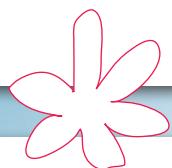
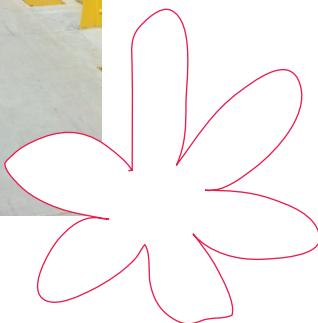
Spring 2024 in Pittsburgh was magical to say the least. Landing on that first night and feeling the cold breeze of -8 degrees Celcius was a feeling so unmatched - almost as amazing as the blissful snowy first day of classes. The first half of the semester as a CS student was all about finding the balance between my CS courses and wanting to explore the city - which I was so lucky to be able to do. We attended hockey games, went thrift shopping, experienced concerts and explored culture and history in museums.



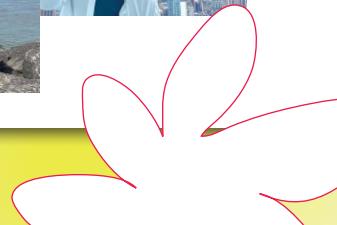


Episode 2: Spring

Just as we started to see the silver lining of the snowfall, the weather drastically changed to be warmer and wetter. That was one of the defining characteristics of Pittsburgh, the indecisiveness in its weather forecast. Out of my classes, I occasionally explored the city. I wouldn't say it is the most exciting place I've been to, but it certainly had its charm. I went to a couple of pretty cool museums and explored some of the surrounding areas. I think the best part of going on the exchange semester was going with my friends who I've grown a lot closer to after spending a lot of time with them. Looking back, I maybe could've done more - attending more university events and venturing out and about some more - but rather than regretting what I didn't do, I prefer to look back fondly about the memories I made.



As the weather got warmer, we ventured out further. So much further that we ended up in DC and New York for Spring Break! It was such an enlightening cultural experience where we visited museums, skyscrapers and even went to a Broadway show! True Spring in Pittsburgh was also beautiful. Visiting the Phipps Botanical Garden was such a pop of color against the harsh white of the snow we had just endured and Spring Carnival was just the cherry on top (though it was rainy - true Spring in Pittsburgh weather!). Somewhere in between, Hajar and I ventured out onto a side quest to Cleveland, Ohio where we watched the solar eclipse - a once in a lifetime experience <3 The sunshine towards the end was so beautiful and enjoyable, especially when we took a break from classes to go visit Kennywood, an amusement park in Pittsburgh.



Fairytales Freiburg

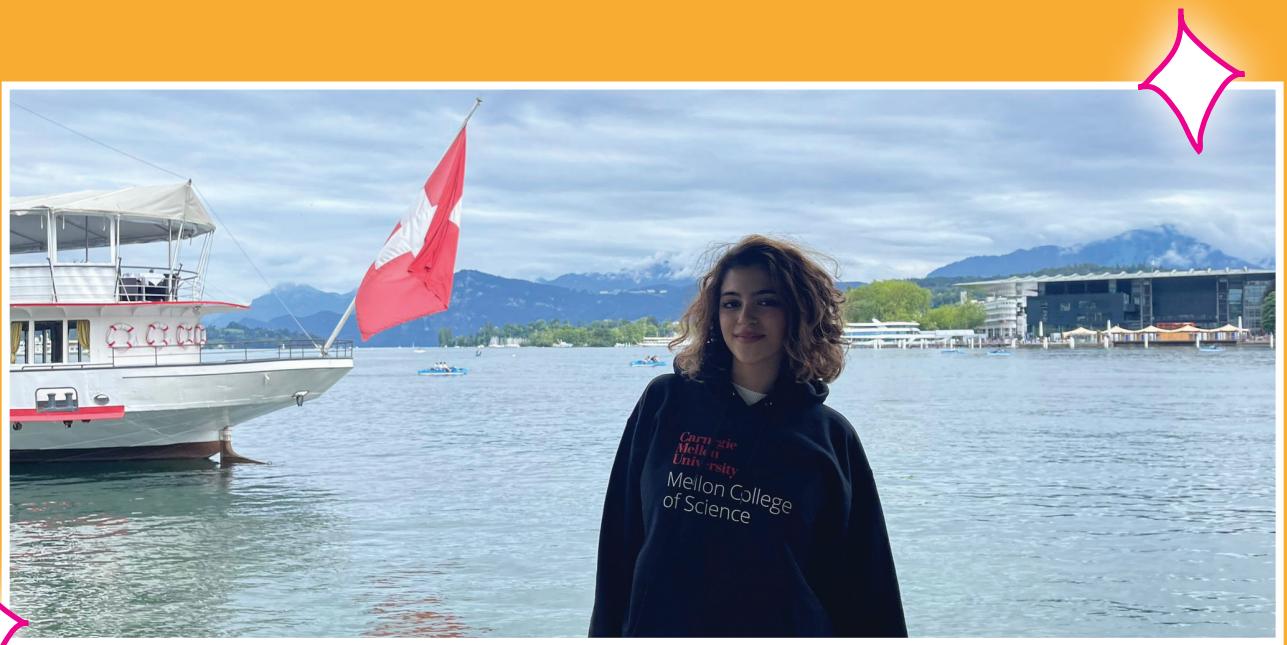
Dana Al Disi



ny good fairytale has bad and good – the witch and the prince, the curse and the wizard, the dragon and the hero. Yet I bet you haven't seen many fairytales where the villain... is the hero! This summer, I lived a real-life fairytale in Freiburg. One where some old part of me was the villainous dragon breathing fire from the top of the big church, and where I was my own brave hero, climbing to the tallest peak I've been and slaying the big scary monster.

Our story starts here in good old Doha, where a scaredy-cat Dana gets accidentally accepted into a month-long trip to learn German in, you guessed it, fairytale Freiburg. Freiburg was sure like a fairytale, with the sun always shining onto the cobblestone streets and old town buildings. Unfortunately, I didn't arrive into the fairytale as the princess or the hero... the intimidation of the trip made me feel like a big dragon, haunting myself, and robbing myself from the full excitement of it all.

You must understand where I was coming from - having to travel all alone to another country whose language I don't speak, with zero idea whether I'll make friends, or whether I'll succeed or make a fool out of myself. I was anxious, and that fiery dragon was really getting to me. My anxiety was almost proven right when I struggled to drag my (embarrassingly) heavy luggage to my dorm from the train, where I spent ten miserable minutes trying to carry it up two flights of stairs... being welcomed with that experience, I immediately thought, can I really survive this month? But, a follow-up thought, "I did it! And I'm here!" And that was only the beginning of a new, adventurous, brave Dana.



This new personality included striking up a conversation with the very first person I saw on the way to German class despite my nerves. Little did I know, I'd make a lot of friends in only the very first day of class. With these newfound companions, my adventures would have an even more exhilarating taste, and Freiburg would feel a little more like home.



I walked to new parts of the city every day, climbed the Münster's high tower, ventured into different bordering cities in France and Switzerland, and most scary of all, braved the monstrous German train system. On the less glamorous parts of my adventure, I forced myself to practice the German I learned in the real world. Nothing beats the thrill of success when communicating with other humans, to be understood through broken language (and sometimes made-up words).

Now that I've lived this summer fairytale, I understand that being brave is actually really easy once you recognize that evil dragon. So, take that leap! Pick up that sword, beat that dragon, and you just might find yourself in a fairytale.



BHUTAN

A COUNTRY WHERE THE HARMONY OF NATURE AND CULTURE HEALS THE SOUL

JEMAL: "BHUTAN IS NOT JUST A DESTINATION; IT'S A JOURNEY INTO THE HEART OF SERENITY, WHERE THE SOUL FINDS PEACE AND THE MIND, CLARITY. MY EXPERIENCE IN BHUTAN WAS NOTHING SHORT OF TRANSFORMATIVE—A PROFOUND CONNECTION TO A LAND THAT FEELS UNTOUCHED BY THE RUSH OF THE MODERN WORLD."

I was one of six lucky students who got to travel to Bhutan this past summer. Bhutan went from a country I had never heard of, to one rich with memories and moments I often revisit. It is incredible how deep of an impact one week can have, and how long that impact can linger, perhaps long enough that it becomes growth. We learnt so much, not only about sustainability and eco-friendliness but about character and strength. To come back from a trip and have its students boast about everything they saw and did, as well as become eager to teach others about the initiatives, passions and missions that they saw is not something that often happens, and yet it occurred naturally on our trip to Bhutan.

This was all thanks to our trip coordinators, Angela and Jennifer, who poured so much of their time and passion into the trip and made it so easy to enjoy. Without them, we never would have gotten to know what a beautiful country Bhutan is, and we are all so grateful to them.

Lets take a deeper look on this one special week that managed to touch the hearts of the students who went on it:

DAY 1: THE BEGINNING OF A WONDERFUL ADVENTURE - SUAD

My trip to Bhutan was an incredible experience, offering a refreshing and unique perspective compared to what I've seen before. The culture there is fascinatingly different, in the best possible way, and I truly enjoyed learning about it. Bhutan is known for its strong commitment to green sustainability, and it's remarkable how the entire nation collectively prioritizes environmental preservation, which not only benefits the country but also strengthens the sense of community. On just the first day we encountered many unique and different features that showcased the country's distinctive approach to life, such as the absence of traffic lights. Instead, we saw police officers directing traffic, which was both efficient and a reflection of their cooperative spirit.

That same day, we visited the Sangay Arts and Crafts School, where students immerse themselves in learning traditional crafts from a young age. They are taught various skills such as painting, wood carving, and weaving, all of which help preserve Bhutan's rich artistic heritage.

We also had the opportunity to try our hand at archery, Bhutan's traditional sport, which was incredibly fun and something we all thoroughly enjoyed. Later, we explored a bustling local market brimming with a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, adding another layer of delight to an already memorable day.

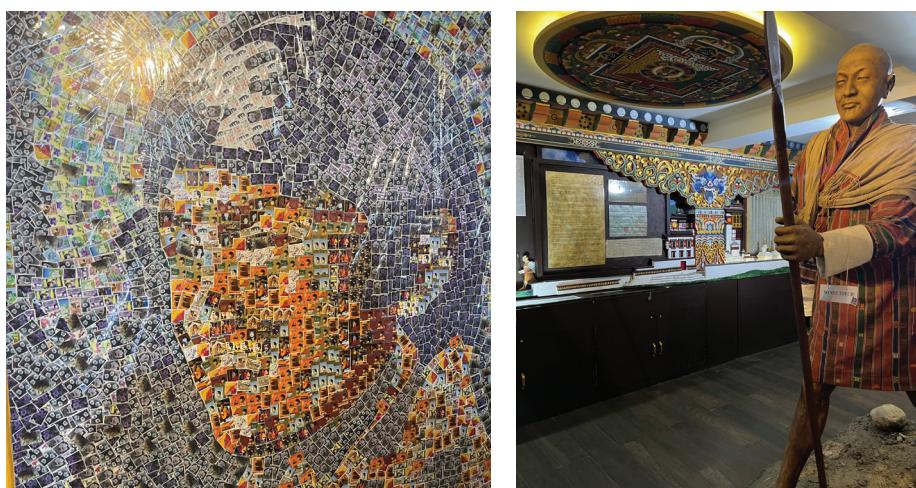


Archery, Bhutan's traditional sport

I'm incredibly glad and thankful that I had the opportunity to visit Bhutan and experience all that it has to offer. The memories I made there are ones I'll cherish forever, and I'm already looking forward to the day I can return and explore even more of this beautiful country. I'm especially grateful to our group leaders, Angela and Jennifer, whose guidance and support made this journey so enriching. The students I traveled with also played a huge role in making this experience truly lovely and amazing, and I'm thankful to have shared such unforgettable moments with them.

DAY 2: LESSONS TAKEN TO HEART - ENOCH

Day 2 started with a visit to the Bhutan Postal Museum. There I remember the 6 ft. 5 life sized replica of Garp Lungi Khorlo, Bhutan's fastest messenger, who was said to have been able to walk from one end of the country to the other in one day! It felt like I was in a fantasy world, and I had just been given lore on a local legend.



Bhutan Postal Musuem

Then, we went to the Department of Surface Transport where Ugyen Norbu talked to us about the challenges they face, the progress they've made and their plans for the future. Listening to him made me realize how quickly Bhutan has developed and grown, and yet how its continuous efforts to improve further are never at the cost of its culture or environment. Their number one priority is always sustaining what they currently have, and all their future moves and plans take this into account, which I thought was incredible. Their steadfast commitment made me realize how important sustainability really is. There are consequences for a country the future can not run.

There was something he said that stuck with me because I didn't understand it at first. He spoke about how there is a foreign misconception of Bhutan as some idyllic place because of its Gross National Happiness (GNH) Index. But he says the truth is that the GNH doesn't mean that everyone is happy; that GNH is more of a general philosophy for providing an enabling environment. I realized what that meant in our next two meetings with Jigme Tshering and Karma Yonten at the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN). This was an NGO dedicated to the conservation of the country's environment. There, I saw two individuals who were able to find success in something they were passionate about because they lived in an environment that enabled them to become successful - they had a government that supported them and a place that took environmental sustainability seriously.

Later that day, when the sun was nearing the horizon, we took a hike to Wangditse Monastery. It's these moments on the trip that truly made me feel alive and happy, and happy to be alive. It is so easy to forget how beautiful the world is but there, I saw it in the towering trees, in the way that the sunlight lit up the clouds, in the city of Thimphu sprawled across the valley. I heard it in the sound of singing birds, the rustling leaves, my ragged breath.

I FELT IT IN THE CHILLY WIND ON MY SKIN, THE COARSE DIRT, THE ACHE IN MY FEET. IT WAS A THOUSAND POEMS COME TO LIFE, AND IF THESE WERE THE SIGHTS THAT GARP LUNGI KHORLO SAW ON HIS JOURNEYS, OH WHAT I WOULD GIVE TO SEE THE THINGS HE SAW.

DAY 3: STUDYING, HIKING, AND SKIPPING STONES - ZEINA

Day 3 started with us transferring to Punakha, which was the former capital of Bhutan, a trip that took us down tree-covered mountains and through winding roads surrounded by colorful houses. Once in Punakha, our first stop was the College of Natural Resources, where we got to both tour the college and sit in on a class with the other students.



College of Natural Resources

Surprisingly, this was one of the moments on the trip that truly impacted me. There is something so unexpectedly comforting about traveling the world to a country you hadn't heard of before; one with a rich, diverse, and completely different culture, religion and language than yours, sitting in on a class with students your age, and coming to the incredibly simple realization that we are truly not so different after all.

Looking at hastily scrawled messages on the walls of the college, sitting anxiously beside my temporary classmate while we both took notes, and waving wildly to the students curiously peeking at us from above, I felt such a deep relatability and connection with everyone we met, and it truly became a highlight of my trip. It's such an obvious conclusion - yes Zeina, of course there are students in every country who are working and studying and probably experiencing the same things you are--

BUT IN THAT MOMENT, COMING FACE TO FACE WITH PEOPLE I COULD NOT COMMUNICATE WITH AND YET COULD UNDERSTAND... IT MADE ME SO HAPPY.

After leaving the college, we had a lovely picnic on the bank of a river, where we took many photos, did relaxing yoga with Angela, and hugged trees. It was also the moment I discovered that apparently everyone is actually a crazy stone-skipping master and I could not bounce a stone on water to save my life. I had to hug several trees after that realization.



Hugging trees by the river bank

Right beside where we picnicked, we went on to visit the Punakha Dzong, built in 1637 to serve as a religious and administrative centre of the region. It was a beautiful fortress, and also happened to be the place where a religious festival took part every March; a wonderful occasion in which a painting of the Buddha is painstakingly unwrapped and hung to show to the devout people gathered at the fortress at 1 in the morning. We then journeyed to and across the longest suspension bridge in the country which was hovering over a fast-flowing river, decorated with Buddhist flags, and showcasing the kind of view that has you stop and gaze in awe.

We ended the day with a hike. I have pictures of the mountain we hiked and the area around it in front of me as I sit and try to describe to you the beauty of the rock strewn paths that we stumbled our way through, all of them overtaken by plants of different sizes and shades of green. I try to weave together words so you could picture how our steps fell on the same worn down stairs that thousands of others had taken before us, with a backdrop of mountains and hills that seemed to come straight out of a painting. When I reached the top, all I could do was stare in awe at the view that was so beautiful it had me calling my parents to try and show them, because I knew then that no pictures would do it justice.

As we made our way down, Angela suggested that we stay quiet, and try to sharpen our other senses and clear our minds. When we got to our resort that night, it was those moments that stuck with me the most, the rustling of the leaves, the mooing of the cows far below, and the thudding of each step as I walked slowly, trying to burn the sights into my mind.



View at the top of the mountain

DAY 4: EMBRACING TRADITION - ZEINA

Day 4 was a bit more of a relaxed day compared to the rest of the week! We spent most of it on the road, traveling to a different city called Paro. On the way there, we stopped by a wind farm, where we learned about wind sustainability, how it works, and how much energy it produces. We also visited two different temples, each with its own deep history and beautiful sights. One was the Tamchog Llakhang, which featured multiple different beautiful statues, architecture, and paintings. One such painting that we saw depicted the cycle of life as thought of in Buddhism, with vibrant colours and insane details.

After visiting the temples, we had lunch in a restaurant modeled around a traditional Bhutanese home and ate incredibly delicious local food with our tour guides. At the end of the day, we arrived at our resort, which in and of itself was so pretty we all gathered together after checking in and walked around for a while. The view was incredible, and the rooms were scattered in separate houses on a mountain.

The real highlight of the day was the traditional clothes we got to wear. Women's traditional dress is called a Kira and is made up of a tie-on skirt and a jacket. Men's traditional dress is called a Gho and is a knee-length cloth tied with a belt. We were all incredibly jealous of Enoch wearing it, as he had what was virtually a massive pocket at his front where he stored all his belongings. The smiles and glances we got from the locals as we wandered around in the clothes were wonderful to return, and most of us bought part of the traditional dress to take back home.



Bhutan traditional clothes

DAY 5: DAY TRIP TO TIGER'S NEST: A BIRTHDAY TO REMEMBER

- JEMAL

Our adventure in Bhutan began with a captivating hike to the renowned Tiger's Nest. Despite my initial hesitation due to the expected physical challenge—six hours of hiking in total—I was swept away by the unfolding beauty of our ascent. The ancient trees, with their evolutionary tales of survival, and the playful clouds adorning the mountain peaks set the stage for a day of enchantment.

The hike was marked by a significant personal event: my 20th birthday. Unbeknownst to me, this day would unfold as one of unexpected joy and profound connection. As we traversed the lush trails, my new friends celebrated my birthday with handpicked flowers—a gesture that deeply touched my heart, making the flowers the most memorable I've ever received.

Reaching the midpoint of our hike, we encountered the legendary Tiger's Nest, a site imbued with the spiritual legacy of Guru Rinpoche. According to Bhutanese lore, Guru Rinpoche's wife transformed into a tiger to protect him as he meditated and fought a local deity, turning a foe into a guardian of the region. This history brought an aura of reverence to our visit, as we admired the temple's sacred art and felt the calm energy that pervaded this holy place.

Our descent was a reflective journey, culminating in a visit to a vibrant local market where I was gifted a traditional Bhutanese outfit—another heartwarming surprise from my friends. Meanwhile, some opted for a soothing hot stone bath, and others engaged in communal rice planting, infusing labor with joy through song. The day's culmination was truly magical: a surprise birthday celebration at a local restaurant. The warm ambiance, coupled with heartfelt gifts and wishes from my professors and peers, transformed my initial sadness—stemming from being away from family—into a cherished memory. This unexpected celebration not only deepened my bonds with my companions but also affirmed the joyous spirit of our collective journey.

As the trip concluded, leaving Bhutan was bittersweet. My soul had found a unique happiness in Bhutan, enriched by the day's experiences and the kindness of those around me. The trip to Tiger's Nest wasn't just a hike; it was a day that added years to my life in happiness and memorable moments.



Jemal's 20th birthday



Tiger's Nest hike

THIS BIRTHDAY, SET AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF BHUTAN'S MYSTICAL LANDSCAPES, WAS NOT JUST A CELEBRATION OF AGE BUT A PROFOUND EMBRACE OF LIFE'S BEAUTY AND THE UNEXPECTED JOYS OF NEW FRIENDSHIPS.

Embracing Leadership, Innovation, and Growth IN PORTUGAL

Talhah Peerbai

This summer I had the opportunity of a lifetime, sponsored by Carnegie Mellon University, I attended the European Innovation Academy 2024 in Portugal. The EIA is a three week program about entrepreneurship development and innovation. You have to launch a startup in just three weeks and pitch it to investors, with the potential of continuing after the program ends.

My journey as a participant in the EIA program was transformative, I took up the important and crucial role of CEO. My leadership, adaptability, and innovation skills were put to the test. I was not able achieve top ten, but I was able to win and get selected for the Porto cityxperiment with some lifelong friends which I made along the way.

MY TEAM OVER THREE WEEKS

I'd also like to introduce my amazing and diverse team for the main program. We had five passionate members on the team.

- CMO, Bella Stevens from UC Berkeley
- CTO, Joao Ramos from Instituto Superior De Engenharia De Lisboa
- CFO, Oskari Laine from VAMK University of Applied Sciences
- CPO, Adan Jawad from Carnegie Mellon University
- CEO, Myself from Carnegie Mellon University

Over the course of three weeks, I learned invaluable lessons from both my successes and challenges.



INNOVATION, SEEING BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

One of the earliest lessons I learnt from the program was the importance of understanding the true problem behind any challenge. It's tempting to jump straight to a solution and attempting to build something which you think is creative and ground breaking. I found this out the hard way where the initial idea I pitched to my team wasn't sufficient. The problem was major and I fell into a rabbit hole, losing grip of what needs to be solved and the essence of the problem.

LEADERSHIP, THE WEIGHT OF RESPONSIBILITY

As CEO of my team, I was immediately put into the position of establishing a team culture that fostered open communication. One of the most challenging parts was managing a team member who didn't speak English, which often left them feeling excluded and underutilized. This was something which I could've handled better than I did. I did put in effort into making sure all members were heard but due to the fast pace of the program, it's difficult to summarize and translate each change that's made.

CUSTOMER VALIDATION, THE FOUNDATION OF SUCCESS

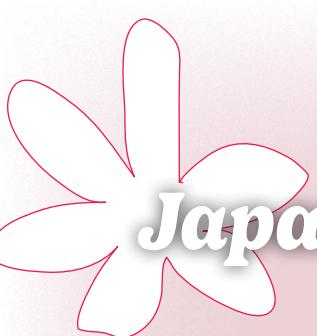
One of the most critical skills I developed during the program was the ability to effectively validate customer assumptions. Our team made a mistake and didn't truly put ourselves in the shoes of our customers. We did do validation but it wasn't thorough enough and the assumptions we made were clearly not valid. PUT YOURSELF IN THE CUSTOMERS SHOES.

PERSONAL GROWTH, CONFIDENCE AND REFLECTION

By the end of the program, I had grown significantly in my ability to lead, present, and adapt to new situations. Pitching to over 30 people during the startup expo, answering tough questions with confidence, and taking on the role of CEO despite challenges all contributed to my development. However, I also learned the importance of self-reflection, particularly when a team member provided feedback about feeling excluded due to language barriers. This feedback was a humbling reminder of the responsibilities of leadership and the need for clear and inclusive communication. I believe I did a great job with open communication to be able to receive feedback.

CONCLUSION, A JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND ADVENTURE

My experience in Portugal was a rollercoaster of highs and lows, but each moment contributed to my growth as a leader and innovator. The lessons I learned about innovation, leadership, customer validation, and teamwork will stay with me as I continue to develop both personally and professionally. While my team didn't make it to the top 10, I'm proud of the journey we undertook and the progress we made. The feedback, challenges, and successes have all shaped me into a more resilient, thoughtful, and confident leader, ready to tackle future challenges with renewed perspective and energy.



Japan: Embracing the Unexpected

Aya Al Sabahi

My summer plans sort of started unsure till I finalized an opportunity to intern in Japan for two months, with understandably hesitant parents and zero plans, I packed my bags from Muscat and hoped for the best!

Interning at Tokyo Seito University has definitely been an experience that has taught me a lot, from understanding cultural differences and work culture but also how to work with other interns with different skillsets and making the most out of uncertainty.

I think more than anything, talking to locals, discovering hidden gems, and spontaneous trips after work has been my favorite part of the trip overall.

To everyone but my fellow seniors (we kind of have to figure life out now and don't have another summer I guess...) I urge you to make the most of your summer vacation months, take a leap and say YES to unexpected opportunities when feasible!

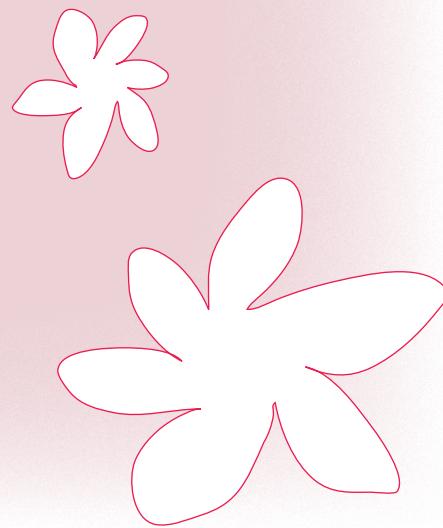
You really never know what may come out of it. Whether it be friendships, cultural exchange, or even possibly job opportunities.

Without taking this leap, I wouldn't have stories I'd tell for days to come and people to reach out to from all over the world.

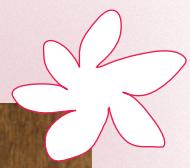
A big thank you to the kindest souls who made my trip better than I could have ever imagined, from my boss who looked into Japanese forums regarding halal snacks to take home, the old man who helped me when I was lost at the train station without asking for help, but most of all, my Japanese and American friends who made those two months feel like home.

Until next time Tokyo <3

PS: and yes, my last meal before leaving Japan was a warm rich bowl of ramen.



Quick captures:



Shibuya sky



Last ramen bowel :(



For all my car people, Daikoku JCT to see modded cars



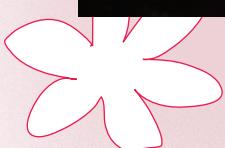
Kamakura, where train watching and beach dates meet



Hello Kitty rave at Puroland



Random but their toilets play fake flushing sounds so you can pee & poo in peace



The Relay

Bratu David Andrei

**TIMELESS MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES TO REMEMBER!
THIS IS HOW THOSE ORDINARY DAYS, WHEN THE ROUTINE SOMETIMES BECAME BORING, SEEM TO ME NOW.**

Woke up with "the night in my head" because the swimming pool at "Lia Manoliu" was eagerly waiting for us at seven in the morning. Yes... at seven, we were already in the water, with the warm-up done, prepared for "several" kilometers and dozens of laps to swim.

At nine o'clock, when some children barely wake up, we had already completed the "mileage"! After training, I dashed to school, at our place, at "Emil Racoviță", a high school with tradition in sports! I hit the same road four times a day, for two practices a day during the week, plus Saturdays. And I don't think there is a curb or a tree that we don't know on Maior Coravu! This road had become, from a cold asphalt path, a path to ourselves, the path to our very future.

After the morning training, the hours passed hard at school, and the afternoon found us back at another training, which seemed even harder. And I admit, I wanted it to be easier then: We wanted to be able to wake up late, too, and we wanted to have days when we could be "normal" children, too! But it didn't last long: Sunday, the non-swimming day, was strange. When water becomes your second skin, you miss it when it's gone.

Be careful what you wish for, my dears, because one day, unexpectedly, you may wake up with your wishes granted! But the hard part begins when you realize that your supposed wishes turn out to be real nightmares!

This is what happened to us, the swimmers from Lia. The spring of 2020 would not bring us the International Competition we were looking forward to; instead, it would bring us the isolation of Covid 19! Suddenly our whole world changed... we couldn't believe it!

FOR SWIMMERS, NOT BEING IN THE "WATER" IS LIKE FISH ON LAND, AS IF THE SEA WERE NO LONGER SALTY, THE GRASS WAS NO LONGER GREEN, AND THE FIRE WAS NO LONGER BURNING... AS IF WE MISSED NOTHING MORE THAN WE MISSED OUR TRAINING.

Do you think we let ourselves down? No, no way!! Athletes' secret lies in their determination, ambition, and motivation to do their best and be the best version of themselves every day. A champion is built from years of continuous work, and our source of energy comes from our confidence.

Thus, we woke up one morning a little later than usual on ZOOM! We also had our own WhatsApp group now. We called ourselves "Leru-i ler", from the name of our club - "Emil Racovita" High School. Here, the group received about two A4 pages of instructions for our "dry" training every day.

Suddenly, my room became cramped, and drastic furniture moves were necessary. Even so, it still didn't seem like I had enough space. Lunch hours were reserved for downloading a video with part of the training - The coach wanted proof that I wasn't on Netflix watching a movie! In the afternoon, the athletes from Ler were together again, live on Zoom, for another training session.

Meanwhile, we also specialized in photographic art. Okay... each with their available phones. We had to pay attention to our diets, so the trainer asked us to send him, in private, pictures of our "meals". In the meantime, I was starting to feel like a chef, "decorating" my plate to impress my team. It hadn't been a week, and my phone had been blocked by how many messages I received from Mr. Coach on the group. "Leru-i ler", although solitary during the times of isolation, were in solidarity with each other and those around them.

On the threshold of the Easter holiday, we thought we would prepare a surprise, a surprise for everyone, even for us. This year, unfortunately, the Easter holiday was going to be different.

We needed something specific for the swimmers from Ler. It wasn't hard! During the competition, the most important event for us was the relay. Although swimming is an individual sport, we have transformed it! For us, the most crucial part has always been the team! And, many times, we brought home the trophy, to "Racoviță", precisely due to this strategy.

Said and done! You can imagine that it took a whole script, a film direction, discretion... because it was a surprise. Let's see what we managed to do!

We prepared our "lanes" (the bed mattress in the bedroom) and the "block" (the edge of the bed frame); we equipped ourselves with the racing suits, the caps with the club's logo, the glasses, and, at precisely 4 p.m., when our Zoom meeting started, we were ready!

"Are you ready for the relay, Mr. Coach? Please take the stopwatch and the whistle because today we are the coaches on Zoom!"

We had prepared a mixed relay, four boys and four girls, as a surprise. We knew what everyone had to do and the order in which we "swam." The gallery was also in top form. It was exciting to see my colleagues on Zoom, wearing the club's gear and cheering for us, just like at a real competition!

"TAKE YOUR MARKS! GO!"

Oh, but how much we missed the sound of the coach's whistle! That's all we needed to hear. Four strokes, eight athletes, eight mattresses that had become "lanes", one coach, one gallery, the same spirit of Ler! Even now, the club still existed in isolation, without a pool, because Lerul was there, in the depths of our souls; it was with us at every start, turn, and finish!

I completed the mixed relay event. I admit, even I had a few tears under my swimming goggles. The gallery was in ecstasy, and the coach's eyes were teary under the pair of glasses! Even if they weren't visible under the swimming goggles or because of the screen separating us, we knew that our tears had weight...

Many would say that the story of the mixed relay from the apartments, in isolation, cannot possibly be true! But don't believe them, please! Athletes will find resources to reinvent themselves constantly; they will find resources to resist, resources to come back! A broken bed frame and a film posted on YouTube, which has become viral in the meantime, stand as proof of that relay... and I can say that I have also inspired others to try such activities.

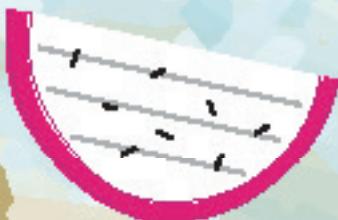
A few months have passed since then, and the day came when we met again in front of the pool at Lia Manoliu, like in the good old days! The small iron gate opened, and we entered one by one. Although we all wore masks, our eyes spoke to us. Did you know that eyes can also smile, not just cry?

Mine were smiling at that moment. The road to the pool on Maior Coravu had moved me a little because, this spring, it had not been with me, and I had missed it. Lia's pool was so patient with us, and we are so grateful! Lifelong friendships were made here; champions grew up between its lanes and have now returned as coaches. It was the pool at Lia that witnessed the "passing of the baton" between generations many times. It even hides the beginnings of many love stories... some will definitely start now because even though we were wearing masks, love could be seen in our eyes. The love of sport, of life, of swimming, the desire to continue.

IN A WORLD FULL OF EVERYTHING, WE WANTED TO SHOW THAT BEAUTY AND KINDNESS STILL EXIST; WE STILL HAVE STORIES TO TELL AND RELAYS TO COMPOSE...

Soon! The end of September will find Lia (because that's what we call her, she's one of us, she's part of the family) as the host of a national competition awaited by all Romanian swimmers. And we, the swimmers from LER, will perform again with our relay! We will bring smiles even under the masks, tears of joy, and emotion even under the glasses, and we hope we will take the trophy home to "Racoviță" on the same road from Maior Coravu...

HUMANS



OF CMU-Q





Stethoscopes and Susets

Mikal Tbaa

THIS SUMMER, SEVERAL OF OUR TALENTED BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES SENIORS TOOK PART IN AN ENRICHING SHADOWING PROGRAM IN GREECE. AMONG THEM WERE NOUR NASRALLAH AND DANA AL DISI, WHO GRACIOUSLY SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCES IN AN INTERVIEW THAT BROUGHT THEIR JOURNEY INTO THE SPOTLIGHT.

WHAT WERE YOUR INITIAL THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED IN GREECE?

Nour:

When I first arrived in Greece, I was excited about the new cultural and medical environment. Our program coordinators offered us a warm welcome and clarified all the things we needed to know to navigate our way through our 2 week stay. The weather was also quite hot so it wasn't the biggest difference from Doha conditions.

Dana:

I was definitely impressed at the dedication of the program staff as they took care of us as soon as we arrived at the airport. I was also super excited to get started as we had been doing pre-departure meetings and preparing for the trip for a while, and we were finally there!

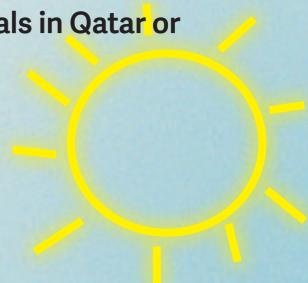
WHAT WAS THE WORK ENVIRONMENT LIKE IN THE HOSPITAL/CLINIC WHERE YOU WERE SHADOWING?

Nour:

It was mostly very professional yet friendly at the same time. It was great to see the doctor-patient interactions or interactions between the work team themselves, they communicated with each other and solved problems together on the spot. We even found a lot of residents and the doctors/surgeons would be very supportive towards them.

Dana:

The work environment in the hospitals was very dynamic and collaborative. All medical professionals were approachable and the atmosphere was less formal than hospitals in Qatar or the United States.





HOW WAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MENTORS OR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS YOU SHADOWED? WHAT WERE SOME KEY LESSONS YOU LEARNED FROM THEM?

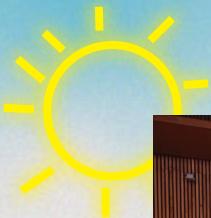
Nour:

The medical professionals I shadowed each had unique personalities and approaches. The way information was shared depended on who was available at the time—sometimes the anesthesiologist would provide explanations, other times it was the resident, and occasionally the surgeon would pause during a procedure to point out specific organs or clarify details. Despite Greek being their first language, the doctors were very friendly and made an effort to explain things in English. Overall, they were all happy to help and provide explanations whenever possible. One key lesson I learned was the importance of empathy and responsibility in patient care. They also emphasized the importance of handling high-pressure situations calmly and effectively.

Dana:

They were extremely supportive and clearly invested in showing us their work and helping us immerse in the experience. One of the greatest lessons from an intensive care doctor: money or status doesn't matter, as long as you do what you like. He had told us the story of how he worked in anesthesiology, and disliked the ego that most surgeons had, which made him turn away from surgery (despite its status and salary) and go towards what he was passionate about, which was intensive care. The same doctor also showed me how medical professionals truly deal with such a variety of cases, and never stop learning.





WHAT WERE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU FACED DURING THIS EXPERIENCE, AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

Nour:

I actually went into this experience as a squeamish person - the type of person who would cover their ears whenever surgery or blood was mentioned! So I had no idea how I would react to attending surgeries which are obviously pretty graphic. I was especially scared of seeing ophthalmology surgery since the idea of working with a sensitive place such as the eye freaked me out. I ended up taking it very well! What helped me overcome any fear was treating the experience like a purely academic one and disconnecting myself from the situation, basically as if I was simply attending a lecture or demonstration. That helped a lot, and now I am no longer squeamish!

Dana:

One challenge I faced was determining the right moments to interact with the medical professionals, especially during surgeries. It was crucial to assess when it was appropriate to ask questions and when to observe quietly. I overcame this by examining the environment and the surgical team's focus to ensure that my inquiries never interrupted critical steps. Eventually, I developed an understanding of when it was okay to engage and when it was best to wait.

HOW HAS THE SHADOWING EXPERIENCE CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE AS A BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES STUDENT?

Nour:

Being a biology senior, I have had extensive experience working in the lab and have already learned a lot in different electives. However, the lab and the classroom still lack the human and clinical elements, where biology is applied in very direct ways to humans. This experience really enhanced my studies since it added another dimension beyond the classroom or lab bench - instead of just studying about cancer or working with cancer cells, I watched a cancer tumor removal!



Dana:

This shadowing experience has definitely supplied my theoretical knowledge from CMUQ with practical exposure. I now have a better understanding of medical practices and the demands of patient care. While we were always taught to be cautious about sterility in the lab, observing surgeries made it clear that in the OR, maintaining sterility can be a matter of life or death.

WHAT DID YOU DO IN YOUR FREE TIME? ANY FAVORITE PLACES OR ACTIVITIES IN GREECE?

Nour:

After finishing our shadowing hours for the day, we typically spent our free time exploring more of Thessaloniki, whether it involved shopping or trying out different restaurants. The city is lively at all hours, so there was never a dull moment while roaming around. During the weekend, some of us visited Skiathos Island, which offered stunning views.

Dana:

We tried a lot of food - the food in Thessaloniki was literally always good. I also visited Athens on my free weekend and - being a history and Greek mythology nerd - had the most amazing time visiting the acropolis and ancient sites!

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER STUDENTS WHO ARE CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN A SIMILAR SHADOWING EXPERIENCE ABROAD?

Nour:

You definitely have to be open-minded and prepared to see graphic stuff and maybe unpleasant realities. During this experience, I saw a lot of surgeries and a lot of different patients who were in different levels of pain or discomfort, and you have to be okay with that since that is the reality of the medical field. It's not really about fear - I think people should still go on this experience if they are scared because the exposure helps a lot - it's more the willingness of being exposed to such things, being curious and not shying away from them.

Dana:

I highly recommend the Hippocrates medical shadowing program to students who are considering participating in it. It is exceptionally well-organized and offers a perfect balance between medical shadowing and cultural experiences. It's an excellent opportunity to deepen your understanding of medicine and assess whether this career path aligns with your interests.



Members





Only

Summer Study Abroad

Afomia, Firdavs, Ulpán

1. MANTES, FRANCE: A FINAL PROJECT By Afomia Seyoum

Afomia Seyoum's summer project takes us on a vivid journey through the streets of Nantes, where history and modernity intertwine. Through a blend of poetry and visual art, Afomia captures her transformative experience in this French city. Her comic and poem pair explores themes of identity, belonging, and cultural adaptation, as she navigates the challenges of immersing herself in a new language and culture.

Comic: Manntes, France



This is my last chance. I must make it work.

Such a beautiful city, filled with so much life.



But I don't even speak French. How will I fit in? I must become a shapeshifter. I must become nanties. I cannot fail.



I will embrace the language, history, and culture as mine.

Nantes is where history meets modernity.



Streets filled with untold old & new stories.

Nantes is where I will create my new family and find new friends.



I have tried my best to learn all about nantes. I've embraced your culture, language & history as mine.



I've worked hard and saved money to open up a store in Nantes.



But will all of this be enough?

Toujours En Rechercher

Je suis à la recherche de la liberté, une liberté que mes parents n'ont jamais eue. Je cherche la renaissance, la renaissance dans une vie que mes parents espéraient pour moi. Je recherche la compagnie, la compagnie de personnes qui me guideront à travers tout cela. J'aimerais que tout cela puisse se trouver là-bas, là où sont plantées mes racines. Mais ce n'est qu'un vœu pieux et personne n'a le temps pour ça.
Je dois partir à l'aventure et trouver une vie que je pourrai vraiment appeler la mienne.

Forever in Search

I seek freedom, the freedom my parents never had.
I seek rebirth, rebirth into the life my parents hoped I had.
I seek companionship, companionship that will guide me through all that. I wish all that could be right here where my roots are.
But that's just wishful thinking and who's got time for that.
I must venture and find the life I can truly call mine.

- Afomia Seyoum

2. FIRDAV'S SUMMER STUDY ABROAD

By FIRDAVS FAYZILLAEV

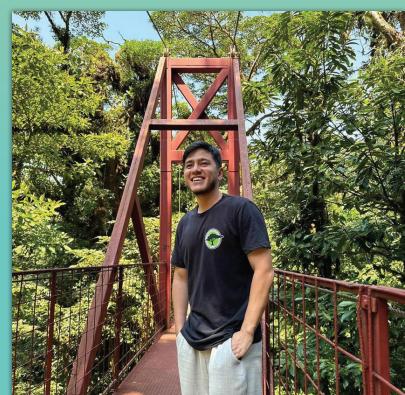
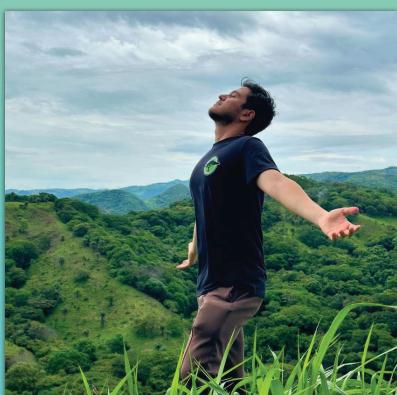
During a month-long stay with a local family in Costa Rica, I dove headfirst into the vibrant culture, thanks to the study abroad program that I chose to join this summer. Living like a local, I didn't just observe—I became part of the community, experiencing the heart of Costa Rican life in the most authentic way possible.

As the main focus of the program, me and several other students from the Pittsburgh campus, were taking a Spanish language course. Prior to this trip, I could barely count to ten in Spanish, however, by the end of it, I had made significant progress, particularly in my speaking skills since the host family I lived with spoke little to no English which pushed me to practice Spanish outside of the classroom. This first hand practice was invaluable and accelerated my language learning in ways that traditional classroom settings cannot.

Alongside the Spanish language course, I took a tropical ecology class which was another highlight of this trip. In this course, we explored various plant and bird species in the Costa Rican forests and as someone who had never previously seen a forest, this was an unforgettable experience. The biodiversity and beauty of the ecosystems in Costa Rican forests blew me away and the views were breathtaking. I like to believe that the stress-free and happy life that Costa Ricans live comes from the gorgeous lush and greenery they're surrounded with. The respect, love, and care they show for their environment is something the rest of the world could benefit from.

All in all, this program was more than just a language course. Not only did I have the chance to be immersed in nature for the first time but I also left the country with a new tongue, a new vision on life, and a new piece to my ever so developing character. 10/10 absolutely recommend.

That's all, and as they say in Costa Rica, ¡Pura Vida!



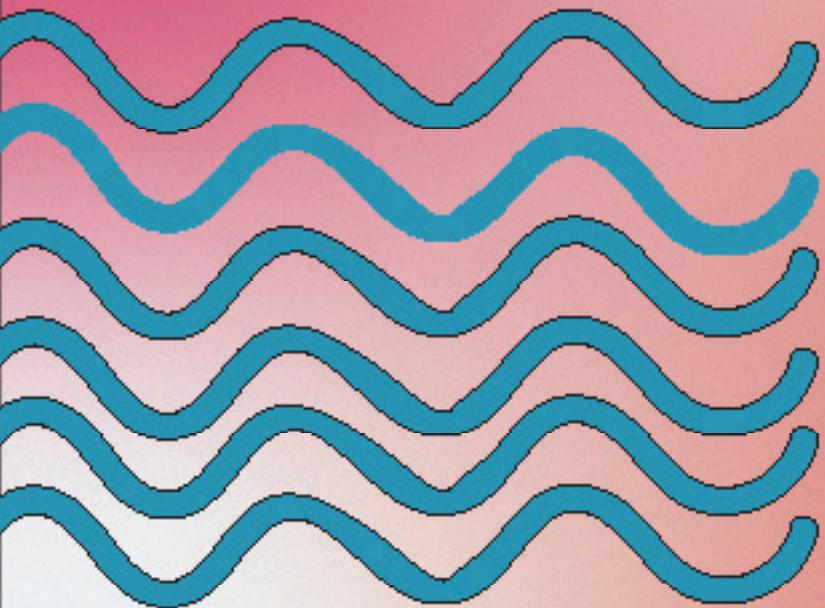
3. MADRID, SPAIN

By ULPAN KAIYRBAYEVA

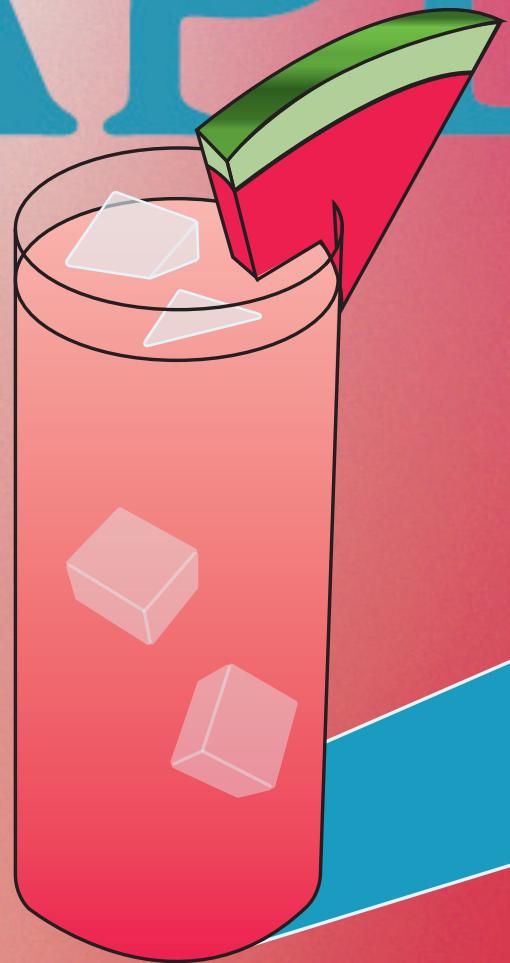
My experience with the Modern Language Program was incredibly fulfilling. At Estudio Samper, the warm atmosphere, friendly professors, and interactive lessons made learning Spanish both engaging and enjoyable. I connected with a diverse group of friends from various countries and age groups, enriching my experience even further. Beyond the main Spanish course, we participated in cultural classes that deepened my understanding of Spain. I had the opportunity to explore five cities—Valencia, Córdoba, Tossa de Mar, Barcelona, and Toledo—each offering its own unique charm. The vibrant energy of Madrid left a lasting impression as well. Comparing the cultures of Doha and Spain, I noticed striking differences: Spain's relaxed and vibrant vibe contrasted with Doha's more formal and traditional atmosphere. Both experiences were eye-opening in their own ways.



ART



SCAPE



When longing Hurts

By: Bratu David Andrea

I miss a little bit of good
But, it seems it doesn't come...
Air longing and rain longing
Lust for sea and lust for sun
Lust for Easter holidays and fun.
Now everything is longing, and it hurts...

Longing for words, for talks.
Spoken and heard.
And when my loving, dear granny
Sent me from afar
One embroidered tapestry mask
Made by her, with longing for me,
For so is the tradition, known by her
Year after year, giving me on holidays
Gifts with love,
Little treasures from blessed hands
For me only, carried out.

And my dear granny told me
With unspoken words, only thought, yet
heard!
For the words of elder people
Are heard from ancient times
In such a beautiful language:
-My boy, dear child,
May you never long for words,
Never forget the language easily,
Learn to smile, too
Even through now-empty eyes,

Speak many words,
My mask will help you!
You'll see, it's enchanted,
Embroidered by my hands
And it will carry your words gently
Like a prayer, up to the heavens.
May your loved ones be well
No illness to touch them,
Only goodness to embrace them!

And today, I have a longing.
I still miss my dear granny...
And my words and thoughts are aching!
Let me hug my granny,
And let's talk endlessly.
Wishing better just a bit!

But, it doesn't seem to come.....
Neither on a cloud nor on a wind
Do I see the good coming,
And then... I wonder, world:
Doesn't goodness long for us?
May our lives be filled with calmed longings,
spoken words, and shared smiles!

*Poetry about missing my grandmother during the pandemic.
(Translated to the best of my ability).*

A Glimpse into Florence...



**By Lowla
Ibrahim**





Dump

- Aya Al Sabahi

SUMMER WORD SEARCH

august beach
issue pool
sport

A M B E A C H
S U L P P O O L
O M G K A A I
M Z K U M K L
N T T I S S E
S P O R T T A
I S S U E K I

DESIGN & LAYOUT BY
Najoud Al-Talib and Dania Elsharkawi