GLOBAL STRIDE FELLOWS

Meet the 2009-10 Fellows

L - R: Amira Aziz, Sarah Kay, Julia Franz. Standing L - R: Jevena Parks and Sheona Sauna, 2009 Global STRIDE Fellows

Five students chose the Global Stride option when offered a Stride fellowship this year. Amira Aziz, Sarah Kay, Julia Franz, Jeneva Parks and Sheona Sauna all share a love of studying foreign languages and an interest in viewing problems and issues from a global perspective. All five have studied at least one language and have either traveled or studied abroad before coming to Smith.

After studying Spanish in high school, Amira Aziz is now eagerly learning Arabic and looking into Arabic language programs in Morocco or Jordan for the coming summer. Julia Franz, already accomplished in German, started Chinese in high school and spent a summer in China living with a host family. This year she is enrolled in Chinese III and hopes to go back to China this coming summer. “As far as ventures into the foreign next summer,” Julia notes, “I am quickly realizing that China is under my skin and there to stay.”

Jeneva Parks and Sheona Sauna, having studied Spanish in high school, decided to begin French this fall. As Sheona remarks, “I think its great that the Global Stride program will let us start studying abroad and visiting and learning about other cultures after only our first year.” Both she and Jeneva are interested in international relations and studying on the Geneva program during their junior year. Jeneva is especially cognizant of the importance of cultural immersion for studying international relations: “Ever since my first trip out of the country I realized the profound knowledge that can be gained from cultural immersion and spending even a short time in another country. I would like to study international relations, so I think the Global Stride program will give me some hands-on experience in that area.” She adds, “Relations between countries are a constant concern of our government, but I think it should be done not only from an office in Washington, but by actually getting out to these other nations.”

With six years of French behind her, Sarah Kay was able to jump directly into the literature and culture courses in French. Her interest in romance languages is leading her to explore the possibility of starting to learn Italian on an intensive summer abroad program. “Long term,” she states, “there are at least a dozen languages I would love to learn and even more countries I hope to someday visit. I am considering a career in translation, most likely scientific, but even if that is not the case, I have a passion for learning languages.”

Their first semester as Global Stride Fellows, Amira, Julia, Sarah, Sheona and Jeneva have all interviewed some of the twelve international exchange students enrolled in the American Studies Certificate Program,
asking them about their initial reactions to studying in a foreign country and how the American and Smith education experience compares to their home country university system. Read here to find out more about Katarina Dusikova and Pierre Magdaleine-Guillot de Suduirot, Hasmik Najaryan and Mohsen Jalali, and Johanna Stegmaier, Yvonne Liu and Celine Kreb.