Our program is home to many talented, distinguished students, and sometimes those students get the opportunity to shine and represent the Provost’s Scholars Program elsewhere. This past summer Dalia Elmelige did just that by going beyond the walls of USF to experience real world dilemmas amongst the country’s brightest at the Carter Center Internship in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Carter Center is a non-profit organization founded by former President Jimmy Carter centered on global issues, and its internship program aims to provide exceptional students with real world experience pertaining to critical issues in an engaging environment.

Elmelige’s particular area of focus was conflict resolution in the Middle East. Having been chosen out of 170 applicants, she had the task of leading an initiative to counter ISIS propaganda and used her native Arabic skills to take charge of the project.

Elmelige and her fellow interns watched and downloaded videos distributed by ISIS and created a coding sheet filled with data gathered from these observations to be distributed at various conferences in an effort to develop an effective way for religious leaders to combat these videos.

(Continued on page 2)
PSP spotlight: Beyond the classroom (cont. from page 1)

Elmelige also authored Daily News updates, briefings written after monitoring Middle Eastern news outlets that were published every day for those involved with the Center. An International Studies and Anthropology double major, Elmelige said the internship helped her narrow down her future career goals. “The internship was painful work, but amazing,” she said.

She wants other PSPs to know that if they have questions about what to do after graduating, a similar program might be the answer. “Internships are a good way to figure out what you want to do,” she said. Elmelige plans to intern again in the future before going on to graduate school where she wants to continue studying International Studies or even International Law.

When asked what the Provost’s Scholars Program did for her in preparation for this internship opportunity, she said that the rigorous schedule at the Carter Center was reflective of the PSP schedule, which made her appreciate her time management skills.

Elmelige expressed immense gratitude for Ms. Wray, who was instrumental in guiding her throughout the application process and gave her a glowing recommendation letter. After this experience, she learned about commitment and dedication, and found a new confidence in herself that she could accomplish big, important things.

Elmelige demonstrates how the Provost’s Scholars Program not only serves to help students within the university setting, but on any endeavors that our students pursue.

"ELMELIGE DEMONSTRATES HOW THE PROVOST’S SCHOLARS PROGRAM NOT ONLY SERVES TO HELP STUDENTS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY SETTING, BUT ON ANY ENDEAVORS THAT OUR STUDENTS PURSUE."
Members of USF’s Women in Leadership and Philanthropy sat in hushed excitement awaiting a speech from Amelia Rose Earhart at their 10th Annual Fall Symposium. Students, businesswomen, and leaders had gathered together to discuss women’s issues and the ways of philanthropy in today’s society.

I was honored to introduce several influential women, including USF system President Judy Genshaft, as well as university professors. Being able to spend time with these great leaders was an incredible opportunity to make connections and gain advice on how to better myself and my leadership skills.

After a series of “breakout” sessions, we congregated to the main room to hear from the keynote speaker, Amelia Rose Earhart. Earhart successfully circumnavigated the globe in a single-engine airplane, much like her namesake attempted to do decades before. She is the youngest woman to achieve this tremendous feat and has started her own non-profit organization called the Fly with Amelia Foundation, which focuses on getting young girls involved with aviation and science, technology, engineering, and math. She spoke about “finding our true north,” or figuring out who we truly are. She believes we should not listen to the expectations of others and should instead listen to ourselves.

As college students, and especially as Provost’s Scholars, we have many expectations we must uphold. Graduation is two years, one year, or just months away for some of us and we have countless responsibilities pulling us in different directions.

If I could take one piece of advice from this event, it would be from Earhart who said to listen to what you want and find who you truly are. It’s never too late to figure out what you want and you should only be doing what makes you truly happy.
PSP graduate assistant brings passion for learning to scholars

Zach Lowie
Cohort 2013

The first day of college can be hard for any student, especially if that first day is on one of the largest universities in Florida. For some, getting lost isn’t too hard – even finding one’s way out of the parking garage can be a challenge.

Shawn Mallory is all too familiar with this experience, finally making his way to the Allen Building earlier this year after being lost for hours. His initial shortcomings allowed him a great day of reflection, realizing that he was finally a graduate assistant, which was one of his important long-term goals throughout.

A first-year USF graduate student working on his master’s degree in the College Student Affairs, Mallory serves as the Provost’s Scholars Program graduate assistant. His program allows students to gain practical experience working through assistantships.

Mallory graduated from the University of West Florida in Pensacola with a bachelor’s degree in diversity studies this past spring. While he was an undergraduate student, Mallory worked in the orientation office for three years as an orientation leader and student coordinator, as well as working for housing and Greek life for two years.

Mallory knew he wanted to come to USF because of stellar higher education leaders, such as members of the Honors College. When it comes to working with Provost’s Scholars, accelerated graduation dates are key to the successful completion of the program.

“I’ve never worked with a group of students that’s just so academically focused,” Mallory said.

When Mallory isn’t working in the office, he’s spending time watching Netflix, with other graduate students, or relaxing with his cat, Nika. Ultimately he wants to work as a Dean or a Vice President of Student Affairs.

Mallory says he enjoys seeing students in a non-academic setting at events, such as the welcome back luncheon and new cohort meet-and-greet. He thinks the social aspect of college is just as important as the academic aspect. However, his main goal is to help scholars in their three-year journey, while making sure they still have a traditional four-year experience, he wants all PSPs to look back on USF with good memories about their undergraduate degree.

“The college experience is something that can’t be repeated,” Mallory said. “It’s a spectrum of finding your place in the world, finding your values. I know how important it is to feel like you matter at a university and how important it is to feel connected to the university after you’ve graduated.”
Eliza Rozier
Cohort 2015

The Provost’s Scholars Program (PSP) Social Committee rounded up students from all cohorts to play kickball. After mingling over breakfast, participants were divided between Team Green and Team Gold. Team Green was up to kick first and scored 3 points. It was then Team Gold’s turn to show what they had and scored 5 points!

While Team Gold was excited, Team Green was determined not to lose. They made a comeback the next inning and took a major lead for the rest of the game.

Even though the weather was not ideal, playing kickball was a blast and a great way to interact with students in the program. We were able to act goofy and have a great time while getting to know each other. This event brought us all together as PSPs and allowed new program members to feel comfortable talking to students in the other cohorts.

The kickball game showed me how special the Provost’s Scholars Program is, providing students with an atmosphere where they can be themselves, meet students who can mentor them in their academic studies, and just have a good time.
PSP alumni spotlight: Emily Palumbo

McKenna Kelley
Cohort 2014

Emily Palumbo, a member of cohort 2012, graduated with her bachelor’s degree in cellular and molecular biology this past May and is now working toward her Ph.D. in biomedical sciences at USF. She is scheduled to graduate in 2020, but her ambitious work ethic could make that happen even earlier.

As the program was only in its second year when she entered, Palumbo has gotten to witness the Provost’s Scholars Program expand and cement its core tenets of leadership, research and global experience. “We were kind of like the guinea pigs,” she said. “Definitely over the years that I was in the program, I’ve seen it get more structured. They have rules now, like ‘this is what you need to do and this is what we expect from you.’”

Palumbo fulfilled those expectations at the highest level. Her major leadership position was serving as the co-president of SEVA For Kids, an organization that raises money and does volunteer work to provide for children in need. Palumbo continues to work with the organization to raise awareness on campus.

“We had a volunteer opportunity with Shriner’s last year, and we’re trying to do that again this year,” she said. “We are also collecting books to donate to a library in Uganda that will hopefully be named after us.”

When it came time to complete her global experience requirement, Palumbo chose to study abroad in Florence, Italy. She said her Italian heritage led her to this decision and she highly recommends it to PSPs who have yet to have their international experience.

It was in meeting the program’s research requirement, though, that Palumbo discovered her passion. She spent a year and a half working in a lab researching protein interactions, saying that the Provost’s Scholars Program “demanding that I do research didn’t turn out to be a bad thing,” she said. “It didn’t turn out to be a demand. It became something that I really enjoyed doing.” This love for research has also influenced her post-doctorate plans, proposing that she may pursue work under the National Institute of Health or with the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

More than anything, Palumbo said, the Provost’s Scholars Program taught her the importance of determination and hard work. These two things are essential for graduating from the program in three years, something most other college students could not fathom. Palumbo said, “It seems like a lot, and it is a lot, but at the same time you can do it. You make time for all of it, and you actually enjoy doing all of it because you get something out of it.”

All PSPs eventually feel the pressure of their many obligations, something Palumbo was no stranger to during her time as an undergraduate. She emphasized finding a stress reliever to help get through these difficult times.
“Just to sit back for an hour and half to two hours to watch a movie with some friends and eat some junk food was enough,” she said.

“And then other times I would go and play volleyball with my roommate, and that was just a good release of energy. Instead of sitting down and watching a movie or studying, it allowed me to get up and kind of run around for a little bit and shake everything off.”

Looking back on her time in the program, Palumbo said current and future PSPs should appreciate the time they have at USF. She said that she came into the program thinking three years was a lot of time and looked forward to completing her degree quickly. By the end of it, she said that her time as an undergraduate went by so fast she would have been happy to take another year to enjoy it.

Still, the program was perfect for her and allowed her to get a jumpstart on her future. “If you’re motivated to get in and out, then definitely, this program is what you want to do,” she said. “Just remember to have fun, and cherish every moment because it does go by really fast.”

Consult Christy

My name is Christy Ibrahim and I’m a second year Provost’s scholar majoring in Criminology with a Psychology minor.

I was born and raised in upstate New York, and moved to Florida only a few years before starting at USF. I enjoy writing poetry and recently I have taken up hooping, which I recommend because it’s a lot of fun and a great stress reliever.

I’m excited to help my fellow Provost’s Scholars with any questions or concerns you may have regarding USF or life in general, but remember, it’s up to you too!

This can only be a helpful column if you continue to participate, so please feel free to email me any time at christyi@mail.usf.edu. If you prefer to remain nameless in the newsletter, please let me know and I will address your question anonymously. Hope to hear from you all soon!

Dear Christy,

The amount of money awarded to me through my scholarships changed this semester! Last year I had just enough to make things work, but this year I might not have enough, what do I do?

Anonymous

(Continued on page 8)
Dear Anonymous,

Thank you for this great question! Scholarships and other forms of financial aid are very important. As you have encountered, sometimes they will change every semester or every academic year. You may receive more, or the amount might even stay the same! But know that just because you receive a certain amount at one time does not mean you are guaranteed to get the same amount another time.

First, if you have not already done so, you should visit the Scholarships and Financial Aid Services office on campus. They will help assess your account balance and determine what kind of aid can be offered through existing university scholarships.

If it simply is a case of automatic fund changes, learn how to budget and manage your money with the help of USF’s Bull2Bull Financial Education Program. They have seminars on a wide variety of subjects throughout the semester to keep undergraduate students informed and fiscally responsible. Their seminars are free to students and they often give away free prizes.

Lastly, if you can create some time in your schedule without interfering with classes or studying, try to find a job on or off campus. Not only can you make money, but you could also be lucky enough to get an entry-level position in your field of study and make some great connections.

You may also be one of the lucky students to find a paying position as a research assistant, and then you can make money while also knocking out that research requirement! Just make sure that the amount of time you spend at work will not be a detriment to your education. Don’t forget, you are first and foremost a student!

Good luck!

Christy Ibrahim