

Spotlight



Name: Kelsey Hayes

Year: Graduate Student

Major: M.Ed. Administration of Higher Education (B.A. Anthropology '13)

Hometown: Centre, AL

Future Plans: I am interested in a career related to public history and museum education, and I hope to either work in a museum or university setting.

How did you just spend your summer?

From May through July, I lived and worked just outside of Paris, France, with the non-profit corporation American War Memorials Overseas (AWMO). The mission of AWMO is to document, promote, and preserve non-government supported war memorials honoring American military involvement abroad. I assisted with this mission by researching and adding new memorial entries to the online database, editing newsletters, and maintaining AWMO's social media presence among other tasks. I also had the opportunity to visit many war memorials and cemeteries across France and explore other parts of Europe on my own. It was the summer of a lifetime!

Why did you choose to become involved in Community and Civic Engagement?

As an undergrad I majored in anthropology with a double minor in Spanish and community and civic engagement. I added the CCE concentration to my plan of study as a sort-of “applied” dynamic. Without that element, my coursework was simply that—coursework! I felt the need to leave the classroom and really apply what I was learning to the world around me and CCE seemed like the best way to start. I have long been interested in CCE-related activities, and I grew up volunteering all the time in my community. The CCE program, however, took my community service efforts and combined them with my academic experiences to provide a unique plan of study that I believe would benefit any student and has the potential to really impact the community and world. There are endless possibilities with a CCE minor, and I am really proud to have been a part of such an innovative, hard-working group of students and faculty.

What life experiences have influenced your outlook and activism?

Like many Auburn students, I grew up in rural Alabama in a community that is very proud of its history; even with its considerable lack of resources and funding, my small town of Centre maintains a great local museum! Small-town southerners tend to be particularly proud and knowledgeable of their heritage and work hard to preserve their heirlooms and accompanying stories for future generations. The importance of objects and traditions in promoting this identity and social unity are what led me to anthropology and sparked my interest in museums and public history. At Auburn, my coursework covered the study of a wide range of diverse cultures and demographics, as well as local and global social issues of conflict, violence, power, and inequality. These overlapping themes have resulted in my interest in cultural preservation now being driven by the prospect of conflict resolution and peaceful cooperation starting at the community level.

What motivates you? What are you most passionate about in life?

Carpe diem! I have been presented with a number of incredible opportunities, and I have yet to regret any that I have taken. I am motivated by the thought of growing as an engaged citizen and learning more about the world around me. For the rest of my life, I hope to simply spread good rather than bad to others and engage with the world in a respectful, sustainable manner. There is always something new to learn, someone new to meet, and somewhere new to visit, and I am genuinely passionate about living with that mindset and doing it all to the best of my ability.

How did different types of campus activities influence and/or enrich your academic life?

I have been fortunate to have had so many great opportunities while at Auburn, and it seems like they have all built upon one another. As a freshman I got involved with a ton of different things (everything from the Raptor Center to the rowing team), trying to find activities that I really enjoyed. One of those was a volunteer position with the College of Science and Mathematics natural history collection which I

stumbled upon while working on a biology project. That position eventually turned into a two-year job. By the end of sophomore year I was deep into my major courses and managed to obtain a summer internship with the National Archives in New York City. That experience confirmed my interest in public history and led into the spring of my junior year when I studied abroad in Spain. I combined everything I had learned up to that point in my honors thesis which focused on history museums in two regions of Spain and their different depictions of the country's civil war. That allowed me to really explore my academic interests on my own. Besides these activities, I have taken a wide range of courses outside of my major, and have been active with the Women's Resource Center, Office of International Programs, the Auburn Circle magazine, and CCE, among others.

What is your favorite service-learning story or experience that you can convey to students that might give some concrete insight into what it is like to be involved in CCE?

Of course my summer abroad with AWMO was incredible, but before that I completed my CCE Capstone course in Auburn under the supervision of Dr. Mark Wilson. For my project, I helped to organize a civil rights conference concerned with the *Lee vs. Macon* case which led to the desegregation of public schools in Alabama, and I also attempted to obtain a historic marker commemorating the events of the case to be placed in Tuskegee. While the conference is to be held later this month, the historic marker proved to be a difficult task that I did not succeed in. I saw firsthand the challenges faced when trying to interfere in an unfamiliar community, and I realized just how difficult a seemingly simple process like placing a historic marker can be. Regardless, I believe the conference itself will be a success and will really spark conversation in Tuskegee and beyond, so I am proud to have been a part of the planning process!

What are your plans now?

I have just started coursework in the M.Ed. program in administration of higher education at Auburn this semester. After graduation, I hope to either continue my education or pursue a career related to museum education, particularly in museums dealing with difficult topics like war or genocide. I have enjoyed my experiences with CCE and want to use what I have learned through the program together with my academic interests and experiences to influence the way communities remember their pasts and build their futures. I feel that museums are excellent places of not just public learning, but community building and even conflict resolution, and that is something I really want to work toward and learn more about.



Kelsey at Utah Beach in Normandy (L) and in Lorraine (the tiny town of Murville) with Lillian Pfluke, founder and director of American War Memorials Overseas (R).