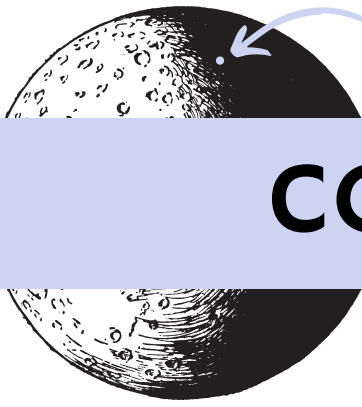


MOSAIC



SPRING 2021



Grinnell

COURAGE TO SPARE

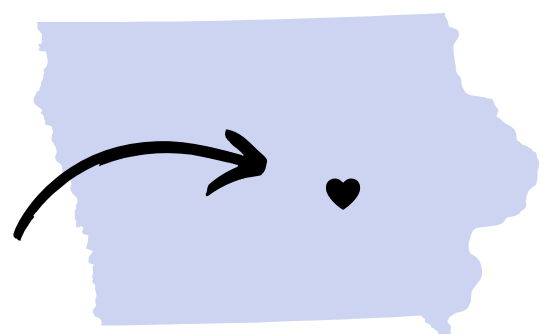
Ralph James Savarese
Professor of English



Scan this code to
view on YouTube

Try going to the moon for college.
 Try saying goodbye to your family and friends.
 Try renting a rocket.
 Try looking for food that you're familiar with—or oxygen.
 Try moving around in those giant boots and gloves.
 Try writing papers in Lunarese
 or making a home amidst so much dust.
 Did anyone remember water?
 How about friends?
 I think you're going to need both.
 The corn looks positively Martian,
 and the beans wave like congressmen.
 Who knew the moon could be so rural
 and the sky so dark?
 Like Buzz Aldrin and the other astronauts,
 you didn't visit campus.
 before deciding to enroll.
 Remember: loneliness, that eclipse,
 is as partial as it is temporary.
 Try thinking of gravity as a kind of vow,
 pulling you close.
 In Arabic the word for yes sounds like Iowa.

Grinnell



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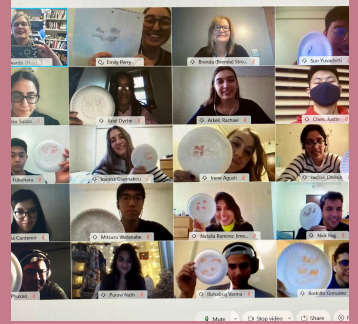
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Photos from IPOP 2020 With Spring Arrivals
 Welcome to Grinnell!!!



Our first time building a snowperson: Elsa!



INTERNATIONAL

*Jon Edwards, Senior Associate Director of Admission and
Coordinator of International Admission*

This was a new, COVID-era dilemma for international admissions counselors: When you have a virtual fair in East Asia that begins at 3am Central Daylight Time, do you go to bed early and get up early, or do you stay up late and then sleep in? I'm a night owl by nature, so I ended up choosing the latter, not that I looked or sounded any fresher than if I'd chosen the former, however. I hope the bags under my eyes didn't give me away! If they did, it was only for a handful of students who presented themselves to me during the 3-hour fair, spent staring at a Zoom screen and listening for a welcome ding - someone has entered your waiting room! Those who did join me in my room were very interested in Grinnell, of course, and we had productive conversations.

These were not all one-student-per-hour affairs, however. I had a blast meeting students at virtual fairs in Brazil, India, Pakistan, and the UK. Early on, I opted not to use stock campus footage as my background and sat proudly in foreground of my attic music studio turned admission office. The drum set, keyboards, or the guitars hanging on the walls would typically spark the curiosity of visiting students, especially fellow musicians, and quickly established a comfortable rapport which we could then take in many directions.

It does seem easier to take more time with people when they are joining you at home, and because I could often see their home backgrounds as well, our conversations went beyond the transactional student-admission officer exchange we are accustomed to. So, instead, we shared our experiences of the global pandemic and discussed their hopes and concerns about U.S. study and our current political culture. Several of the musicians on the other end even graced me with an impromptu performance! Eventually, we would hit upon what it means to be a Grinnellian and whether we might have a home for them. This was the way that most of my one-on-one student interviews would go as well. The pandemic actually allowed my colleague, Grace Lloyd, and I to do many more student interviews than we usually could for our international applicants. We ended up doing 250 of them by the end of the admission cycle.

So, although the late-night fairs could be hit-or-miss, the student interviews, virtual information sessions, and online visit programs were particularly important opportunities for our international applicants. For that, I thank my admissions colleagues and the members of our marketing and visit teams as well as student interns and tour guides who sprang into action to create brand-new virtual content and outreach strategies to help yield Grinnell's Class of 2024, admitted the week prior to the evacuation and subsequent shutdown of campus. This suddenly meant no in-person visits, no personalized tours of campus, no overnights, no classroom observations, no sampling bulgogi burgers in the dining hall. How would an admitted student decide to call Grinnell home for the next four years without a trial run?

ADMISSION

The truth is that most of our international students have never had the opportunity to do immersive, trial-run visits to campus before making their final May 1 decision. Most commit to Grinnell sight unseen (though our websites are readily viewed). They show up after up to 48-hours of travel at the smallest airport they've ever seen only to be whisked through the fresh air and rolling cornfields to the smallest, flattest town many of them have ever set foot in. Pretty brave and pretty amazing! If this is hard to imagine, their journey is captured with poetic viscosity in Ralph Savarese's *Courage to Spare*, a tribute to our international students. These new and inventive virtual offerings allowed those far-flung students to get much closer to Grinnell and Grinnellians and we look forward to their continued participation.

Speaking of flying around the world, I didn't get to do that this year, of course. Being grounded for the first time after 24 years of fall recruitment travel took some getting used to and I realize it has become part of my identity. It's one of the favorite parts of my job and I missed seeing my friends and colleagues from the road. The job of recruitment is mostly about venturing out - creating and maintaining relationships; talking, listening, and connecting people that can help each other; offering a vision of the future that might inspire future Grinnellians.

While the number of total applications had been steadily increasing each year, we experienced an over 40% increase in the number of international applications for the Class of 2025. In part, this was due to Grinnell going test-optional for the first time in college history, eliminating what can be a formidable obstacle to application for many international students, particularly during the pandemic. The increase created much more data-processing work for our operations staff, and I thank my long-time colleague and friend, Melinda Drees, whose tireless work ethic and attention to detail made it possible for us to complete our application review BEFORE our internal deadline. In committee, of course, we had to make even more difficult decisions on who to admit within such a highly selective environment.

I do look forward to the return of normalcy in our office and in my professional field - to see full faces, to have unscheduled laughs and conversations, and to move about the world freely. We've learned what we can do for our students virtually and will continue to reach out in all of the ways possible to tell Grinnell stories to whomever, however.



Jon Edwards with his "virtual background" in his attic/music studio/Admissions office.

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL

Karen Edwards, Associate Dean and Director of International Student Affairs

A YEAR OF GRATITUDE

The assignment to reflect on the past year feels ominous, but international educators embrace adventure, experiential learning, and diverse communication methods. This year has delivered all three!

In December of 2019, we read news reports looking outward. We felt concerned for friends around the globe. The focus shifted swiftly however, and within months our campus community would scatter – at least those who could. Before we could blink, parents and alumni were mailing precious PPE supplies to Iowa – with special thanks to the Chinese Student Association!

Staff and faculty transitioned to home-offices, engaging new routines and diverse technologies. Students in Grinnell moved into single rooms and isolated conditions, dependent on screens for social connection. Students who had returned home enrolled online across 20+ time zones and digital divides. For a 3:00pm class in Iowa, students in Thessaloniki tune-in at 11:00pm and those in Hanoi have to join the discussion at 3:00am!

For international students and scholars, the adventure has been compounded by evolving border policies, Consulate closures, and revised F-1 visa regulations – coupled with shifts in College policies and an intense political climate.

Rules that typically apply uniformly (impacting all international students mutually) have shifted throughout the pandemic, often changing from person to person depending on the student's nationality, physical location, and program status or class year. For many, the prospect of returning to in-person learning, even by next fall, will remain dependent on the status of border restrictions and Consulate services.

Race relations and culture wars in the U.S. have also caused harm, as have political strife and natural disasters globally – from Brazil to Ethiopia to Myanmar. Students don't always feel welcome in the U.S. and they often worry about things going on at home. Students who are at home have also become embroiled in local issues, making online engagement across the ocean feel understandably insignificant.

We have also learned a new language, of sorts, adding new words to our vocabulary, like: academic continuity, scurry, synchronous learning, and "Zoomed out." We've gained fluency in Webex, Teams, Calendly, and more. Most campus offices, including the OISA, have expanded the circle of collaboration – our work has required a greater sense of interconnectivity. This year nearly every campus function, for example, has been engaged in the quest to support international students well.

STUDENT AFFAIRS



I am ready for this adventure to end, but there is so much to be grateful for. The 'trip' would have been unbearable without Brenda Strong, Mollie Ullestad, Emily Perry, and our IPOP Mentors. We have relied on so many dedicated Grinnell staff and faculty partners, along with skillful colleagues from peer institutions. We all benefit daily from science in action, and an impressive SHAW team. Consulates are starting to re-open, and we are hopeful for progress on borders as well. We've seen so many individual acts of kindness and hospitality - staff and faculty helped students move in and out in rushed conditions; FIS hosts baked for continuous residents; Dining staff delivered meals in the heat of July and the blizzards of February; donors supported the distribution of curricular and technology supplies; etc. Finally, I am grateful to our amazing students! Many were new to Grinnell this year, and won't set foot on campus until their sophomore year! Some have stayed in Grinnell straight through, barely leaving campus in over a year. All have been responsive and resilient - thank you for your patience and your grace throughout this truly adventurous journey.



OISA Staff (Karen Edwards (front), Brenda Strong, & Emily Perry) checking-in an "Amigos" group of first-year students who arrived in January 2021.

FEBRUARY 2020

- Mooncakes, Matcha Cupcakes, & Tea
- Jazz Hands, Social Distancing
- Travel Bans

APRIL 2020

- DAR = Travel Agency
- Hybrid/Online Learning
- SEVP Accommodations
- Electronic I-20s!
- Work from Home

MAY 2020

- Academic Continuity
- WebEx, Teams, & Zoom
- 20+ Time Zones
- Mask Up! (w/ special thanks to CSA)
- Executive Orders
- Proposed Rule
- Eyes on India: Serious Flooding

SUMMER 2020

- Virtual Commencement
- Murder of George Floyd & Black Lives Matter Protests
- Continuous Resident Petitions
- Summer Terms
- COVID-19 Testing Pool
- Campus Activity Levels
- FIS Bake & Drop Off
- Eyes on Ethiopia: Civil Unrest
- IPOP [online]
- Synchronous vs. Asynchronous

FALL 2020

- U.S. 2020 Elections
- Eyes on Brazil: COVID Cases
- Winter Break Care Packages
- #CourageToSpare
- 31 of 89 First Years Arrive
- Insurrection & Impeachment
- Snow, Snow & More Snow
- Eyes on Myanmar: Military Coup
- Vaccination Roll Out
- Eyes on Europe: COVID
- Murders in Atlanta & #StopAsianHate
- DOS Phased Resumption
- TBD...

WINTER 2021

- U.S. 2020 Elections
- Eyes on Brazil: COVID Cases
- Winter Break Care Packages
- #CourageToSpare
- 31 of 89 First Years Arrive
- Insurrection & Impeachment
- Snow, Snow & More Snow
- Eyes on Myanmar: Military Coup
- Vaccination Roll Out
- Eyes on Europe: COVID
- Murders in Atlanta & #StopAsianHate
- DOS Phased Resumption
- TBD...

OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

*Alicia Stanley, Director of Off-Campus Study & Casey Clements,
Assistant Director of Off-Campus Study*

Off-Campus Study (OCS) is one of several units within Grinnell College's Institute for Global Engagement (IGE). IGE also includes Faculty-led Learning Across the Globe (FLAG) such as a Global Learning Program for 1st years, course-embedded travel, faculty-led summer research, and athletic teams abroad; a Language Learning Center that assists language departments and oversees an Alternative Language Study Option (ALSO); support for Visiting Scholars; and international partnerships and exchanges. As OCS staff, we seek to ensure that all Grinnell students have opportunities to engage in transformative, global learning experiences through credit-bearing semester and year-long Off-Campus Study programs in the U.S. and around the world. Despite a rise of short-term faculty-led programs and a decline in longer-term experiences nationwide, Grinnell's OCS enrollment has remained steady over the years, with more than 50 percent of each graduating class having participated.

The year of 2020 started off with Casey, as assistant director, joining Alicia, director in OCS. At that time, we were aware of a spreading virus but did not realize the impact the eventual COVID-19 global pandemic would have on our study abroad students. We did not know how much it would challenge our vision for them and disrupt the entire field of education abroad! The College experienced its first OCS Spring 2020 program suspensions in Italy during late February. Other countries in Europe and then the rest of the world soon followed.

As borders closed and travel restrictions were implemented, we worked around the clock to book flights for students and assist those who needed to shelter in place. Thanks to our program partners' ability to pivot as well as strong support from various offices at Grinnell, our students were able to complete their programs remotely. We were heartbroken that their time onsite was cut short and their envisioned experience wasn't fulfilled but awed by their resilience. Many reported that they learned a great deal and experienced personal growth both onsite and online. While the pandemic worsened, our heartbreak continued as all OCS Fall 2020 programming was cancelled and we worked with students to defer their OCS experiences to spring or the following year.

After the fall suspension, we were grateful to have the opportunity to take a nuanced approach to OCS Spring 2021 programs. Casey worked closely with Grinnell's Senior International Officer, Kate Patch, and the Data Analysis and Social Inquiry Lab (DASIL) team to collect and analyze many COVID considerations. These indicators ranged from OCS partner policies and practices, host country cases and deaths, health care infrastructure, travel restrictions, etc. After this analysis, a number of locations and programs were able to be approved, with the caveat that the sites would continue to be monitored by us and our partners. Unfortunately, many partners made the difficult decision to suspend after that and the remaining programs have had to start remotely.

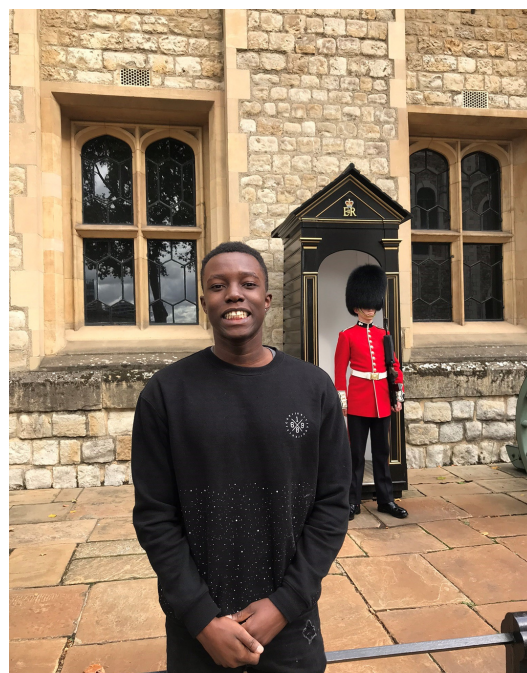
We are hopeful that the participants will have onsite experiences before the end of the semester. We are also happy to be working with students planning to participate in international internships and programs this summer.

Throughout this year, we have continued our work to prepare for 2021-2022. In collaboration with Susie Duke, who serves as acting director of our flagship Grinnell-in-London program, we have been meeting virtually with students based on our individual advising portfolios. We have also partnered with IGE's fabulous Global Envoy peer advisers and OCS alums, Abby Leonard and Elisha Tibatemwa, to host a Virtual Global Opportunities Fair, several panel events with past OCS participants and Grinnell alumni during International Education Week, an annual photo contest, and various information sessions. We greatly miss meeting with Grinnellians in person but are thrilled with the number of students who engaged with us remotely this year to explore OCS options, apply for Grinnell approval for the upcoming year, and remind us why we love our jobs so much. Now, perhaps more than ever, it is crucial to interact meaningfully with others around the world to explore ways in which we are interconnected, foster inclusive mindsets, and address critical global issues. We are optimistic about off-campus study next year, and look forward to continuing this engagement with our Grinnell community near and far.



Abby Leonard spent Spring 2020 abroad with SIT India: Public Health, Gender, and Community Action. Throughout her time, she got to explore Northern India and immerse herself in the culture and history of the nation. One of those experiences was seeing Humayun's Tomb in New Delhi. (above)

Elisha Tibatemwa spent fall 2019 abroad with Arcadia at Goldsmiths University in London. As a direct enrollment student, he got to fully experience London as a student and immerse himself in the culture. One of these experiences was visiting the Tower of London and trying to take pictures with the Queen's Guards (below) and a visit to Chinatown (left).



IPOP Mentors

HOW DID IPOP HAPPEN THIS YEAR?



Fitsum '21 - Ethiopia

"IPOP had to switch to a virtual setting this year, meaning we went through activities via video calls. Once students were cleared to arrive, they were housed in residence halls near their IPOP mentors on campus, then explored the campus following the quarantine procedures."

WHAT DID YOU LEARN THROUGH IPOP?



Antonella '23 - Ecuador

"I learned that people can adapt to anything and everything if they so choose! We had so many challenges this year and somehow we made it work. There's nothing better than seeing an awesome group of people come together to innovate solutions."

WHAT WERE SOME CHALLENGES?



Xinmiao (Austin) '23 - China

"The most challenging thing during this IPOP is definitely its distant nature. The most important purpose of IPOP is to create some connections and belongingness for our mentees. But this was fairly difficult when we are all meeting online..."

WHAT DID YOU FIND OUT?



Vidush '21 - India, New Zealand

"As an IPOP mentor, I wanted to give back to the community all the love and support I received in my first weeks at Grinnell. I admire all of the mentees, who travelled to a new country in the middle of a pandemic, and had to find their social support system while also navigating the challenges of isolation and social distancing."



Momi '22 - Japan



Letícia '23 - Brazil

"IPOP gave me those who are my closest friends today. I wanted to be a mentor to help others feel comfortable, given that they travel from all around the world to a new environment. There's just something about helping mentees that makes me happy. It could be just a campus tour, explaining laundry, or just being someone they can trust."

"A benefit of becoming an IPOP mentor was that I was able to feel the excitement of an incoming student again. There's nothing more exciting than meeting new people and getting to know each other and learning about your college for the first time!"

"My favorite IPOP event was the Dari Barn run. I was able to meet new people and at the same time spend more time with my IPOP group. Mentees, never be afraid to chase your own dream!"



"Dear Mentees,
I hope you know how much the college community cares about you. You had a hard transition but truly, things are steadily getting better and I am so excited for you to experience everything Grinnell has to offer. Remember to take care of those around you and yourself. Also, know that we are always here for you and beyond excited to catch up when we see you passing by!"

WHY DID YOU BECOME A MENTOR?



Puravi '21 - India

BENEFIT OF BEING AN IPOP MENTOR?



Shirley '22 - South Korea

YOUR FAVOURITE MOMENT?



Justin '21 - Taiwan

MESSAGE TO MENTEES?



Saule '23 - Lithuania



Rachael '22 - England



Sriyash '21 - India



NOSTALGIC MUSINGS AND LONG WALKS



TANAWIN (SUN) YUVACHITTI

Class of 2024 - Thailand

Before my first glimpse of the town of Grinnell in the middle of the night, almost everything that surrounded me was darkness and layers of snow. Being from a tropical country, I found it all bewildering. For about an hour, I had been on a shuttle bus assigned to incoming international students by the college. As our brains attempted to comprehend that we were now in the States, the bus sped past the Des Moines State Capitol (which I mistook for a Greek Orthodox church) and straight into the lowland countryside, illuminated only by the moon, the headlights of the occasional trailer truck, and some streetlights. Since it was too dark to see outside, we turned to random conversations with each other.

While we did not know it back then, these conversations would serve as the cornerstone to friends that I cherish to this day. I could still remember clearly how at the front of the bus, I was in a discussion about video games (the ethics behind *Cyberpunk 2077*) while in the back, there was some talk about the country of Spain. It was in that short timespan that I began noticing the formation of possibly life-long dynamics between these people who were just strangers less than a day ago.

By the time the shuttle driver took the Grinnell exit off the highway, I can still feel the excitement that came over me as my friends and I gazed out of the bus windows, witnesses to a quaint Midwestern town with red brick buildings covered in more snow than I had ever seen. I couldn't help, as a history enthusiast, but imagine Grinnell as one of those frontier towns that was built in northern Canada during the Klondike Gold Rush. It was as if the sight of every single building -- like the local supermarket McNally's, or Choung's Garden -- could fill us with wonder. I had seen the town of Grinnell before arriving, but only through Google Maps, and I must say that the application doesn't do Grinnell any justice, even when it comes to displaying its charm in the middle of the night.

I'm sure that to this day, folks from back home are still saying that I'm studying at some university with a name that sounds like Cornell in an agricultural state in the middle of nowhere, but I would say with certainty that there is a charm to this place that you can't experience until you are there in person.



A street in downtown Grinnell at sunset, bathed in bright, orange sunlight.

After we were dropped at our residence halls, I found myself in my new small, yet comfy, room on the second floor of Clark Hall with only two suitcases filled with clothes and other amenities. I immediately began to wonder what was in store for me as I transitioned into this next chapter of my life. I quickly realized that the act of spontaneous, intuitive walking was all I needed to become used to living life in college.

Because of my status as an international student, I arrived on campus before the domestic first-year students. I care deeply for my American friends, especially since many of them have shown me a heartwarming level of kindness and opened my eyes to what contemporary American life looks like. However, I appreciated the solitude before the entrance of the first wave of American students. It must have been quite the spectacle for possible onlookers to see some random Asian guy standing alone in the middle of Mac Field, rolling around in snow with childlike curiosity -- and this, of course, was after slipping on ice and bruising my butt just mere minutes before. There's just something about being on campus that can make you want to be outside, snow and all. Compared to the decorated but cramped residence hall room, being outdoors provides a place of possibilities, a place where you could easily stumble upon new encounters and experiences. In my case, this turned out to be true.

Grinnell's eye-catching architecture and tranquil natural beauty gives off an air of intellectual thought and creative energy. You can wander around aimlessly with no destination in mind, gradually taking in your surroundings and reflecting on life at the same time. I often find myself walking along the railroad tracks on campus, trying to maintain my balance on the iron tracks and reminiscing.



A snowy February day from the second-floor lounge in Cowles Hall.

A excellent time for a walk is strangely enough when it's raining outside and the air smells heavy with moisture. In Thailand, from April to October, there's this natural phenomenon called the Monsoon Season. The weather is rainy almost every day, and people celebrate the fact that they don't have to deal with the sweltering heat anymore. You can look at how the rain outside changes the way your surroundings look, like the numerous droplets of water turning an asphalt street from gray to black or the same heavenly H₂O dripping serenely like a ballerina moving across the stage as it moves down a banana leaf. Just that familiar scent of moisture pulls me back down to earth and makes me feel relaxed. It is as if Mother Nature is trying to tell each and everyone of us to find the time to worry less about our daily responsibilities and just live life one step of a time, soaking in all those experiences that we will think back to one day with blissful nostalgia. While I wouldn't suggest running around and dancing in the Grinnell rain - since the temperature here can drop all the way down to less than five degrees Celsius - I highly recommend finding a spot preferably outside to sit back and just enjoy the whole experience. At the very least, you could open the window in your dorm room and let nature do its magic.



The beauty of Grinnell College doesn't just lie outside in the architecture and natural landscape, but also in the hearts of the people I've met on campus.

I've been here for about three months now, and I still can't seem to have any recollection of any spirit-crushing moment brought about by others. I'm not sure if it's just a gesture of courtesy in the Midwest, but when you walk out of your residence hall or wherever on campus you may be, it's as if everybody (including people you've never seen before) will wave at you and say hi. In most cases, you just can't help but end up striking a conversation with them.

I feel that this is how I made most of my friends here at Grinnell, and I find it rather touching how quickly two people can develop a dynamic that could very well last a lifetime. There always seems to be someone out there to help you out or make sure that you have a wonderful day. My first February here was a time in which it was as if I was making at least two new friends every single day. I would always find myself having study hall in the HSSC with someone after just meeting them days prior, or going on trips into town to get food with folks whose existence was unknown to me weeks before.

One of the most memorable moments of this was when a friendly gathering of Indian girls living in Smith Hall in North Campus turned into a multicultural socially distanced gathering which brought to life the spirit and camaraderie of the residence hall in a way that you can sense in the air. Even my lounge has this sentiment of community since there is always someone there, ready for a meaningful conversation or a moment to watch a movie.

Honestly, I don't think I could ask for a better group of people in one spot on the face of the earth, and I would suggest that anyone, even those who have been on campus for years, to find the time to get in tune with the positive energy you can get around campus, either from the people around you or the serenity of the daily serene which greets your eye from dawn till dusk.



FAMILY

First Year Experience

From Home in Brazil

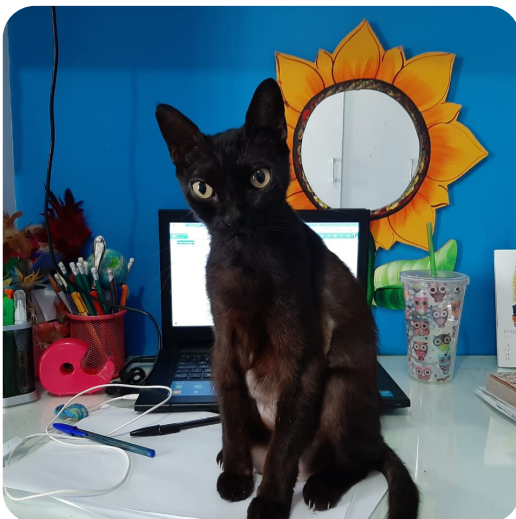


ANA BEATRIZ FERNANDES COSTA

Class of 2024 - Brazil

I come from an extremely huge, yet surprisingly united family. No matter what happens, we support each other, we take care of each other. So, when I was looking for a college, one of my main concerns was finding a place where I would have a similar feeling. I wanted a place where I would feel as embraced by the community as I feel by my family. I know it may sound a bit weird, and maybe it was asking too much, but that was what I was looking for. Spoiler alert, Grinnell's community did not disappoint me. From the moment I was accepted into the school, I was part of the family; I was a Grinnellian. Still, when I decided to start taking online classes from Brazil this Spring, I was scared. I feared I would not fit into the community since I was not on campus; I feared I would not develop a good relationship with my professors; I feared I would not make any friends. I was terrified that I would not only be alone, but also lonely. God, how wrong I was.

In these short 7.5 weeks, I have met so many incredible people. From my classmates to my professors, I enjoyed every instant I spent with them during and after classes. I got so attached that in our last class together, after I pressed that "leave meeting" button, I simply could not hold back my tears. I was so sad we would not be meeting regularly anymore, the distance felt so permanent. And it was while I was crying that I realized how much those people mattered to me. How could I ever think I would not form strong bonds with them? Only because I was not on campus? I was delusional.



Even in this short time, even in this online setting, I found the sense of family I was looking for. I felt that the whole community had my back, that they were there for me. And if I felt this way being all the way here in Brazil, I can only imagine how it will be once I get to campus. Honestly, I cannot wait to be in Grinnell. I cannot wait to be with my newly found family.

Ana's in-person classmate, Pérola (Pearl), who attends class with her once in a while.

DURING COVID...

SAY MY NAME: A STORY OF EMBRACING OUR CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE FACE OF ANTI-ASIAN RACISM



The Grinnell Say My Name (SMN) Project was initiated by the former Director of the Language Learning Center, Claire Frances in collaboration with the Office of International Student Affairs and several students, including Shudi Pan '19 and Yuanqi Zhao '19. SMN workshops are dedicated to helping members of the college community pronounce Chinese students' names properly and more confidently while providing some name-related cultural backgrounds. During this winter break of 2020-2021, we held three more sessions online in collaboration with OISA, and we plan to hold more sessions in the future.

MINGXUAN HE

Class of 2022 - China

Back in 2016, I traveled from China to the U.S. for a 3-month exchange/language training program as a high school sophomore. That was the first time I realized I had a problem with my Chinese name.



In my international high school in China, every student had an English name, mine being Sheldon. However, since the program instructed us to use our “official” i.e. Chinese Pinyin name, I had to teach everyone around me how to pronounce my name. The outcome was—you guessed it—not great. I could see that they tried hard, and I knew exactly how difficult it is to learn a completely different language, so I did not take any offense. However, I did feel somewhat awkward every time I had to re-teach my name, so as a high schooler who does everything to stay cool, at some point I started to say, “Just call me Ming for short.” That’s a straight-forward pronunciation in both languages, so life was easier for everyone.

Having experienced this culture shock with my name, I wrote about the issue of my Chinese vs. English name in my college application essay; I guess you could say my name is part of the reason why I’m here! After I came to Grinnell, I continued to use Ming though sometimes people would attempt to pronounce Mingxuan. They usually failed, but I really, really appreciated it every time.

My perspective changed later in my first year when my French professor Claire Frances first invited me to join the **Say My Name project** as a volunteer. At the beginning of the session, we watched the video Say My Name, where a group of students at Columbia University explained the meanings behind their Chinese names. That video, which later inspired the Grinnell SMN project, was produced in response to a serious racist incident where Chinese students had their name tags ripped off their dorm rooms. This makes me think SMN might be one of the earliest projects at Grinnell to combat against AAPI hate. Having learned about the incident, I began to realize that my name is more than my title — it carries part of my cultural identity. When I hide my name, I actively choose to “make lives easier” at the cost of omitting part of my identity. This feeling grew more as I volunteered in more SMN workshops and later co-organized several workshops together with Xindi and Elena. In one of the sessions, we had a slightly awkward moment when one faculty member wasn’t able to pronounce my name after multiple tries. I remember myself saying “Sorry this is so hard. Thank you for trying.” They immediately looked me in the eyes and responded “Don’t apologize! This is your name, so it’s MY fault I can’t pronounce it, not yours!”

I had an inner debate with myself for a minute after hearing this. In the Chinese culture, it is considered a virtue to practice “self-reflection” in order to “self-improve”. But in the context of fighting against racial and cultural biases, this practice can contribute to the “dangerous meekness” that has been stereotypically associated with Asian people. Next time someone gets our name wrong and refuses to learn, we should feel comfortable saying: It’s not OUR fault that our names are hard to pronounce. It’s YOUR responsibility to learn them.

I do not wish to discourage any of my peers from choosing an English name or a nickname if they intend to. After all, names are our self-identification and I do know many peers who picked their English names after favorite characters or stars, so they really do love their names. (It’s always better to ask directly rather than to assume anything!) I want to say that I totally understand the temptation to “blend in”, or “make people’s life easier” as I mentioned about my own experiences. Admittedly, it is “safe” to choose not to in places like Grinnell, where the vast majority have good awareness and respect for cultural differences -- but not everywhere is like Grinnell. Misogynistic violence and crimes against Asian people in the past year have demonstrated the existence of widespread, dangerous anti-Asian racism in this country. The name tag incident at Columbia University reminds us that our names are certainly related to this bias. By using our original names and asking people to pronounce them properly, we are raising cultural awareness in this country and protecting Asian international students and Asian Americans alike against hate and bias.

As one can tell by reading this article, I am not proficient with writing as an activist, so here is just a simple, personal message for my fellow Chinese/international/minority Grinnellians: Say your name, and say it out loud. Do not feel ashamed to call yourself something that’s hard to pronounce for English speakers. Instead, be proud of it. If you would like to help out, instead of changing your own name, consider referring people to SMN workshops or SMN volunteers (Mingxuan, Xindi, Elena). Feel free to use any material written by SMN volunteers to teach people how to pronounce your name!

Acknowledgements: (it’s such a long list, but it’s amazing how much help we got since the start of the project): I’d like to acknowledge Professor Frances, Shudi, and Yuanqi for laying the foundation for Grinnell SMN, as well as brave Chinese students at Columbia U who stood up against anti-Asian racism and started Say My Name. Big thank you to everyone who volunteered to help in SMN workshops including Yilan Dong ’21, Jiayu (Britney) He ’22 and so many others. Thank you to Xindi and Elena who have been amazing partners and teachers during this year’s sessions which involved many difficulties because of the online format. Thank you to Brenda, Karen, and Emily for helping organize the online workshops, recruiting, and rehearsing with us. Thank you to the staff at the CLS who gave us strong support and valuable feedback on improving the online sessions. And finally, thank you to everyone who has participated in our past workshops or plans to come to future ones—you being here means a lot to us!

LU (ELENA) LI

Class of 2023 - China

I am Lu Li, and I go by Elena. I am a second-year, psychology major with intended neuroscience or statistic concentration. I am originally from Beijing, China. I was really excited about the program when I was asked at the beginning. After three years of high school in the U.S, I did realize the difficulty of pronouncing Chinese characters for my classmates and teachers. I am grateful to whoever ca program because the program indeed demonstrates h different cultural backgrounds are treated with respect. We countered some challenges when we started to develop the program. The instruction of the whole Pinyin system is complex, so we could not fit it in a 45-minute long session. Therefore, we only selected the letters that are pronounced differently than it in English. I was a little nervous when we gave our first presentation. As a native mandarin speaker, I appreciate how much interest and effort that people have shown in the practice session.



XINDI SUN

Class of 2022 - China

I am Xindi Sun, a third-year music and biological chemistry major. Living in a country with a distinct cultural background from home for six years, I realized that pronouncing and memorizing names instantly from unfamiliar cultural backgrounds is a big part of the challenge of cultural shock. I found myself bad at names. However, almost every professor of mine could identify everyone's name easily on the first day, which was utterly impressive for me. I used to blame my inability to memorize names at first sight as an innate problem, but this program showed me otherwise. During the sessions, we taught our Chinese peers' names by establishing cultural associations and breaking down their structures. The diligent learning of our participants showed me that one's "ability" with names comes from mindfulness and care for others. Underneath the seeming easiness of other's ability to identify names, I used to fail to recognize the effort that they put into there. During the sessions, we also asked our participants to share the stories behind their own names. Surprisingly, many of them found out something new even about their long-known coworkers. Names could be more than a mark of one's identity. If you ask about the story behind your friends' names, you might also learn something new about them!



FROM MY WINDOW

How's the world looking outside **your** window?

This academic year, Grinnellians are spread out across the globe. To better visualize the views represented outside our windows, the Institute for Global Engagement and OISA held a photo competition and collected images from Grinnellian students and alum alike. Here are many of the submissions we received!



Shuhan (Hope) Yi '22 - China



Sean Lee '22 - Seoul, S. Korea



Leila Payer '21 - Grinnell, US



Hinako Minagi '22 - Tokyo, Japan



Vi Anh Nguyen '22 - Vietnam



Sophie Mero '22 - Nagaland, India

FROM MY WINDOW

How's the world looking outside **your** window?



Michaela Gelnarová '18 - London, UK



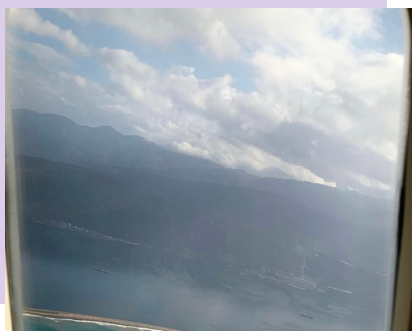
Cristian Sales Garcia '22 - Sao Paulo, Brazil



Mitsuru Watanabe '24 - Grinnell, US



Isabelle Bruder '23 - Rockport, Texas, US



Ariel Richards '23 - Jamaica
(from her airplane window)



Caleb Jenkins '24 - Grinnell, US

LOCKDOWN

IN J.A.



ARIEL RICHARDS

Class of 2023 - Jamaica

18° N and 77° W is where you'll find Jamaica, an island filled with good vibes, warmth, and mouth-watering flavors. Just like tourists, residents enjoy spending the day at the beach, eating authentic jerk chicken, and living it up at parties. You can also spot people playing a game of dominoes or in a stadium watching sporting events, or just doing road¹ with friends. Sadly, daily life has not been the same since March 10, 2020, when the first confirmed case of Covid-19 was reported on the island.

For national safety, residents have had to face numerous restrictions ranging from the number of people at gatherings to rules that only permit the elderly to leave home for necessities. These measures also led to the closure of our borders and public place, such as beaches, bars, and schools. The following lockdown not only affected the social and entertainment events like Carnival and 5k charity runs, but it also infringed on traditions such as Christmas dinner with extended family, our Independence Day Grand Gala on August 6, increased unemployment, and disadvantaged tourism, a key contributor to the economy.

As a result of the economic impact, enforcement measures were re-assessed and certain businesses were allowed to re-open, given that Covid-19 guidelines were maintained. With the risk of increasing cases, however, daily curfews have been implemented and reminders like "tan a yuh yaad",² "kip yuh distance",³ "wear yuh mask",⁴ and "Call 888-ONE-LOVE if you have symptoms..." broadcasted by the media, became embedded in our minds.

Adapting to the new normal was an obstacle that many overcame because Jamaicans know how to "tun wi han mek fashion".⁵ Accomplishments were celebrated via Zoom and people partied to our top reggae and dancehall tunes via DJs on radio show and virtual concerts. Others honed their creative skills or invested their time into entrepreneurship, posting on social media for all to see.

The foodies who were brave enough, attended picnics or brunches in restaurants and the free spirited explored the island, finding secluded rivers and hiking trails. Occasional friendly buck ups⁶ were complemented with elbow bump greetings instead of hugs -- but smiles remained under colorful homemade masks.

Businesses and organizations adapted by requiring customers and staff to wear masks, sanitize, and check their temperatures upon entering. Of course, our vendors capitalized on this demand to make an extra income. No Netflix? No problem! The movie theatre established a drive-in cinema to provide an outdoor and distanced experience. Tourists were allowed to experience a bit of Jamaica and interact with our people within certain geographic regions established as "areas safe for tourism". Lastly, live streams became the norm for award shows, festivals, religious services, and with the prohibition of nine nights⁷ and funeral services. Burial services were limited to 10 mourners, so many people gained the opportunity to bid farewell to their loved one via a livestream.

Without a doubt, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought a lot of pain and unwanted changes to a Jamaican's way of life. However, because "wi likkle but we tallawah",⁸ we have taken advantage of the slowed pace of life to spend quality time with our family and friends, to connect with nature, to better ourselves, to become advocates, and to appreciate life and what our island has to offer.

.....

PATOIS/PATWAH TRANSLATION

Jamaican Creole/Patois commonly called Patwah, is an English-based creole that originated as the West African slaves interact with and learnt English from plantation owners. This language is influenced by West African and English vernacular as well as bits of other languages from immigrant groups such as the Spanish who governed the island before being overthrown by the British.

1. **doing road:** go out
2. **tan a yuh yaad:** stay at home
3. **kip yuh distance:** social/physical distance
4. **wear yuh maks:** wear your mask
5. **tun wi han mek fashion:** innovation to create a solution during difficulties
6. **buck ups:** unexpectedly meet with someone
7. **prohibition of nine nights:** a gathering to celebrate the life of someone who has passed away, traditionally nine nights after the death, nowadays mostly the night before the funeral.
8. **wi likkle but we tallawah:** we're small but strong/fearless.

MY GAP YEAR: 2020-2021

Priyanka Dangol '22 - Kathmandu, Nepal

Throughout my whole life (pre-COVID), the idea of taking a break had never crossed my mind. It was just one academic year after another, one internship after another; I always found something to keep my mind occupied and "stay productive", just like how it's "supposed to be". Moreover, growing up in an Asian society, I feel like the idea of a gap year has always been highly stigmatized. Whenever my extended family referred to someone's child taking a gap year, they would say things like, "He lost one year." The word "lost" in itself has such negative implications, deeply rooted in capitalistic values that prioritize productivity over everything else.

Even when the pandemic started to worsen and we shifted to online classes in late March, I was still just thinking about getting back into the grind in the fall. This thinking was untroubled by the realization that online classes were only worsening my distraction issues, which stopped me from being able to retain any information. I started to think that it was the only way through until one of my best friends from high school mentioned she was planning to take a gap semester. The message took me off guard, and it hit me that I too could take a gap semester if I wanted to.

This alternative for my fall semester could alleviate the complications regarding time zones if I were to do online classes from home, as well as the of being exposed to the virus if I were to travel back to campus, half way across the world.



*Trekking in Solukhumbu, which is the same region as **Mt. Everest!***

The internalized sense of failure associated with a gap year, and the reality that I would graduate later than my friends, made this decision even more difficult. However, the support from my close circle of people really helped me realize how much I did not want to go back to school in a time like this and how much of a break I really needed.

Honestly, taking a gap year was the best decision I've made in a long time. To be able to shift my priorities to my health and my close relationships, instead of the academic grind, felt very freeing. During this past year, I have been able to video call my best friends in Australia bi-weekly, which was a huge step-up from the once a year video call we managed to do when I was in Grinnell (largely due to the vast time difference). I've also been able to go on several hikes with my mom and dad, exploring different hills around my city that I'd never been to before, despite having lived here for almost 21 years.

Cooking a myriad of dishes has claimed my free time, with some that take me over 3 hours! I've been trying to make a lot of international dishes that I tried at IPOP for my family, and they thankfully really seemed to appreciate the change in taste! A few of our favorites included Bánh xèo, Onigiri, Medovik (Russian Honey Cake), Japchae, Japanese-Style Chiffon Cake, Sambal Goreng Labu Siam - all of which I was introduced to through my friends at Grinnell! I also got to learn a lot of recipes from my mother and record videos of her making them so that I could reference them once I get back to campus.

Finally, I've had the privilege of being able to do a part-time internship at Open Learning Exchange, a social organization where I develop educational games and lead a website design project for a non-profit based in Malawi (Do For Children). Thankfully, not only have both of these work experiences been very insightful regarding my career trajectory but they have also been very emotionally fulfilling. I feel very fortunate that I had the privilege of taking a gap year and feel grateful that during this heavy time when the whole world is grieving, I am able to stay with my family whom I could always rely on for emotional support. I am really glad to say that I feel refreshed and ready to see what my senior year has in hold for me!



At Rara, Mugu which is a rural village in Nepal and home to one of Nepal's biggest lakes (March, 2021)



Samay Baji, a dish commonly eaten by people who belong to my ethnic group - Newar, prepared by my mom and me!

CARNIVAL IN COVID



ANTONELLA DIAZ

Class of 2023 - Ecuador

I've always been a huge fan of Carnaval. As a child, it felt like the only time when it was acceptable to misbehave and commit all of the *travesuras* we had been planning to carry out throughout the year. Carnaval was the only way to get all of us up by six AM, filling up water balloons even before we filled our bellies. We'd prepare to compete with the neighboring houses, and sometimes—when we were feeling extra competitive—those water balloons turned into Coca-Cola balloons.

Carnaval, to me, is a synonym of community. Regardless of age, race, economic status, or whether we even knew each other, it was a game where everyone participated. Surely, some of the best childhood memories I have.

This year was very different: there were no games, no water balloons before breakfast with friends, and no community gatherings. My family and I decided to have our miniature Carnaval, in an effort to make my little sister, whose birthday falls around this time, not miss out on the fun. It turned out to be some of the best memories of the pandemic. It felt great to play around during a year that has been so difficult. Bonus: I am sure that the lower number of water balloons used made Pachamama very happy!



VINICIUS ONO

Class of 2024 - Brazil

Having lived for most of my life in Rio, I was constantly exposed to one of our most popular cultural traditions: Carnaval. Replete with vivid costumes and an energetic spirit, Carnaval is a time for celebration, happiness, and lots of confetti.

During Carnaval, Brazilians either go the streets to party or stay at home to watch the traditional Carnaval parades on TV. However, with the current global COVID crisis, Brazil was highly impacted and Carnaval was canceled.

Hopefully, next year with the alleviation of the crisis we will be fortunate enough to celebrate our beloved Carnaval.



Vinicius at Carnival (from a previous year).

MY NEW HOME IN GRINNELL

JUN SEOK CHOI

Class of 2022 - Nepal & South Korea



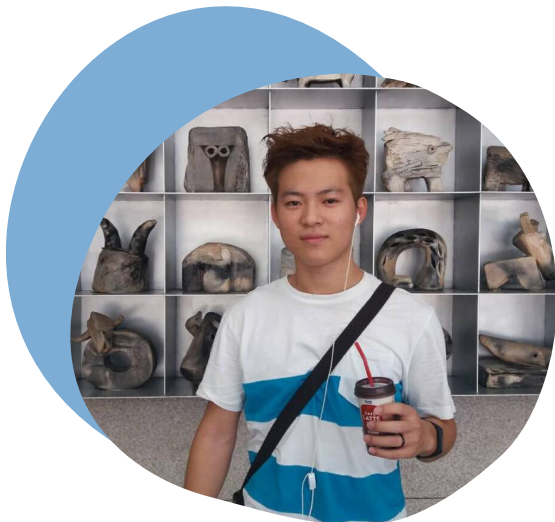
With my host family: Eli, Christian, Kaetlyn, Jordan and Audrey

Starting college was a really exciting and enjoyable experience for me: I got to meet new people, live in a new place and learn about a new culture. What has made my college experience much better is my Friends of International Students (FIS) host family, The Clarks—Jordan and Audrey, their three children Eli, Kaetlyn and Christian, along with their two dogs and cats. My host family has been very warm and welcoming toward me, which has made the transition from my life in Kathmandu to Grinnell much smoother. During winter break, I stayed on campus and there wasn't much to do, so my host family always invited me to their place. I would play video games with the kids, watch movies with the family, or play with their dogs and cats. I also spent Christmas with my host family, and as a family tradition, we watched the "Elf". Given that Audrey loves to make home crafts, we also used a Cricut machine to design Christmas shirts for our family. I remember sleeping over at my host family's place and waking up and opening Christmas presents with the rest of the family.

Christmas wasn't a holiday I celebrated back home so this was a very memorable experience for me. Given that I am far away from my family, I really appreciate that my host family looks out for me and invites me to their family gatherings.

My host family also introduced me to some popular sports played in the U.S. Prior to Grinnell, I used to only watch NBA games or soccer games, but my host family introduced me to American football and ice hockey. When the weather was warmer, my host dad taught me how to grip and throw a football and I used to play catch with the rest of the family. In addition, my host dad, Jordan, is a big Kansas City Chiefs fan and given that the Chiefs made it to the Superbowl this year and last year, watching the Superbowl with my host family and slowly learning the rules of the game was a new and enjoyable experience.

I also went to watch my first ice hockey game with my host family. My host mom, Audrey, loves the Iowa Wild and we went to watch a game against the Grand Rapids Griffins. It was my first time going to a sporting event and being in that arena surrounded by all the other fans was a surreal experience. Our team ended up losing the game, but I did get to see some fights between players; the players would throw their hockey stick and helmet and start throwing punches at each other. In most other sports, players can get penalized for fighting but in ice hockey, I learnt that referees permit fighting up to a certain extent, which I thought was surprising and funny at the same time.



There are so many things that I did with my host family that I cannot fit in this article, but I will always remember these experiences long after graduating. My friends always tell me that I have a very close relationship with my host family, and I feel very lucky to have them. I am grateful that they are a part of my life and can't wait to meet them soon!



Scan to sign up
to be a FIS host
for Fall 2021!

FRIENDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (FIS) helps to build friendships across culture, language, and generation. Every fall, Grinnell welcomes approximately 100 new international and global nomad students to campus. Students are invited to participate in FIS during their first year, and some relationships last longer. **Students learn more about the community, hosts learn more about the College, and everyone learns more about the world!**

THE FEELING OF NOT BEING ALONE

My Experience with Humanitarian Affairs Asia • **Clara Zioli Da Igreja '22 - Brazil**



Two things that I learned in the first semester of 2020 are that one event can have a huge impact on your future and Handshake (the online portal Grinnell uses for employment opportunities) can be quite unpredictable. As I started getting more and more interested in pursuing a career in humanitarian aid and international development, I decided to explore the wonderful world of Handshake. In the search bar, I simply typed “peace” and a single result came out: Peace Summit of Emerging Leaders, organized by Humanitarian Affairs Asia. I had no idea what the word “summit” meant and at this time, I thought Handshake showed only on-campus opportunities. So, I applied to attend.

I could barely believe it when I received an email letting me know that my application was approved and was even more surprised when the message started talking about hotel accommodations in Bangkok, Thailand. Then I thought, why not? I applied for funding through Wilson Center and one month later, I was packing to head to Thailand. In the middle of February, I hopped into the Burlington Trailways bus with summer clothes under my snow coat and only a backpack as my luggage.

I met a woman named Cynthia by chance while trying to figure out how to get to the airport from the bus station, and we spent the whole night at the airport talking. Her flight was just one hour before mine and she was completing her PhD at the University of Iowa. We talked about how weird it was that we were both from Latin America but spoke English to each other, what it was like being international students, and why we chose to study in the U.S. I was really scared about spending the night at the airport, but getting to know Cynthia was certainly a beautiful experience.

My flight arrived in Bangkok at two in the morning, but I could only check-in at the hotel twelve hours later. In that semester, one of my classes was Introduction to Anthropology and one of the assignments was to practice writing an ethnography, a formal study of the practices of a group of people. So, I had an idea: I would book a tour with a local guide to the temples at 5 AM and write about what I observed. I cherish everything I learned while following the monk as he collected the morning donations, but I had no idea how bad my jet lag was. I also was unprepared for getting lost in a country without any internet connection and for the feeling of only knowing how to communicate by saying hello.

Then, I saw a girl about my age, walking alone on the sidewalk, and I asked her how to get to Khao San Road. Her name was Haru and she had no clue either -- but she joined me in asking other people. When we finally found my hotel, it was still not check-in time, so we visited the snake sanctuary and walked around the city. She left the following day to continue her exchange program, but we still talk sometimes.

I had high expectations for the conference, and it surpassed every single one of them. I could barely believe how exceptional each person I talked to was and being there simply felt right. Standing in front of the United Nations Conference Center was magical, and the magic still did not fade away on the last day of the event. The week was emotionally exhausting as I heard stories about war, peacebuilding, and violence. However, after each speaker, I was increasingly more convinced about my professional vocation. By the end of the conference, the career path I dreamed about finally started taking shape and, for the first time, felt like a real possibility. I learned about global issues, gained meaningful connections, and improved my networking skills. Most importantly, I realized that I was not the only one dreaming of a world where safety is not a privilege. From a workshop organized by Relief Web to a speech by an organization that advocates for forgiveness, I started building a more in-depth understanding of the different ways someone can bring about change and this sparked my process of professional self-discovery.

The pandemic started to impact the U.S. soon after I returned to campus, and we all know what happened then. Numerous challenges crossed our paths, and our dreams seemed to fade a little bit. So, when I received an email from Humanitarian Affairs Asia advertising a virtual internship placement with them, all my memories of the conference came back and I knew I had to apply. The six-week program had its challenges - like meetings at four or five in the morning - but I was able to create content to engage young people to become leaders in their communities. This was certainly a ray of sunlight in the middle of so many challenges.

Sometimes we feel like we need to have each step of the way planned, and that makes us dismiss many opportunities. Taking a step out of the comfort zone and learning how to figure out things as they happen can be a great chance to grow. Going alone to another country was intimidating and I nearly panicked a couple of times! Yet, luck put kind people in my way and I am sure I would not be the person I am today without what I have learned from Humanitarian Affairs Asia.



MY TIME AT GRINNELL

AARZOO BHIMANI

Class of 2021 - India & Switzerland & U.S.



The fact that my time at Grinnell is almost over is simultaneously frightening and satisfying. To be very honest, I had been actively attempting to avoid the thought until I was asked to write this piece. I am very proud of all the things I have accomplished at Grinnell and am certainly ready to take the next step forward in my future. Despite this, I am also highly emotional and sad to be leaving so many important people in my life. I have moved around a fair amount over the course of my twenty one years, and as such I consider myself to be a global nomad. As an international student, being away from loved ones for extended periods of time is also something you get used to. So as much as I should be accustomed to the idea of leaving places and people behind, accepting the fact that I will soon be leaving Grinnell has not been any easier.



IPOP 2017



Momo Night with the Host Fam

2020-21 ISO Cabinet



IPOP 2019



Diwali 2019

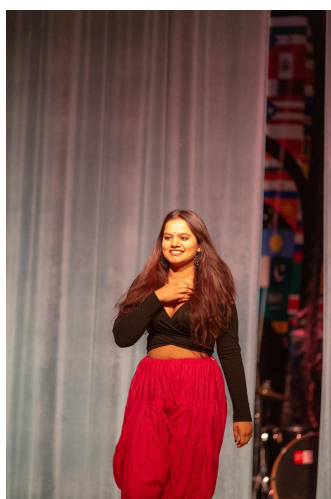
My fondest memories of Grinnell include participating in IPOP, as a mentee in 2017 and as a mentor in 2019. I felt blessed to have the chance to meet and spend time with so many amazing people from all over the world. In fact, it was on the campus tour on the very first day of IPOP that I met a very special group of people who then went on to become my best friends and my support network at Grinnell. I was then lucky enough to have the opportunity to work alongside the OISA and eleven other mentors to put together an equally meaningful IPOP experience for the class of 2023.

One reason I will always be thankful to Grinnell is for showing me how much I love mentoring. In addition to IPOP, I have also mentored for biology and chemistry classes, and for smaller events such as Grinnell's science retreats. I came to Grinnell wanting to go to medical school and become a practicing physician, but these experiences have driven me to incorporate teaching and academia into my future career as well. My time at Grinnell has therefore been essential to shaping my future and professional goals.

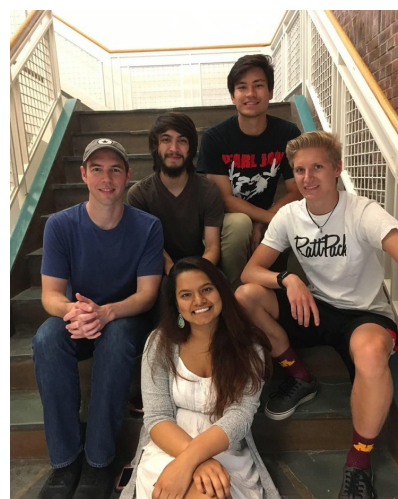
When I first came to Grinnell, I definitely would not have believed that in three years time I would have the confidence to do things like run for Vice President of ISO or apply to the renowned Biomedical Research Program at the University of Iowa. Even then, I certainly would not have believed I had the competence, the profile, or the leadership capacity to win that election or be accepted into my dream summer program. Interestingly, it was only upon leaving Grinnell, connecting with other undergraduate students, and entering the professional world that I truly realized the advantages Grinnell's education gives us. How to speak or present a viewpoint eloquently, how to be an effective writer, how to think critically and evaluate different perspectives on the same issue, how to be both a good leader and team member... These are just a few of the lifelong skills I will take with me. For showing me what I am capable of, what I can be worth, and what I can accomplish when I set my mind to it, I will be forever grateful to Grinnell.



Food Bazar



Cultural Evening



Summer Research

FISCHLOWITZ TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

The **Fischlowitz Travel Fellowship** provides an opportunity for Grinnell College international students to pursue casual yet purposeful independent travel in the United States, focused on deep exploration of a chosen theme. One award of \$5,400 is available each year, made possible through the generous support of **Teresa and Merle Fischlowitz '53**.

ANTONELLA DIAZ

2020-21 Recipient: "Befriending Fears and Strangers"

Class of 2023 - Quito, Ecuador

I titled my Fischlowitz project: Befriending Fear and Strangers. As the title suggests, my goal was to push myself outside of my comfort zone with hopes of overcoming my deeply internalized label of 'shyness'—a label which had been stamped on my forehead early on in life. The idea for the project began upon a reflection of my childhood, through which I realized that I have always been searching to silence the voice in my head that whispered every worst-case scenario to me, even prior to the situation unfolding, causing me to develop my extreme timidity.

And so, I formulated my antidote: for a period of three weeks, I would travel hand-in-hand with fear across some of the notable cities of the United States: Los Angeles, New York City, New Orleans, and Nashville, looking for strangers willing to have a conversation. After all, what better way to prove social mastery than to successfully befriend a stranger, right? At the end of each interaction, each stranger would be asked one final question: What does it mean to be American? Their answers would be recorded and compiled into a journal accompanied by their photograph. Later, I would return to Grinnell and share my reflections with the hope of sparking conversation around this question.

Life had different plans... The pandemic began, the whole world changed, and the mere thought of asking people to define the word "American" became far more daunting. To my surprise, it made my project feel more substantive and it acquired a new goal, or rather responsibility, towards showing different perspectives of what it means to be American. Thus, in an effort to strengthen my project, I changed my locations to align with the political scene in the United States, as well as take into account some states with complex histories. Now, I will be looking for willing strangers in Alaska, Atlanta, Washington D.C, and New York with more fear than I had anticipated, but also far more excitement than what I originally had.



FISCHLOWITZ TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

The Fellowship for 2020-21 was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, both the recipients for 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years plan to embark on their travels in the upcoming months. Thanks to Merle for his flexibility and continued support!

DIANA CHEGE

2021-22 Recipient: "Black Women Kitchen Stories"

Class of 2022 - Nairobi, Kenya

For the Fischlowitz Travel Fellowship this year, I want to make space for and privilege Black stories by Black women in the U.S. Specifically, my approach is founded upon understanding the relationship between Black women and Black cuisine. With the heavy hand that the Black woman has given to the invention of various foods in the U.S., how has the U.S. created space, or lack thereof, to reward their creativity? What foods do we eat now that were invented with the resourcefulness of the Black woman?



I want to explore the ways in which Black women engage with the kitchen space in various places: the corporate food industry, home kitchens, religious settings, and even the street food world. Through this, I hope to highlight the interdisciplinary literacy practices developed and performed by Black women in their kitchen spaces.

I have seen first-hand through my mum how the kitchen space is, in fact, a literacy space. History is shared when she retells family stories that had been passed down to her, stories of inventing different recipes that border scientific experiments and interesting chemical reactions result in tasty meals. Within those walls, her creativity has no bounds. In our kitchen, I learned science, the chemistry of food, and the history of my family. I believe that there are many more experiences hidden in such kitchens, Black Women kitchens, and my hope is to learn from them.

At the end of this project, firstly, I hope to have increased my experiential knowledge of the Black women experience in America from a historic, corporate, religious, feminist, and critical race theory lens. I hope to learn real stories told by Black women themselves and think about how they relate with my African experience. Lastly, I aim to highlight the creativity and inventions that Black women in America have contributed to the culture of food and beyond.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

AROUND THE GLOBAL AND IN GRINNELL!

SALMA ABOUHATAB

Language Teaching Assistant of Arabic
Alexandria, Egypt

I was born and raised in one of the most beautiful cities in Egypt: the breathtaking Alexandria, situated by the Mediterranean Sea, where I studied Phonetics and Linguistics. I arrived in Grinnell in January 2021 through the Fulbright FLTA Program and serve as a teaching assistant in the Arabic department. I consider my profession to be a sacred one and I place all my energy into trying to be a better teacher.



Throughout my five years of working as a language instructor, I have learned that students may forget your name, but they will not forget what you taught them. Whenever I am teaching a class, I do not only teach the curriculum in the books. I tend to think that if I did only that, I would not be worthy of this position. Whenever I teach my students, I give them what is carved inside my heart; I give them the opportunity to talk and express themselves as well. I will never forget the feeling of seeing a student after completing a course and hearing them say that what our class taught them made a huge difference for them in their thesis defense or their job.

I like to think of my life as a jigsaw puzzle where every new step is a newly added piece; it forms who I am every day. Being a Fulbright language teaching assistant at Grinnell is definitely a huge factor in completing my puzzle. Five years ago, I was stumbling my way through my career and today, I am clinging to this irresistibly fulfilling profession. When I stop to think about the future, I always see myself teaching for years to come, and I constantly strive to learn new teaching techniques and methodologies.

I cannot confidently make a conclusion about 50 states by only seeing one small city of a single state. However, I will say that my stay in Grinnell so far has been a joyful experience. At Grinnell, students, staff, and faculty are used to seeing different people from different cultures, different colors, and different representations. That is why whenever I walk in the streets of the city, I do not feel so different. People do not look at me as if I do not belong here. Actually, in my first couple of weeks, I was amazed by the fact that people nod, say hello, and ask how my day is going, even though they do not know me at all. I am grateful that this city and this community is another piece of the puzzle shaping who I am.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

AROUND THE GLOBAL AND IN GRINNELL!

LUCILE BEAUJOUAN

Visiting Language Instructor of French
Rennes, France



I am from France and I teach FRN 101, 102, and 201 here at Grinnell College. I had the chance to grow up close to the ocean in Brittany. I lived there my whole life, and that's where I studied both literature and history of English-speaking countries at Université Rennes 2. During my last year as an undergrad, I had the chance to come to the US and be an exchange student at University of Rhode Island. After graduating, I got my Masters to teach French as a foreign language.

I decided I wanted to teach French to foreign people when I was 16. I went to visit my future university and I heard the Chair talking about this Masters. He simply mentioned it, but it just stuck with me. My parents thought I would forget about it in a couple of days. And here I am: I have been travelling the world since I was 18, teaching French and discovering new cultures here and there, and my family is still waiting for me to get back home.

Teaching a language is the most fascinating thing. Sharing this part of you, of your culture, with someone else is a beautiful thing. Learning a new language is not about struggling for a few weeks to learn vocab; it's about taking a step back from your own culture and discovering the world again through someone else's eyes. It's the opportunity to understand others instead of judging them. I hope many Grinnellians realize this and seize the opportunity they have here at Grinnell College to learn new languages.

I am really happy I have been a part of this community for almost a year, and I hope I will have the chance to meet a lot of you either in class or on campus, once we can all come back in person!

Grinnell typically hosts about 20 Exchange Visitors per year - including Language Assistants, Language Fellows, Short Term Scholars, Professors and Researchers. This proved challenging in 20-21, limited by border and visa issues, but we were pleased that both the Arabic Language Assistant and French Language Fellow were able to navigate the challenges and join us in Grinnell!

RAISE THREE FINGERS FOR MYANMAR

From the Office of International Student Affairs

On February 1, 2021, the Burmese army seized control of the government. The military coup, led by General Min Aung Hlaing, occurred in the aftermath of a landslide election victory of Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy (NLD). There has been broad international condemnation of the coup and mass protests have been taking place throughout Myanmar ever since. The military security forces have responded with brutal force, including the use of live ammunition on protesters, stealth attacks, kidnapping, and murder of private citizens.

Nearly two dozen Burmese students have attended the College over the years, so we've been thinking a great deal about these fellow Grinnellians. We've had the privilege of speaking with a couple of them recently, and were struck by the intensity of their current context and the broad range of emotions they expressed. There is fear, regret, and disgust – coupled with passion, inspiration, and optimism. There is revulsion for the military government and the legacy of political corruption, juxtaposed with a deep love and commitment to their homeland and people. Alumni spoke with enthusiasm about the unified voices of young people in particular, and the resolution of so many throughout the country to “risk it all” to restore democracy and peace. They also reflected on the daily growth and real-time learning that is taking place for protesters and revolutionary leaders. One said, “Gen Z is awake! When we win, this will be the birth of our new nation.”

Grinnellians and friends are invited to visit www.threefingers.org, a “campaign hub founded by artists and creatives ... to highlight the unfolding humanitarian crises caused by the military coup.” You can also follow this project on Instagram, Facebook, & Twitter, and scroll through contributions from artists all around the world. You can even upload your own contribution in solidarity! #Raise3Fingers #ArtforFreedom #SayNoToMilitaryCoup

Artwork from the Raise Three Fingers campaign, each submitted anonymously.



THE WILL TO FIGHT

MAYO SUETA

Class of 2020 - Japan



“Well, you just have to do it, that’s all.”

I had just delivered a heated monologue to my colleagues about why I believed it was sexist to say that crossing one’s legs was rude.

“For men, the ‘business-like’ way to sit is to man-spread. For women, we have to sit with our knees together. Do you know how much muscle and effort that takes? The alternative to crossing one’s legs is painful for women, while being extremely easy for men. If the logic is that crossing one’s legs is rude because we’re sitting in an easier position in comparison to the other person, then men are always sitting in an easier position—always. With that flawed logic, all men are rude, and I know that’s not what you’re trying to say.”

That’s when my boss implied that I should stop complaining and just “do it.” Since we were at dinner with a group of colleagues, I dropped the subject. But I still get an uneasy feeling in my stomach whenever I think about his words. You just have to do it, that’s all.

During my time in Grinnell, I learned everything from how to write a short story to the history of the Roman Republic to how to write code. But today, as I work as a real estate agent in Tokyo after graduating from Grinnell with a degree in English, I realize the biggest lesson I learned at Grinnell was to fight.

I don’t mean fist-punching-face kind of fighting. I mean fighting for what I believe in, standing up for what’s right, using my voice to enact change rather than floating along with what others have deemed “normal.”

Being in Japan, I have found that a lot of people have learned simply to stay silent. In some ways, it is Japanese culture to do so. It’s easier to give in to what the mass majority is doing and saying because Japan is an easy place to be if you fit in.

But having spent my college years in Grinnell, I have come to possess the natural ability to question the norm. For example, in Japanese trains you are bombarded with hair removal advertisements. Paper advertisements on the walls, video advertisements on loop on the small screens above the doors, and sometimes, little advertisements wrapped around each train strap that hang from the ceilings. The advertisements each come with a different storyline—a hairy girl gets rejected from a boy and decides on laser hair removal and they end up married, or a hairy girl has low self-esteem and getting hair removal helps her become confident – but the general message of all of these advertisements is: hair removal = desirable girl. You don't have to take a sociology class to offer critique on that type of messaging. These advertisements socialize us every day until one day, we end up saying, “Ew, I am so hairy” or worse, “Ew, why is she so hairy.”

I go to work every day and see people who have given up and given in. They say, “we just have to do it, that’s all.” They live every day knowing that they’re not happy with the way things are. They get up every morning and come back home that night, having given up another thing, unknowingly bowing down to a norm that they think they can’t fight.

But Grinnell taught me that there’s always a point in fighting for what’s right. In my first semester of first year, my Intro to Sociology professor told my class to “take action and create change.” He taught us not to float with the masses. Even if it doesn’t turn out the way we want it to, there’s power in action and resistance.

Fresh out of high school, I didn’t question anything. I went with the flow, not questioning my norms and enjoyed life in blind obedience.

But now, I don’t. And sometimes, it’s hard to question everything. Sometimes, I wish I didn’t know to fight – maybe it would have been easier to fit in. It’s hard when you’re constantly pushing against the waves and there are days when I feel like I should laugh at a sexist joke and move on or resign myself to become a money-making machine. Sometimes, I question whether it’s worth the energy.

But whenever I feel the impending weight of normativity pushing me down, trying to make me bow down to the majority vote, I hear the chanting of my fellow students in Grinnell as they pushed against the waves of the status quo, didn’t let others define what was right, and raised their voices to fight for their beliefs.

And the will to fight begins to bubble up again.

REBUILDING 915



NATZ SOBERANES

Class of 2013 - Guadalajara, Mexico

On a trip to Grinnell back in October of 20 as part of the group of Class Agents for 2013 class, my classmate Doug and I too walk downtown to the new Grinnell Colle Bookstore to have some lunch at Pra Canary. To my surprise, I realized that building right across the street from Pra Canary— which back in the day when I was Grinnell was the La Cabana Mexican restaurant— was gone.



Natz and her husband/business partner Enrique

Not only was it gone, it had completely burned down. Beyond the metal fence you could see parts of what was left of some of the old structure of the one-story restaurant, boarded up with pieces of plywood, broken windows, exposed subfloor coming up in many places, and charred brick on both sides of the two buildings still standing. Also: a large, red For Sale sign.

Although I did not know exactly what we would do with the space right away, I called my then-boyfriend now-Grinnellian-husband Enrique and asked if we could look into purchasing the property. He was a little hesitant at first, but thought it was worth a shot to try and bring the space and our ideas for it to life and we jumped into trying to buy it.

We tried to get an offer and our ideas sorted, but by the time it all came together someone else had already beaten us to it. We were crushed that we had missed out on the opportunity, but thought it was for a reason and that maybe it was not meant to be for us. A couple of months later, COVID-19 happened.

As we got settled into our routine and our lives shifted into the new normal of COVID and a pandemic, we received an unexpected phone call from our realtor in Grinnell: are you still interested in trying to get the 915 Main St building? It's going back on the market.

The months that had gone by since the first time I saw the building and COVID only helped strengthen our vision and plans for what the space could look like. The fact that we were getting a second opportunity to go for it and make it all happen again felt like a gift during a year that had brought so much uncertainty and chaos. Despite everything feeling unfamiliar and no end in sight for the pandemic, we decided to trust our gut and go for it one more time.

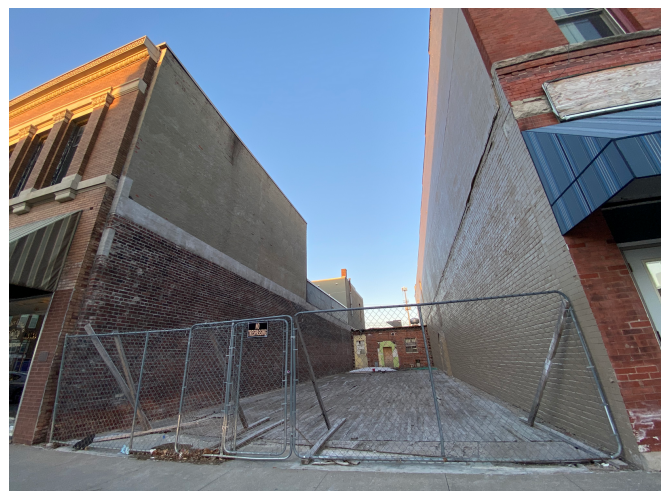
June 10, 2020, we (virtually) closed on the property. Everything – from talking to our realtor, to handling the paperwork, negotiating, inspecting, and closing– was all done remotely. We were grateful for the trust and familiar faces during the process because of the nature of Grinnell and having built connections with my host family back when I was a student, and knowing that even though we were so far away and could not travel, there were people in town looking out for us.

In March 2021, Enrique and I decided to take a long road trip to Grinnell from Austin, TX for the first time since purchasing the lot to see it in person. While I had last seen this property in October 2019 from the outside, Enrique had not had the same opportunity. It was a surreal experience to drive into town (we arrived at night) and finally park in front of the lot; we were able to see it for ourselves after months and months of planning and imagining what the finished product would be.

Some of the less fun work – like taking out that rotten subfloor – has not stopped us from rebuilding the space into something new and welcoming to college students and people from the town of Grinnell. We are so grateful for the opportunities Grinnell gave us, the patience 2020 taught us, and that we get to move forward with rebuilding 915 Main better than it was, just as the world (hopefully) starts to do the same.



The fire at 915 Main that left the lot in a state of disrepair. Photo Credit: KCRG.



The empty lot of Natz & Enrique's dreams!



A SPOON NERD ASKING FOR HELP

CHRIS BAIR

Environmental & Safety Coordinator - Grinnell College



Pre-COVID, Professor Jon Andelson and I co-hosted a spoon carving get together every Friday afternoon. This was a great way for some students to unwind after a stressful week of classes. Making something with our hands can be very satisfying and as Professor Andelson puts it, "We are trying to help folks add a little hand knowledge to their head knowledge." Spoons are the perfect "thing" to start carving. We all eat, and they are relatively simple.

As someone who is addicted to spoon carving, I carve quite a few spoons and I am very interested in learning more about traditional spoons from cultures around the world. I belong to a Spoon Carving club that meets through Zoom and there are participants from Australia, Israel, England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Denmark, and more. The group recently carved a traditional Welsh Cawl spoon and we learned a little bit about the history of Wales in the process.

I have since begun researching spoons from other cultures. Several recurring themes have already become apparent to me. First, in many countries, there exists entire villages focused on carving spoons and ladles. I have found examples of this in Russia, Spain, Japan, and Turkey. In addition, transient populations were often known for their carved spoons. I have found beautiful examples from Spanish and Somali shepherds, as well as the Romani people.

A population on the move could only carry so much, so spoons were often prized possessions. Spoon carving also requires relatively few tools, so they are easy to transport and the selling of spoons along the travel routes were a secondary form of income.



A Welsh Cawl spoon that Chris carved with his Spoon Carving club via Zoom

It has also been fascinating to find very distinct differences in spoon design within a relatively small area, such as the Iberian Peninsula, yet obvious similarities between designs that are seas apart, likely due to historic trade routes. Sometimes mountains are more formidable boundaries than oceans. One commonality among most of these spoon carving groups is that they are disappearing. There is not much of a market to sell hand carved spoons, so this traditional knowledge is fading. Hopefully, that will change.

I am particularly enamored with a Russian spoon made in the Nizhny Novgorod region. The undecorated spoon itself is very beautiful and the method for carving is very unique to that region. The town of Semyenov specialized in this style. Not only did the

whole village specialize in spoon carving, but the entire family helped, with each age group having specific tasks. They also invented a peculiar lathe to turn just a portion of the spoon handle. The rest was hand carved. The style was also one of the first items to be decorated with the Golden Khokhloma painting style which has become quite famous. I mentioned to Russian professor Todd Armstrong that I have learned more about Russia researching this spoon than I ever knew before. He noted that anything can provide a lens to learn about a different culture!

As I have just begun to learn about spoons specific to various cultures, I would love to learn more, and I would also like to add an international context to our weekly spoon carving endeavors. My selfish reason for writing this article is to ask for help from our international students in learning more about traditional spoons respective to their culture. It would be even better if we had more students join us to carve spoons! My ultimate dream would be to combine this with some of the global kitchen efforts. It is important to mention as well that spoons are not just used for cooking or eating. In Turkey and Russia, they are used in traditional dances in similar ways to a castanet. Maybe spoons could be used at the ISO Cultural Evening or Food Bazaar. I would welcome any help someone is interested in offering. Google translate has its limits!

Nameera Dawood

Class of 2023 – Pakistan



WINTER

I have lunch. I have dinner.

I sometimes indulge in too much hot chocolate before lunch.

I like it a lot.

I like it best on cold days. I like it best when it's served to me at the cafe after a 15-minute walk through sparkling piles of snow that I had never laid eyes on in my home city.

This is my second winter here, but I guess the novelty hasn't worn off.

There are no beggars outside that I could volunteer to pay to have fed.

More importantly, there is no father. My father.

There is no father to tip the waitress.

"Isn't the design carved into the ceiling so extravagant!"

My mom would probably say that.

If she was here, I'm sure she would.

When the waitress would come over, my mom would hold an excited conversation about everything and nothing.

The waitress would smile at this enthusiasm and chime in with her own version of everything and nothing.

But today, the waitress comes and goes.

I am here alone.

I drink the hot chocolate slower each time.

Sip by sip by sip.

Why does it always seem to run out too fast?

I hope there comes a day beyond which all days are void of lonely meals.

But for now, I have lunch.

I have dinner.

JADED

How do you keep yourself from plucking a wild daisy?
It sways, inflamed with songs of mystery in the wind.

Tempting.

And how do you keep a daisy alive when it is helpless in your hand?
When it no longer stands on its own upon the green and under the blue.

Even when you place it in the water
or in the sun.

It is destined to fold on itself
Cursory glances won't reveal the injured veins that struggle to breathe life into it.

You'll return to it one day hoping to find solace but see
the dripping mosaics,
Quivering wounds,

laying upon clear tuneless vowels.

Familiar turgidity drainer from its length.

Just yesterday the petals were a solid flawless white.

Where do our familiar colors go?

When they are thirsty and no water can compel them, move them.

No music can nurse them back into dances.

You won't discard the daisy immediately.

Today it will be out of disbelief rather than amusement.

Disbelief will wrap its length in your hesitation. Final moments are painful if

You don't let them creep in slow.

Insidious. Eventually easy.

But you will no longer be able to stand the sight of it. When that happens, I have one favor to ask of you

Don't forget it's days of careless dancing upon wind currents. Don't let

Its sagging death be its final imprint

On your endearment.



Trung Le

Class of 2024 - Vietnam

I HAD NEW YORK CITY IN MY HANDS

I had New York City in my hands
The genetic touch to Joan Didion
The sowing hands to the Big Apple
The Boterismo imagination that strips Adam and Eve
The Broadway rainbow lights that escape the matinée on Christmas Eve
The sweetheart soiree with the Birdland's jazz on Valentine
The Faye that levitates my Riggan Thompson's ignorance
The Veritas answer to what we talk about when we talk about love
The Columbian dark blue that I see from every lyric from Bluets
The Penn Station that sheltered Ocean Vuong in three long weeks and sheltered me in
three little words
The curious love affair with the Apthorp apartment
The messy lycanthropy of Wall Street and coming-of-age
The solitary awareness of a former daily commuter
The Valley of Ashes that I got hold of the Pikachu on Macy's
The Synecdoche, New York review that freed me from soliloquy
The "Humans Of New York" story that I dreamt of interviewing
The whole Julliard School in a form of a woman.



MOSAIC EDITOR

Momi Fukushima

Class of 2022 - Japan

After reading the MOSAIC in high school, I was so excited to join the Grinnell community. It was a beautiful magazine that portrayed Grinnell students and their inspiring adventures in the college. It has been a wonderful time working as the editor for MOSAIC, and I hope you can enjoy the articles as much as I enjoyed editing this magazine. I would like to thank Emily Perry for working with me, as well as Karen Edwards and Brenda Strong for giving me the opportunity to work for MOSAIC. I would also like to thank all the MOSAIC writers for producing such beautiful pieces, and also being extremely patient with my numerous reminder emails.



FRONT COVER ARTIST

Rei Yamada

Class of 2022 - Japan



When I was brainstorming the front cover design, I immediately thought of drawing the Grinnell campus simply because I've been missing Grinnell so much! This view of the railroad and the North campus is inspired by my last day in Grinnell, when I was walking out from the East residence hall to leave the campus. I was heading to JRC with my two heavy suitcases, thinking that we all will be back on campus soon. It has been more than a year since I left the campus, but this last moment in Grinnell left a strong impression on me. Though we international students are all scattered around the world as of Spring 2021, I hope this cover reminds everyone of the snapshots of the happy memories in Grinnell.



