

SIUE summer grad ready for next steps after complementing degree with a high impact internship

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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville students spent their summer around the globe, studying, relaxing, working, serving others, and making a positive difference in their communities through high impact internship opportunities.

Summer graduate [Graeme Huntley](#), of Edwardsville, did that and more, gaining valuable hands-on experience and making his positive mark in East St. Louis through an internship at SIUE's WE CARE Clinic, located at the East St. Louis Higher Education Campus.

As a double major in anthropology and public health, Huntley found the clinic to be the perfect place to advance his interest in the interplay between medicine and culture.

"In order to understand and handle a lot of the medical issues in this country and around the world, you need to understand how culture works and how people view health in general," Huntley explained. "Combining my studies in anthropology and public health allowed me to study how culture works and changes over the course of time, and how medicine is influenced by that."

During his internship at the WE CARE Clinic, Huntley helped plan and gather resources for the Metro East All-Star Asthma Camp scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 8 at the Lessie Bates Neighborhood House.

He also wrote a \$25,000 grant proposal to the Environmental Protection Agency about changing furnace filters in East St. Louis and gained practice in patient interactions while in the clinic. In addition, he attended a variety of local organization meetings to discuss important health-related issues.

"My time at the WE CARE Clinic has enhanced what I want to do in the future," said Huntley. "This opportunity reinforced my desire to pursue the clinical side of medicine. It opened my eyes to how public health and clinical practice interact on a daily basis, and how important it is that these two fields work together and support each other."

"Additionally," he continued, "I loved working closely with other community organizations and gained a lot of experience in this area thanks to the nature of promoting health in a localized area."

"Graeme was instrumental in identifying schools within our service area for targeted educational interventions to be explored during the coming school year," said Huntley's supervisor, Marcus Minnis, SIUE School of Nursing health education coordinator. "His work will help ensure that all schools within our service area of Madison and St. Clair Counties will have the opportunity to participate in our asthma education programs."

School of Education, Health and Human Behavior Interim Dean Paul Rose, PhD, emphasizes the substantial positive impact high quality internships have on all those involved.

“The student intern gets to see academic concepts in a real-world setting while acquiring work experience,” Rose explained. “The cooperating agency gets assistance from the intern with its programs and experience working with students who may interview later for job openings. And the University gets to prove its value as an intellectual center that enhances quality of life in the region.”

“The WE CARE Clinic hosts undergraduate nursing and public health students, as well as graduate level social work students,” Minnis said. “By supporting students from interdisciplinary backgrounds, our clinic is able to provide a wider array of services for our clients.”

“From the student perspective, working with a team comprised of various health professionals helps reinforce the idea that modernized health care is a collaborative effort,” he added. “The value the clinic gains is in the emergence of fresh ideas that help identify ways to improve our ever-changing care model.”

Huntley now plans to advance his education by pursuing a medical anthropology professional program.

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River’s rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of nearly 14,000.