Former Henry Institute Semester in Washington D.C. Interns
Where are they now?

**Jordan Davis** graduated from Calvin in 2013 with a History major and Archaeology minor. As a junior, he interned in the Publications Department at the Middle East Institute (MEI) as part of the 2012 Semester in Washington, D.C. While at MEI, Jordan edited and wrote content for *The Middle East Journal*, the oldest scholarly journal about the Middle East region in the United States.

After graduation Jordan served for a year in the AmeriCorps NCCC FEMA Corps program, working on a GIS specialist team to provide humanitarian assistance to unaccompanied Central American children on the United States-Mexico border and then returned to Washington, D.C. to support FEMA’s Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation. Currently, Jordan has returned to his hometown of Milwaukee where he is beginning a Masters program in Sustainable Peacebuilding at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

“My internship at MEI was a crucial turning point during my time at Calvin. As part of the Leadership Development Internship Program at MEI, I worked alongside and befriended a group of diverse young professionals from a wide array of academic disciplines as well as cultural and religious backgrounds. While my history major provided research and critical thinking skills that I will continue to rely upon as a graduate student, my participation in the Henry Semester and my internship at MEI expanded my horizons beyond academia. My fondest memory of my MEI internship was having lunch with a former MEI Vice President for Development, who had previously served with the United Nations in Gaza and Sudan—a mentor who inspired me to pursue a vocation in peacebuilding.”

**Ryan Hunt** participated in the first Henry Semester in 2000. Finding an internship was difficult, and none of his top tier choices panned out. Just weeks before the semester began, he finally landed a spot at the Embassy of Ecuador.

The internship was a perfect fit: it allowed him to connect his majors in Political Science and Spanish, to get a taste for how other governments function and interact with our own, and to recognize that international affairs wasn’t the area of political science he wanted to pursue. Ryan returned to Calvin at the end of the semester (working as Prof. Doug Koopman’s research assistant for his Paul Henry book, *Serving the Claims of Justice*) to finish his senior year.

Upon graduation, Ryan immediately moved to Washington D.C. and began answering phones and opening mail for Senator Dianne Feinstein, his home state senator from California. Over 10 years with Senator Feinstein, he progressed from the mailroom, to writing correspondence, to serving as lead Appropriations staff. He now is a professional staff member for the Senate Appropriations Committee, where his portfolio includes Department of the Interior and Forest Service programs (with periodic trips to national parks, monuments and forests). Ryan and his wife Rebecca live, worship and garden on the eastern edge of Capitol Hill.

“I consider my Washington semester to be pivotal in leading me to where I am today. Most importantly, I discovered D.C. and was sure this was a place I wanted to live. I learned that my Calvin education prepared me just as well or better for the working world as people with advanced degrees from big name schools. And it gave me the opportunity to figure out I didn’t like foreign relations as much as I thought I did for a career path. That’s why I enjoy mentoring current Calvin interns: I want to introduce them to this terrific city and let them know that even if you don’t get your first choice internship, it’s going to be a great experience!”

**So-heon Park** graduated from Calvin in 2011 with majors in International Relations and French. Her last semester with Calvin was spent in the Semester in Washington D.C. Program, when she interned at For Love of Children, a non-profit organization providing educational services beyond the classroom for low income students. So-heon worked as a site coordinator to manage tutoring sites and volunteers, as well as writing and editing new language curriculum for young children.

“I was interested in human rights issues, and also wanted to get experience working for NGOs, and my internship definitely did this! After graduation, I worked for Civilian Fellowship for the International Exchange in Seoul, South Korea helping with legal counseling for foreign workers in the country. I also started and led Official Development Assistance (ODA) work for the organization. I led field research in rural Nepal to carry out an ODA project to build a library and community center and secured an $82,000 government grant to assist the organization! I believe the Semester in D.C. program helped me see how valuable it is to work for NGOs and prepared me to work in the ‘real field.’”

Currently, So-heon is a second year student at Regent University School of Law, and for the summer of 2015 has been an intern in Seoul, South Korea, at Advocates for Public Interest Law, a non-profit, public interest lawyers’ organization dedicated to defending the human rights of refugees, victims of human trafficking, stateless persons, long-term detained migrants, and the victims of human rights abuses committed by Korean Corporations abroad.

She is involved in researching law in the European Union, as well as in countries such as Cameroon, Liberia, and Lesotho, particularly to assist lawyers who are working for refugees. She is also researching alternatives to detention for immigrant children in South Korea, since currently there are no regulations to prohibit their detention.

**Susanna Lynch** was a Calvin senior majoring in Biochemistry when she participated in the 2010 D.C. Semester, interning at the Stimson Center’s Global Health Security Program, working on health policy issues.

“The time in Washington D.C. was instrumental in my personal and professional development. I ultimately learned I wanted to address health needs on a one-to-one clinical basis, but I gained a better understanding of the function of global health policy and U.S. politics through the semester’s coursework and lectures with Dr. Corwin Smidt. I also had the privilege of exploring the nation’s capital with my classmates while living on Capitol Hill. How many people can say their metro stop was Union Station, saw cross-country skiers along Capitol Hill during ‘Snowmageddon’ [when D.C. received 20 inches of snow in 24 hours, and the city completely closed down for several days], and visited the U.S. Botanic Garden on their weekend walks?”

Following graduation, Susanna spent two years doing research at the National Institutes of Health in Maryland, where she met her fiancé. She is currently a fourth-year medical student at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, and is applying for an internal medicine residency.
After participating in the 2007 Henry Semester in Washington D.C. as an intern at Delphi Corporation, and graduating from Calvin with degrees in Political Science and Communications (Rhetoric), Nate Knapper went on to Pepperdine University School of Law. He received his J.D. in 2011, earning top grades in legal Research and Writing, Dispute Resolution in Education, and in Interviewing, Counseling and Planning, as well as being granted the top-ranked Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution Certification.

From there, Nate began working for the Attorney General’s Office in Michigan, where he has served on the Human Trafficking Commission and the School Safety Task Force and is currently Assistant Attorney General. In 2014, Knapper ran for Michigan State Representative for the 43rd House District.

“The Henry Semester’s purpose is very comparable to the notion of traveling to a foreign country in order to gain fluency in a particular language as you are immersed in the culture where that language is spoken. Similarly, American political culture is often a foreign reality to most students, and effective political engagement requires a degree of immersion in the culture and conversation of American policymaking. The Paul Henry Semester facilitates this experience, offering students an opportunity to live and work in the heart of the nation’s capitol, where important policies are debated and adopted. Examining American political developments through the lens of faith, the program helps prepare future leaders to let their own lights shine in the public square.”

Amanda Stek majored in Political Science at Calvin and was part of the 2007 Henry Institute Semester in Washington D.C. program. Amanda was an intern with the Save Darfur Coalition during her final semester at Calvin, and the experience exposed her to the world of international advocacy and development. Her work with the Save Darfur Coalition motivated her to seek an internship in India for the following summer, where she worked with victims of human trafficking. Amanda quickly became committed to furthering her experience and education in the field of International Development.

“The D.C. Semester was a wonderful opportunity to explore my interests in a city filled with individuals and organizations committed to global care. It gave me the chance to learn about NGOs, non-profits, International Organizations, and private companies that are doing development work in countries I was interested in. Without the semester experience, my understanding of how the job market and professional opportunities aligned with my interest areas would have been limited.”

Amanda completed her MA in International Relations at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAID) in Washington D.C. and then moved to Indonesia as a Team Leader for Social Impact, Inc. where she now works on Monitoring and Evaluation for multiple clients in Southeast Asia. She is married to another Calvin College grad and has a 4 month old daughter.

Rachel Jacobs Gainer was one of the first Social Work students to participate in the DC Semester, when that option first became part of the program in 2005. She interned with Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services, working with low-income families to provide housing and utility assistance. After graduating from Calvin with a Bachelor in Social Work, Rachel joined Americorps in D.C. and worked at Miriam’s Kitchen as a Case Manager, a position she found through her former internship supervisor, whose husband worked at Miriam’s Kitchen (a perfect example of how D.C. is filled with connections, Rachel notes).

In 2007, she joined the Peace Corps to serve in a rural health clinic in Zambia for two years and then returned to Washington. She earned her MSW from the University of Maryland and now works at the Office of Refugee Resettlement in their Division of Children’s Services in Washington. Rachel also assists the D.C. Semester Social Work students, helping them find social work placements which will fulfill their final academic requirements for graduation, as well as debriefing with them during a weekly seminar. Rachel recently got married and bought a house in Alexandria, VA, just a few miles away from her Calvin internship site over 10 years ago.

“The experiences I had through the D.C. semester have helped shape me into the person I am today. During the internship, I fell in love with D.C. because it had so many opportunities for learning about the connections between policy, social work, and social justice. These are lessons I take with me in my work with the Federal Government today. I was also able to attend rallies against genocide in Darfur, witness historic Supreme Court votes, eat amazing ethnic food, and build lifelong friendships.”

Scott Tipton was part of the 2013 Semester in Washington DC. His degree from Calvin was in Political Science-Public Administration, with a minor in business. After graduation, Scott relocated back to his original home in northeast Ohio and currently works as a business development and government relations professional for Kuhnlein & Martin, Inc. (DBA Martin & Tipton), a group medical practice providing consultative examinations from orthopedic and occupational medicine physicians across Ohio and adjacent states.

As a student on the D.C. Semester, Scott interned for the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), a think tank chartered by Congress to provide independent, non-partisan performance evaluation and analysis of governmental agencies and programs. He worked with the organizational branch which cultivates relationships with prospective clients in the Beltway and throughout the U.S. Scott also shadowed the organization’s Director of Project Development and many Senior Advisors through their prospective studies involving groups such as the Office of Management and Budget at the White House, the U.S. Postal Service, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the District of Columbia, and several major corporations. His chief project for the semester included researching prospective federal contracting opportunities and presenting his findings to the development team and upper level management.

“My internship was a perfect fit, and contributed immensely to my professional growth and interests in business development and government relations. Coupled with rigorous academic coursework, my experiences in Washington provided a strong foundation as I transitioned out of college and into my current position. On a personal level, I grew tremendously during the D.C. program, and I would recommend it to any Calvin student looking to broaden their academic, professional, and spiritual horizons. I draw from my D.C. Semester experiences every day, and I am very thankful to those who encouraged me to participate. If I had the opportunity to do it all over again, I would do so in a heartbeat!”