



# **GLOBAL HEALTH IN ACTION**

**FALL 2017 EDITION**

**MERCER UNIVERSITY**



# Become globally minded.

*Global Health in Action* is back with exciting articles, as well as new board members. This fall our theme is becoming globally minded. Global-mindedness means having the humility to incorporate the plurality of perspectives of people and cultures throughout the world into your own understanding of the globe. The women on the editorial board this year are engaging in respectful debate, critical inquiry, and meaningful dialogue in order to provide information about local and global health issues in the hopes of spurring our readers into action. For the Fall 2017 issue, intertwining the voices of students, alumni, and faculty outside the parameters of the International and Global Studies (IGS) Department was an integral piece to all our writing. Please enjoy the articles we have compiled for the 1st anniversary of the *Global Health in Action* Newsletter! -Mary Martinez, Editor-in-Chief

## Table of Contents

- **Solving Global Issues: Voices from Mercer Students**
  - Climate Change Debate.....2-3
  - Becoming Globally Minded.....4-5
- **Careers in Global Health: What Comes Next and How to Get There?**
  - Letters of Recommendation Etiquette.....6-7
  - Possibilities for a Global Health Major.....8-9
- **In the Field:**
  - Joseph Kollie: Installing Flush Toilets at an Orphanage in Liberia.....10
  - Kayla Beasley: Intern at USAID.....11-12
  - Kaitlyn's Bucket Shower Experience.....13-14
- **Introducing the American Center for Mongolian Studies.....15**
- **Upcoming Events/Meet the Newsletter Board**
  - Upcoming Study Abroad Trips.....16
  - Meet the Global Health in Action Team.....17

# CLIMATE CHANGE: RESTATING THE FACTS

For tens of thousands of years bright minds have honed the craft of argument, strategizing as to how to convince another of their logic. The debate on climate change has been going on for a while. It is time to put this debate to rest given preponderant evidence that climate change is occurring. As part of our theme of becoming globally minded we have chosen to restate the facts about climate change to dispel myths and confusion on this global phenomenon!

## Question

■ Has the Earth's surface temperature actually increased during the past century?

■ Can small changes in global mean temperatures produce relatively large changes in frequency/severity of extreme weather events?

■ The Earth goes through a warming and cooling cycle. Is global warming really caused by human activity?

■ Does climate change have any measurable impact on the ecosystem?

**CLIMATE CHANGE IS  
AFFECTING THE STRUCTURAL  
AND ECOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION OF  
OUR PLANET AND CANNOT BE  
IGNORED."**

**-MERCER CHEMISTRY  
STUDENT**

## Answer

■ Yes! global temperature has increased by 1.4° F since the early 20th century.

■ Recent models show that rising temperatures correlate with amount of vapor in the air which control extreme weather events.

■ Yes! changes in atmospheric circulation and extreme weather events strongly correlate with human production of greenhouse gases. This includes burning of fossil fuels for energy, industrial and agricultural activities. It also includes activities by individuals such as driving cars, use of aerosols, smoking, and improper disposal of waste.

On November 3rd, 13 federal agencies released a dire scientific report calling human activity the driving force in global warming.

This response both shocked the world and called humanity to notice the consequences of their actions. Clearly, evidence suggests that climate change is occurring.



# CLIMATE CHANGE: WHAT DO MERCER STUDENTS THINK?

To gauge Mercer student perspectives on climate change, and hence their level of global mindedness on this issue, I embarked on a mission to interview 12 different students. I gathered information from a variety of students, interviewing students from 10 different disciplines and all four classes. Seven of the interviewees were female, and five were male. The interviews were very casual. The results that I gathered from Mercer students are shown on the right.

## Summary of Findings

Based on these findings, it is clear that Mercer students know about global warming and acknowledge that it is real. However, there are important gaps in their understanding of the underlying causes of climate change.

At Mercer, "every student majors in changing the world." We cannot harm the world we are changing for good. Now we know that our personal actions contribute to climate change, our lifestyles must reflect our values intentions!



## MERCER UNIVERSITY CLIMATE CHANGE SURVEY

### IS CLIMATE CHANGE REAL?



3 out of every 4 students (75%) claim that climate change is affecting their lives.

### IS THE SCIENCE RELIABLE?

1 out of every 4 students (25%) doesn't believe that enough data exists to factualize climate change.



### ARE WE THE PROBLEM?

Half of the students (50%) did not believe that their personal actions are the problem. Most contributed environmental issues to corporate pollution.

### WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

Every student agreed that action could be taken to better the planet. Some suggestions included:

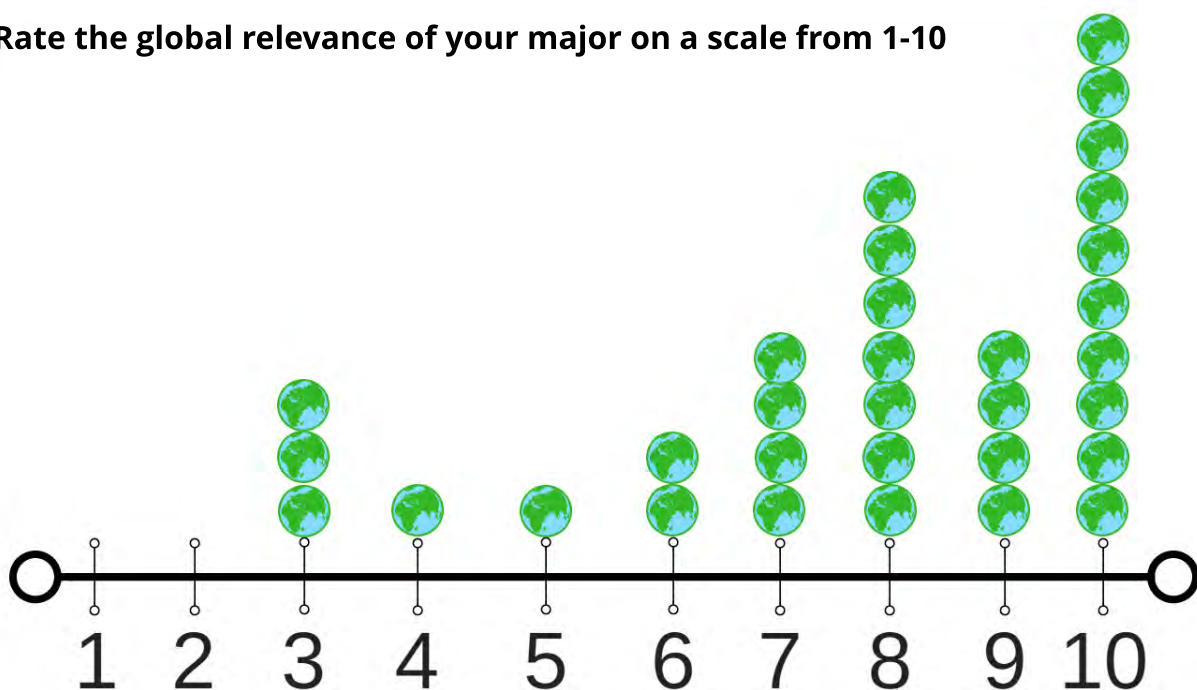


USE REUSABLE WATER  
BOTTLES  
USE LESS PLASTIC  
WALK MORE OFTEN  
TURN OFF THE LIGHTS

# BECOMING GLOBALLY MINDED

As a student in the International and Global Studies (IGS) Department, everything I study is viewed through a global perspective. IGS students learn to filter interdisciplinary topics, such as international policy, biology, statistics or psychology through a global context. IGS majors are foundationally globally relevant because we are able to identify the global component in seemingly one-dimensional topics. However, as the interconnected relations between countries accelerates and the rate of globalization expands, the globally-minded students become increasingly less exclusive to the IGS department. I wanted to know if students in other departments on Mercer's campus felt that their major was globally relevant. My first case study begins with the Eugene W. Stetson School of Business, where 32 business students participated in a survey gauging the global relevance of business majors. The survey asked business students to rate the global relevance of their major on a scale from 1-10, where 1 represented not globally relevant, and 10 represented extremely globally relevant. Here are the results:

**Rate the global relevance of your major on a scale from 1-10**



The results from the survey show a shift towards global thinking, highlighting a pleasant surprise that all of the business students surveyed perceived their own major to be somewhat globally relevant. None of the participants viewed their majors to be completely lacking in some

type of global connection. Alex Grandinetti, a junior majoring in International Business, International Affairs, and Global Development provides some insight on globally-minded business students at

Mercer. Alex explains, "As an International Business Major, I quickly learned the value of taking International Global Studies (IGS) courses after my sophomore year, when I took Global Health with Dr. Nicolas-Belo and International Affairs with Dr. Houry.

Initially, I had taken these classes to fulfill general education requirements; however, I have since decided to pursue additional degrees in the IGS field.

International and Global Studies courses are helping to answer the questions I have about how nontraditional external

factors will affect the business market and teaching me how to navigate the complex international landscape. I highly recommend pursuing a degree in IGS to anyone who is interested in how politics, culture, and health will affect their profession".

**"I highly recommend pursuing a degree in International Global Studies to anyone who is interested in how politics, culture, and health will affect their profession." -Alex Grandinetti**

Alex's firsthand insight additionally underscores the importance of global-mindedness in all majors and disciplines. Choosing to take IGS classes outside of your major provide supplemental background on the global impacts of more discipline specific topics.



# LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION ETIQUETTE

Being accepted to the graduate school of your dreams, or landing the fellowship opportunity that could be a gateway to a potential career may be contingent not only on your own scores and essays, but the quality of your letter of recommendation. The IGS professors are dedicated to the success of their students and are invested in their futures. However, they are sometimes inundated with letter of recommendation requests, which makes student awareness about letter of recommendation etiquette all the more pertinent. Read on to find out how best to ask for a letter of recommendation and *why* the way you ask can make all the difference.

## ADVICE FROM PROFESSORS:

### **You're not entitled to a letter of recommendation!**

"‘Would you consider’ writing a letter of recommendation is much better received than ‘I need you to write’ a letter of recommendation.”-Dr. Vu

"I prefer students to ask via e-mail for a letter of recommendation, as in-person suggests that the professor will definitely answer in the affirmative.” -Dr. N.B.

"Providing a cover letter or personal statement beforehand is a must. I can only advocate for the student if they have advocated for themselves first.”-Dr. Vu

### **Ask professor who knows you very well!**

"Recommendation letters are becoming increasingly specific. For the Fulbright letters I am asked—‘have you observed the applicant in a situation when they had to react quickly?’ and to provide a detailed observations of their teaching skills. Knowing the student well is a prerequisite for a quality letter.” -Dr. Houry

"Writing a quality letter of recommendation stems from mentoring a student over many semesters, not just getting an ‘A’ in a class.” -Dr. Obidoa

### **Remember to observe basic etiquette rules!**

When a professor is in a meeting with another student, wait outside and don't interrupt.

When meeting a professor for the first time, remember to offer a handshake in greeting.

Always ask permission first before using professor's contact information. When applying for federal agencies, such as the Foreign Service, officials from the agency may request in-person interviews with those you list as references.

### **Professors want to see you succeed. Make sure to give them the tools they need!**

"Student success is a reflection not just of our teaching, but the relationships we have with students. It is equally important to us that we see you accepted to prestigious schools and programs.”-Dr. Houry

"It is so important that students maintain contact with their professors, even when we cannot schedule the time to write a letter of recommendation. Building rapport with students is part of our job.”- Dr. Obidoa

## Final thoughts from professors...

"When students give the needed materials for an application in advance, the professor can then reinforce the attributes the student highlights in their reasoning for why they are worthy choice."

-Dr. Vu

"Professors care about the outcome of your application and may spend several hours to complete a thorough recommendation letter, so it is very important that students be mindful of giving professors a heads-up."

-Dr. Nichols-Belo



"Especially if a student has been accepted to the program you recommended them for, it's only right to let the professor know the outcome of your application."

-Dr. Houry

"'Get a life' means, don't forget the lessons you learned from home now that you are in college! For example, thank your professors for their recommendation—regardless of your acceptance."

-Dr. Obidoa

## Letter of Recommendation Checklist

- ✓ Provide all application materials including: cover letter, all required essays, and résumé beforehand.
- ✓ Give the professor at least 2 weeks notice.
- ✓ Make sure to debrief the professor about the nature of the application, what kind of job or graduate program you are applying for, and any other details they may need.



# WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A GLOBAL HEALTH DEGREE?





# HOW CAN I HELP MYSELF?

For many, figuring out a career choice is challenging. Senior year and the years following can often be a time filled with uncertainty, doubt, and mixed emotions. Here, we share some tips on steps you can take in discovering your career what you can do with a degree in Global Health Studies.

**Global Health Studies offer a variety of endless possibilities with the blend of unique hands-on engagement in the real world. Here at Mercer University, students are encouraged to think critically and strengthen their leadership skills in order to connect with the real world...**

## Where do I Start?

1. With the diverse opportunities available, internships are a good way to start your career path journey beforehand in order to get a feel of what direction you want to go in. This will allow you to understand what may or may not be right for you once you have completed graduate school.
2. Ask yourself if you are interested in working locally based or internationally. By identifying your country of choice, you can find information relevant to what fits your personality and interests in the work field.
3. Contact global health organizations to learn more about opportunities to work in the field. The World Health Organization has a link where you can also search opportunities and interests by location and subject. (<http://apps.who.int/whocc/Search.aspx>).
4. Go to [career.state.gov](http://career.state.gov) and have a look at the different career paths available.



# Joseph Kollie: The Hurdles and Triumphs of Grassroots Health Initiatives

Joseph Kollie, an Information Sciences and Technology major and International Affairs minor, graduated in the class of 2017 and currently works and lives in Monrovia, Liberia. As an international student, Joseph spent four long years away from his home--the mountainous, Northern region of Liberia. Since his return to Liberia, he has started a project to increase the safety, sanitation, health, and livelihood of the children of the Comfort K. Toe Orphanage by providing indoor flush toilets close to their dormitory. In this piece, he describes how his time as an IGS student helped reign in his calling to give back to his homeland.

"As an IGS student, I learned that we are to do things that will make the world a better place with respect to **peace** and **health**. Even though I am not a medical professional, I can still do things in my environment that will help **reduce health concerns** such as this project."

-Joseph Kollie



*Having access to a good, sanitary facility is necessary for every community, family, and individual, as it is pertinent to health outcomes. Having 45 or so children on just one acre of land increases the need for good sanitation even more. That was the case with Comfort K. Toe Orphanage. The children did not have access to good sanitation, sometimes using pit toilets and open defecation, which was very hazardous to their health as they can become breeding places for disease-carrying vectors and waste will eventually contaminate the water. On top of that, they did not even have indoor bathrooms, and toilets, meaning that they would have to come out during the nights to attend the call of nature which is also a safety hazard. Therefore, the need for flush toilets and indoor bathrooms was indispensable. This facility makes them feel comfortable, which equals happier, healthier children!*

*In terms of challenges, finance was a BIG problem. I thank my good friends in the USA that stood with me financially and morally. Having a partnership with others was vital to the success of the project, which could not be possible without their generosity. In spite of hurdles, the implementation of flush toilets has added value to the institution, and made the surroundings a safe place for the children. When I reflect on this initiative, the welcomed reception of this project, and the change it has brought to the lives of those children just made me want to do more. It makes me happy when I can do little things like this to make life better for someone. ■*



# INTERNSHIPS IN GLOBAL HEALTH

Kayla Beasley is a senior Global Health Studies major. This past summer, she interned with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Food for Peace (FFP) based in Washington, D.C. Kayla worked specifically in the Bureau for Democracy Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) on the Latin American and Caribbean Team. Her basic duties as an intern included providing administrative and program support, assisting in compiling information for FFP programs, and monitoring countries identified through field agents.

## **How did you find out about your particular internship and what drew you to it?**

I knew I wanted to do an internship that related to the coursework that I had taken, so I specifically focused on applying to internships in global health and global development work. I was very drawn to the prestige and reputation that USAID has in the field of development work as well as D.C. being a major hub for individuals who do work in international development field. I also loved the “young professional” culture that D.C. has during the summer when thousands of young people travel there for internships.

## **How did your internship help you decide what you want to do in the Global Health field and how has it helped you branch out into the workforce?**

One of the major benefits of my internship were the connections that I was able to make with individuals working in the field of global health and international development work. Through casual meetings with these people during lunchtime, also known as “brown bags”, and informational interviews that I attended, I had the opportunity to meet several individuals working in the field. Since I hope to join the Peace Corps after graduation, working in D.C. provided me the chance to meet a few of the thousands of Returned Peace Corps volunteers that live in the area. As the Peace Corps headquarters are located in D.C. and the city is a hub for international development work, it is no wonder that nearly 50% of USAID employees are former Peace Corps members. Conducting informational interviews with the individuals who were now working at USAID exposed me to the wide variety of careers and job opportunities that I could potentially have in the future after my Peace Corps service.





### What advice do you have for other students that are looking for internships?

- Do research on your own for internships that you may be interested in.
- Don't be afraid to apply to internships that you think you may not qualify for; you could turn out to be the perfect candidate!
- **APPLY EARLY!** Start looking in January/February for summer internships, it will give you a better chance of having your application reviewed if you submit it early.
- Research the company, organization, agency, that you want to apply to and see if working there aligns with your goals for what you want to do.
- Don't let the cost of an internship discourage you from applying; sometimes the benefits of what you can gain outweigh the costs.

### What was the most important thing you learned from your internship?

"The most important thing I learned from my internship is that you get out what you put into it. You learn the most and gain the most experience when you step outside of "everyday duties" and experience other aspects of the job. The majority of the information I learned this summer came from all of the events that I attended and people I met outside of my direct internship. Exposing myself to new



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# How to Take a Bucket Shower: A Firsthand Learning Experience



**Peace  
Corps**

Back in August, I received an invitation to begin an adventure of a lifetime. I was accepted into the Peace Corps in Ethiopia as a Community Health Volunteer starting January. Since my service begins in only a few months, I thought I better start preparing now. After reading through some blogs from returned Peace Corps



Volunteers, I quickly realized that the biggest adjustment Peace Corps Volunteers face are bucket showers. Since most Peace Corps Volunteers are sent to water scarce communities, ending a long day with a bubble bath is not an option. With this future obstacle in mind, I set out to teach myself how to take a bucket shower. After Googling some instructions, I grabbed a couple different sized buckets, a few washcloths, and got in the shower.



First I grabbed my largest bucket and my smallest bucket, then filled them with warm water from the tap. The largest bucket will hold the water for cleaning, and the small bucket will be used to rinse the washcloths as you shower. Next I grabbed a medium size

bucket, filled it with a little water from the large bucket, and poured it all over myself. I then put a little soap and

water on a washcloth, and started to wash myself. I was still pretty dry, and I mainly just felt sticky from the soap, so I poured a little more water on myself. To my surprise the large bucket was now half empty, and I was not even close to being clean. I rung out the washcloth in the smallest bucket in order to rise the rest of the soap off, but it was still pretty sudsy. I desperately tried to feel clean by wiping the still soapy washcloth on

myself. Realizing that I had not even started to wash my hair, I dumped about half of the remaining water on my head, but my hair was still almost completely dry. I proceeded to scrub shampoo through my mostly dry hair, which resulted in a tangled sticky mess.

**"this experience taught me that I will have some major adjustments to make once I begin my two-year service with the Peace Corps in Ethiopia."**

I used the large bucket to dump the remaining water on my head in hopes of rinsing out the shampoo. After dumping the rest of the water on

myself, I learned that the once warm water was now freezing cold. My failed bucket shower experience left me cold, damp, and really soapy. Luckily, I can still turn on my actual shower, but this experience taught me that I will have some major adjustments to make once I begin my two-year service with the Peace Corps in Ethiopia. ■

# PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

## THE AMERICAN CENTER FOR MONGOLIAN STUDIES

In October, the American Center for Mongolian Studies (ACMS) officially became a part of the International and Global Studies Department. The center will be directed by Ambassador Johnathan Addleton, Junior Ambassador of the U.S. to Mongolia. This center is one of twenty-five centers in different parts of the world under the Council of Overseas Research Centers. It focuses on encouraging academic research and exchanges between Mongolia and the United States. The goals of the center are to build upon its previous work while promoting research, and also provide a large network of opportunities to its students. The ACMS supports scholars working in all fields of study related to Mongolia, and serves as a central meeting place for Mongolian and international academics. His ties to Macon and the Mercer community are what allowed the program to be brought here. Ambassador Addleton is excited to have the center at Mercer and expects the program to increase knowledge of Mongolia and its diverse histories.

The ACMS is located in Groover Hall room 114.



### 5 Health-Related Facts About Mongolia

1. Although Mongolia is the 19th largest country in the world, it is also the least populated.
2. Women in Mongolia live nearly a decade longer on average, than men. For women, life expectancy is 73 as opposed to men who have a life expectancy of 65.
3. Noncommunicable diseases are the leading causes of death in Mongolia.
4. The average marrying age in Mongolia for men is 26 while the average age for women is about 24.
5. While the fertility rate for Mongolia has declined from an average of 6.4 births per woman to 2.3 births per woman, the infant mortality rates have also declined from 63.4 deaths per 1000 to 19.4 deaths per 1000.





# Study Abroad Opportunities



## SPRINGBREAK IN DUBAI:

Announcing the 7th annual Faculty-led Study Tour of Dubai and the United Arab Emirates! Enjoy a desert safari that includes camel rides, and tour the Emirates while exploring Arab culture, food, music and fashion! Go out for a thrill and visit the largest amusement park in the world, ride the fastest roller coaster known to man, and ski in one of only two indoor ski slopes in the entire world! For more information about this trip, please contact Dr. Houry at [Houry\\_E@mercer.edu](mailto:Houry_E@mercer.edu). Trip dates are March

## SPRINGBREAK IN CUBA:

Are you eager to visit Havana before Cuba is fully open to tourism? Did you know that Cuba was the first nation to eliminate maternal-child transmission of HIV? Or that Cuba has produced an effective lung cancer vaccine? The Spring Break to Cuba Program offers a unique opportunity to study the Cuban healthcare system and to learn about the architecture and planning of Havana. Visiting Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a variety of healthcare settings including a maternity home, and meeting with Cuban healthcare providers and policymakers. For more information, please contact Dr. Nichols-Belo at



## MERCER ON MISSION: CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

The MOM-South Africa cohort will collaborate on team projects that capitalize on their majors and areas of expertise as well as the needs of our community partners. The goal of MOM—South Africa is to give students hands-on, applied experience and resume building that also serves a critical community need. Highlights of this trip include an animal preserve where you can see the "Big Five": lions, Cape buffalo, elephants, rhinoceros, and leopards, tour famous landmarks like Table Mountain, and Robben Island, where anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years. For more information, please contact



## MERCER ON MISSION: TANZANIA

Building on our previous Mercer on Mission in 2016, the 2018 cohort be working with Upendo Daima, a Tanzanian organization that houses and works toward restoring the lives of children who have lived on the streets. The team will build culturally appropriate health modules, which the Upendo staff has identified as needed. The health modules are designed with the aim of providing the staff with necessary and creative approaches to educating the children at Upendo about health and wellness. The 2016 program produced modules ranging from alcohol/drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, schistosomiasis, first aid, and yoga. The 2018 program will build on and expand those modules. For more information, please contact [MercerOnMission@mercer.edu](mailto:MercerOnMission@mercer.edu).





# MEET THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

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*As burgeoning health journalists, it's our job to "stir the pot," while also providing precise, informative, and engaging articles that will mobilize our readers to action, which are among the great privileges of being part of the GHS newsletter team!*

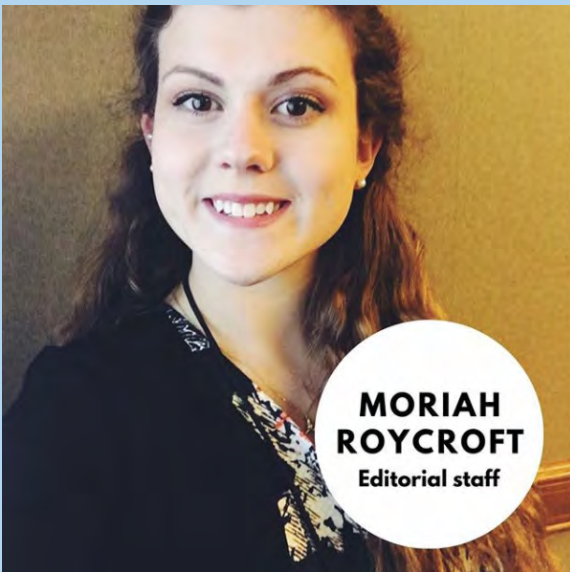
MARY MARTINEZ  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

”



"The GHS in action newsletter functions as an outlet for global health awareness. Through this next edition I hope to gauge the global mindedness of Mercer Students."

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**Ms. Bobbie Shipley**

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