

# IGS Newsletter



## What's Inside?

Take a look at the accomplishments of Mercer's IGS Department, its new faculty, and the amazing achievements of IGS seniors.

# Editorial

## **Dear IGS Seniors,**

Congratulations on all your accomplishments! It has been wonderful seeing you grow over the years. You have put in so much work; now it is time to see the fruits of your labor. We can't wait to see what the future holds!

## **Dear IGS Professors,**

Congratulations on another successful year! You all have worked tirelessly to provide us with the best possible education and support us through all our ups and downs. On behalf of all students, we are so grateful to have such invested faculty members. Thank you for being you! And a special shout-out to Dr. Dodaro! Congrats on an amazing first year!

## **Dear GHIA Contributors,**

Thank you for working so hard to make this newsletter a success. You have put in countless hours to turn mere ideas into incredibly articulate and creative displays of knowledge. I have had a blast working with you guys, and I can't wait to see what comes next!

## **Dear Dr. Obidoa,**

Being a part of this newsletter has been one of my greatest achievements. I applaud you for your ingenuity and for creating such a wonderful working environment. Thank you for challenging us with every new edition. We are truly better for it.

It's been a pleasure.

- *Aaliyah Deen SesayAA*

# Table of Contents

1

Honors  
&  
Awards

2

Faculty  
Spotlight

4

AGH  
Spotlight

5

IGS  
Events

6

Senior  
Dinner

7

Mercer on  
Mission

9

Tips and Tricks  
for  
Post-Grad

10

Senior  
Spotlight

# Honors & Awards

## **International Fellowships**

Fulbright Semifinalist - Victoria Jackson  
Peace Corps Placement - Elizabeth Stinson

## **Honors Convocation IGS Awards**

Global Health Studies Outstanding Senior - Aaliyah Deen Sesay  
Global Health Studies Outstanding Junior - Mandia Roberts  
Global Development Studies Outstanding Student - Emmaline Scott  
Anthropology Outstanding Student - Victoria Jackson

## **College Scholars**

Stamps Scholars - Aaliyah Deen Sesay

## **Honor Societies**

Phi Beta Kappa - Jamyah Combs, Aaliyah Deen Sesay  
Phi Eta Sigma - Victoria Jackson, Keslyn Billings  
Omicron Delta Kappa - Victoria Jackson

## **IGS Departmental Honors**

Emmaline Scott, Josh Parker, Victoria Jackson, Aaliyah Deen Sesay

## **Algernon Sydney Sullivan Medal**

Jamyah Combs

## **Scholarships**

Gilman Scholarship - Cammie Hutchins  
Global Leader Scholarship - Keslyn Billings, MaKenna Lawler, Tatiana Cobos,  
Hannah Dong, Cameron White, Taylor Parker, Naahema Osei-Tutu

## **Peace Corps Prep**

Jamyah Combs, Unnati Davey, Shaan Prasad, Cheyene Kamau

# Faculty Spotlight

Tori Jackson

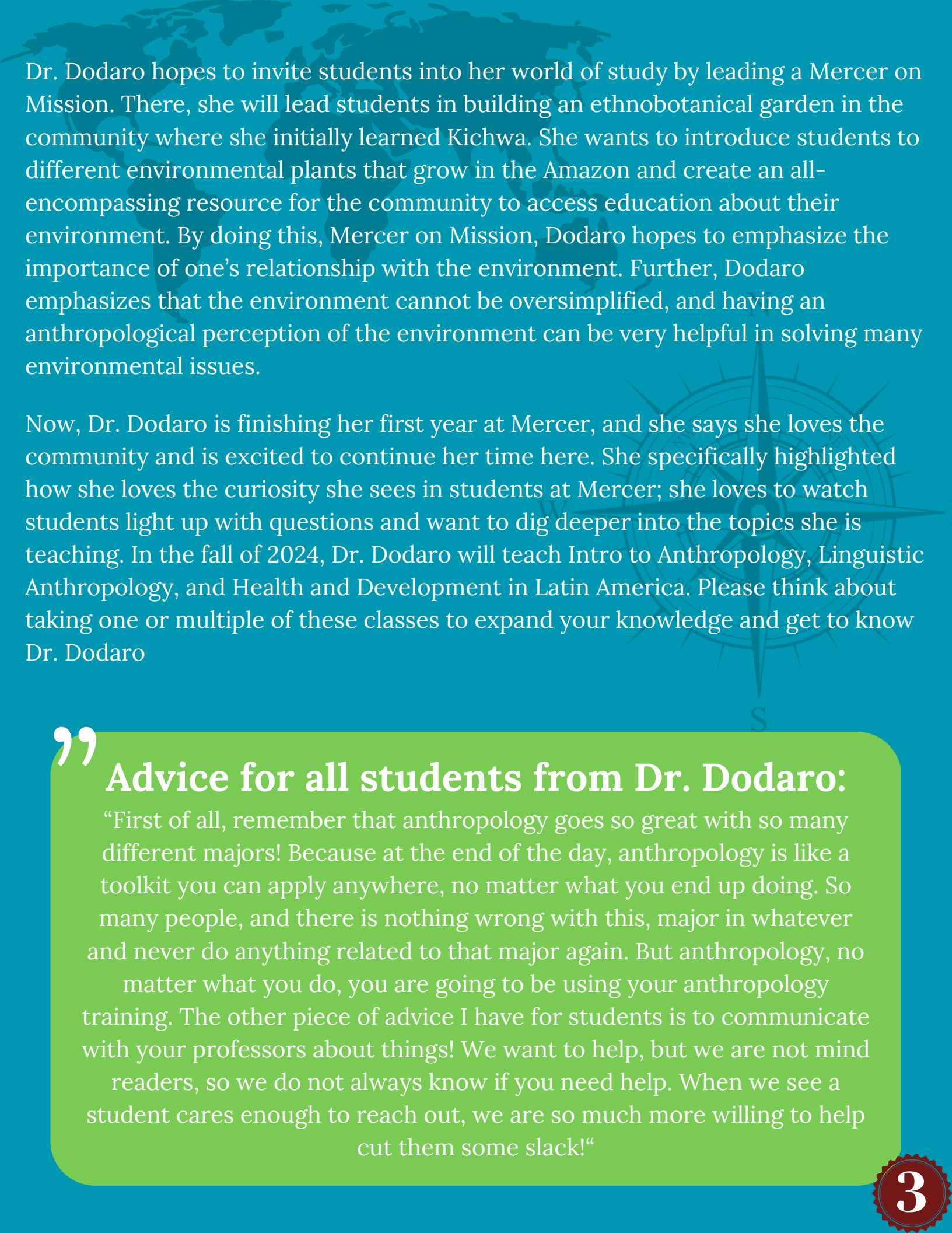
Dr. Lauren Dodaro  
Assistant Professor of Anthropology



Dr. Dodaro started her educational journey off with a B.A. in Anthropology and Art Studio from SUNY Potsdam. She initially wanted to be an art teacher, but then realized she was thriving in her anthropology classes more than her art classes and grew a deep love for social science. After graduating, she felt lost and confused while applying to graduate schools; however, she used her anthropological education and stepped out by emailing people who had her “dream job.” This is how she meant her future graduate school advisor at Tulane University.

At Tulane University, Dodaro received her Ph.D. in Anthropology, which furthered her passion for art, the environment, and world cultures. Dodaro said she loved choosing anthropology because it is a science that allows you to study a combination of everything, and you do not have to choose. During her schooling experience, Dodaro was awarded many fellowships, including the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships Program (FLAS) for Amazonian Kichwa and a Fulbright Fellowship in Ecuador.

After four years in graduate school, Dodaro started on her dissertation. She researched what kids were learning about the environment in an Amazonian Kichwa-speaking community and how that environmental knowledge is important for the empowerment of young girls. This was vital to studying because environmental knowledge is necessary for performing many community operations.



Dr. Dodaro hopes to invite students into her world of study by leading a Mercer on Mission. There, she will lead students in building an ethnobotanical garden in the community where she initially learned Kichwa. She wants to introduce students to different environmental plants that grow in the Amazon and create an all-encompassing resource for the community to access education about their environment. By doing this, Mercer on Mission, Dodaro hopes to emphasize the importance of one's relationship with the environment. Further, Dodaro emphasizes that the environment cannot be oversimplified, and having an anthropological perception of the environment can be very helpful in solving many environmental issues.

Now, Dr. Dodaro is finishing her first year at Mercer, and she says she loves the community and is excited to continue her time here. She specifically highlighted how she loves the curiosity she sees in students at Mercer; she loves to watch students light up with questions and want to dig deeper into the topics she is teaching. In the fall of 2024, Dr. Dodaro will teach Intro to Anthropology, Linguistic Anthropology, and Health and Development in Latin America. Please think about taking one or multiple of these classes to expand your knowledge and get to know Dr. Dodaro

”

### **Advice for all students from Dr. Dodaro:**

“First of all, remember that anthropology goes so great with so many different majors! Because at the end of the day, anthropology is like a toolkit you can apply anywhere, no matter what you end up doing. So many people, and there is nothing wrong with this, major in whatever and never do anything related to that major again. But anthropology, no matter what you do, you are going to be using your anthropology training. The other piece of advice I have for students is to communicate with your professors about things! We want to help, but we are not mind readers, so we do not always know if you need help. When we see a student cares enough to reach out, we are so much more willing to help cut them some slack!”

# Association of Global Health

Taylor Parker

The Association of Global Health (AGH) is a departmental organization for all students majoring in, minoring in, or simply interested in Global Health Studies. AGH is focused on educating the Mercer community about the principles of Global Health Studies and raising awareness about global health issues.



AGH seeks to achieve its goals through interactive and educational opportunities such as panels, service outings, table events in the CSC and Cruz Plaza, and its annual Global Health Week.

AGH holds a general body meeting centered around a different theme once a month. Things to look forward to as a member is the annual Global Health Week in March and the annual “A Day with AGH.” During Global Health Week, AGH hosts multiple events for the Mercer community to raise awareness for the global health major and various global health topics.

This year’s “A Day with AGH” was a visit to Atlanta to visit the CDC museum, Ponce City Market, and an Atlanta Hawks basketball game!

“We are so lucky to have wonderful, dedicated, and caring people to help us raise awareness for global health as a discipline and as a topic on the international stage.”

–**Amaya Shackley,**  
**Secretary**

# IGS Events



GHIA hosts Fireside Chat about the dangers of Modern Slavery

## ANTH

POPCORN &  
THURSDAY 2/  
STETSON 251

Celebrate Anthropology Day by eating popcorn and watching *Darkest Austria*, a fictional but painfully accurate parody of ethnographic films of the midcentury. Follow anthropologist Kayonga Kagame on his journey through Austria!



Anthropology Movie Night



IGS Study Abroad Showcase



Global Health Panel featuring Dr. Tokarz



GHIA Fall 2023 Newsletter Launch





# Senior Dinner

IGS Department Class of 2024

A night where senior students in the IGS department and IGS faculty come together to honor each other and celebrate students' accomplishments.



Appreciating our GHIA seniors:  
Aaliyah and Tori



# Mercer On Mission in Tanzania

Interview with Aaliyah Deen Sesay  
Keslyn Billings



## What was the purpose of this Mercer on Mission trip?

We went to teach about women's rights from a human rights perspective. We were there to create curriculum and teach lessons to secondary school students while also talking to rural communities. The focus of our lessons were gender based violence and women's rights. We partnered with a local organization, Hakizetu, that showed us where we could help them best. There was a need for knowledge on these topics as it was considered a cultural norm.

## What made you choose this country?

One reason is that I am from Africa. I had only been able to experience West African culture, which is where I am from, and I did not want to pass up an opportunity to experience East African culture and see the differences between my own. Another reason is that I want to become an OB/GYN which involves women's health and I felt that a trip where I would be promoting women's rights resonated with me because that is something I hope to be doing in my everyday practice. I felt that this was a good opportunity to start laying the foundation for the practice I want to be in.

## What advice would you give to other students wanting to study abroad?

Try your best to keep an open mind especially if you haven't travelled before. Culture shock is real! Be patient with yourself but make sure that you are still trying to be receptive of new experiences. Make friends on the trip to make it more bearable if you get homesick. Get to know your professors! Not just as teachers but as people. Time management is really important! Have a good time but make sure you're doing what you went there to do.

## What was the most important lesson you gained from this experience?

The importance of practicing cultural relativism. We talk about it all the time in global health but it was really important when we went there because we were talking about such a sensitive topic and probably wouldn't have connected with them if we just talked about what we know without having an understanding of their culture. We had to convey information in a way that was culturally relevant instead of presenting information in a way that only expressed the way we perceive things in the US. such as domestic violence being wrong.

# Mercer On Mission in Mongolia

Interview with Annie Potts

Keslyn Billings



## **What was the purpose of this Mercer on Mission trip?**

We went to make an enrichment camp where we coordinated with a grassroots organization in Mongolia. We taught STEM, English, Health, and Sustainability to kids ranging from elementary to high school. We worked in an informal community and collected information about demographics on things such as mental health and substance abuse when talking to parents. We did a lot of networking and were able to get an understanding of the things that Mongolia needs.

## **What was your favorite part?**

I got to teach a class on sexual and reproductive health and that was really cool because I love teaching on this topic. I felt like it made a tangible impact that we could see. We got to answer a lot of questions and it was good hearing some of the questions that needed to be answered.

## **What advice would you give to other students wanting to study abroad?**


Just do it! You may feel like there is a million reasons not to but if you just shove those feelings aside and take the chance then it will be an experience you won't regret. Do a lot of research before you go and make sure you understand the cultural context of the country. Be flexible! When you are traveling you don't always know what the standards are so you need to be flexible because everything doesn't always go according to plan.

## **What was the most important lesson you gained from this experience?**


Traveling with Mercer and with a group is a great way to travel effectively. I always grew up doing trips related to global health but they were independent and sketchy. When I got the opportunity to do MOM and do it with a big group while connecting with communities I felt that I had a more significant presence because there was a group of us and not just one individual. I felt like that made a bigger impact while also feeling more safe and comfortable.

# Grad School & Medical School Advice Bulletin


Reema Chande




**Know that your grades or test scores do not define you, but your willingness to learn does.**



**Have hobbies! Admissions committees want to know who you are outside of healthcare and school.**



**Applying to graduate school isn't easy, surround yourself with people who will support you and keep you focused. Ask your professors for help, they've been there!**



**Find clinical or field experience early on to show understanding of your area and gain mentorship.**



**Create a narrative in your application, have a theme that connects your experiences.**



**Senior  
Spotlight**  
Class of 2024



## Jamyah Combs

Major: Global Health Studies

Minor: Anthropology, Sociology

Jamyah has been accepted into Emory University, Boston University, Columbia University, and University of North Carolina Chapel Hill--to pursue a Master of Public Health degree. She will also participate in a summer internship.

“Follow that star no matter how hopeless, no matter how far.”



## Cheyenne Kamau

Majors: Global Health Studies, International Affairs

Minor: French

Cheyenne plans to join the National Health Corps for a year. She will get her MPH in either Health Policy or Epidemiology.

“Don't be afraid to take a variety of classes even if they seem difficult. Every class is useful and will be meaningful to you in the future.”



## Kasandra Torres

Major: Global Health Studies

Minor: Biology

Kasandra will be attending Augusta's MSN-CNL program in the fall.

“College goes by fast, so enjoy it while it lasts!”



## Joshua Parker

Major: Global Health Studies

Minors: Spanish, Chemistry

Josh plans to get a Master in Public Health at Emory University in Epidemiology.

“Push past your limits!”



## Emmaline Scott

Major: Global Health Studies

Minor: Global Development Studies

Emmaline plans to move to the Atlanta area and work for a few years in community health promotion. Eventually, she will go to grad school for a Master's in Public Health.

"Spend time getting involved on campus and making friends! It makes college much more fun!"



## Skylar Daniel

Major: Global Health Studies

Minor: Economics

Sky plans to build a career in the nonprofit sector.

"Find what you're passionate about and go with it!"



## Bailee Huston

Majors: Global Health Studies, Anthropology

Bailee plans to attend graduate school. She has been admitted into Emory University.

"Take breaks and take care of yourself. Both have been an important step I used to finish my classes and maintain my mental health."



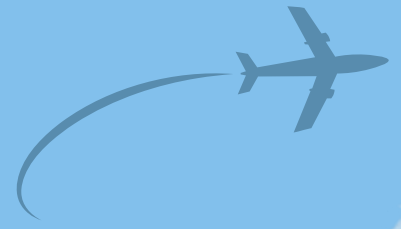
## Elizabeth Stinson

Majors: Global Health Studies, Global Development Studies

Minor: Psychology

Elizabeth plans to be a Community and Youth Health Educator. She has been accepted for Peace Corps in Botswana.

"Find your passion!"





## **Shaan Prasad**

**Major: Global Health Studies**

**Minors: Biology, Chemistry**

**Shaan will be attending Mercer School of Medicine in Fall 2024.**

**“Enjoy the college experience as much as you can! While I was involved on campus, I definitely have regrets of not putting myself out there. Make the most out of your time in undergrad and make some great friends to hang out with!”**



## **Colby Martin**

**Major: Global Health Studies**

**Minors: Biology, Chemistry**

**Colby is working towards graduate school and she would like to practice as PA one day. She will conduct research in Uganda.**

**“Be an advocate for yourself. Understand your worth, explore personal interests, and take risks- it could lead to incredible and unthinkable opportunities!”**

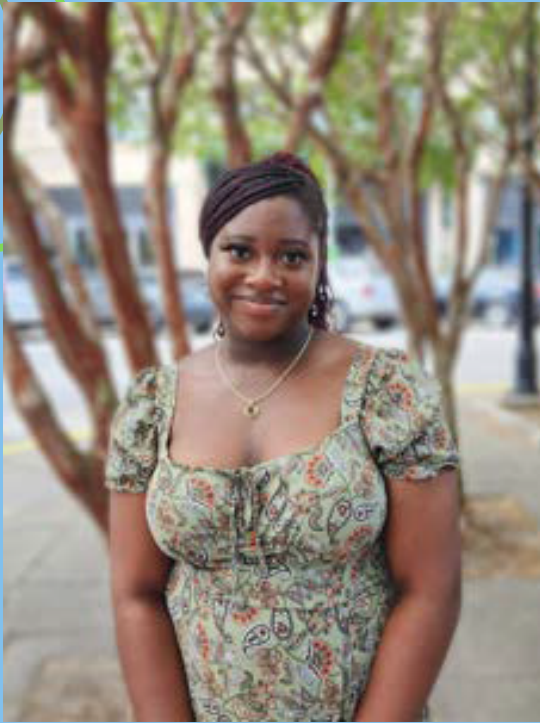


# **Congrats!**

**The IGS Department congratulates these students for their noteworthy accomplishments! We wish you all the best in your respective programs and future endeavours.**



# **GHIA Seniors**



## **Aaliyah Deen Sesay**

**Major: Global Health Studies  
Minors: Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry**

**Aaliyah has been accepted to Mercer University School of Medicine and Morehouse School of Medicine. She is deciding which to attend for Fall 2024!**

**“Step outside your comfort zone. If there’s one thing I could tell my freshman self, its that the best experiences came from being uncomfortable and trying new things.**

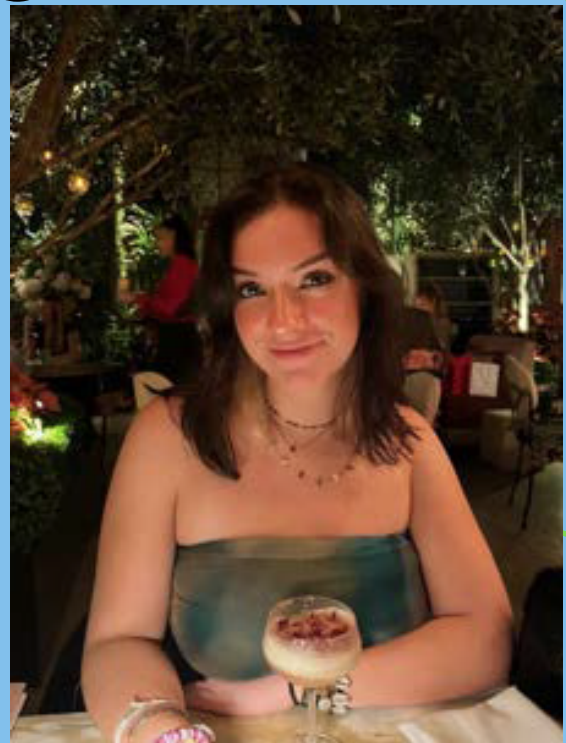
**Also, be sure to create a good support system because you’ll need them on those hard days. But all in all, have fun and enjoy college! You have the rest of your life to be a grown up, so let loose.”**

## **Tori Jackson**

**Majors: Global Health Studies,  
Anthropology**

**Tori applied to a Fulbright as an English Teaching Assistant in Madagascar. She is currently a semi-finalist! If she becomes a finalist, she plans to attend. If not, she plans to go to graduate school to study Medical Anthropology!**

**“College is hard, and it’s not meant to be easy, so give yourself grace and remember that learning from mistakes and discovering your passions is more important than perfection. Give yourself time to enjoy life and explore yourself. One of my professors always reminded me to never stop the act of playing. The universe will open the right doors for you trust that.”**



# Editorial Board



Aaliyah Deen Sesay  
Chief Editor



Tori Jackson  
Assistant Editor



Keslyn Billings  
Contributor



Reema Chande  
Contributor



Taylor Parker  
Contributor

# Acknowledgements



We would like to  
thank the  
International and  
Global Studies (IGS)  
faculty for their  
continued support  
of and commitment  
to the furthering of  
educational  
opportunities at  
Mercer.



Special thanks to:

Dr. Chinekwu Obidoa

Founder and Faculty Advisor

Dr. Amy Nichols-Belo

Dr. Ryan Tokarz

Dr. Rachael Goodman

Dr. Lauren Dodaro

Ms. Bobbie Shipley

Sr. Admin. Assistant/ Programs

Coordinator IGS



Want to get  
involved?

Follow us on Instagram  
@globalhealthinaction for  
more information and  
updates!