Overview: High-Impact Education Practices that facilitate experiential learning within the first-year seminar hold the potential for perspective transformation and the opportunity to dramatically influence students’ academic, career, and personal paths. Emphasizing diversity and global learning within curricular and co-curricular learning aids students in an exploration of cultures and worldviews different from their own. Kennesaw State University’s University College – an innovative, interdisciplinary degree-granting college that both challenges and supports students from the first day on campus through commencement – emphasizes multicultural experiential education for first-year students to enhance their understanding of global issues as they transition into higher education. By aligning the learning outcomes from a globally focused first-year seminar course, students participate in either The Global Fellows immersion program in Italy or the Global Engagement Scholars experience in Washington, D.C. Both initiatives provide rigorous curriculum and activities for students “to do” and “act,” rather than to passively and transactionally receive multicultural education. Here students are empowered by the learning context and can begin to think about how they might exist as a change agent and global citizen in the ever-changing interconnected world.

Global Fellows Program: Students fulfill many of their first-year curriculum requirements by spending the first seven weeks of their fall semester on campus and the second seven weeks in Italy. While on campus, learners will take courses that fulfill general education and first-year requirements while enjoying the organizations and activities that help students connect with the institution such as civic and community engagement, mentoring, athletics events and more. In Italy, students will spend the last seven weeks of the semester finishing the classes started on campus as well as meeting local leaders, visiting area businesses, and touring sites including vineyards, organic farms, archeological museums. The curricula also include trips to cities such Rome, Florence, and Siena. This 7 x 7 approach is designed to help prepare learners to compete in the global market, develop international and national perspectives, and get a head start on their community, civic, and leadership training.

Global Engagement Scholars: Through an essay selection process 10 students enrolled in the globally focused first-year seminar will travel to Washington D.C. By aligning the learning outcomes from the course curriculum, students participate in this week-long trip at the conclusion of their first semester of college. Students visit federal agencies, NGOs, and private sector implementers as well as interact with members of Congress, officials from the Department of Defense, and representatives from the Department of State to discuss how defense, diplomacy and civil society shape our country and the world as well as learners’ current experiences and future goals. Students will also have the opportunity to be self-directed and empowered to visit the White House, various museums of the Smithsonian, and other attractions that the area offers. Costs for airfare, accommodations, and Metro Card is provided by Kennesaw State University, and students are only responsible for their meals and spending money.

Students Testimonies: Students are invited to engage in the practice of critical reflection, or a ruthless interrogation of their socially constructed knowledge, attitudes, values, and beliefs. Weaving in critical reflection, by way of journaling, provides student testimony of their learning adventure and unique perspective transformations. Utilizing Instagram and the following Hashtags: #Abroadsfromatlanta and #Thorntobewild16, students share a variety of experiential learning about academic/social adjustment in their local campus community and other places and spaces around the world.

To access students’ testimonies, use your mobile device. Log into Instagram and search #Abroadsfromatlanta or #Thorntobewild16.

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