

International Diploma

SETS A

Global Stage

FOR GRADUATES

– BY STACY CALFO –

In conjunction with our Mission Statement

— The Ravenscroft community, guided by our legacy of excellence, nurtures individual potential and prepares students to thrive in a complex and interdependent world — the International Diploma program was designed for Upper School students who have a passion for and curiosity about global issues, world languages and travel.

ALMOST TEN YEARS AGO, David Kates, Director of Global Education and Initiatives, along with Mary Beth Immediata, Mimi Lieberman and others decided they would create a program of distinction for our students who were globally minded and interested in world languages and cultures to have an opportunity to shine and run with those passions. They wanted Ravenscroft students to be recognized for being global citizens who go the extra mile. “We looked at models from other schools and while many had the global travel component, few high schools had this level of investment in global studies,” Kates says. “It was something that was mission-driven and aligned and meshed beautifully with the Citizen Leader Framework.”

“This program is distinctly Ravenscroft — it is tailored to meet the individual needs and interests of our students. At the same time it is continually evolving so the school is providing the most impactful learning experience and global curriculum,” adds Jessica Yonzon, the program coordinator. “The International Diploma program begins in ninth grade and currently has over 50 students enrolled, including nine graduating seniors. Our international experiences begin in middle school and this year there are over 100 students involved in the travel and hosting this year.” For graduating seniors, the International Diploma program is much more than an academic degree. **It’s a decision to pursue a life’s passion and connect across borders.**

Reed Margolis ’17 will attend Duke University this fall, where he plans to double major in International Comparative Studies and Global Cultural Studies with a minor in Spanish. “I want to use all of the lessons I learned through the International Diploma program and my recent experiences abroad to propel my success at the next level. After college, I will ideally join the United States Peace Corps, and later become some sort of ambassador or consul overseas,” Reed says. “Perhaps the experience that sticks out the most to me is my hosting

of a Spanish exchange student, Alvaro, my sophomore year. Our relationship has transcended the International Diploma program, as he has come back to visit me twice, I have gone to visit him twice, and we have even shared an excursion to New York City together.”

Alumni who have taken the International Diploma studies at Ravenscroft state that it helped them shape their college and grad school experiences. Many have won awards or have been chosen to be part of University-level programs like Elon’s Project Pericles, which aims to promote social justice and civic engagement at home and abroad.

“The International Diploma program has helped me at Elon by encouraging me to take unique classes my first year and that ultimately led me to major in Religious Studies,” says Tate Replogle ’14. “Because of the



REED MARGOLIS '17 (right) with his exchange student and friend, Alvaro



TATE REPLOGLE '14 has traveled to all seven continents. Here, she is pictured in the United Arab Emirates.

International Diploma program, I am more confident in my classes and have taken on many leadership roles at Elon, like applying and getting accepted in the Periclean Scholars program. I have spent the last two years travelling back and forth to Zambia with my peers as we work together on our Periclean project. My travels abroad with the International Diploma program and now at Elon have really set the stage for my path to the Peace Corps after college.”

“The international diploma program truly makes our Ravens global citizens who are ready to share their talents & experiences worldwide.”

Replogle adds. “I thought that the requirements for the International Diploma would challenge me, inspire me, and help me grow. In the end, they did exactly that and I am grateful for the whole experience.”

In addition to the Peace Corps, graduates of the program have also pursued careers with Teach for America as well as International Business degrees and linguists of all types. “Ms. Yonzon always encouraged me to think globally, act locally, and I’ve carried that slogan with me,” says Jessie Lutz ’14, currently studying at the University of North Carolina. “Right now, I am interning at a human rights think tank. I’ve thoroughly enjoyed examining human rights specific to the American South through both a legal and grassroots lens, and hope to continue to advocate for human rights beyond college. I was also recently invited to be a corps member for Teach for America. If I choose to accept the offer, after I graduate, I will be teaching in Hawaii for two years.”

“The International Diploma program is a toolkit that provides valuable cultural competency skills that are essential to thrive in our world today. The world needs curious, open-minded, and worldly leaders, and the International Diploma can help groom students into global citizens ready to take on the world,” Lutz adds.

The International Diploma program truly makes our Ravens global citizens who are ready to share their talents and experiences worldwide.

“At Carolina, my international diploma certainly helped form my decision to major in Global Studies and continue my Spanish classes. I plan to study abroad for a semester in between my sophomore and junior year in South America because my region for the Global Studies major is Latin America,” explains Caroline Christman ’16, a freshman at the University of North Carolina. “After UNC, I would like to get a job abroad, possibly making economic recommendations in developing countries or for businesses in Latin America.”

Christman adds, “I would say that pursuing the International Diploma at Ravenscroft is a good idea for anybody interested in studying abroad, learning another language, anthropology, history, or any global/economic development or political fields. The world is much more connected than it may seem in many different areas of study and the international diploma will give you a solid base to build your international knowledge on.” *R*



When Jessie Lutz was a senior she shared these views of the International Diploma program.

“As a transracial and transnational adoptee, I am a child of both the eastern and western worlds. I like to say that I’m ethnically Chinese and culturally American. The richness and complexity of my own cultural identity has fostered my passion for learning about the diverse peoples and cultures of the world.

When introduced to the International Diploma program at Ravenscroft, it seemed a perfect fit for me. I love learning about culture and have always been interested in international relations. Indeed, the International Diploma has equipped me with a well-rounded international education. The coursework coupled with travel and hosting opportunities have shaped me into a more competent and growth-minded global citizen.

The Religion and Ethics Seminar impacted me most during my time at Ravenscroft. I found this seminar to be especially powerful because it was primarily discussion based. In articulating my personal beliefs, I began to understand the evolution of my moral compass. I realized just how significant a role religion has played in shaping culture, societal norms, and the justice system. I learned that understanding a person’s faith is profoundly important to understanding their ethical code.

Global Issues One and Two also had a profound impact on my international education. These classes challenged me to “walk a mile in someone else’s shoes” and to always check my privilege. I have learned not to take things like clean water, plumbing, and electricity for granted.

Another incredible facet of the International Diploma was the opportunity to travel. I’ve been fortunate to have participated in both the China exchange program and the Zambia program. The China exchange enabled me to practice my Mandarin skills while experiencing what life is like in a typical Beijing home. I was able to reconnect with my culture and that meant the world to me. In Zambia, I was humbled by the two schools and orphanage we visited. Despite language and cultural barriers, I felt that I could connect with the people of China and Zambia. Laughing, dancing, and singing are all beautifully universal.

I’ve had a rich and meaningful international education at Ravenscroft. I feel that I’m well prepared to continue my international studies at American University in the fall. I believe that graduating with an International Diploma is a perfect starting point in my pursuit of a career in the international diplomatic arena.”



JESSIE LUTZ '14 (behind the cheetah) with her classmates in Zambia in 2014.