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The experience I had abroad was not a typical emergence into another culture and language but was a combination of foreign and familiar. It was an emergence into a international academic community, that, although it did take place in a foreign country with a foreign language for me, was not that way for everyone. I participated in a Global Leadership Program in Cordoba, Argentina that consisted of international participants and coordinators. For one month we all lived in a dorm together at Blas Pascal University just outside the city of Cordoba, and had classes in English Monday through Friday. The required class for everyone was “Philosophies of Leadership”, and I chose to also take “Global Management” and “Survey of Conflict in International Relations” and an additional Spanish class. In other words, this program had more of an academic emphasis than a cultural one.

Before this experience in Argentina, I had studied abroad twice in Brazil and, in many ways, I felt that I had a sense for cultural sensitivity and a solid sense of where I stood in the world as an American. However, I found, understanding and being aware of these sensitivities is much different than practicing them. In this program dialogue was never flat and boring, but was always enlightening and spurred growth within the individual in ways that are life changing. We were, at times simulating the international round-table discussion such as what takes place at the United Nations, having to listen to, or represent, the views of a foreign country. We were all friends and it happened to work

out that our program consisted of all women (an environment that I have grown to value and appreciate so much because of my education at Saint Mary's).

One of the things we discussed in my Global Management class was that emotional memory lasts longer than cognitive memory. I believe this to be true in all aspects of life. In joining together students from various different countries around the world, the students grow in unison throughout the month long experience. We formed friendships but we also learned together in our daily experiences or our community service projects. Through these bonds we have formed, we are now, unlike a typical United Nations round-table, emotionally connected to one another and their country of origin. Now, when I read a newspaper and read about Tajikistan, I think of my two friends from there and all that they taught me and shared with me.

One of the most meaningful moments for me was the day when everyone presented their project proposals for a project that they were going to implement back home. It was one of our last days all together and here we were presenting to everyone how we were going to be active citizens in this world, something that is so contrary to all societal norms, and I was overwhelmed with the power resonating from each woman in our classroom. The power of the individual became clear to all of us in that room and when we stopped to let it hit us, it sent goose-bumps all over.

Everyone was as equally vulnerable at the beginning of the program and no one left the same person as when she came. We entered as a diverse, heterogeneous group of foreigners, and left a united, homogenized body of global citizens with a better sense of self and the world in which we share.