

Interviews with Students at COH During 2015 Conference

by Charlie Graham, 236-1059

1. MATT MURPHY, Senior at Univ. of Maine-Orono, studying international affairs and security (From Maine, former US Army soldier in Afghanistan). There was "an incredible depth of knowledge and experience shown", and it was "great to get the perspectives of both US policy makers and foreign policy makers". "I was especially impressed by "Ambassador Pifer and his background in security and defense", for he resonated strongly "with the areas I'm currently studying". "All speakers so far are people I can learn so much from".
2. BRETT WELCH, Sophomore at College of the Atlantic, Russian country studies (From Daytona Beach, Florida). This particular Conference had a lot of meaning for Brett, who has been "studying Russian history, culture, and language since last spring." The speakers and discussions so far have "strongly reinforced a commitment to my course of studies and to eventually have some sort of involvement in government or foreign affairs".
3. CELINA "Katie" BERNHARDT, Senior at Univ. of Maine-Orono, pre-law (From Bangor) "This is the 3rd Conference I've attended and the best so far. All speakers seem to have a close connection with Russia", even to the point of "being very emotional about it, such as Constanze Stelzenmueller." "It's a valuable information source, not at all like reading foreign affairs on-line."
4. LEAH LITTLE, Freshman at Univ. of Maine - Orono, studying international affairs with a concentration in area studies (from Atlanta). "I'm so glad this Conference is about Russia, because I've really wanted to study that country. I'm specifically interested in the recent changes in Russia's international adoption policies vis-a-vis adoptions by Americans. This Conference, especially my conversation with one of the speakers, has convinced me that I may change my career path, which is good. I'd rather be finding these things out now rather than later."
5. ARTUR FAS. Junior at Colby College, (From Tallinn, Estonia) "I'm very impressed by the speakers and their range of expertise, from American and

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Russian and Chinese, with points of view that you seldom get from the media. I'm thinking of becoming either a teacher, like my parents, or a medical student, an interest I picked up during my compulsory service as a medic in the Estonian army. Attendance at the Conference may not have a career impact for me. However, the information I'm getting here is very important to me as someone from a country bordering Russia."

6. EVAN CENTALA, Master's Degree studies at Univ. of Maine – Orono (From San Diego, Cal. and Machias, Maine). "Although the focus of my current studies is on Latin America, the course on Russian studies that I took to prepare me for the Conference has been very instructive in helping me to understand the dynamics of the challenges faced by any sovereign nation. I don't know that this particular conference will impact my future career choices in any specific way, but the information being provided is very thought-provoking, and that has to be a good thing."

7. JESSICA JEAN SCHWARTZ, a : a senior from Lisbon, ME studying Marine Biology; ELIZABETH (GRACE) KORPENING, from Kingville, Indiana studying captive wildlife, and ADRIANA LOBO, from Boston, studying captive wildlife care and education. **All students attend Unity College.**
 - JESSICA: "I came here not knowing what to expect, and there is certainly an overwhelming amount of knowledge.
 - ADRIANA: "We got an overwhelming amount of knowledge from the speakers today, much more than I could have possibly gotten from months of research on my own. The speakers were so knowledgeable and clear and understandable in their presentations.
 - GRACE: I came here not knowing that much about the politics and economy of Russia, and this conference really opened my eyes. I learned a lot."
 - JESSICA: I wasn't well prepared for all the information I've gotten, but it's inspired me to do more research in order to put the information into context."

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- ADRIANA: "I've been so glad to find out about the Camden Conference. I didn't realize that such a thing existed in Maine. I'd like to come back every year. I wish it were open to more students than just those taking a specific course (as is the case now)."
- JESSICA: "I agree. There are only eight of us in the Conference class itself. There are a lot of other students at Unity who could really get into the various topics discussed here. I've never done anything like this before, and it was really a good experience."