

Cali VanCleve '26

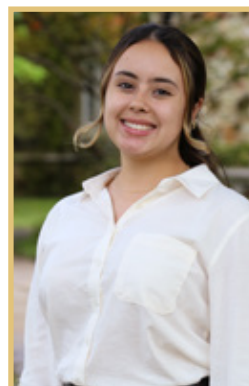
Hometown: Nashville, TN
Major: International Studies and Russian Studies
City/Country: Pathum Thani, Thailand
Employer: Labour Protection Network Foundation

This summer, I had the privilege to work with the Labour Protection Network (LPN) Foundation, which is a small NGO in rural Thailand that focuses on human rights and counter

trafficking in Southeast Asia's fishing industry. LPN's programming consists of raid/rescue assistance, labor rights advocacy, and migrant education centers to support Burmese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Indonesian migrants and their families. Not only do they offer direct support, but they are a leading voice amplifying migrant concerns nationally and internationally with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Their bravery in leading rapid response efforts saves thousands of lives yearly from abuse, wage theft, and life-threatening work conditions.

Hosting a migrant education center's activity day, joining worksite trips to illegal ports, and interviewing fishermen's stories, it served as a reminder that there's much work to be done. Trafficking persons operations and the seafood supply industry needs drastic reform to ensure that workers are protected and not stripped of their dignity.

This experience granted me the opportunity to strengthen my strategic planning, grant writing, narrative engagement, and further relationship building skills. I leave this experience with a greater commitment to mobilizing migrant populations and safeguarding their rights to a just life.



Dania Vanessa Verbena '27

Hometown: Esquipulas, Guatemala
Major: International Studies and Latin American & Latinx Studies
City/Country: Buenos Aires, Argentina
Employer: Democracia en Red

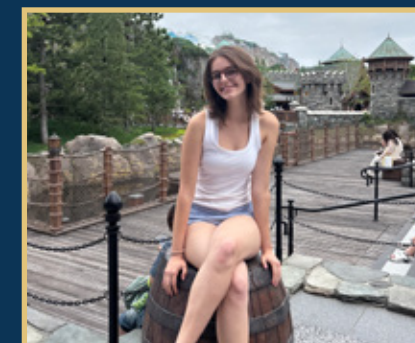
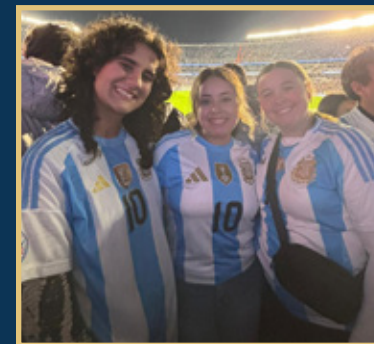
Interning with Democracia en Red in Buenos Aires has been a deeply enriching experience at the intersection of civic technology, public policy, and grassroots activism. Democracia en Red is a civil society

organization that uses digital tools to strengthen democratic participation and reduce the gap between governments and communities. From the beginning, I was entrusted with meaningful responsibilities—developing an eight-week social media campaign ahead of Argentina's national elections, conducting outreach with local governments outside the city, and supporting “Diálogos Dateros,” a feminist campaign advocating for inclusive data governance with the slogan “No more data about us, without us;” I was fascinated to collaborate on this. Beyond the projects, what has marked me the most is the community I've found. I connected with Indigenous leaders, feminist organizers, and human rights advocates—people who welcomed me with generosity and whom I now call friends. Through our conversations, we discovered not only common struggles across Latin America but also the power of solidarity and resistance. These conversations reshaped the way I understand democracy, migration, and advocacy—not just as academic topics, but as lived, collective realities. This internship strengthened my professional skills, but more importantly, it reminded me that real change begins with listening, connection, and community.



RHODES COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CENTER FOR CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MERTIE W. BUCKMAN INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



SUMMER 2025



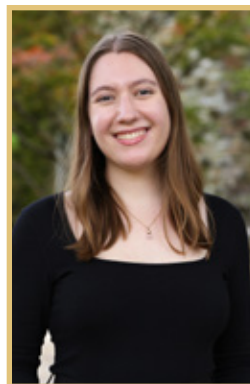
Rhodes College
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

The Mertie W. Buckman International Internship Program

Initiated in 1994 through a generous gift of the Buckman family, The Mertie W. Buckman International Internship Program provides the opportunity for rising junior or senior International Studies majors to broaden global understanding through living and working abroad. Selected students complete an eight-week summer internship in the country of their choice. Recent destinations have included Argentina, Columbia, England, France, Ireland, Japan, and South Africa. Mertie Buckman interns can work alongside international leaders in a variety of work environments from businesses to local human rights organizations.

Qualified applicants are rising junior or senior International Studies majors with a minimum overall/major GPA of 3.3 and relevant language skills. Selected students will earn one credit of I.S. 470 and F11 credit.

The program is coordinated by the International Studies Department Chair, the Center for Career and Professional Development, and the International Studies faculty. Please contact these departments with questions about the program or application materials.



Lauren Bottom '27

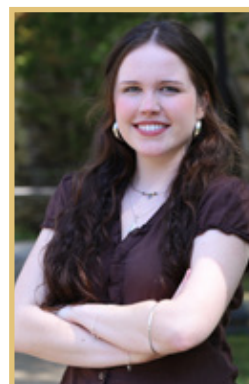
Hometown: Reston, VA
Major: International Studies
City/Country: Barcelona, Spain
Employer: Barcelona, Spain

Through the generosity of the Mertie Buckman Internship Program, I had the amazing opportunity to spend a summer working and exploring one of the most exciting cities in Spain. In Barcelona I pursued my interests in research, writing, and cross-cultural communication at Associació Diomira:

a local non-profit driven to inform and uplift children, adolescents, and young adults across Catalunya through their magazine publications, social media presence, and leadership workshops.

My favorite part of the experience was seeing my own articles published in foreign magazines as well as deepening my knowledge about children's rights and education in Catalunya through my own research. As a Spanish minor, it was incredible to immerse myself in a language I've dedicated years to learning as well as learn the local language of Catalan. Along with exploring all of Barcelona's gorgeous neighborhoods and iconic landmarks, I had the chance to travel all over Catalunya, from the Roman ruins of Tarragona to the white sandy coves of Tossa de Mar.

Overall, I am incredibly grateful for all the amazing experiences, relationships, and knowledge that I've gained through my internship. I know that my time in Barcelona will stay with me as I continue my academic journey in international relations and in becoming a global citizen.



Lydia Gold '26

Hometown: Madison, WI
Major: International Studies
City/Country: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Employer: Konnit Play To Learn

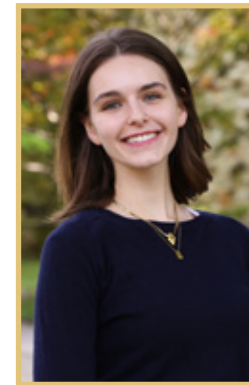
This summer, I had the chance to intern at Konnit Play To Learn in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Konnit Group is a company dedicated to designing and building educational and engaging play spaces for children aged 2 to 12 and their families. The organization's mission is to

foster a generation of healthy, confident, and creative Vietnamese children by providing enriching experiences in play, learning, and discovery.

During my time at Konnit, I was responsible for developing lesson plans for use in future programs. Additionally, I worked directly with children, helping to organize and lead the activities I designed. This dual role allowed me to contribute both creatively and practically, ensuring the lessons were engaging and effective.

One thing that truly stood out to me throughout my time in Vietnam was the overwhelming kindness of the people. Everyone treated me as if I were part of their community, whether it was helping me cross the street, assisting when I missed my bus, or countless other small gestures. I've never lived somewhere where people are so compassionate and genuinely eager to help others, no matter the circumstance. It was really refreshing, and their openness made every day feel special.

One of the most fun and meaningful experiences during my internship was organizing a bike race for local students. A lot of the kids didn't know how to ride a bike, so it was exciting to help them try something new. In Vietnam, most people get around on motorbikes, so bikes are an important part of the culture. This experience reminded me that investing in children is one of the most powerful ways to shape the future. Through play, learning, and small moments of encouragement, we help kids build the confidence, curiosity, and creativity they need to grow. When we support the next generation, we're not just helping individuals, we are planting the seeds for a more compassionate, innovative, and hopeful world.



Eleanor Knight '27

Hometown: Atlanta, GA
Major: International Studies and Chinese Studies
City/Country: Tokyo, Japan
Employer: Seibo Japan NPO

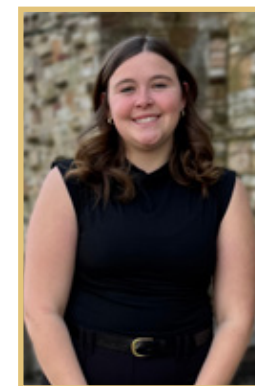
This past summer, the Mertie Buckman International Internship program granted me the opportunity to intern in Tokyo with Seibo Japan, a registered non-profit that funds school feeding programs and sustainable educational

development in Malawi. My work centered on fundraising, where I honed my grant writing skills and cooperated with Seibo's partner universities to host fundraising events. The most memorable experience was volunteering at the World Expo in Osaka as a representative of Malawi and Seibo, facilitated by our organization's charitable agreements with the Malawian government.

Outside of work, I enjoyed the variety of food and cultural experiences Tokyo has to offer. One of my most favorite activities was museum hopping, from the state-of-the-art Tokyo National Museum to the hole-in-the-wall art galleries throughout the city. I also loved eating many different types of cuisines, and Tokyo's culinary community helped me to expand my palette.

Over the course of eight weeks, I was able to immerse myself in Tokyo's greater metropolitan area, which is comprised of several unique neighborhoods including: Shimokitazawa, perfect for vintage and antique shopping, Asakusa, home of the famous Sensoji Temple, Shibuya with an abundance of must-visit attractions, and plenty more.

In true International Studies form, this internship has equipped me to "expand my mind" and "change the world". I am leaving Japan with a greater appreciation for the culture and language and a personal understanding of the broader impact philanthropy has in today's world.



Lily Grace Richey '27

Hometown: Greensboro, NC
Major: International Studies and History
City/Country: Buenos Aires, Argentina
Employer: Global Planet of the Children

For eight weeks this summer, I had the amazing opportunity to intern and live in one of South America's most captivating cities, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

I was an intern for Global Planet of the Children, an NGO based in Buenos Aires with the goal of creating stronger families and boosting children's self-esteem through a number of initiatives, including throwing birthday parties for low-income children or children who have been in the

hospital. My role included crafting social media messaging, translating documents into English, and communicating with potential donors. One of the most fulfilling parts of my internship was helping to set up for the birthday parties and seeing how delighted families were to have people help craft such a special day.

My internship allowed me to constantly be improving my Spanish, whether it was through conversations with my co-workers or writing emails to potential donors, I was constantly improving. This internship also made it possible for me to work in the nonprofit sector, which is something that I have always been interested in.

I am so thankful for this incredible experience that made it possible for me to explore a new nation, improve my Spanish, and grow professionally!



Catherine Tanner '26

Hometown: Louisville, KY
Major: International Studies and Spanish

City/Country: Buenos Aires, Argentina
Employer: Centro de Políticas Públicas para el Socialismo (CEPPAS) Spending this past summer interning in Buenos Aires has sparked professional and personal growth within me and provided me with new skills and tools that will be beneficial as I finish my last year of undergrad at Rhodes and begin

exploring post-grad career opportunities. Working with CEPPAS, I was able to bridge my understandings of Indigenous conflicts in Latin America that I had gained both at Rhodes and during my recent semester abroad in Ecuador to the context of Argentina in this particular issue.

I had the chance to do grant work, specifically in ecological conservation and simultaneously uplifting Indigenous communities. This opportunity allowed me to grow in my research skills and understand basic jargon associated with open-calls to determine if CEPPAS was eligible to apply. I also learned more about implementing international treaties into national policies and legislation, as CEPPAS is part of an observatory group for the Escazú Agreement. This also required me to complete numerous translations, from English-Spanish and vice versa, to facilitate interlingual communication between CEPPAS and other national and international organizations also working within the context of implementing the Escazú Agreement in Argentina.

When I was not working, I was still keeping myself busy exploring Buenos Aires. There's never not something to do or new to try in the city. I had the chance to attend a World Cup qualifier game between Argentina and Colombia, visit Uruguay and Iguazú Falls, shop at weekend markets, and see so many iconic museums, theaters, and monuments like Teatro Colón, Plaza del Mayo, and Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes.