



UNC  
ESHELMAN  
SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

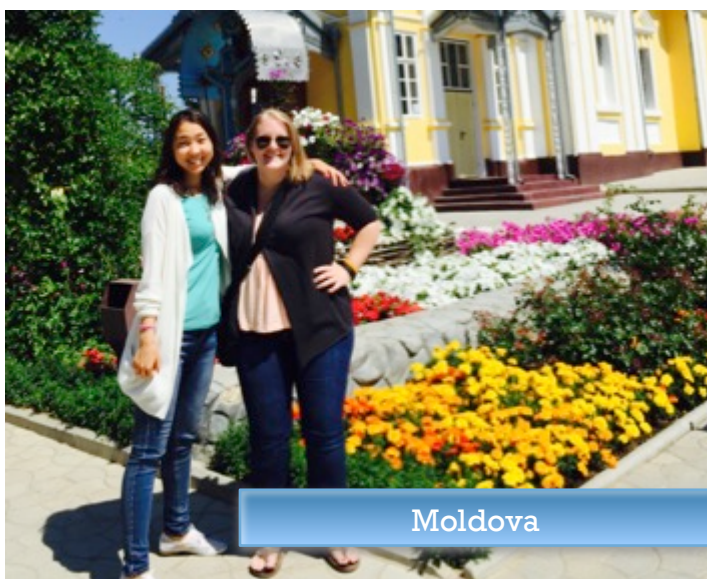
Australia



Malawi



Moldova

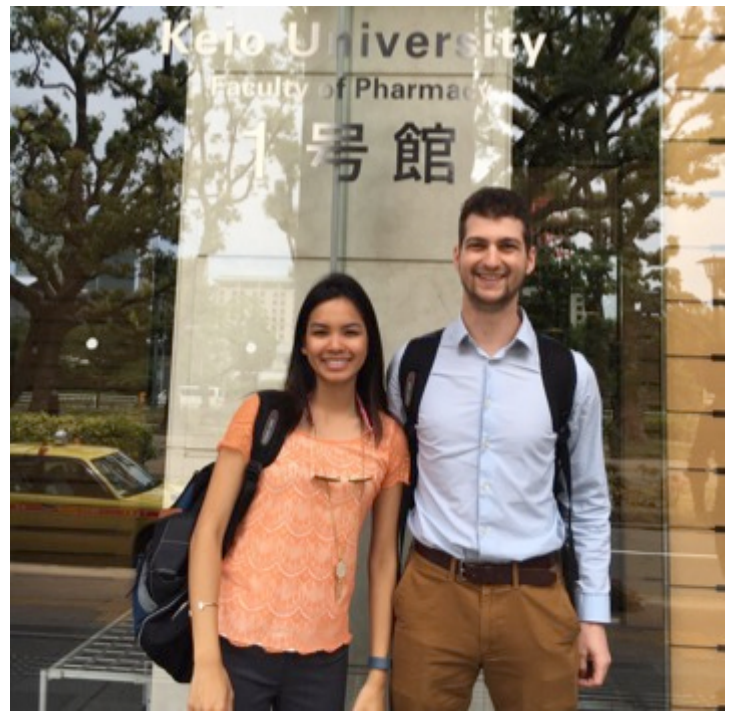


## Reflections of a Global Pharmacy Scholar

**Dive into the experiences of our Global Pharmacy Scholars who have traveled to one of the many destinations available to them through the Global Pharmacy Scholars Program**

*"My experience has taught me to continue to challenge myself so that I can continue to grow as a person, and that I can accomplish things which once seemed unobtainable if I work hard and believe in myself."*

**- Brian Kurish**



GPS Location  
**Tokyo, Japan**

## Brian Kurish

### PharmD Candidate, Class of 2017

Reflecting on my pharmacy experience in Japan, I have come to realize that it has been the greatest educational experience in my entire career. I learned a great deal about the pharmacy environment in Japan, but this information is not the most significant takeaway from the month. By immersing myself in Japanese pharmacy and Japanese culture in general, I left with many new life lessons, which will help make me a better professional and a better person throughout my pharmacy career.

The most significant professional lesson I will take away from my experience in Japan is that there is more than one right way to provide healthcare. Learning pharmacy at a US university, I had honestly assumed that the way medicine is practiced here is simply the correct way to care for patients. Consequently, I found some practices at Japanese hospitals to be odd, incorrect, or dangerous. In Japan, very few sterile compounding

areas would be USP 797 compliant in the US.

Inpatients are often permitted to administer their own medications.

More important than the professional experiences I leave Japan with are the personal experiences. One of the reasons I chose to complete my rotation in Japan was because it would stretch me far out of my comfort zone. Immersing myself in a new culture and a new language for a month was a very intimidating idea to me, but I was able to thrive while in Japan. I studied the language before leaving, and that helped me interact with strangers when needed. Through preparation and having confidence in myself, I was able to succeed in this rotation, something that I would have never thought possible even a year ago. My experience has taught me to continue to challenge myself so that I can continue to grow as a person, and that I can accomplish things which once seemed unobtainable if I work hard and believe in myself.

# Olena Northrup

## PharmD, Class of 2016

It is difficult to zero in on specific impactful highlights and experiences during my time in Moldova. The whole rotation was one big learning journey both personally and professionally. It was curious to observe the asymmetric distribution of the pharmacy services. Pharmacy services were virtually nonexistent in the hospital setting compared to the community setting, where pharmacists gave medical advice and recommended specific courses of therapy, especially with frequently used herbals. Their astounding proficiency in herbal medication use stems from the extensive education and hands on experience in the Center for Medicinal Plants Cultivation. I enjoyed immensely visiting the center and being taught about medicinal properties of various plants.

The most important learning moment for me was when my classmate and I were presented with the task to evaluate Medpark International Hospital services in accordance with the European Joint Commission standards and present our findings and recommendations to the head clinicians and administrative staff. At first, just the name of the task was challenging. In a way, it made me see what becoming a professional means: clarify expectations, start somewhere, research and figure out on the way what needs to be done, ask for feedback, repeat. We started with the appropriate guidelines, visited and observed services in various departments in the hospital and compared it to how it is done in the USA. From our recommendations and discussions with the hospital pharmacist we were able to make a big impact. Medpark hospital was going to use our evaluation and incorporate the scanning system not only for medication inventory but as means for safe medication delivery to the patient.

Visiting Moldova brought me to realize how central cultural competency is both on personal and professional levels. Personally, it allowed me to comprehend how different but at the same time similar American and Moldovan cultures are. Professionally, adaptability, patience and open-mindedness are the crucial components of culturally competent professional.



GPS Location

**Chisinau, Moldova**



*"Visiting Moldova brought me to realize how central cultural competency is both on personal and professional levels."*

**- Olena Northrup**

# GPS Location: Melbourne, Australia



**Lydia Wang**

## **PharmD, Class of 2016**

The highlight of this experience was definitely just being in Melbourne and trying to immerse myself fully in Australian culture, from pharmacy practice to activities and cuisine. I loved the all-around experience we received in terms of learning about pharmacy practice, their education system, and their vision for the future of the profession. It was really nice to be able to integrate academic and professional learning with fun, cultural activities with pharmacists and pharmacy students in the evenings and on weekends. I loved being able to see how pharmacy practice in Australia compares and contrasts with pharmacy in America. Additionally, discussions on these differences and similarities, such as drug names and pronunciations, were very stimulating and enlightening.



**Kasey Hamrick**

## **PharmD, Class of 2016**

My experience and time spent in Australia was not only an eye-opening experience, but it was something that I will never forget. Having the chance to gain exposure to a health culture that is similar yet also drastically different to the United States has strengthened my development as a student pharmacist. Prior to this rotation, I always assumed that practice in the United States was the best and 'our way' was the 'best way.' However, since having this rotation, I have realized that our healthcare system is inadequate in many respects. I feel that the experience provided by the Alfred has prepared me to succeed. I'm also very appreciative of the hospitality of all of the pharmacists at the Alfred and for their time spent making our experience the best that it could be.



**Rachel LaBianca**

## **PharmD, Class of 2016**

My experience in Melbourne, Australia, was a wonderful opportunity to both learn about the global practice of pharmacy and to create unforgettable memories traveling across the globe. My rotation in Melbourne varied each day, and included tours of local hospitals and community pharmacies, three days of a community rotation, and two weeks of rotation at The Alfred Hospital. During the first week, the other two UNC students and I met with administrative faculty at Monash University and were introduced to Australian pharmacy with a variety of tours. We went on a student-led tour of Monash University's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and spent a few days touring local urban and rural hospitals with a pharmacist guide.

# GPS Location: Lilongwe, Malawi



## Juhin Patel, PharmD Class of 2016

All in all, the experience was truly eye opening. It teaches you to be very open-minded and initiative driven. The opportunity to change requires much effort and dedication. The cultural competence gained through the experience was invaluable; not only specific to the Malawian culture, but simply the ability to understand that cultural differences exist, and can play a major role in healthcare decisions. Comparing and contrasting the difference in pharmacy practice between Malawi and the United States, really shows how advanced our profession is in the US, and where it stands in other parts of the world.



## Cecilia Robaina, PharmD Class of 2017

After spending a month in a country with limited resources and a very rich culture, I realized the things that really matter in life. People are what make our lives worth living. Interactions we have with others, no matter who they are, is what drives us, what connects us. Not scrolling through an Instagram feed. Being disconnected from my phone all day really caused me to look up. To say hello and speak with a stranger. Although there was a language barrier, I quickly picked up simple greetings and got excited each time I said good morning to someone new. The people of Malawi made this month fly by. They were all so warm and welcoming, greeting me with a bright smile each day. It made me realize that in the end no matter our culture, location or beliefs we all have one thing in common. We are all human. We all strive for connection with the world around us.



## Alex Cremer, PharmD Class of 2017

My time in Malawi was truly life changing. I can now appreciate that we are all just people, no matter where we're from, but at the same time there are important cultural differences that should not be ignored. I can appreciate that different does not mean wrong, even in fields like medicine which can seem so concrete in America. I also now understand how important people are to the development of a country, more so than money or resources. I think that the Malawian people that I worked with are the key to improving healthcare in the country. I feel that my month in Malawi, although short, will be a personal and spiritual experience that I will carry with me. I hope to be able to reach back to my time there to help maintain perspective in my life in the future.

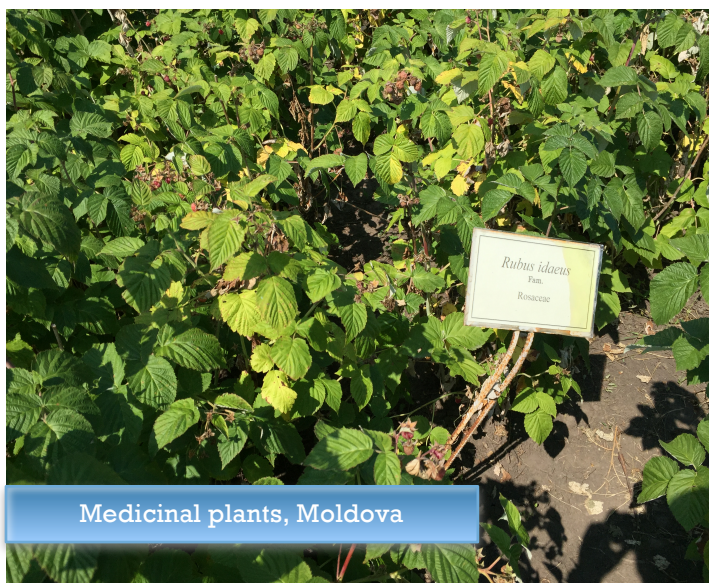


## Adam Bernstein, PharmD Class of 2016

As I reflect on the past month in Malawi, I realize the depth of knowledge I gained about life, culture, and myself. The goal of this rotation was to learn about medication supply chain management, however, pharmacy practice was only a small piece of the growth I experienced. This journey removed my comfort zone and challenged me to adapt. It introduced a new culture, way of thinking, and friends that will last a lifetime. I developed tools to live a richer and fuller life, as well as expand my potential as a health-care professional.



Inpatient pharmacy, Malawi



Medicinal plants, Moldova



Herbal medications, Japan

# UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy The Office of Global Engagement

301 Pharmacy Lane  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

<https://pharmacy.unc.edu/academics/the-pharmd/about/global-pharmacy-scholars-program/>