Two Students Study Abroad in Europe

Two ARMD students, Emily Wotzka and Mackenzie Koenig, spent the fall 2017 semester studying abroad in Europe. Both loved the once in a lifetime experience and would encourage others to study abroad.

Emily Wotzka studied at the University of Chester in England. She took classes in both fashion design and journalism. Classes at the University of Chester were very immersive and engaging. Emily’s fashion design professors had lots of hands-on experience, and she was intrigued by their background and their creative process. While in England, Emily was fortunate to schedule her classes from Monday to Wednesday, so she spent her long weekends traveling Europe. She visited Scotland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. The travel was one of her favorite parts, and she believes that study abroad is a great way to see the world. Another of Emily’s favorites were the friendships that she made. Two of her best friends were from Australia and Argentina, and she was able to meet others from all over the world. Everyone that she met was very friendly and welcoming, and she developed an appreciation for different cultures by meeting new people. Emily’s biggest take-away from the experience is that, “life is all about the people that we surround ourselves with.” She encourages others to take the leap and try study abroad; the experience has enriched her own life and has opened her eyes to many new experiences.

Mackenzie Koenig studied at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, Italy. She continued to study fashion and took classes in Luxury Business, Digital Journalism, Italian Culture and Traditions, and Beginner Italian Language. Mackenzie enjoyed learning about luxury business, as it was a new avenue of the fashion industry that she has not had much experience with. The topic was intriguing to her, and learning with students from around the world opened her eyes to new perspectives. In Milan, the college campus differed from NDSU. The Cattolica campus was spread across the city, as opposed to NDSU where all buildings are concentrated in one area. This gave Mackenzie a chance to explore the city. Milan was an exciting city to live in, and there was always something for her to do or explore. In addition to attending classes, Mackenzie had the opportunity to travel across Europe. Destinations included Paris, Munich, Edinburgh, Rome, Venice, Florence, Pisa, Cinque Terre, and Verona. She loved the ease to “pack up and go” and explore Europe. Throughout the experience, Mackenzie learned a lot about herself, including resilience confidence, and how to take a pause and enjoy the moment, as Europeans do. She is very grateful for the opportunity to study abroad, and would encourage all students to take this chance to see the world!
Alumni Open New Boutique: Leela and Lavender

Last fall, ARMD alumni Jill Shea and Laura Polanski opened Leela and Lavender, the newest addition to Fargo’s boutique scene. Both Jill and Laura have a combined 35+ years of retail experience, most recently at Vanity here in Fargo. Jill and Laura saw an opportunity to create a unique shopping experience. Their goal was to re-invent the retail experience and create a space for women to relax, shop, and be themselves; thus, Leela and Lavender was born.

Leela and Lavender’s mission is “Style Adventure. Passion for Good.” Their name itself embodies this mission. “Leela” means a sense of play, adventure, and discovery, while “Lavender” represents femininity, calm, and peace. The two words blend to create the essence of Leela and Lavender, a one stop shop for women to find a blend of adventure, femininity, and a chance to be her best self.

Leela and Lavender’s goal is to help women leave the store as a better version of themselves. They believe that fashion is a force for good, and fashion can be very empowering. True to their mission for good, Leela and Lavender donates a portion of their profits towards a women’s charity. In stores, Leela and Lavender aims to give every customer personalized styling experience. They offer a wide variety of merchandise to ensure that there is something for every customer. Their Style Catalysts offer a personalized styling experience to help every customer find pieces that she loves. The store also features a luxurious shopping environment, including spacious dressing rooms and a lounge area, to make customers feel at home.

What’s next? After making Fargo their home for the last couple months, Leela and Lavender recently announced that they will be opening a second location in Detroit Lakes. We are very excited to watch this young company grow!

ADHM Student Projects on Display

On Wednesday, April 25th, student projects from the Apparel, Design, and Hospitality Management Department were on display in the NDSU Memorial Union for the day. The display coincided with the FABO Fashion Show and the Interior Design program’s Design Week. The display allowed other NDSU students, high school students, and the general public to stop in and see projects that students in the various programs have been working on all year.

Apparel, retail merchandising, and design student projects included work from freshman through seniors. Projects from many classes were included, including Aesthetics, Visual Merchandising, Trend Forecasting, Product Development, and Capstone. Student projects from interior design students, hospitality management students, and a display from the Emily P. Reynolds Costume Collection were also included in the showcase.
2018 FABO Fashion Show: Fashion Has A Voice

The 2018 FABO Fashion Show theme centered on the idea of fashion as a means to express yourself. This year’s show tied fashion looks with words. Each retailer was given a word and was asked to style a fashion look associated with that word. FABO members selected the words to portray an overall message of positivity through fashion. Student designers also showcased their creativity and made a statement about who they are. The theme was all about fashion as a means of individual expression and a way for people to showcase their individuality.

This year’s show featured looks from 23 retailers, including local boutiques and stores form West Acres. Fifteen student designers also showcased their work from apparel construction classes this semester. Elegant wide leg pants, fun printed skirts, and a trendy moto jacket were among the debuted designs. The fashion show is a great opportunity for student designers to showcase their work and gain experience on the runway. Student designer Kristen Peterson commented, “That moment when your garment hits the spotlight on the runway and every stitch, cut, and victory flashes back to you - you know it was all worth it. A smile came to my face in confidence of what I made, and I saw an audience of smiles. That was pure gold.”

Fashion Show coordinators were Katie Fischer and Regan Biss. The event was attended by NDSU students, local high school students, Fargo retailers, and the general public. Regan commented on the the show, “I absolutely loved being a show coordinator. I loved watching the show come together and enjoyed working with each FABO member. It’s a leadership experience and a lot of FUN!”

This year’s fashion show sponsor was Creative Capital Design of Portland, as Britta Cabanos, chief design director at Creative Capital Design is an alumni of the Apparel and Textiles program at NDSU. Other show sponsors included the college of HD&E, the department of ADHM, the NDSU Congress of Student Organizations, and Bridal Fantasy. FABO also wants to send big thank you to the ADHM faculty in their support of the show, FABO advisor Sara Sunderlin, and all FABO members. The show was another big success!
ARMD Alumni Honored as College of HD&E Distinguished Alumni

Brooke Schommer was honored as this year’s College of Human and Development and Education Distinguished Alumni. Brooke is a 2002 Apparel Textiles and Retail Merchandising graduate. She is currently employed as the strategic sourcing manager at Asurion in Nashville, TN. Brooke has held a variety of positions over the years across the country, including working in sourcing at Target Corporate, before landing at Asurion. Brooke also stays involved with NDSU, and she currently serves on the College of HD&E Board of Visitors.

While visiting NDSU as the distinguished alumni, Brooke spent her day visiting with department faculty and Dean Fitzgerald. She also toured the Emily P. Reynolds Historic Costume Collection spoke to two ARMD classes. She shared her career path and advised students to be open to the many career possibilities out there. Brooke also encouraged students to “take the leap and try something out of your comfort zone, like move to a new city or take a new job. Don’t be afraid; you never know what opportunities may present themselves until you try!”

Congrats Graduates!

The NDSU Class of 2018 graduation ceremony was held on Saturday, May 12th. Apparel, Retail Merchandising, and Design graduates are pictured below. Congrats to all!

Editor’s Note: I would like you to meet Katie Fischer who has put this newsletter together as my new Student Editor. Katie is a junior in the ARMD program, minoring in Business. We hope you’ve enjoyed this newsletter. If you have ideas for future newsletters or would like to share about your career, email:

Linda.Manikowske@ndsu.edu or
Katherine.M.Fischer@ndsu.edu