IR Class of 2013: Student Voices

We asked the IR Class of 2013 to submit comments reflecting on their senior year, the IR major, time at Tufts, plans for the future or what they want other IR majors who follow them to know. Here is what some of them had to say:

As a freshman, I wanted to study everything, and the IR major allowed me to do just that. Taking classes in different departments and programs contributed greatly to my intellectual and academic development. What I enjoyed most about IR, was being able to challenge it and being able to engage issues of race, colonialism, and society where they had been absent. It was difficult to always ask these questions, but the conversations that resulted were the most rewarding. As a senior reflecting on these past four years, I will gladly say that IR is tough, but it's worth it. I loved IR because I survived it. ~Jameelah Morris, A13

During a conversation with other seniors at the IR Core Forum one night in early October, I realized that it isn't really very helpful to ask IR majors about their concentrations. When people outside of Tufts ask what I study, I usually say "International Relations," to which most people ask again, "Oh, so what does that mean?"

I have that same feeling when I talk to IR majors in the Middle East/South Asia or the International Finance concentration. While it's helpful to have some sort of label to share with people, often the more interesting answer is found when we ask the question, “What are you passionate about?” A Tufts IR student in the Latin America concentration might be passionately studying U.S. drug policies in Mexico as it pertains to domestic arms control. On the other side of the world, there might be an International Finance student who is passionate about how microfinance is revolutionizing access to credit for women in Bangladesh.

With the whole world open to our intellectual pursuits, IR students truly transcend the labels of degrees and concentrations. As I go out into the real world with my IR degree in the International Security concentration, I hope that I will continue to transcend labels and let my passion guide me to projects that require the same energy that Tufts inspires and cultivates.

Thank you to all of my classmates who have never failed to keep this place interesting and grounded in the urgency of confronting real global issues. Tufts IR is home to some of the most captivating individuals and I am so grateful to have gotten to learn from your enthusiasm for the Black Panther movement in Liberia, water rights in Palestine, legal parameters of unmanned aerial vehicles, and constructions of identity in the environmental justice movement in India. And when you're out in the real world, if you're ever having an urge to talk about the genderization of war -- you'll know where to find me. ~Katie Monson, A13

I have nothing but positive things to say about the IR major. In high school, a friend of mine went to Yale for IR while I went to Tufts. I was surprised a year later when I found out the Tufts course load was more rigorous than hers at Yale. I am very happy about how the Tufts faculty is seriously dedicated to the IR major. The classes are difficult and there are many requirements across many subjects that were sometimes painful to fulfill (particularly the language requirement and the econ classes) but I'm glad to have been challenged in such a way. The community of IR majors at Tufts is phenomenal. I feel humbled to just be around many of my colleagues who have accomplished so much in just four years, I am honored to have learned so much from my fellow classmates. Tufts also does a good job of kicking us off campus by encouraging us to study abroad and to travel during the summer, I felt that I have seen the world these past 4 years which has done so much for my self-growth. Nothing needs to be said about the professors, they were all excellent. After four years, I view the world in a completely different way. I have the tools to understand what is going on around me and to talk about complex issues. Most importantly I’ve learned to be sensitive to the perspectives of others. ~Bruce Wang, A13
**IR Event Recap from 2012-2013**

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the IR Program staff and student groups worked tirelessly to provide quality service, support and numerous events and programs to the vast IR community.

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**Core Forum topics this year:**
- IR Theory and the Middle East
- Latin American Politics and Culture
- Why Conflict is Good for the Soul
- Global Geography of Cities, Development and Ideas
- The People in Politics: Anthropology in IR
- European Sovereign Debt Crisis
- Is IR an ‘interdisciplinary’, ‘multidisciplinary or ‘alter-disciplinary’ field?
- Greek Financial Crisis
- Ethics and IR
- Advising the Military: Social Science, The Human Terrain Program, and Combat Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Straining Under Hope: Youth, Culture and the Future of the Middle East
- Anthropological approach to the understandings of the state
- Art as a Political Weapon of Hegemony
- Experiments to inform agricultural and environmental policy in Zambia
- Labor Rights in Developing Regions
- Foreign Policy in the U.S. Presidential Election
- Civil-Military Relations: The Forgotten Terrain

**Director’s Leadership Council (DLC) Crash Course topics this year:**
- Policy in Action: From the Classroom to Washington
- U.S. Immigration Reform and its Implications
- North Korea: Prospects for the Future
- Understanding the Eurozone Crisis
- Democracy in Latin America: Promises and Challenges
- China’s Leadership Transition
- Whispers of War, Mongers of Fear: Understanding the Origins of Threat Perception and Proliferation
- The Sino-Japanese Dispute Over the Diaoyu (Senkaku Islands)

**Anne E. Borghesani Symposium**

The Anne E. Borghesani Memorial Prize was created to inspire personal and intellectual growth, increase understanding of all peoples, and encourage a commitment to community by providing students with funding to travel and conduct research abroad. On Oct 30, four Borghesani Prize recipients shared their experiences. Topics included the study of French culture, tracking endemic cholera in rural Bangladesh, democracy promotion in Tbilisi, Georgia since 2008, and group challenge facilitation for youth from conflict regions at Seeds of Peace International Camp in Maine.

**IR Research Scholars and FEIRS Symposium**

On Feb 6, Prof. Jose Mazzotti presented his recent research on indigenous languages in Peru, where he was able to bring along a Tufts student thanks to the IR Program’s Field Experience for IR Students (FEIRS) program. Following Prof Mazzotti’s presentation, three IR seniors also presented an overview of their summer research.
**Thesis Exchange**—The annual event is an opportunity for Tufts seniors to present their research findings in a full day celebration of undergraduate scholarship. However, with the tragic events that unfolded surrounding the Boston Marathon bombings, the 2013 Thesis Exchange on April 19 was cancelled.

**Thesis Seminar—Friday Lunch Meetings**
The thesis seminar meetings provided an opportunity for current thesis writers to share their research and experiences with each other as well as with the director of the IR Program. Feedback and support received during these meetings was an invaluable resource.

**Alumni Outreach, Networking and Career events**

**Inaugural IR Alumni Career Symposium**
On Feb 16, a full day symposium welcomed over 20 IR alumni back to campus, with the goals of providing lifelong learning opportunities for alumni, expanding opportunities for alumni to mentor current IR students, and providing forums for alumni to connect with each other. The IR Program hopes the event will become an annual tradition, and that the event will help kick-start the renewal of a relationship between IR alumni, the program, and it’s students and faculty.

**State Department/Foreign Service Information Session**
Linda Cheatham, the Diplomat-in-Residence based here at Tufts shared information on internships, fellowships, and career opportunities in the State Department, how to prepare for the foreign service exam, and other topics. The Diplomat-in-Residence is a great resource on campus for individuals interested in learning more about the U.S. State Department and the Foreign Service.

Other info sessions hosted by the IR Program included a Fletcher School Admissions Information Session and a Georgetown School of Foreign Service Information Session.

**General Program events**

**Dining with the Stars: An IR Student-Faculty Dinner**
On April 4, the IR Director’s Leadership Council hosted the second annual IR Dining with the Stars Faculty-Student Dinner. Guests enjoyed a seated three course dinner in Ballou Hall, with a keynote speech from Dr. John de Jong, a Tufts trustee and the first-ever International Relations student at Tufts.

**SIR Induction Ceremony**
On April 22, 39 IR students were inducted into the Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Iota Rho, the Honor Society for International Studies. See page 4 for a complete list of the newly inducted students since not everyone was present at the induction ceremony.

The IR Program also hosted the IR Welcome Back Social, the IR Barbecue, the IR Pre-Registration Night, as well as a series of IR Thematic Concentration Meetings.

**Upcoming IR Event for IR Seniors and Core Faculty!**

Come join the IR staff for an informal reception celebrating the IR Class of 2013!

**Saturday, May 18, 4:30-5:30 pm** (immediately following the Baccalaureate)
Crane Room and Patio (Paige Hall)
**Sigma Iota Rho’s Beta Chi Chapter: 2012-2013 New Members**

- Neil Aronson, A14
- Philip Ballentine, A14
- Maxine Builder, A13
- Kelsea Carlson, A13
- Paul Celentano, A14
- Michelle Cerna, A14
- Seo Yeun Choi, A14
- Jordan Dashow, A14
- Emily Denton, A13
- Matthew Dowd, A14
- Hans Ege Wenter, A14
- Kiersten Ellefesen, A14
- Ian Erhard, A13
- Arielle Evans, A14
- Max Fathy, A14
- Haydn Forrest, A14
- Konrad Gessler, A14
- Jena Goettisheim, A13
- Michael Goldstein, A14
- Christopher Harkins, A13
- Elizabeth Ho, A13
- Kaitlyn Hodgman, A14
- Jia Wen Hoe, A14
- Ilana Hosios, A13
- Alexander Howard, A13
- Maxine Jacobson, A14
- Nadezhda Kazakova, A14
- Morgan Kee, A14
- Marcus Larsen-Strecker, A13
- Jeremy Lebow, A14
- Can Lei, A14
- Gillian Leitch, A13
- Mira Leon, A14
- Minh Leu, A14
- Yihao Li, A14
- Edward Limmer, A14
- Menghan Liu, A14
- Christina Luo, A13
- Niyash Mistry, A14
- Katherine Monson, A13
- Saman Nargund, A14
- Laura Peterson, A14
- Emily Poole, A13
- Neethu Putta, A13
- Mark Rafferty, A13
- Aparna Ramanan, A13
- Catalina Restrepo, A14
- Manuela Rojas, A14
- William Rose, A14
- Eddy Santana, A13
- Nicholas Santangelo, A14
- Ethan Schneider, A13
- Allison Schwartz, A14
- Lisa Setrakian, A14
- Shira Shamir, A14
- Emily Sillari, A13
- David Smythe, A13
- Mahpari Sotoudeh, A14
- Elayne Stecher, A14
- Eugene Steinberg, A14
- Chelang’at Surum, A13
- Lara Thibodeau, A14
- Elyse Voegeli, A14
- Anisha Wadhwa, A14
- Jessie Wang, A14
- Yummo Wang, A14
- Megan Wasson, A13
- Emily Weiss, A13
- Jessica Wolff, A13
- Joshua Youner, A14

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**The Phi Beta Kappa Society: 2012-2013 New Members**

- Michelle Cerna, A14
- Rebecca DiBiase, A13
- Madeline Hall, A13
- Marcus Larsen-Strecker, A13
- Namson Ngo-Le, A13
- Emily Poole, A13
- Yugank Sikka, A14
- Arlen Weiner, A13
- Alexandra Wollum, A13

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**Class of 2013 IR Senior Thesis Writers**

- Rebecca DiBiase
- Caitlyn Doucette
- Ilana Hosios
- Natasha Jessen-Petersen
- David Meyers
- Shauna Pierson
- Mark Rafferty
- Sarah Schiferl
- Megan Wasson
- Arlen Weiner
- Jessica Wolff
- Brent Yarnell

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**IR Major Awards**

The Distinguished Achievement Award in International Relations and the John S. Gibson Award will be announced at the IR commencement ceremony on May 19, 2013.
IR Program Scholarship and Award Winners 2012-2013

Research Scholarships and Prizes

Anne E. Borghesani Memorial Prize
Malina L. Filkins, A14
Research Topic: Building an Electronic Data Collection System in Nepal

Christina E. Goldbaum, A14
Research Topic: Understanding Informality: The Effect of Informal Systems on Human and Political Development

Taina M. Paredes, A14
Research Topic: Educating Young Minds: From America to South America

Isabel L. Weiner, A14
Research Topic: Patients and Doctors: Victims of the Public Health System in Post-Revolutionary Egypt

IR Research Scholars

Sabrina Ghaus, A14
Research Topic: Women and War in South Asia

Ye Shen, A14
Research Topic: Weighing Risks: Science and Policy-making in UK Blood-borne Hepatitis C infection

Yunmo Wang, A14
Research Topic: The motivations for China’s increasing military presence in and cooperation with Africa

O’Toole and Aidekman Scholarships

Yufei Du, A15
Research Topic: Language and Research: Looking at the Vanishing Cuban Rationing System from a Chinese Perspective

Jessica Laporte, A14
Research Topic: Ideas in Action: Volunteering in Haiti

Nishant Saharan, A14
Research Topic: Understanding Indian State Responses to Kashmiri Youth as Violent Political Actors

Hans Ege Wenger, A14
Research Topic: Street Battles: A Microcosmic Theory of Political Violence in Kashmir

IR Major Recipients of University General Awards

Andrea Diaz, A13, Ellen C. Myers Memorial Prize
Caitlyn Doucette, A13, Arabic Language, Culture and Literature Prize
Kiersten Ellefesen, A13, Tufts Alumni Association Award and Alex Elias Memorial Prize Scholarship
Ian Erhard, A13, William Howell Reed Prize in German
Lydia Jessup, A13, Frederick Melvin Ellis Prize
Kedar Kurpad, A13, Robert Asch Prize
Marcus Larsen-Strecker, A13, Asian Studies Prize
Suzanne Lis, A13, Tufts Alumni Association Award, Outstanding Contribution to Performance, and Elizabeth Verveer Tishler Prize in Music Performance
Katherine Monson, A13, Marion Ricker Houston Prize Scholarship in Economics
Sundardas Powers-Adler, A13, Frederic J. Shepler Memorial Prize in French
Jazmin Rodriguez, A13, Frederic J. Shepler Memorial Prize in French
Marguerite Selvin, A13, Constantine Ghikas Prize in Romance Languages
Emily Sillari, A13, Tufts Alumni Association Award and Marion Ricker Houston Prize Scholarship in Economics
Paige von Mehren, A13, Frederic J. Shepler Memorial Prize in French
Megan Wasson, A13, Constantine Ghikas Prize in Romance Languages
Arlen Weiner, A13, Audrey L. Hale Award
Lia Weintraub, A14, Tisch Library Undergraduate Research Award
Hans C. Ege Wenger, A14, Army ROTC Prize
Jennifer White, A13, Frederic J. Shepler Memorial Prize in French
Ryan Willison, A13, Goddard Rhetorical Prize
Anne Wolfe, A13, Community Service Award
Alexandra Wollum, A13, Class of 1898 Prize
Stefanie Yeung, A14, William J. King Award
Planning on studying abroad this summer or next year?

Find out all you need to know about the transfer of credit process (for both Tufts and the IR Program) by visiting the following link: [http://ase.tufts.edu/ir/abroad.htm](http://ase.tufts.edu/ir/abroad.htm).

3 Important Things to Keep in Mind:

1. The transfer credit process should be completed **BEFORE** you leave to study abroad. Follow the steps at the above-mentioned web link to secure pre-approval for the courses taken on any foreign study program (Tufts and Non-Tufts programs).

2. Courses taken at Tufts and Non-Tufts Programs must be approved by the IR Program in order to be used to fulfill IR requirements!

3. **Beginning with the Class of 2014**, there is a transfer of credit limit as follows: No more than 3 courses can be applied toward the IR major, and of those 3, no more than 1 course can apply toward the IR Core requirements. The 3 course limit does not apply to language courses or transfer students.

**Questions:** The IR Assistant Director is available for questions and concerns regarding study abroad. Office hours and e-mail addresses are posted on the IR website as follows: [http://ase.tufts.edu/ir/contact.htm](http://ase.tufts.edu/ir/contact.htm).

**ANYONE considering a senior honors thesis should visit the following links for important guidelines and suggestions.**

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- [http://uss.tufts.edu/undergradEducation/research/undergradResearchFund.asp](http://uss.tufts.edu/undergradEducation/research/undergradResearchFund.asp)—info about potential Tufts funding

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**IR Class of 2013 in Numbers**

- Total # of IR seniors graduating = 212
- Total # of double majors = 103 and Total # of triple majors = 4
- Number of IR seniors nominated for magna or summa honors = 69

**Thematic Concentration breakdown for the Class of 2013**

| TC1A | Europe and the Former Soviet Union = 31 |
| TC1B | East and Southeast Asia = 13 |
| TC1C | Africa = 8 |
| TC1D | Middle East and South Asia = 21 |
| TC1E | Latin America = 14 |
| TC2A | International Economics: Trade = 8 |
| TC2B | International Economics: Finance = 18 |
| TC2C | International Economics: Environment = 5 |
| TC2D | International Economics: Development = 11 |
| TC3 | Global Health, Nutrition, and the Environment = 36 |
| TC4 | International Security = 38 |
| TC5 | The United States in World Affairs = 3 |
| TC6A | Ideas and Identity in IR: Ideologies = 1 |
| TC6B | Ideas and Identity in IR: Empires/Colonialism/Globalization = 5 |

**Tips from the IR Office**

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| TC2B | International Economics: Finance = 18 |
| TC2C | International Economics: Environment = 5 |
| TC2D | International Economics: Development = 11 |
| TC3 | Global Health, Nutrition, and the Environment = 36 |
| TC4 | International Security = 38 |
| TC5 | The United States in World Affairs = 3 |
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- [http://uss.tufts.edu/undergradEducation/research/undergradResearchFund.asp](http://uss.tufts.edu/undergradEducation/research/undergradResearchFund.asp)—info about potential Tufts funding
International Relations Program

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Menghan Liu, A14
Dylan Saba, A15

The IR News & Views newsletter highlights events and people in the Tufts IR community. The publication appears twice a semester and welcomes feedback and submissions from students and faculty.

IR FUN FACTS:

Total # of declared IR majors as of May 2013:  595

Looking to the Future: Of the 3400+ students accepted to Tufts for the Class of 2017, 548 expressed an interest in International Relations.

Wishing everyone a relaxing summer break!