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Upton Finds Math Paradise

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As a child, Jeff Primozich '09 dreamed of being a diplomat. Last summer he took a first step toward that goal.

Primozich honed his knowledge of Canada during an internship at the Canadian Consulate in Seattle, Wash. He worked in the departments of political and economic relations, and public affairs, staffing booths at events and promoting good relations between Canada and the United States.

The experience not only boosted his self-confidence but also deepened his understanding of the need for global cooperation.

“I’m better able to comprehend what it means to represent the interests of the United States abroad and to work closely with foreign governments to promote policies that will be beneficial to both countries,” said Primozich, a political science major and music minor. “I have a fundamental belief that global cooperation is necessary for global stability, and to be able to play a role in facilitating that cooperation is very exciting.”

One of Primozich’s most interesting and challenging tasks was organizing elements of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Summit, which focuses on regional partnerships and cooperation. He helped organize the Clean, Green Border Tour, an environmentally friendly event, for representatives from governments, businesses and universities in the Seattle, Tacoma and Bellingham areas. The tour’s goal was to educate participants about environmental awareness and the missions of the Canadian Consulate.

Although Primozich hopes to use this internship as a launching pad for a career in the Foreign Service, he said Primozich’s professional goal is to become a diplomat somewhere else in the world and immerse myself in the culture. It would be a gateway for me to accomplish something with my life.”

Primozich credited the recommendation of Dawn Nowacki, professor of political science, as instrumental in helping him secure an internship at the Canadian Consulate last summer. Primozich’s professional goal is to become a diplomat somewhere else in the world and immerse myself in the culture. It would be a gateway for me to accomplish something with my life.”

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Both Nowacki and Primozich recognize that Canada is sometimes overlooked as a foreign country because of its proximity to the United States. In fact, during his interview for the internship, Primozich was asked whether he had ever been to Canada. He answered “yes.”

“Canada is not just an adjunct of the United States. It’s no surprise that Upton, who is from Corvallis, has an affinity for math. Both of her parents are engineers. I have always had encouragement to be on the science side of things,” said Upton, a double major in mathematics and physics. “My mom has always said I can do anything.”

The professors and students who shared her love of math and physics were enthusiastic about the material.

Julianne Upton ’11 spent a month in math paradise last summer.

Advised by Linfield faculty to apply for the program, Upton was one of only 20 women from around the country selected to participate in the Carleton College Summer Mathematics Program for Women in Northfield, Minn. She studied complex subjects such as dynamical systems and the knot theory, but also discovered new careers that she can pursue after graduate school.

Upton said it was stimulating to work in an environment with students who shared her love of math and were enthusiastic about the material.

“At Carleton, Upton attended classes and listened to guest speakers who outlined math research projects. Discussions of math and what the students had learned did not end with the classes or speakers. After working on group projects, the women explored how everyone had answered the problem and shared plenty of laughter and fun,” Bricher said.

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Julianne Upton ‘11 combines her interests in math and physics by working at Applied Physics Technologies, Inc., a small company in Carleton College Summer Mathematics Program for Women.

“I learned so much about graduate school that I wouldn’t have even thought to ask about.”

The Carleton program gave Upton a glimpse of the variety of career options available after graduate school. Previously, her goal was to become a math professor, but other careers have sparked her interest. She is intrigued by think tanks, made up of mathematicians working together on complex mathematical problems.

For example, when the space shuttle Columbia exploded, mathematicians were called together to calculate where the pieces of the space ship might have fallen.

During the school year, Upton is a math and physics tutor and works at Applied Physics Technologies (APTECH) founded by Bill Mackie ’71, professor of physics at Linfield. APTECH produces and develops electron emitting materials and electron sources, work that stems from the Linfield Research Institute.

Linfield’s strong faculty is one of the reasons that Upton selected the college. She said her professors at Linfield encourage her in and out of the classroom.

“I can tell that she truly loves studying mathematics;” Bricher said. “She has the tools to successfully pursue an advanced degree in mathematics, and this program reinforced that perspective.”

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Primozich’s desire to be a part of the Foreign Service and to Canada. He answered “yes.”

Although Primozich hopes to study abroad in Germany and would like to travel to the Middle East and Norway as well. She has been considering additional graduate school preparation math classes and hopes to take math courses at the Budapest Semester in Mathematics program offered through St. Olaf College.

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“Stephen Bricher ’86, professor of mathematics, calls Upton talented and hard working, and encourages her passion for mathematics. “I can tell that she truly loves studying mathematics;” Bricher said. “She has the tools to successfully pursue an advanced degree in mathematics, and this program reinforced that perspective.”

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