

## NIU-Human Connections Global Internship and Leadership Development Program

Eight NIU students – **Timi Adebjoe, Luke Arrington, Raven Bryant, Hopkins, Yannick Koua, Dexter Matthews, Janel Pilate and Yuije Sansone** – traveled in January of 2016 to San Pancho, Mexico and began a journey that now becomes their legacy.

While in San Pancho, the students not only learned about themselves, but they learned about the tenacity and commitment of the people of San Pancho. For many of the students, the trip provided their first excursion outside the United States. And, although the eight originally hailed from inner-city Chicago, their journey to Mexico offered an eye-



*“Going to Mexico taught me that there is so much more to life than what we see right outside of our front doors in the states. Though we may not be able to see the entire world in just one lifetime, I encourage every person in this world to travel and see as much as possible. If not for you, do it so you can share the wisdom gained from such experiences with others who may never have the chance to see a world outside of their own.”*

— Randiss Hopkins

opening look at what lies just beyond the border.

When the students arrived back in the United States, they made it their mission to ensure that other NIU students would have an opportunity to engage in a similar experience. The NIU-Human Connections Global Internship and Leadership Development Program represents their legacy and their desire to provide a cost-effective avenue whereby NIU students can gain practical work experience and critical leadership skills. Through this four-week program, students will engage in three weeks of internship and one week of leadership development and civic engagement.

[Source: NIU Newsroom](#)

**NIU-Human Connections Global Internship and Leadership Development Program Description:** This Summer Internship is an immersive cultural and professional development experience ideal for those seriously interested in the social sector. Students are treated as a part of a small but inventive team, and are entrusted with a great deal of responsibility and choice. NIU-HC wants students to think critically about community and economic development. When working to help those in need, students must first understand who they are, what their goals are, and why. Through projects, personal interaction, and meetings with social entrepreneurs in western Mexico, this internship and leadership development experience gives students the analytical tools necessary to tackle these questions. It also provides them with experience that will help them make decisions about their own future in the social sector.

**NIU Global Internship Program Description:** The NIU Global Internship Program is a partnership between NIU's Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning, the Center for NGO Leadership and Development, the University Honors Program and Omprakash, a non-profit organization, which helps facilitate the internship connection process and also provides valuable mentorship, training, and networking support. Participation in this program will give students an opportunity to work for a variety of global organizations that provide critical assistance to local communities. Placements are low-cost and high-impact, providing a challenging academic and personal student development experience. Students will not only "learn about new cultures" they will be encouraged to think critically about international aid and volunteering, and work to push back against problematic trends in 'voluntourism.' Students will become immersed in the communities for which they are interning and will be challenged to address personal biases, misinformed notations and ways to ensure that the community needs are being met.