GEL 2019-2020 Academic Year Summary

Programming
During the 2019-2020 academic year GEL intended to offer students, staff and faculty from the University of Arizona four unique domestic and international programs that promote interdisciplinary learning, civic engagement, career development and leadership opportunities through hands-on, experiential learning. However, due to extenuating circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, GEL Programming initially scheduled to take place in late Spring and Summer 2020 were postponed.

Participants
This year GEL programs collectively served 158 students before the postponement of programs. Participant demographics: 94% identified as a student of color. A distinguishable difference found was that 72% of participants were First Gen, or first-generation college students.

Data Sources
Program Application, Flipgrid Daily Video Reflections, Photos and Videos, Pre-Post Assessments, Program Curriculum

Methodology
To evaluate how GEL supports students and the impact that GEL programs have on personal, academic, and professional development, students completed pre- and post-assessments for their respective programs. Qualitative data was also collected from daily reflections and final projects where students openly showcased their experiences.

Impact
Increased Knowledge, Competency, and Appreciation of Culture
All students describe domestic and international experiences as opportunities to learn, adapt, integrate, and draw parallels between their own identities and those of the communities visited.

Student testimonies from Southeast Asia:
“I’m from California...I don’t know much about other cultures and what it’s like to live anywhere else or how people live so this has impacted me on so many levels and I’ve learned so much and I would say...I’ve learned to broaden my definition of a new way to show love, a new way to show respect and a new type of work ethic”.

Commitment to Environment and Social Justice
GEL programs strive to educate students on the importance of service-learning and giving back to communities. Students participate in various projects that allow hands-on experiential learning alongside community members and participated in projects geared towards restoring the environment.

Student testimonies from Hawaii:
“I think today's projects were really amazing. Having to participate in such service projects. Finally makes me satisfied about this trip. I finally feel that it’s different from any tours. Who came to Hawaii Island because I got to give back to the land and give back to the community.”

Acquisition of Travel Navigation Skills
Students were supported by their peers and GEL staff throughout the programs, contributing to their increased confidence in traveling and navigating various settings.

Student testimonies from Arizona-Sonora and San Xavier Visits:
“It was refreshing to be around such a diverse group of students who all valued learning about traditional and cultural crops.”

Personal Identity Development
GEL programs encourage students to reflect on their daily experiences and how their own racial and ethnic identities align with those from the respective communities or countries visited.

Student testimonies from Southeast Asia:
“Honestly I can say that this [program] is life-changing for me and I am a different person than I was before this trip. I definitely feel much more like a global citizen.”
GEL Fall 2020 Semester Summary

Due to travel restrictions and social distancing guidelines brought on by the COVID-19 global pandemic, GEL has transitioned its programming for the 2020-2021 academic year to a virtual webinar series showcasing distinguished stories of community, culture, and international connections in the Tucson community and beyond. To enhance participants’ viewing experience, GEL partnered with the UA Digital Humanities Department to curate engaging and interactive videos featuring businesses and organizations within the local Tucson community. Despite the inability to travel to international locations, GEL featured numerous distinguished speakers to engage in global conversations with students, faculty, and staff. With the significant participation in our webinars that allow students to virtually travel around the world with GEL, we foresee students are ready and have a vested interest in participating in GEL programs once we are allowed to travel again. The webinars were recorded and on the GEL website for continued education.

Student testimonial from the fall semester:
“I will definitely use the information to give and participate in my community. The involvement that GEL offers not only to Tucson's community but in their international program is amazing and that will be more culturally aware and get to learn more about other cultures”

Overall, during the fall 2020 semester, GEL hosted 12 webinars reaching 688 total users. Despite the ongoing travel restrictions, which directly impacted GEL’s ability to facilitate domestic and international travel experiences for students, the virtual webinar series captured meaningful narratives within the local community and beyond that positively impacted student learning. Based on post assessment feedback, 90% of participants found the GEL webinar virtual series helpful and enjoyable. Additionally, 84% of participants indicated that the content across the webinars increased their knowledge and was reflective of GEL’s core mission and values. Finally, 83% of participants reported that GEL is a meaningful addition to their college experience. Below in the table are of some of the man highlights from the GEL virtual webinar series from the fall 2020 semester:

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<th>Webinar Highlights</th>
<th>Student Testimonials</th>
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| The October International event, A Look into Mexico’s Border Issues, garnered 104 total users with 89% of participants agreeing that their participation in this webinar increased their knowledge and appreciation of diverse cultures. | *Student testimonial from November’s Culture Event: O’odham Food from the Tohono Garden:*  
“I will definitely use the information to give and participate in my community. The involvement that GEL offers not only to Tucson's community but in their international program is amazing and that will be more culturally aware and get to learn more about other cultures” |
| The November Community event, San Xavier Co-Op Farm, reached 76 total users as panelists showcased sustaining environmental farming practices on the Tohono O’odham Reservation. | *Student testimonial from November’s Community Event: San Xavier Co-Op Farm:*  
“What I will share with my family and friends is that there is a co-op farm in San Xavier. Living so close to San Xavier and I didn’t even know that there was a farm where they grew crops to help with economic development within the community. Also, mention how their growing of traditional crops is to support cultural and environmental values.” |
| The December Culture event, GEL Food Tour of Oasis Raspados on 12th Avenue, had 75 total users, with 100% of the attendees indicating that the webinar was informative in learning about local culture and cuisine. | *Student testimonial from December’s International Event: LGBTQ+ Movement in Latin America:*  
“It's really interesting to learn about the history of the queer movement in Latin America. We don't touch on that history in the US, much less other countries and I think that it's important to have an outline of it at the least. The impact of fascism on the movement in recent years is also interesting, since that's been a global phenomenon.” |