Melissa Carpenter
PUNE, INDIA

Melissa’s Major: Elementary Education
Program: Alliance for Global Education Pune Internship

Academics: My summer program was comprised of a seminar course on Contemporary India and an academic internship experience, for which I was placed in a primary school. The credits counted toward my certificate requirements, and the program offered a valuable learning experience through my internship where I was able to collaborate with teachers, work with students, and set up a library system. The program reaffirmed my interest in education and provided me with practical experience that I will be able to look back on and apply throughout my educational and professional careers.

Academic Internship Experience: My internship was definitely the most incredible and most rewarding aspect of my study abroad experience. I worked with teachers and the principal to develop and implement child-centered learning strategies in the classrooms. The students and staff became family to me, and it was amazing to witness the changes that the school was undergoing during such a developmental period. The opportunity provided me with practical experience, strong friendships, a newfound sense of independence, and a sense of belonging in the community where I was living and working.

Travel: Plan ahead for extra travel if you can! India is so diverse and I wish I had been able to see more of it. If I could go back and change one thing about my experience, I would have booked my tickets with a couple of extra weeks to travel after the program was over.

On Returning: Studying abroad brings with it many unanticipated circumstances and experiences that make flexibility a necessity. Since returning, I have found myself to be much more capable of handling last minute changes or surprises. Sudden obstacles in everyday life have become a lot less stressful, because I have become adept at thinking on my feet and coming up with creative solutions to problems.

"It was the moment when I realized that I missed the little aspects of my daily routine in Pune that I understood the extent of my attachment to my life in India."