Kelly’s Majors: Microbiology, Global Health Certificate

Program: CIEE Community Public Health, Spring

Academic Life: The classes in Thailand were based on experiential learning. In the first course, we visited hospitals and interviewed people working in public health. The second course focused on learning about different research methods in public health. After learning about them, we implemented the methods in communities. Finally, we created our own research projects in one of the communities. Our classes were taught by Thai professors but we only took classes with other American students on the program. In addition to the public health courses, we learned the Thai language through class time, peer tutors, home stays, and day-to-day life.

Kelly’s Fieldwork: While abroad I conducted public health fieldwork with regards to diabetes and exercise. The research was done in a community near Khon Kaen, Thailand. The group of students I was working with looked at the accessibility to exercise for middle-aged women in the community.

Advice for Students Considering Fieldwork Abroad: I think that doing fieldwork abroad teaches you not only about the research process, but about ethics and working with people of different backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, etc. It makes you think even more about how a question should be asked and what the barriers to receiving your desired information might be.

Tip for Study Abroad Students: My tip for people considering studying abroad would be to think about it early. Even if you are a STEM major, you CAN study abroad. Work it into your schedule, I know that it can be difficult, you may not want to miss an entire semester at your home university, but it is worth all the planning!

“Build so much about yourself and your abilities to take risks, learn, and open your mind.”