

FEATURE

BY KATHRIN HAVRILLA

# HUĀNYÍNG GUĀNGLÍN! AH LAN BIKOM! WELCOME!



(Above, facing page) NYIT staff members and student ambassadors went to JFK airport to greet students from China.

Photos: Martin Seck, Don Hammerman, Suhail Iqbal

**NYIT's emphasis on internationalization provides transformative experiences inside and outside the classroom for all students—no matter where they come from or where they choose to study.**

# A Small World: Creating a Global Mindset

**A student from China is nearing the end of a 20-hour journey. She's leaving her family, her hometown, and all her friends. With just an hour left in the flight, she's starting to get nervous: What will this experience be like? What if she gets lost? What if she doesn't make any friends, or no one can understand her?**

**Checked luggage in tow, tired and a little disoriented, she makes her way out of baggage claim and toward whatever is going to come next. Then, she turns a corner and sees them: NYIT T-shirts, signs, and big grins.**

**A woman holds out her right hand. "Welcome to New York!" she exclaims. "We're here to help you get settled into your new dorm. Come on, let's go meet everyone else."**

.....

This past year, NYIT became one of a select group of universities to receive the prestigious 2016 Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization from NAFSA: Association of International Educators. It's an honor that reaffirms the university's commitment to providing a globally integrated learning environment and recognizes NYIT's excellence in promoting study abroad programs, cross-cultural exchange, and strategic partnerships on the international stage. And it has wider implications. NAFSA's soon-to-be-released study of NYIT will serve as a model for other institutions interested in bringing the world into their campuses.

The award is only one part of the story. Internationalization at NYIT is a holistic endeavor—it encompasses experiential education for domestic and international students, scholarships to study abroad, research projects with partners in other countries, and more.

"American higher education is the gold standard," says Peter Kinney, NYIT chief of staff and a retired U.S. Army infantry colonel. "There's a definitive link between the education of a population and economic success, both personally and as a society. There are three main ways a country can seek to better educate its people: establishing a privately controlled university in your country, sending your young students to





America to study, or inviting a U.S.-based university to set up shop in your country. NYIT has embraced all three.”

At core of this are students, who now represent all 50 states and 125 countries. Around 20 percent of NYIT’s student body is from outside the United States. And whether they come from a town six miles or 6,000 miles from their NYIT campus, it is the NYIT experience that makes them ready to engage, socially or professionally, wherever they may be.

**Huānyíng Guānglín! Ahlan Bikom! Welcome!**

Leaving one’s home country to study in the U.S. is hard. Students must negotiate language barriers, cultural barriers, and jet lag—and that’s before they even step into a classroom. NYIT works to make sure that international students arriving in New York (where more than 2,500 NYIT students come from outside the U.S.) feel welcomed and ready to get involved. Staff members in the Center for Global Academic Exchange serve students from NYIT’s non-U.S. campuses

and partner programs, walking them through the visa process, coordinating housing, and even picking them up from the airport. Throughout the year, they help with language and networking skills, and navigating life in America. New York students studying at global campuses receive similar services there.

Alleviating some of the stress that comes with moving to a new country means students can focus on more important aspects of their education—like being a student.

Marking major **En (Lychee) Li (B.S. ’16)** transferred to NYIT-Manhattan from Foshan University in southern China two years ago. “During the first semester, I was just a normal student, hanging out with friends and studying,” she says. “The second semester, I became an international student ambassador and an orientation leader in Manhattan, and vice president of the Global Exchange Organization.”

Li and a dozen other ambassadors organize activities to encourage face-to-face interactions among domestic and international students. She has helped

her classmates go through the same transition she did. “As an international student, our families are not here in New York, so sometimes we will feel lonely,” she says. “But you cannot say, ‘I want to stay with my Chinese friends forever.’ So I meet a lot of American friends, African friends, Indian friends. So now I’m in New York, but I’m not lonely.”

**Global Careers: Activated**

When it comes to pursuing a career path, “think globally” is pretty common advice. It’s not always easy to follow, however, particularly when trying to network and grow a career abroad. All NYIT students are encouraged to connect with employers early and often. “Each member of the Career Services staff meets with domestic and international students,” says Dean of Career Services John Hyde. “Most staff members also speak more than one language, which is of course very helpful in making international students feel more comfortable.”

“We prepare students to be global citizens and secure jobs, but international

NYIT Magazine put out a request for students to participate in a photo shoot for this feature; these dynamic, globally-minded powerhouses answered the call.



**TARIQ JAMAL**  
Studying: International Studies.  
Hails From: Saudi Arabia. Good to Know: Speaks five languages, is a student ambassador.

**JIA WANG Pursuing:** a Master’s in Animation. **Hails From:** China. **Good to Know:** Wang’s *Zoedream* won Best of Show (animation) at the 2016 NYIT Animation and Film Festival and was exhibited at the Governor’s Island Art Fair.



**JONELL JOSEPH**  
Studying: Business Administration  
Hometown: Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Good to Know: Awarded the Gilman Scholarship for Study Abroad and spending the fall 2016 semester in Nanjing.



students are limited in the amount and type of paid work they can do because of visa restrictions,” says Ann Marie Klotz, dean for campus life at NYIT-Manhattan. To address this, NYIT looks for internships and service learning opportunities on campus or with partner agencies.

“I help students find ‘smart’ volunteering opportunities,” says James Huang, NYIT’s international student support specialist for the Office of Career Services. “They contribute their skills to a place like a nonprofit, rather than through casual volunteering, where students do not necessarily use their specific skills.”

For example, through NYIT programs like Consultants for the Public Good, business students from Nanjing performed neighborhood and market research for a chamber of commerce; communication arts students from Beijing produced videos for an international organization; and marketing students from Vancouver taught branding at a Bronx middle school. “They all made high-impact contributions while adding value to their resumes,” says Huang.

“Even if their intent is to return home, having such experiences helps them stand out among others who may have also studied abroad.”

Networking is another challenge. “It’s so important; you have to stay in touch with everyone,” says **Faisal Khan (M.B.A. ’16)**, an NYIT-Vancouver graduate who is originally from India. “NYIT-Vancouver is a fertile ground for cultivating your professional network in both Canada and the U.S.A.”

In China, the closest word to networking is *guanxi*, which means relationship. But the idea of networking in China is different than in America, explains Huang. “A lot of students will ask, ‘What if I don’t know anyone?’ So we’ll schedule informational interviews with their professors, set them up on LinkedIn, and help them connect with people.” Professional connections in both the U.S. and the student’s home country become a formidable foundation for career development.

“I went to Career Services because I wanted information about what to do to

stay in the U.S. after graduation,” says Li. She now lives in New York, is studying for the GMAT, and is interning at iBenzer, an American-Chinese company that manufactures tech accessories.

### The Trip

Students who wish to travel abroad can do so in a variety of ways, from shorter research trips sponsored by their school or funded through programs like the Presidential Global Fellowship to longer study abroad opportunities at another NYIT campus or partner institutions.

The Center for Global Academic Exchange is one resource that helps students find a good fit among the study abroad options available. Last year, it awarded more than \$20,000 to students attending programs in China, France, Greece, Germany, Italy, and more. This year, **Jonell Joseph**, winner of the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship administered by the Institute of International Education, is studying in NYIT-Nanjing. The first in her family to study abroad, she says the



**DEVIN ZACCHINO**  
**Studying:** Communication Arts  
**Hometown:** Mt. Sinai, N.Y. **Good to Know:** Wrote down that he wanted to be an orientation leader at his own orientation; became one this year.

**XIAOYUE (MOON) CHE** **Studying:** Electrical and Computer Engineering  
**Hometown:** Kunming, Yunnan Province, China **Good to Know:** Holds two patents for an earthquake detection device that she hopes will save lives in her hometown province.

**DIXA SONI** **Studying:** Architecture **Hails From:** Ghana **Good to Know:** While she was born in India, Soni spent 13 years in Ghana and considers that her home. Speaks five languages. Loves Manhattan!

seamless integration between New York and the Nanjing campus is critical to her ability to go abroad. “I won’t have to transfer credits, which would otherwise be difficult,” she says.

Hospitality management major **Suhail Iqbal** decided that rather than go to one country, he’d go to more than a dozen. In 2014 and 2016, he took part in Semester at Sea, an on-ship experiential learning opportunity in which students travel the world and visit up to 15 countries (see below, cover). “By being able to participate in my study abroad program, I was given the chance to travel the world and learn from its people,” he says. “Along the way I learned a great deal about different cultures, customs and different ways people conduct business. As a result, I chose an entrepreneurial route for myself ... I hope to open my own restaurant one day.”

Many students who can’t fit a semester abroad into their academic plans, can still experience a new culture. **Anthony Holloway**, an interdisciplinary studies major, had never traveled outside the U.S. when he applied to NYIT’s Alternative Spring Break. “I always wanted to travel and do something beneficial,” he says. Holloway took part in Alternative

Spring Break in 2015 and 2016. Both years, the team traveled to Nicaragua, where they worked with communities with limited access to water and ran a camp for children.

#### At Home with Internationalization

To gain a global perspective at NYIT, students don’t need to travel far. But they do need to possess an open mind and some natural curiosity.

Sophomore and Long Island native **Devin Zaccharino** knows this firsthand. While many of his friends went to state schools, he decided to attend NYIT-Manhattan. “My experience is so different from theirs,” he says. “I’ll tell them that my friends here are from Japan and other countries, and they’re always surprised. It’s so awesome.”

“Many of our New York-based students are from the surrounding area,” says Klotz, “and they start out thinking that being from New York City, they don’t need to know about internationalization. But once they start to engage with students who are so different from them, they learn about cultures and experiences that can really change them.”

The drive to encourage and develop a global perspective is embedded in

NYIT’s DNA. That perspective, in turn, has benefited and influenced alumni long after they’ve graduated. And when it comes to careers and the global marketplace, Huang believes NYIT graduates have an advantage. “I advised **Xinyi Dai (B.S. ’16)**, an NYIT-Nanjing student, during her final year at NYIT-Manhattan. She decided to go back to China when she finished,” he says. “She ended up getting a job with Phoceis, a French digital marketing and consulting agency in Shanghai. Because her resume and interviews were in English, she ended up negotiating a salary higher than her Chinese peers. That was only possible because she came to NYIT.”

“Everything we do now that brings us positive attention and recognition, such as receiving the Simon Award, is a win for NYIT and all students, and brings additional clout to the degree our alumni have already worked hard to earn,” says Klotz. “When they apply for a job, there’s recognition of excellence there; when they negotiate for a job, they can get more money. The value of their degree goes up exponentially.” ■



Read more about the Simon award: [bit.ly/Simon-NYIT](http://bit.ly/Simon-NYIT)



Myanmar was a highlight of Suhail Iqbal's trip abroad. (Above) Iqbal watches the sun rise over the town of Bagan as hot air balloons float in the distance. (Cover) Iqbal sits in front of Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, Myanmar.

## Global Study and Service Opportunities at NYIT

Students participate on the global stage in many ways. Here are some recent examples:

- NYIT Presidential Global Fellowships helped support dozens of experiential learning opportunities outside students’ communities and comfort zones.
- Faculty members and students participated in NYIT Center for Global Health missions, performing health screenings, medical procedures, and educational outreach abroad.
- School of Management students from New York, Abu Dhabi, and Vancouver did summer programs in India, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Germany.
- 13 students traveled to Paris to study documentary filmmaking and marketing.
- Nine New York students spent a semester at NYIT-Nanjing, while 200+ students from NYIT’s campuses in Beijing and Nanjing spent a year in Manhattan and Old Westbury.
- NYIT-Abu Dhabi students and alumni traveled to New York and met with international student ambassadors and faculty in their subject areas.
- 27 medical students carried out clinical rotations in countries including Costa Rica, the United Kingdom, and Vietnam.