



the Collage

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Kutztown University

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Rebekah March | German & Psychology Student Highlight

“I chose to major in German because of my family ties,” says Rebekah March, a senior at Kutztown University. Her grandmother is from Germany and emigrated to the US as a young woman in the late 1950s. Now a double major in German and Psychology, Rebekah has studied abroad in Germany, and she hopes to help and encourage other students in their study abroad journeys through her capstone research on reverse culture shock.

Rebekah decided to add Psychology as a second major while in her first year at KU, as she felt she needed something more in her academic career. “I’ve always been interested in how people think and behave,” she says. “I knew I didn’t want to be a German teacher or be in the school system, so I felt like I needed to add something.” She finds the majors intersect in many ways, one being that many influential psychologists come from Germany. Her background with German is helpful when there are psychological concepts that are unable to be translated into English, such as Gestalt Theory, which is loosely translated to “configuration” as it focuses on interpreting patterns as a whole rather than as individual parts.

When Rebekah studied abroad in Germany last year, she missed most of her spring season on the KU Women’s Soccer team and needed to keep up with her training for when she returned. She was excited about the opportunity to get involved in Germany’s soccer culture. “You can’t go to Germany and not try playing soccer,” she jokes. There she was welcomed by the DJK Blau-Weiß Women’s team and felt like she became a part of their family. The goalie of the team, an English-German translator, especially made an impact on her time studying abroad.

She was able to stay with them and their family in Germany over the 2023-2024 winter break, working on her Honors capstone project while also playing more soccer.

After experiencing reverse culture shock—the result of coming home after an extended period of time in another country—she decided to use this experience for her Honors capstone thesis, the culminating project for the Honors program at KU, working alongside her advisor for the project, Dr. Jason Lanter. “No one really talks about reverse culture shock when you come back home because you kind of think of it in the sense of, ‘Oh, I’m going back home, I’ve lived there my entire life,’” she notes. “But it’s not really talked about as much how weird it is to be away in a completely different culture for so long, and then to come back and have to reintegrate yourself into society again with a new somewhat intercultural identity and cross-cultural experience.” She hopes the project can help implement a reentry program with the Study Abroad office at KU to support students returning

from studying abroad. “The first step is to broach it as a topic,” she says. “There’s a light overview of the topic in the study abroad informational packet right now, so I think starting there and giving students and those around them the information they need to expect when coming home can help.”

She also hopes to connect students returning from studying abroad with current exchange students at KU. While in Germany, she had a buddy system with her fellow students at Hildesheim Universität to answer questions and have someone to help, which she feels can help both students returning from studying abroad as well as current exchange students at KU. “It’s up to the students to determine what their relationship looks like, but I think it would be a great program to implement,” she explains.

She’s returned to Germany once since studying abroad her first time, and she now hopes to attend grad school at Hildesheim after graduating this semester, all the while improving her German speaking skills and continuing to play soccer. For now, she hopes students live in the moment and enjoy everything as it comes: “Before you know it, you’re in my position—graduating this semester and my study abroad is over, so I can’t relive those memories” she says. “But I’m glad I didn’t take anything for granted, and I just simply lived. Don’t take anything for granted, just enjoy everything as it comes.”



Rebekah (left) playing soccer over winter break with the league she joined while studying abroad



April Jones | English Staff Highlight

prior to KU. Joining the English department at the end of last year, she finds academia to be a different experience in providing clerical support for faculty throughout the department. Though there are some familiar tasks like making copies of files and creating documents, working with the budget and overseeing the student workers in the department are aspects of the position she had not experienced before. "There's a huge age gap with the students, but I don't feel that's a barrier," she notes. "We're all learning together, which is great."

She finds the skill she has needed most as secretary is simply being open to learning new things. "It's not always easy to learn new things" she says. "But by doing so, by meeting an obstacle, learning from it, and overcoming it, that's what has truly fulfilled me in this position," she says. Ms. Jones feels that being the glue who holds the department together is really what her job is about. Her ability to adapt and find the best, most efficient way to get things done is what helps the department run.

Despite any difficulties she may face, she feels she makes

a difference in the department just by remaining positive. "I think that is really what this department is about: positivity," she says. "Regardless of what we're up against, we all have a positive spin on it—we know we're going to get through it and we're going to do it together." Interacting with students and faculty has made a difference for Ms. Jones, as she notes the good experiences she has had with people in the department. "I really do see how much the faculty care about their students and are involved with student success," she says. "I also hear some of the students' feedback, and they have remarkable things to say about the professors in this department—it's a very positive experience."

When she is not at KU, Ms. Jones is a fiber artist, working on knitting and embroidery to de-stress and be creative. As for her advice for students as someone who has been in a working environment, she says to continue to learn, as that will make all the difference. "Be open to the opportunities that are available," Ms. Jones says. "I encourage any student to continue their education. Education is the key to success."

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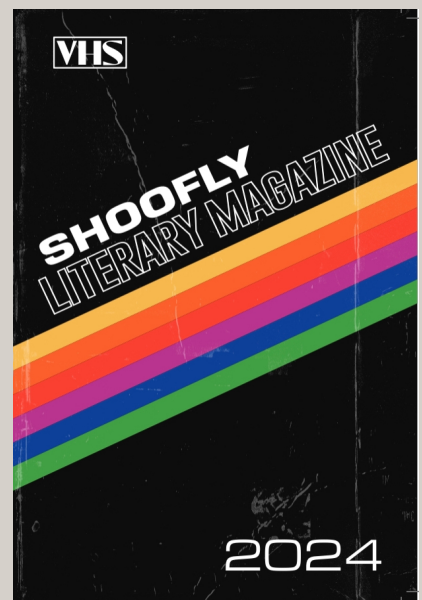
For April Jones, English department secretary at Kutztown University, working in academia is exciting. "It's very different than anything I've ever done," she says. "I always wanted to go to college, but I never realized this is how I would fulfill that." Ms. Jones was given the opportunity to join the English department after seeking out a clerical position at KU. Now she finds challenges and learns new things throughout her daily tasks as a secretary.

Ms. Jones had been working in the medical field at Tower Health as a clerical worker

Shoofly Literary Magazine's 20th Year

The 2024 edition of Shoofly Literary Magazine marks its 20th year of the publication. Shoofly is a student-run magazine that publishes poetry, fiction, and drama written by students at KU. It also features a different student-made cover each year. All students are encouraged to submit their work, regardless of their major, and the selections are made anonymously by Shoofly staff. Copies of the 2024 Shoofly Literary Magazine can be found throughout Lytle Hall.

We hope you enjoy reading what KU's talented students have to offer!



Cover designed by KU student Caitlyn Bleacher