

This report sets out to give a summary of my time spent this past summer studying in London, England at King's College. The aid given to me by the Alpha Sigma Foundation made this summer possible, and I'm forever grateful as it is an experience unlike any other trip I have ever taken. I arrived in London in late June with Sigma '18 Luke Haynes. We checked in to our housing by Waterloo station and proceeded to walk around London for the afternoon trying to get a feel for the city we would be living in for the next month and a half. At the end of our trip Luke and I reminisced on that first day and how naïve we were walking around Southbank. We ate at a little restaurant a little skeptical of the 18 y.o. drinking age, shivering as we had our first experience with London weather, 65°F and cloudy.

While at King's I took a class on public health with an emphasis on the European healthcare system as well as a biosciences class, which was more so a lecture/seminar series on cancer research, stem cell research, and drug discovery. Each class ran for three weeks at a time with either a morning session or afternoon session, leaving the other half of the day to study or explore

The City. The biosciences class I took was split up week by week, with researchers working at King's giving the daily lectures. We were given the opportunity to tour their Nikon imaging center with some of the most advanced microscopes in the U.K. and we also were given a tour of their live animal research center. I gained a lot from this class, and I think most notably I gained a thirst for research. Throughout the three weeks we spent discussing the recent research in these healthcare areas, I grew a passion for research that I had never really recognized. I became fascinated by the entire process – from the beginning idea or observation to the clinical trials and finished journal



Picture 1: Luke Haynes (right) and myself aboard our plane to London

articles, I became enamored with the prospect of research and the renewed vision that these researchers had for future healthcare. For instance, during the week of stem cell research, we were lectured by Dusko Ilic. Before attending King's I had never heard of Dr. Ilic, but since this summer he has been quoted in multiple news articles as the story of the baby born with three different people's DNA surfaced. This area of healthcare is new and very challenging when considering the ethics behind it, however as a lead researcher in the field, it was neat to hear from his point of view the incredible benefits of stem cell therapy. Since being back at UNC I've been able to join a research team looking at the efficacy of low-cost water filtration systems for the developing world, and while this research is not much like the research I learned about this summer, the process of research has been fascinating to be a part of and I'm looking forward to other projects I may get to help out on in my last year and a half as an undergraduate at UNC.

My second class introduced me to the history of public health in the U.K. as well as the history of public health in the U.S. After learning about the first few years of public health, we discussed major health concerns in today's age as well as the various parts of public health. I heard from leading environmental health researchers from Greece, epidemiologists from London, and from an analyst who works with the Royal Society for Public Health. This class was an incredible introduction to public health as I came back to school this fall entering my first semester as an Environmental Health Sciences major in the Gillings School of Public Health. Since being back on campus and in the lodge I've been able to start conversations about healthy lifestyles and the long term effects of some seemingly harmless habits. I've also been able to talk to



Picture 2: Sagrada Familia

guys interested in healthcare as a career option. Often times people see healthcare as only doctors and nurses, however if someone's passion is to help people, public health is fundamentally about as on point with that passion as one can get.

While in Europe, Luke and I had the opportunity to travel on a few of the weekends to parts of Europe we had never been to. We spent one weekend in Barcelona, a weekend in Edinburgh, Scotland, and a day in south England at the White Cliffs of Dover. These three trips were unforgettable and very different from one another. We both enjoyed Barcelona, but to make the trip affordable, we had to get plane tickets that only allowed us a little over 24 hours in Spain, making it pretty difficult to see a lot. However, we got to go to the beach and we also saw Sagrada Familia which was truly beautiful. The weekend we spent in Edinburgh was one of my favorite weekends abroad. We took the train up Friday afternoon, woke up before sunrise Saturday morning and hiked up Calton Hill to watch the sun rise over the North Sea. The rest of the day was spent walking around the city, hiking up Arthur's seat, catching a free tour of downtown Edinburgh, and eating incredible food including traditional haggis. Finally, the day I spent in Dover was one of my favorite days of my trip. Sigma '18 Alec Di Ruzza joined us in London for the weekend and we all travelled down to Dover together early Saturday morning. We stopped in Canterbury on the way down and then travelled by foot all across Dover. We spend some time on the pebble beaches, but the majority of our time was spent hiking the cliffs, from the public entrance all the way to the South Foreland Lighthouse (2.5 miles one way). After living in congested London for what had been nearly a month, the hike in the fresh air was incredibly refreshing and the weather was better than we could have asked for. I have to include one final night spent in London, that must be noted. On July 16, in central



Picture 3: The White Cliffs of Dover. Note the lack of handrails.

London, up in Shoreditch area, five Sigmas grabbed dinner together and spent the evening talking about life, love, and all of the above, this night ended up being one of my favorite dinners in London, not only because the food was incredible, but because I was sharing conversation and time with four of my close friends I had met less than two years prior. Luke Haynes and I were of course studying at King's, Wilson Sink (Sigma '17) was in London for an internship, Jonathan Alvarez (Sigma '18) was visiting us for the weekend away from his internship in the Netherlands, and Sam

Bondurant (Sigma '15) was in London for business. After a two-hour dinner we continued the conversation at Wilson's apartment. July 16th was also the day of the coup in Turkey, which is worth mentioning as Dave Dwight (Sigma '16) at the time was in Istanbul. We were able to FaceTime him and provide some sort of comfort from so many miles away, which was a blessing for us that we were able to see he was in a safe part of the city.

I'm thoroughly excited for these last two years I have at UNC. I'm excited to grow

my interest in research and public health, but I'm more excited for the relationships I form with guys in the Lodge. I spent my first and second year in the Lodge learning from many incredible guys – learning how to structure my semesters to be most efficient, learning what it meant to find a major you were passionate about, and learning what it meant to be an Alpha Sigma of Chi Psi. While I will never claim to be the epitome of a Chi Psi gentleman, I think I know a little more about what that means on a world level. I'm excited to be able to talk about our healthcare system with guys in the Lodge on a somewhat regular basis.



Picture 4: From right to left -- Wilson Sink (Σ '17), Jonathan Alvarez (Σ '18), Luke Haynes (Σ '18), Sam Bondurant (Σ '15), and myself in a small London pub



Picture 6: Visiting Queen Elizabeth's Olympic Park



Picture 7: Luke Haynes and myself at the top of King Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh, Scotland



Picture 5: The introduction to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre before watching "The Taming of the Shrew"