

# JULIANNA PETTINGER

## The Impact of Global Learning

Before coming to FIU, I grew up very sheltered from the world around me. A suburb of a large city; surrounded with homogenous lifestyles, skin colors, and political ideologies. My first few weeks in Miami were certainly a culture shock. As I adapted to this vastly different world, I began to learn and grow. Being in such a culturally diverse city, I have had the opportunity to hear so many different points of view that I had never heard before. I quickly understood how little I knew about cultures other than my own. Taking this lack of knowledge to heart, I was eager to expand and learn more. FIU has helped me gain access to these perspectives, something which is of the utmost importance to me.

My sophomore year, I took a leap and enrolled in a course on the history and culture of India. This course is what finally helped me grasp how rich and diverse each culture is, and that everything that happens in the world effects everything else around it. By being able to connect India's historical events to ones that were happening in the western world at the same times, I was able to feel more globally aware. During this course, our class had to act out a pivotal moment in India and Pakistan's history, the partition of the two nations. We were each assigned roles, and the heated debates that followed were life changing. I felt the way these leaders felt, and could fervently debate genuine issues that had happened in the past. We spent many hours and late nights collaborating on this project, and the results were fantastic. We were one of few groups nationally to achieve an actual compromise, and we did this through teamwork, communication, and compromise. This exercise also dramatically assisted in growing my ability to view things from other perspectives, especially cross culturally.

This global enlightenment continued into my junior year when I became involved with GlobeMed. The people I met here are passionate and eager to do good in this world. The sheer enlightenment alone of the individuals I met here was astounding. I learned more about cultural respect and inclusiveness of all individuals than I had ever thought possible. I grew up in a very close-minded society, and this exposure to cultures other than my own has been one of the best experiences here at FIU. Through GlobeMed I was inspired to follow my passion of global health, and was given the opportunity to assist in funding and planning our yearly trip to our partner in Guatemala. Interacting and associating with a culture quite different from our own gave me some surprising insights. Primarily, that despite the language barrier and the many differences, we are all inherently the same. The small differences that are present in our everyday lives are just that; small. By embracing and understanding one another, problem solving can become possible and enjoyable.

Despite the immense amount of knowledge I have accumulated in my brief time at FIU, the most valuable thing I have realized is how little I truly know. This has given me a great desire to keep learning and expanding my base of understanding. With this comes a hunger to help people in a way I am passionate; health. I plan on continuing my education in the fields of psychology, medicine, and nutrition post-graduation. While continuing to work in the field of clinical psychology, I will apply to school to get a degree as a Physician Assistant. By completing graduate school and becoming a licensed healthcare professional, I aim to use this knowledge to

educate others. Upon my arrival at FIU, I thought I wanted to be a marine biologist. Now, I know exactly what strengths I possess and where I want my life to take me.