

Master's students conduct HIV/AIDS research in Cape Town

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A partnership between Queen's department of Global Development Studies and South Africa's University of Cape Town (UCT) is allowing graduate students to access and explore original research material for their dissertation projects.

"The opportunity to conduct primary research in Cape Town opened up a lot of doors in terms of the directions I could take my paper," says Leslie Wells, a master's student in the Department of History. "I think it contributed to a better final product."

The two universities signed the multi-year project agreement earlier this year with the goal of enhancing work-study opportunities for students and strengthening the working relationships of Queen's and UCT faculty members.

Ms Wells researched the history of South Africa's HIV/AIDS epidemic at the African Centre for Cities, where academics and graduate students are studying development and sustainability in urban Africa.

"Having international experience can go a long way in showing prospective employers in the international development sector that you are actually committed to the field," she adds.

Adam Houston, a master's student in Global Development Studies, interned with the well-respected Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), an organization best known for putting legal pressure the South African government to recognize the rights of people living with HIV. Over the summer, Mr. Houston participated in government consultations with TAC on the most recent National Strategic Plan for dealing with HIV. He focused on the integration of tuberculosis into the plan, which offered a rare opportunity to study how human rights concepts are applied to diseases other than HIV.

"Canadians certainly have much to learn from seeing how South Africa is mobilizing civil society in the development of this strategic plan. It's important that these experiences are brought back to Canada," he says.

The project facilitates internships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or community-based organizations for up to five undergraduate and two master's students from Queen's each year. In addition, four UCT graduate students over four years will spend a term here at Queen's for independent study, curriculum development and internship work with NGOs in the Kingston community. A third component of the project will link senior undergraduate or graduate seminars in the two universities to foster teamwork through cyberspace discussions on the theme of "Aboriginal rights and reconciliation."

The Queen's-Cape Town collaboration is a project of the [Students for Development program](#), which is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and managed by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC).

Students who are interested in the program are invited to [visit the DEVS website](#).

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