

Student Spotlight - Katelyn Parker

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A Face You've Seen Everywhere, for Good Reason!



Katelyn Parker

Meet Katelyn Parker! Katelyn is a senior at Utah State University, studying International Studies with a minor in Chinese. She is also completing the Global Peacebuilding Certificate and the Leadership and Diplomacy Certificate through the Heravi Peace Institute (HPI). Katelyn was named the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHaSS) Scholar of the Year for 2025 and is one of the finalists for the Robins Awards. She sat with us at the Heravi World Café on a rainy afternoon to look back at her time in Utah State and HPI.

What drew you into international studies and peacebuilding?

I started in psychology because I love neuroscience and always thought I'd be a STEM person. But then I started learning about global issues, especially the treatment of ethnic minorities in China, and I just couldn't ignore it. I wanted to know what I could do from Logan, Utah. That led me to switch majors and discover the peacebuilding and diplomacy programs.

How did you first get involved with the Heravi Peace Institute (HPI)?

It was actually through a class with Dr. Colin Flint in 2022. He mentioned the Global Peacebuilding Certificate, and I remember thinking, "This is exactly what I've been looking for." Later I learned about the Leadership and Diplomacy certificate, and that aligned with my interests in diplomacy and building peace through dialogue.

You've also had quite a few global experiences. Can you share some of those?

I went to Taiwan for three months last summer, then to Cuba with Dr. Knuppe in December, and also attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York with Prof Nicole Allen recently. The Taiwan trip was actually for my major, not the certificates, but it still deeply impacted me. Cuba counted for my Global Peacebuilding Certificate, and for Leadership & Diplomacy, I'm doing an internship through No Más, which has been great! I've met so many people, and each week is different. I've worked with clients from a variety of backgrounds speaking French, Spanish and more, it's been humbling and really meaningful.

What's been your favorite experience so far?

Taiwan was great because it was for a longer period of time, and I was able to put my language skills to the test. I took Chinese in high school and now I am getting a minor in it now, which helped me explore the culture easier.



Katelyn Parker and friends in the Taiwan Study Abroad, Summer 2024

We heard you've been nominated for some major awards. Tell us about that!

I was named the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Scholar of the Year, and the USU-wide Robins Awards. I'm also representing Grad Studies in the Miss USU competition this year.

How did you end up doing so many things? Minors, certificates, and multiple experiences and study abroad?

It might sound like a lot, but many of the requirements overlapped. A lot of classes for my major, International Studies, also count toward the certificates, so it made sense. I also received the Heravi Experiential scholarship for going to Cuba.

How have all these experiences shaped your career goals?

They've opened up a lot of doors; and A LOT more questions! I'm more aware now of how many different paths there are. For example, when I was in New York I met the CEO of Women in International Security at the UN, and she gave me her card and directed me to internships. So now, that's something I'm seriously considering, along with NGOs, advocacy work, diplomacy, and even intelligence analysis.



Katelyn at the UN Economic and Social Council during the NYC visit of the Commission on the Status of Women

So, what's next for you after graduation?

I've received a conditional offer for a government internship that I'm really excited about. There's still a security clearance process, so I'm waiting on that. In the fall, I'll be starting my master's in Anticipatory Intelligence. I was originally enrolled in the minor and am now using it to fast-track into the graduate program. I'll definitely still be around campus! As for the long term, I want to keep

exploring different areas, intelligence analysis, diplomacy, or NGO work.

You've experienced both HPI and the Anticipatory Intelligence program. How do they intersect for you?

They actually complement each other really well. Both are interdisciplinary and offer different lenses to look at global issues, which speaks to different sides of my interests in this field very well. My background in global peacebuilding and leadership helps me think more long-term and ethically about national security problems. It expands my perspective and helps me imagine strategies that center peace, even in complex security settings.



U.S.-Cuban Relations with Prof. Knuppe: People, Power, and Politics in Cuba study abroad Dec 2024

What has been the most impactful part of HPI for you?

Having a dedicated center focused on peacebuilding has been incredibly impactful. HPI provides a space to explore different methods and approaches to peace—not just in one-off classes, but as a cohesive focus across the curriculum. Even courses that aren't directly about peacebuilding are framed through that lens, which helps deepen your understanding and connect the dots across disciplines.

What is something you wish HPI could do better for someone like you?

Honestly, I just wish I could stay involved after graduation! I know there's an alumni group starting, so I'll definitely be around for that.