

## Student Spotlight - Olivia Harper

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HPI is thrilled to highlight Olivia Harper, a dynamic Utah State senior studying international studies, minoring in Spanish, and earning a Global Peacebuilding Certificate. A Heravi Scholarship Recipient, Olivia's multi-dimensional journey through the Heravi institute has been nothing short of inspiring, as she continues to forge a unique path toward making a difference in the world, taking advantage of a number of programs HPI and USU have to offer.

Olivia participated in the "Europe at War" HPI study abroad program last summer, and just recently completed an internship with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in their Public and International Affairs office in New York City. She currently works with the "No More a Stranger", a local non-profit legal organization serving the immigrant community of Cache Valley.

**What inspired you to get involved with the Heravi Peace Institute, and how has your connection with the institute shaped your academic or career goals?**

I was first introduced to HPI by Professor Tammy Proctor in a modern world history class. At the time, I was in the process of declaring an international studies major. When

Professor Proctor presented the global peacebuilding program, I knew right away that I wanted to get involved. As I met with my advisor and learned more about the HPI, I realized that peacebuilding was a way that I could build upon the information learned and skills acquired in my previous studies. Through my peacebuilding classes and HPI involvement, I discovered my passion for working in the realms of foreign service, immigration law, and NGO work.

My experiences with the Global Peacebuilding Certificate culminated in a capstone class last spring taught by Professor Colin Flint. In the class, we studied different peacebuilding strategies and worked with a group to complete a capstone project. This included analyzing global conflict, application of peacebuilding methods, conducting research and presenting our findings for the class. This experience allowed me the opportunity to put what I have learned into practice and understand the relevance and importance of using peacebuilding methods in conflict resolution.

**How did the Europe study abroad program impact your perspective on peacebuilding or global issues?**

The Europe study abroad program with Professors Tammy Proctor and Susan Grayzel left a meaningful and lasting impression on me. It's one thing to read about World War I and II in textbooks and novels, but standing in mass cemeteries, walking through trenches, and overlooking battle fields where history unfolded made it all so real. I realized that it's essential to learn from the past to understand why peace is not just desirable but absolutely necessary. This experience as a whole strengthened my resolve to pursue peacebuilding on a global scale.



Europe at War study abroad group at Utah Beach in Normandy, France

**How has the Heravi Peace Scholarship influenced your educational path?**

The Heravi Peace Scholarship allowed me to participate in the "Europe at War" study abroad experience. The

Scholarship provided me with the financial flexibility to pursue a meaningful opportunity that increased my understanding of global issues and the importance of peace in the world.

**Tell us more about your most recent project in New York. Did you utilize any skills that you developed during your time at the institute?**

This past fall semester I interned with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in their Public and International Affairs office in New York City. The office is very active in both the diplomatic community and the interfaith community in New York, so I frequently attended events in both realms. I had the privilege of attending the United Nations General Assembly in September, meeting Consuls General and UN representatives from all over the world and interacting with many NGO and faith leaders based in New York. As a part of my internship, I actively participated in the meetings and events that involved advocating for religious freedom, and educating others on Latter-day Saint Charities' humanitarian efforts throughout the world. HPI does significant work on campus providing spaces where students and faculty alike can come together to discuss important ideas. These HPI spaces and conversations prepared me for the real-world discussions I participated in as a part of my internship. Skills like research and advocacy that I gained through HPI were crucial. My internship experience perfectly exemplifies the intersection of academic preparation and real-world application.

**What is a feature unique to HPI that has been impactful for you?**

The sense of community among the students and faculty is inspiring. Being in spaces with people who share my vision for the world and want to make a positive impact is incredibly empowering. This goes beyond each individual certificate or program. Collaboration within the institute and bringing students from different backgrounds together is essential. HPI attracts students from many different majors and areas of study, meaning that when we come together as an institute it is a gathering of people who have different professional and personal experiences, goals, and opinions. Despite these differences, there is a deep sense of shared purpose that is encouraging amid so much division in our world today.

**In true Aggie fashion, Olivia's advice to students considering the Heravi Peace Institute Certificates is simple: "Grab the bull by the horns and go for it!" Her journey highlights how unique HPI's programs are in shaping a comprehensive educational experience: "If you're unsure about your path, HPI and its various certificates offer structure and clarity. Programs like Global Peacebuilding might sound abstract from the outside, but they provide practical tools and opportunities that set you on a clear course and prepare you well for your career post-graduation."**

*Curious about what the Heravi Peace Institute can offer you? [Contact us](#) and tell us about your aspirations*



Olivia At the United Nations General Assembly in September 2024