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Fearless (Saturday): Michael Hannum

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Fearless (Saturday): Michael Hannum

Abstract

In celebration of [Alumni Homecoming Weekend](#) and Hispanic Heritage Week, we proudly feature Michael Hannum, member of the Class of 2011, for his fearless commitment to fighting for social justice issues and his continued involvement in serving the Adams County community. Currently working with the [Lincoln Intermediate Unit's Migrant Education Program](#) as a Recruitment Coordinator, Michael began finding his passion for helping identify families in the migrant community who need extra educational support when he was a first-year student just looking for something to do. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, Hispanic Heritage Week, Brazil, migrant, education, minorities, ethnicity, Hispanic

Disciplines

Chicana/o Studies | Civic and Community Engagement | Community-Based Learning | Educational Sociology | Inequality and Stratification | Latin American Languages and Societies | Latin American Studies | Race and Ethnicity | Rural Sociology | Social Psychology and Interaction

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

FEARLESS (SATURDAY): MICHAEL HANNUM

September 28, 2013

In celebration of [Alumni Homecoming Weekend](#) and [Hispanic Heritage Week](#), we proudly feature Michael Hannum, member of the [Class of 2011](#), for his fearless commitment to fighting for social justice issues and his [continued involvement in serving the Adams County community](#). Currently working with the [Lincoln Intermediate Unit's Migrant Education Program](#) as a Recruitment Coordinator, Michael began finding his passion for helping identify families in the migrant community who need extra educational support when he was a first-year student just looking for something to do.

“When I came to Gettysburg as a first-year,” says Michael, “[I really didn't know what to do about choosing a major](#), just like a lot of other first-year liberal arts students. All I knew was that I liked Spanish.” [Following his interest in Spanish](#) and the desire to practice it, he found himself in [Rebecca Bergren's office](#) at [Off-Campus Studies \(OCS\)](#) his very first semester at Gettysburg. However, after finding out he'd have to wait until at least second semester sophomore year to study abroad, he decided to pursue a different route (that is, at least, until he [studied abroad in both Spain and Argentina](#) later) by applying to be a [Heston Summer Intern](#).

He spent the summer of 2008 here in Gettysburg, interning as part of the [Heston Summer Experience](#) at the LIU Migrant Program that began to solidify what would become his Gettysburg experience. “That summer I worked with the [Migrant Education Program of Summer Excellence](#) as an aid, [practicing my Spanish](#), meeting people, and helping out at the best agency in Adams County,” says Michael.



That first summer spent at the LIU not only led to a part-time job there during his **sophomore year working with the Migrant Education Program**, but also a position at the office here in Gettysburg every summer.



After graduation, Michael **went abroad to Brazil for a year** as part of a [Fulbright Scholar program](#) and worked as an **English Teaching Assistant for soon-to-be ESL students** at a Brazilian university. The program was a sort of dual program between the [State Departments](#) of the US and Brazil, originally leading Michael to think he'd pursue a State Department position.

“But when I got back to the US,” says Michael, “it was like I had that first-year mindset all over again: ‘Should I go to DC? Find work in Philly? Go back abroad?’ I really just didn’t know what the next step was.” But that’s when **a long-term recruitment position at the LIU** in Gettysburg opened up.

“At first I wasn’t sure—did I dare come all the way **back to Gettysburg**? But, of course, the answer was yes. And it’s been great.” Working as a [Recruitment Coordinator](#), Michael **helps identify families** who fit federal- and state-level guidelines for educational aid, which includes **providing children with in-home education options, ESL classes, and trips to local colleges** to inspire them to pursue higher education.

“There are two sides to this sort of work,” says Michael. “There’s **the recruitment end of things** where you’re finding **new industries for people to work in**, finding **families who need support**, and figuring out the logistical ends of things; and then there’s **the instructional, more hands-on side** of meeting with people, giving general support, and working with ESL students and classes. I used to do more of the hands-on work, **but now I do more logistical things.**”

Michael says, “I’m kind of behind the scenes most of the time, but I know that **what I’m doing is important and affecting people’s lives—and that’s rewarding**. I’m proud to be a part of a system that’s really helping these kids, getting them **inspired to go to college**, and then actually seeing some of them get there and credit the **LIU** as a huge reason for why they were able to get to college when they never would’ve thought it possible before. Of course, **they really get there on their own hard work**, but they always acknowledge how much influence the **LIUprograms** have had in their success.”

For Michael, **it’s a continuous learning process**—constantly learning new things about social justice issues, how to better serve the community, and help more students reach success. Working here in Gettysburg as an alumnus is also something Michael finds rewarding, despite the fact that every time he comes on campus, he just feels that much older.

Continuing to **pursue excellence and take initiative by serving the community**, Gettysburgian Michael Hannum still feels at home here in town, **affecting change** and changing lives for those in the Gettysburg community.

<http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com/2013/09/28/fearless-michael-hannum/>