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This summer I was fortunate to receive a Glenn & Susan Brace Scholar Award from the UVA Center for Global Health. I was interested in Botswana's opt-out policy for HIV/AIDS testing, and I left the United States for Botswana in May excited about researching the implications of this policy.

Within two weeks of my arrival, however, circumstances necessitated an adjustment. The two contacts with whom I had planned to work – a University of Botswana (UB) law professor and an American anthropologist – suddenly changed their plans and were traveling outside Botswana throughout most of my stay here. Fortunately, my UVA sponsor, Professor Thomas Massaro, Dean of the new UB School of Medicine, worked quickly to put me in touch with the UB Director of Research & Development. I thus spent the remainder of my summer working with the UB Office of Research & Development to revise their intellectual property policies. In relation to this work, I independently researched how Botswana's intellectual property laws affect health and development. It was wonderful to meet with government and NGO employees, lawyers in the private sector, professors, and other health care professionals about these issues. My interviews with them have reinforced the value of physically being here rather than just reading about Botswana – especially since I have found that many resources would not be accessible back in the United States!

This was a valuable experience from personal, academic, and professional standpoints. Professionally, it has made a great addition to my resume and distinguished me as a candidate as I go through recruiting this fall. Academically, having this global experience challenged me to look at the law in a new way. I'm also applying what I learned this past summer in a class called International Patent Law & Policy, and combining both my summer experience and this class, I plan to submit a paper for publication that better details what I learned in Botswana. Finally, spending my summer in Botswana challenged me on a personal level. I studied abroad in undergrad and always regretted that I left without making a personal connection with the culture. But I learned that lesson then, and was happy to return to the United States this time with a number of Botswana contacts and greater confidence in my ability to adapt to new cultures and remain positive in the face of unanticipated circumstances.

With the World Cup, this was an especially exciting summer to be in southern Africa, and I am incredibly grateful for the Center for Global Health for helping make it possible.