Study abroad program strengthens leadership

Hope Browning, a senior at Georgia College & State University, never thought she would venture outside of her comfort zone to participate in a study abroad program. But when the opportunity came, Browning knew it was the chance of a lifetime.

"I had a student in criminal justice come up to me and say, ‘Hey, GC lawyers won the case,’" said Browning. "I was so excited that I became a student in criminal justice because of that." Browning then decided to apply to the study abroad program in Straubourg, located in northeastern France.

"I always wanted to study abroad because it gives me the confidence and opportunities for what I love to do," said Browning. "At first, I was like being thrown into the fire, but I can't say enough about how much I learned from the experience." When Browning worked as a graduate assistant in Straubourg, she found the freedom to work with athletes and apply what she learned in a real-world setting. Browning wanted to continue her studies in basketball and softball so much that she decided to do it.

"It was much better than I'd imagined." Her biggest takeaway from the Study abroad program was that she is open to new experiences and is not afraid to take risks.

"I’ve learned a lot about myself and will use it for years to come," said Browning. "I’ve learned how to be out of my comfort zone, and I’ve learned how to let things go."

Browning’s study abroad highlights included visiting landmarks like the Place des Vosges, Louvre Museum, and European Parliament. Some of Browning’s study abroad experiences included volunteering at the Eiffel Tower, helping win the Cannes Film Festival, and learning how to ride a bicycle.

The most fun she had on the study abroad program was exploring the city and other countries with her new friends. "We made lots of memories together that I will remember for a lifetime," said Browning. "I believe all students should study abroad because it gives the opportunity. There are many scholarships available, and I’m sure that one will pay for the trip."