

Diplomacy Alumna Advances Global Health Research in Germany

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By Judy Bissoon

Emma Tobin '19 is building bridges between research, policy and institutional leadership as senior coordinator in the Director's Office at the Heidelberg Institute of Global Health (HIGH) at



Emma Tobin '19, Heidelberg Institute of
Global Health

Heidelberg University. One of the world's leading global health research institutions, HIGH has experienced rapid growth and international expansion over the past decade.

Created in response to the institute's expanding scope, her position sits at the intersection of strategy, research management and institutional development. In the Director's Office, Tobin supports executive leadership, coordinates cross-departmental initiatives and helps streamline internal systems that enable faculty and researchers to advance innovative, policy-relevant global health research. "My

work ultimately focuses on ensuring that our researchers have the structural and administrative support they need to make a long-term impact,” she said.

Her path to Heidelberg began at Seton Hall University’s School of Diplomacy and International Relations, where she gained hands-on experience through internships with the High Atlas Foundation in Morocco, the World Food Prize, the U.S. Consulate in Dubai and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. She was also deeply involved in campus organizations, experiences that strengthened her leadership, communication and organizational skills.

After graduating from Seton Hall, she began her career as a contractor with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), supporting humanitarian assistance programs in the Middle East. She later earned a master’s degree in international development from the University of Oxford, focusing on strengthening global health systems. Following graduate school, she joined USAID’s Global Health Bureau, where she helped manage a \$300 million maternal and child health portfolio across 18 countries.

When USAID was dismantled, Tobin transitioned to academia, joining Heidelberg University and continuing her work in global health, supporting research that informs governments and multilateral organizations worldwide. Reflecting on her journey, she encourages current and prospective Diplomacy students to explore widely and take initiative. “Try everything,” she advised, “Every experience helps clarify your path. Career trajectories are rarely linear, but curiosity and initiative consistently create opportunity.”

She credits the School of Diplomacy with preparing her to succeed early in her career through rigorous coursework, faculty mentorship and exposure to high-level policy environments. “Seton Hall gave me both the technical skills and the confidence to navigate complex professional spaces with resilience.”

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