

# NIU-Human Connections Global Internship and Leadership Development Program

Eight NIU students – **Timi Adebjoe, Luke Arrington, Raven Bryant, Hopkins, Yannick Koua, Dexter Matthews, Janel Pilate and Yuije Sansone** – traveled in January of 2016 to San Pancho, Mexico and began a journey that now becomes their legacy.

While in San Pancho, the students were hosted by an organization called Entre Amigos where they not only learned about themselves, but they learned about the tenacity and commitment of the people of San Pancho. For many of the students, the trip provided their first excursion outside the United States. And, although the eight originally



*“Going to Mexico taught me that there is so much more to life than what we see right outside of our front doors in the states. Though we may not be able to see the entire world in just one lifetime, I encourage every person in this world to travel and see as much as possible. If not for you, do it so you can share the wisdom gained from such experiences with others who may never have the chance to see a world outside of their own.”*

— Randiss Hopkins

hailed from inner-city Chicago, their journey to Mexico offered an eye-opening look at what lies just beyond the border.

Following this experience, Randiss Hopkins, then traveled to Bucerias, Mexico where he interned for Human Connections, a non-profit organization that connects local people with international audiences. Both experiences were life-changing and when he returned to the United States, he and several other students made it their mission to ensure that other NIU students would have an opportunity to engage in a similar experience. From here, The NIU-Human Connections Global Internship and Leadership Development Program

was born and represents their legacy and desire to provide a cost-effective avenue whereby NIU students can gain practical work experience and critical leadership skills. Through this four week program, students will engage in three weeks of internship with Human Connections in Bucerias and one week of leadership development and civic engagement with Entre Amigos in San Pancho.