



Peter I. Rose*

“Some Reflections on a Very Unique Program: The Global Citizenship Alliance”

Nearly two decades ago, Dr. Jochen Fried proposed to bring American undergraduates to Austria, mostly, but not exclusively, from community colleges and Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCUs) to address issues such as the dilemmas of diversity in our society, problems relating to climate change and other environmental issues, and matters of class, status, power and politics, and also to compare and contrast what we do in the United States with

what goes on in other countries. It was an enormous challenge. Undaunted, Jochen and his colleagues, Astrid Schroeder and David Goldman, put their shoulders to the wheel and gave ample credence to the expression “Where There’s a Will, There’s a Way.” They had the will, and, with written proposals, oral presentations, and the peaked-curiosity of presidents and deans, they paid visits to a number of institutions of higher education such as Miami-Dade in Florida, the City University of New York and its array of four-year and community colleges, and San José State University in California, and found receptive audiences and support for the program. Within a year or two a growing consortium of institutions began facilitating the travel of selected students to Salzburg where they would work, study and interact at the Rococo palace known as Schloss Leopoldskron .Not long after, the first groups of “fellows” (as all who attend the program are called) were joined by those from many other schools from the same states and also from Texas, Kentucky, Illinois and other places in the mid-West.

Being there at the laying of the keel of what came to be known as the Global Citizenship Alliance (GCA) and as regular members of its core faculty nearly every year since its launching, my wife, Hedy, and I have witnessed the development of this program up close, and it is not an exaggeration to say that being part of this enterprise is one of the most rewarding and exciting experiences in our long careers as educators.

For us, both seasoned professors who have taught and lectured in some of the best known American colleges and universities and, in my case, many others abroad, the GCA and its students offered us a most intense and unmatched opportunity to get to know, interact and work with very special cohorts of students, most of whom are good matches themselves for such choice institutions. In fact, not a few who have come to Salzburg for the program, often as a result of their “life-changing experience in the GCA” (their words), managed to do precisely that. We have personally welcomed several to Smith College in Massachusetts and to Stanford University in California, the two campuses where we now spend most of our time, and have followed the academic careers of many others, almost all of whom have gone on to get their BAs and more than a few to obtain higher degrees.

What impressed us from the start was that the student fellows from different schools and different cities tended to reflect the very diversity mentioned above, giving visible – and often audible! –evidence of the plural character of American society and culture and the varieties of life experiences they would often share. They were frequently the ones to put concrete meat on the bones of what we sought to convey.

Through faculty lectures, organized discussion sessions, gatherings under the supervision of faculty advisers, work on final projects, and many informal meetings in rooms in the Schloss and the Meierhof, the other building on the estate, over meals in the Marble Hall and get togethers in the Bierstube, they and we all learned from each other and, together, reflected on many new ways of thinking about things and, as importantly, came to understand a good deal that we didn’t know or think about before.

Over the years, as we returned every spring to meet new groups of students, we were also impressed by the fact that, in contrast to the idea that “the more things change, the more they stay the same,” the GCA continued to evolve. Programs were tweaked to meet the needs of students, such as those occasions when the majority came to us from the Graduate School of Education at the University of San Francisco or, owing to requests by institutions wanting to send a large group for special reasons. As importantly, sudden changes in world events result in last-minute adjustments made in the week-long schedule and curriculum. What did stay on course was

the mission of the GCA itself, to understand the individual's role in making their home environments, our country, and the world a better place, to truly become "global citizens."

All this – along with many other educational enterprises --seemed to come to a screeching halt in the early spring of 2020. We on the faculty and those in the administration of the program were not the only ones, not even the main ones, affected by the outbreak of COVID-19. Those most devastated were the many students back in the States who had been selected to participate in one of the sessions scheduled for 2020 and 2021. But, again, their collective will found a way to maintain the spirit of the GCA as Jochen, Astrid and David are holding out the promise to many prospective new fellows and their home institutions that despite the challenges they would keep the program and the dream alive.

Now we are all looking forward to 2022.

I should note that, while Jochen and Astrid contemplated trying to run the program remotely and over Zoom, they decided against it. We thought it a good decision for, as I wrote to them,

From our point of view, virtual sessions are not the right thing for what you (we) are trying to do in reaching out to the college students who have long come to Salzburg for "an experience in the round." Although we and others give lectures and often lead discussions, our students are not just there to listen and respond in the lecture hall, but to meet and interact with us and with each other and drink in the atmosphere that is at once academically challenging, aesthetically pleasing and very different from what most have ever experienced. And we know the GCA's widely recognized past successes has keep an array of potential fellows and their advisors awaiting the word of a restart in 2022 and that it will grow from there, fearlessly -- and masklessly -- moving into a new era.

We think many other faculty members and advisors, observers and our now thousands of alumni share such views.

For now, Hedy joins me in sending our greetings to all who have been touched by the magic and realism of time spent in the grand fairy-tale Schloss, in sight of park-like gardens, the lake, the majestic Untersberg and near to the colorful downtown of historic Salzburg, offset by serious consideration of the tough topics and healthy debates which often sharply clash with those tranquil surrounds.

We look forward to staying in touch – and to being back in harness and teaching in our favorite program in 2022.
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** Peter and Hedy Rose, are, as he notes, members of the original and core faculty of the GCA. Peter is Sophia Smith Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Anthropology at Smith College a long time member of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Massachusetts and a visiting scholar at the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences at Stanford University. Author and editor of many books, his latest include *The Dispossessed: An Anatomy of Exile; They and We: Racial and Ethnic Relations in the U.S. and Beyond (7th edition);* a memoir, *Postmonitions of a Peripatetic Professor; Mainstream and Margins: Sixty Years of Commentary on Minorities in America,* and, most recently, *Tropes of Intolerance: Pride, Prejudice, and the Politics of Fear.* Hedy is the retired director of Graduate Studies in Education at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. She has long been doing research on her home town of Amsterdam in The Netherlands before and during World War II, a time when she spent three and a half years as a hidden child owing to the persecution of Jews, like those in her family. The arrest and murder of her father and her personal experience of quite literally living the life of Anne Frank and on the courage of those who hid her and her sister is the frequent subject of her talks in sessions of the GCA.*