

improve their readiness for the labor market. At the heart of this program is a career development workshop to prepare students for their summer experience, as well as student stipends to fund unpaid internships.

Rich Feeley, an SPH associate professor and chair ad interim of the global health department, says the Santander Fellows Program is a vitally important program for students, “not just at SPH, but around BU, to do first-rate practica around the world. It’s a tremendous opportunity to obtain a high-quality training experience for the future leaders of public health.”

The original 2010 agreement has grown over the years. It was later amended to fund advanced physics research in graphene and extended further in 2013 for additional SPH fellowships and the Hispanic Voices cultural exchange program.

Feeley says the most recent expansion of the program allows SPH to “meet the growing needs among our increasing number of students, but more importantly, it allows us to initiate new opportunities with new partners around the world. We look forward to developing deeper relationships with Santander Universities and their global affiliates to expand our engagement to other countries where Santander is working.”

Banco Santander created Santander Universities in 1996 to promote higher education as a way of contributing to economic and social development. Since its inception, Santander Universities has disbursed about \$1.3 billion to more than 1,100 academic institutions in 20 countries.

MICHAEL SAUNDERS

## PhD student named first Moorman-Simon Civic Fellow

# Preventing Landslide Harm in Uganda

IN JUNE 2012, A LANDSLIDE IN eastern Uganda killed dozens and left hundreds homeless. Scores of people had been buried alive in a similar disaster in the region two years earlier.

Kira Sullivan-Wiley (GRS’16) is working to prevent such catastrophes by studying Ugandans’ awareness of the risks posed by landslides and other natural disasters and then forming solutions in partnership with agencies on the ground there that could save lives and livelihoods. A PhD candidate in the College of Arts & Sciences department of earth and environment, Sullivan-Wiley was recently awarded a 2014 Moorman-Simon Civic Fellowship for her research.

Created last year by a gift from University overseer Ruth Moorman (CAS’88, SED’89;’09) and her husband, Sheldon Simon, the fellowships are awarded to outstanding doctoral students “whose research and scholarship involves vigorous engagement with civic life and seeks to establish a close partnership with the community to solve critical problems,” according to the Office of the Provost. The long-term goal of the Moorman-Simon Civic Fellowships is to establish a “generation of scholars in the academy who are committed to civic engagement” around the world. The award provides funding for tuition, fees, and a stipend for two years.

“We were extremely pleased with the caliber of candidates we saw in this first year, all of whose work exemplifies the spirit of civic engagement Ruth Moorman and Sheldon Simon hoped to spark through these fellowships,” says Timothy Barbari, associate provost for graduate affairs and a College of Engineering professor of biomedical engineering. “All of these students, and Kira in particular, are performing outstanding, important work in a host of diverse areas and truly helping to effect positive change at the local, national, and global level.”



Kira Sullivan-Wiley (GRS’16) is the first BU student to be named a Moorman-Simon Civic Fellow, in recognition of her work to prevent environmental disasters in Uganda.

“The population I work with is quite poor in terms of monetary income, and they are located in areas that are vulnerable to natural disasters,” says Sullivan-Wiley, who visited the region for the third time this past summer. “The community is located near a volcanic mountain in Uganda, and so the area has loose volcanic soils and lots of rainfall. As they expand and cultivate areas that have higher risks for mudslides and landslides, they are increasing the likelihood of a disaster.”

Her research examines how to reduce vulnerability to a disaster, or “disaster risk reduction,” mainly by examining the roles that organizations like the Uganda Red Cross Society and the American Red Cross play in increasing awareness and risk mitigation behaviors. She hopes to suggest ways the programs can improve getting their message across.

Sullivan-Wiley says the fellowship aligns well with her longer-range career plan: “My doctoral work is an example of the type of work I intend to conduct throughout my career—work that builds partnerships with practitioners and communities, links academic knowledge to action, and focuses on the effects of development programs on people who struggle with vulnerability to disasters.” AL