AES student Kora Nixon exploring indigenous cultures in New Zealand this summer

A desire to explore an indigenous culture took Kora Nixon from Michigan State University to the University of Waikato in New Zealand for a semester on a Generation Study Abroad program.

Nixon is a junior at MSU from Au Gres, Mich., studying Applied Engineering Sciences.

“I decided I’d like to study where an original culture was integrated into mainstream society, so that’s why I chose New Zealand,” she said.

At Waikato, Nixon is taking a paper examining M?ori and Pacific and indigenous development, an anthropology paper focusing on ethnicity and identity, along with two Tikanga (M?ori culture and customs) papers.

“Taking these papers has really made me think and reflect on other cultures and I’ve realized I don’t know a lot about my own heritage,” she said.

“What I’ve enjoyed most in the Tikanga papers is making M?ori musical instruments and learning the stories behind them. It was fascinating to find they were all made out of natural materials,” she said.

Nixon said she is also enjoying life in Student Village, one of Waikato’s halls of residence.

“Coming from a really big university in the States where you can get lost in the crowd, it’s good to come to a smaller place and really get to know the people.”

While Nixon has been in New Zealand, she has travelled around the South Island and various parts of the North Island.

She returns to the United States in August and will be back on campus for her senior year at MSU this fall.

Generation Study Abroad is an Education New Zealand-supported program open to U.S. citizens and residents to study in New Zealand as part of their university education.