Episode 20: Dr. Ana Spalding

**KL:** Katie Linder

**AS:** Ana Spalding

**KL:** You’re listening to *Research in Action*: episode twenty.

[music]

# Segment 1:

**KL:** Welcome to *Research in Action*, a weekly podcast where you can hear about topics and issues related to research in higher education from experts across a range of disciplines. I’m your host, Dr. Katie Linder, Director of Research at Oregon State University Ecampus.

On this episode, I am joined by Dr. Ana Spalding, an Assistant Professor of Marine and Coastal Policy in the School of Public Policy at Oregon State University. Dr. Spalding has a Bachelor’s in Economics from the University of Richmond, a Master’s degree in Marine Affairs and Policy from the University of Miami, and a PhD in Environmental Studies from UC Santa Cruz. She has been a postdoctoral researcher and a research associate with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) in Panama. Theoretically, her work is informed by debates within political ecology, human geography, and environmental anthropology, and she has adopted an interdisciplinary approach to the study of how broad uses of coastal, marine, and terrestrial resources in Panama affect local people and environments. During her research, Dr. Spalding has worked closely with Panamanian NGOs and with NOAA’s National Marine Protected Areas Center in California. She has also engaged with academics and practitioners from a variety of backgrounds, including ecologists, biologists, anthropologists, economists, policy-makers, and lawyers, as well as members of local indigenous communities in both the US and the Caribbean and Pacific coasts of Panama.

Thanks so much for joining me, Ana.

**AS:** Hi. Thank you for having me.

**KL:** So glad you could be here.

**AS:** Thank you.

**KL:** So, I wanted to start out just by mentioning that I first came across your work and was really fascinated by it when I attended a meeting of kind of a local group that we have here on campus at Oregon State called ORIN, which is the OSU Research Impacts Network, and you had come to present to that group in that kind of context of thinking about the research impacts of your work. But one of the things that really drew me to your project was the interdisciplinary nature of it and some of the work that you’ve done. My background is also interdisciplinary, so I’m usually drawn to those projects. So, I’m hoping we can start just by talking a little bit about your interdisciplinary research and what makes these projects interdisciplinary. So, what are some of the things that you’re currently working on?

**AS:** I think I would like to start with sort of the idea of interdisciplinarity and what it is. So, in my experience, it’s mostly linking a few different disciplines, and particularly I’m a social science interdisciplinarian. So, within the social sciences there’s a wide variety of fields, disciplines, backgrounds, methods, and I feel that I take a little bit of each of those in order to answer some of the questions I have about social and environmental relations or social and environmental issues. So, in that respect, my doctoral work was focused on sort of combining – as you pointed out in my bio – combining those elements of geography, anthropology, political ecology – which in itself is an interdisciplinary sort of discipline, field – in order to answer some questions. And beyond that, then, it’s sort of bringing in the ecology, or bringing in the natural environmental elements, and that sort of helps further explain some of these questions.

So, the work that I did in Panama, in particular, was looking at sort of what are the social and environmental impacts of lifestyle migrants or new forms of migration in a tropical setting, in a tropical island setting. To answer that question I really had to look at, you know, so the impacts part of it, I really had to look at what’s changing on the ground or in the water, in this context. Because it was a doctoral research program, there was sort of the, it was unrealistic to think that I would be able to develop the complete expertise on, you know, trying to assess changes in the natural environment, as well as the in-depth social elements that I was looking at. So, in that respect, interdisciplinarity was really bringing in these different fields, sort of schools of thought, and then combining them with the sort of literature that talked about change on the ground on the environment. So, it was less of a natural and social interdisciplinary at that point. What I did was a lot of integration of methods. So, I added an element of, a little bit more quantitative and did some GIS, a land cover change, to [unintelligible] some of the social elements that I was understanding. So, for me that’s what interdisciplinarity is.

Here at OSU I’m really interested in exploring, developing collaborations to go beyond that within the social sciences and expand it to social and natural science working together to answer some of the big questions we have today about the environment.

**KL:** It seems to me, and you’ve raised this a couple of times, it’s really the nature of the questions that we’re asking that is necessitating this interdisciplinary work. And, that some of the questions are so big that they really can’t be answered by one discipline alone. Is that kind of what you’re finding?

**AS:** Yes, I definitely find that. I think it’s sort of these grand challenges. So, the Smithsonian when I was a postdoc – and I’m currently still a research associate with the STRI, the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute – and they frame it around this idea of grand challenges. And, I have seen it also in the literature talked about as these broad, large questions. Climate change: you can’t answer questions about impacts, change, mitigation, adaptation without taking into account both the natural environment and the social questions about population change. Sort of these big, grand challenge questions that we’re faced with today really depend on the integration of both.

**KL:** So, I can imagine that, I mean, just kind of answering these huge questions alone presents some challenges. In terms of just like the theoretical component of it and thinking about how do you even tackle something like this? But I’m also kind of wondering if there are logistical challenges of doing interdisciplinary work? In terms of, you know, like you had mentioned, adding in new methodologies or, you know, having to teach yourself, you know, new literacies in different fields as you go forward. Are there certain things that you’ve found as you’ve done this work that have been particularly challenging about that interdisciplinary component?

**AS:** I think two main challenges. One is we don’t know how. So, when you speak about, you know, when you speak about these different data, it’s different types of data, different scales of data. So, how to integrate it? And, how to, you know, do you come up with a model? Do you come up with a narrative that includes both? So, those are two ends of the spectrum of sort of the social and natural methods, if you will. And, another challenge is just talking to each other. So, the feeling of having to justify the methods and having to justify what we do. And, this happens within disciplines. So, a sociologist speaking to an anthropologist will have, trying to explain, you know, kind of where they’re coming from. It will be much easier to talk to each other than for instance, a sociologist and an anthropologist with an oceanographer. But those challenges are there. So, as we bridge, so within the social sciences is one thing. But as we jump from natural to social sciences, it really becomes a struggle. And, I find that a lot of times it’s just taking that time to speak to the other discipline, person about what we do and why we do it and how we do it and what kinds of questions we can answer with that kind of information. Because we just don’t know. Unfortunately it’s more often the case that a social scientist knows or understands or is literate about the ways of the natural sciences. They seem to have more of a dominant force. Perhaps it’s the way we understand data, the way it can be presented – numerically, quantitative. You know, it’s real as opposed to this fluffy perceptions, attitudes, thoughts. But there is, obviously, and I believe that there is validity in the kind of work that we do. So, it’s kind of communicating that across the board. So, that’s the biggest challenge I think. And oftentimes I find myself at meetings where we’re trying to get at kind of coming up with the how and instead of talking about the how we end up talking about the what. So, what is a social science? What do you do? How do you do it? And it’s actually really interesting to see, sort of, people say, “Oh, you can get that information through interviews?” or, “You can ask those questions?” It’s exciting; it’s interesting. And people are increasingly aware of that difference and willing to listen, which is nice.

**KL:** That’s, I mean I think that’s such an exciting part of doing interdisciplinary research. And this was something too that came up in episode two when we talked with John Creswell about mixed methods. One of the things that he talked about as a challenge for mixed methods was really having to have two kinds of expertise and then a third expertise of how to join them together. And that, you know, the individual researcher really has to expand their tool kit and their skill set to really understand how to do this. One of the things I hear you saying is that to some degree it’s about relationship building with other disciplines and really taking the time to do that.

**AS:** I would say it’s 90% about relationships. And I think part of that is, as I was saying, being able to communicate what it is that we do. So, I mean, I think in all research projects or in all sort of collaborations we end up finding a group with whom you can communicate, with whom you can collaborate, you know. That the conversations just flow. So, once you’ve found that, even if they are a physical oceanographer that’s completely sort of as far away from what I do, but if we can start to speak the same language around a common problem, that’s kind of when the conversation starts moving forward. And I think that’s been the exciting sort of “Yay” point in the conversation of sort of starting out with a dataset and just sitting across the room and thinking, “Wow, how are we going to integrate this?” It’s when we have a shared interest. It can be policy, it can be a management goal, it can be purely a theoretical research question. But that “Wow” moment happens when you have a shared question, a shared problem. Something that makes you come together. And that’s kind of exciting; it’s fun.

**KL:** I love the idea of the “Wow” moment. And I think a lot of researchers can probably relate to that, of having that “Wow” moment.

We’re going to take a brief break. When we come back we’re going to hear a little bit more about Ana’s current work here at Oregon State. Back in a moment.

[music]

# Segment 2:

**KL:** Ana, at the time that we’re recording this, you’ve been here at Oregon State a little bit under a year. And, I’m interested to know how your work in Panama has been kind of transitioned since you’ve come to research here at Oregon State University.

**AS:** That’s a great question. So, I am still planning on continuing my research in Panama. So, at the moment I’m maintaining relationships, as I mentioned before, I’m still a research associate with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. And, I’m planning on spending where possible, grant funding dependent probably, but planning on spending summers in Panama, so US summers in Panama. And at the moment I’m focusing on a project with sports fishing. So, engaging in this interdisciplinarity. We’ve been talking. So, the whole time I was at STRI I was talking to the different marine biologists, marine ecologist folks. We weren’t able to, you know, formalize a relationship, but at this point we are moving forward with a project on sports fishing, and it’s kind of a great moment to do that. The new fishing law in Panama is out for debate and discussion, and for the first time since the original law in 1959, they’re including regulations for sports fishing. So, the industry’s interested, willing, you know, everyone’s seeing a decline in the species, so it’s a great moment to come in and participate and engage with them. They have data from all the different fishing competitions, so it’s interesting to start that at this point. So, it’s kind of a policy opening moment to do some of the research, and it’s also going to, hopefully, help me continue my interdisciplinary research, whether initially it’s just interviews and then eventually sort of coming up with either ways of gathering data in data-poor areas, which is what happens in most countries, or just coming up with an idea of how to work with non-social scientists.

In terms of translating to Oregon, it’s actually been really interesting too. So, my work on lifestyle migration that I talked about, for a variety of reasons I would sort of let that go a bit. Primarily because there was more of a conversation of who was moving and less about the impacts, which is what’s really interesting to me. And as I’ve moved here to Oregon I’ve continuously heard people talk about these changes along the coast and these people moving in that are not from there necessarily. So, there’s this really interesting parallel phenomenon of new forms of migration with potentially significant social and environmental impacts along the coast. So, I’m hoping that that work will actually transition nicely here to Oregon.

**KL:** So, one of the things I’m kind of wondering about with these projects, because they sound complex. I mean, like, to try to simplify the complexity. Is there a way that we can kind of pull out, you know, what are some of the research questions that you’re asking? And maybe they’re the same questions in different locations, but what are some of the ways that you’re kind of approaching these research projects?

**AS:** Well, the fishing really is just characterizing. It’s a really basic, starting from the ground. There is no information at the time other than these, you know, who’s who? How do they fish? Where do they fish? Who’s involved in the fishery? So, those are very basic questions. So, that’s, at this moment, relatively simple and straightforward. And, again, it’s based on collaboration. So, it will be ongoing while I’m not there, so that’s a nice sort of specific project.

Here on the coast, here in Oregon it’s mostly based on collaborations and just trying to find out what has already been done and what needs to be done. So, we don’t exactly have the questions. As I said, we started to talk about what it would look like. It ties into existing projects on effort shift and growing of the fleet that various people here at OSU are involved with. The marine reserves, the creation of marine reserves, is also something that ties into that in terms of people’s perceptions to marine reserves and how that affects or doesn’t the coast and coastal communities. So, I guess, I’m taking distinct questions. So, for the marine reserves I’m looking at how people define questions of success and that’s a collaboration with folks here from Integrative Biology and OSU Cascades actually, which is really exciting. And then the other question about migration and change, I’m just kind of keeping my ears open to what people are doing and see when that would become an opportunity to do research on that.

**KL:** It seems like, and part of this is given what you were saying in the first segment about interdisciplinary research, that there is a level of just openness because you’re not quite sure what will come from other disciplines, what kinds of relationships might be built, what kind of opportunities could come up, collaborations, and maybe even what, you know, some question about what role you might play in that because you have a range, you know, a vast skill set that you can bring to the table. And that seems kind of like an interesting part of the work as well, is that some of it clearly sounds planned, but then there seems to be a level that maybe is unplanned because you don’t know what’s coming.

**AS:** Yes, so living in that uncertainty is difficult, so I try to have plans. I do have plans. I have submitted a project, currently a proposal, to conduct research on this idea of marine reserves. So that one’s a concrete project with specific goals and questions. And, so to step, so this is kind of a step process where we’re looking at initially, just again, scoping out the land, these definitions of success of reserves, and what those mean to different people. And then potentially scale it up either in terms of space or in terms of that integration piece. And, that’s what’s key to me. So, there’s that landing onto finding an innovative, creative way of coming at that integration of the two types of information is essential to me. So, that’s a very specific goal that’s in the mix there.

The project of changing along the coast, I think that would just be a long-term idea anyway. So, yes, I fully agree with you that I would have to figure out how I fit in it and how to tie it all in. And that’s sort of going to be an ongoing thing as the Oregon Coast is changing. You know, you can’t just take one snapshot and then be done.

**KL:** Yeah, absolutely. Well, and it seems like that might be kind of the exciting component. Is that you don’t know what’s coming and have to be prepared for a lot of different potential avenues for what that research could do.

**AS:** Yes, definitely. And that is very exciting actually because there’s so much fun stuff going on here to tap into. Eventually I’ll have to land somewhere, definitely, but again, so which is what I’ve done with the marine reserves work. And then the other is just, I’m new here to the coast too and sort of as an ethnographer, I guess, as someone who works, I really need to understand the coast. So, I would not even think, not even dream, about going in and saying, “I’m going to do a project on amenity migration or lifestyle migration to the Oregon coast” without just being there, and hearing, and listening, and seeing what people are talking about. Because I can’t. I would be called out.

**KL:** Well, and I think, you know, you embrace this really good point, which is some of these research projects that we engage in take time to set up and to really contextualize for ourselves, but also for the communities that we might engage with. To really think about, I think sometimes there’s pressure to kind of produce and start these research projects, but creating a pipeline where you can have concreate projects and you can have a balance of maybe projects that you’re not quite sure where they’re going or what the timeline might be, it allows you to kind of give the time that’s needed for those projects that need it or those projects that really need a bit more investment in that way.

I know that one of the things you’re interested in doing, eventually, is involving students in your research and in your work. Can you talk a little bit about some of your plans for that?

**AS:** Yeah, absolutely. So, for the marine reserves work we’re hoping, at this point the proposal is very small, so my colleagues and I are probably going to start out the research ourselves in terms of the interviews and the interview process. We do hope to bring a student in to sort of be a support, play a support role throughout the project. And, eventually, as I mentioned, we want to scale it up, so at that point it would be wonderful if we could find a student who’s interested and invested and committed to this work and to taking that on too. And that’s at the graduate level.

I’m also, again, new, so I’m receiving and in the process of speaking to different people on whose committees I may serve. So, trying to find out what that niche is for me too. So, am I going to position myself as a Latin Americanist, as a marine person, as an interdisciplinarian? The different hats that I can wear that students might be interested in being part of.

And then the third component of that is I’m currently a co-PI on an REU program, so it’s the Research Experience for Undergraduates, which is an NSF-funded program through STRI. And the idea is to bring students to conduct science, basically natural science, tropical ecology work in Panama. So, hopefully at some point if I, I’ll have a project of my own. Right now I’m more of an administrative capacity, but when I have a project of my own I would love to bring some Oregon State students down to Panama with me and, you know, enjoy the tropics.

**KL:** Yeah. Well and it sounds too, I mean, one of the really important components of bringing this work to Oregon State, the work that you’ve done in Panama, is offering students the opportunity to have more of an international experience with their research.

We’re going to take another brief break. When we come back we’ll talk a little bit about scientific diasporas and a little bit more about the internationalization of education. Back in a moment.

[music]

# Segment 3:

**KL:** Ana, one of the things that I’ve heard you talk about which I just find really interesting is this idea of scientific diasporas. And, I’m wondering if you can explain a little bit about what you mean by that?

**AS:** So, we’re used to hearing about the brain drain. So, it’s this idea that people from developing nations, developing countries, you know, once they get an opportunity to get higher levels of education, then just leave. And there’s a high association between development in a country and investment in education and, sort of, yeah, so, investment in development and education essentially. So, this idea of a scientific diaspora kind of turns that idea on its head and it sort of says, “Ok, we have an opportunity, we have people who, they’re either being trained by their own government through funding or they’re just getting opportunities, you know, Fulbrights or other types of grants, and staying in the countries in which they were trained.” So, it’s more of an opportunity for developing countries to capitalize on the person that is staying in that country and making sure there are ties and there are mechanisms through which that person can continue and contribute to, in my case, Panama. And this is probably a very personal thing. As you’ve seen, there’s sort of this trend and this idea of migration. I’ve sort of gone and come back and forth. My mom was probably one of the first ex-pats in Panama. So, there’s this idea of, you know, these flows of people.

But at the same time there is a commitment, on my part to Panama. So, how can I, as an assistant professor at OSU, continue to contribute to development, education, training in Panama? So, that’s the idea of the scientific diaspora is where we provide an opportunity for those of us who have left and stayed outside to contribute whether it’s through funding, whether it’s through requiring mentoring, it could be through workshops, it could be through providing grant opportunities for students from, for instance, Panama, to attend OSU, bringing OSU students down there and including Panamanians in the courses. You know, it could take a variety of forms. Developing patents, you know, in the case of technology. Making sure that my publications are also reflected in the publication record of Panama, so, in my case, through my affiliation with the Smithsonian that happens. So, things like that. It’s just kind of keeping your relationship with the country in a way. So, it’s benefitting the home country.

**KL:** Absolutely. Well, it sounds like for the researcher, it creates maybe an extra layer of intentionality around balance, around being in that kind of liminal space of being in between. You have the home country, you have the new country. And, what’s kind of interesting about what you’re talking about is I would imagine for some researchers who come to the United States, for example, from another country, find it challenging to maintain that relationship when they are not going back to that country of origin. And one of the things that I think that you’ve raised, which I think is really important, is that you can still have those ties and they can be very concrete and very much sending impacts back to that original country, even if you’re not living there. You may be visiting it regularly, but you’re clearly building relationships and collaborations with that other country that are very strong and that are clearly creating those impacts.

**AS:** Yes, that’s the hope. And I recognize that it’s not everyone’s interest, that it’s not everyone’s goal. It’s harder.

**KL:** It sounds like it could be harder and more complex.

**AS:** It could be way more complex. I mean, my kids, I have a family, so it requires mobilizing my family back and forth every summer, which has a cost. It requires getting funding for research. It requires sort of living two lives. But at the same time, and again, this is on a purely person level, you know, I’m working with students here and I think, “Well, I could also be working with students in Panama.” You know? Or I’m developing, I’m looking at ideas on how to improve research along the coast and I think, “Well, Panama needs that too.” So, how can I bridge the two is the ultimate goal I think. Not to have two completely distinct lives, but to link the two would be the ideal in the interest of efficiency and time and balance and all that.

**KL:** Absolutely. Well, one of the things you talked about earlier was how you started out with these international collaborations when you were a doctoral student and with your project, and maybe even prior to that. And I’m wondering if you can talk a little bit about how you see international collaborations maybe differently given different professional levels? So, you talk about bringing students into these international collaborations, but then also working with researchers who are significantly experienced in terms of their own work. And, what are kind of the different, maybe the differences between having students engage in international collaborations at an undergraduate or graduate level, versus people who are more experienced in their professional worlds?

**AS:** I think, that’s a great question. And I want to give credit to a colleague with whom I’ve been working on this and this will be hopefully our third year developing a workshop or at a minimum a talk, at a maximum a couple hour workshop, in Panama on international collaborations. So, she’s a colleague who’s currently at Gettysburg University and we’re still in conversation about how to create sort of a formal program on international collaborations. Her name is [unintelligible]. And the idea of this is sort of training students on understanding that they come from completely different points of views, points of reference, about things. So, for instance, we ask them, “What do you think about a protected area?” And, for students in the United States it came across as recreation rights, so we go to Yosemite because it’s beautiful, we go for recreation. Whereas in Latin America it had more of a perception of either use or science, so subsistence use and science. So, just recognizing those differences, which kind of brings along the idea of interdisciplinarity and kind of coming to the same place.

And, then the second level is that at that point you will also be working with the local students, potentially. As we get up higher or as we move up in our levels of experience and education, we then, what ends up happening is that the same people who were your peers as students in other countries remain at that level, and we continue to move up. So, then the idea is at the basic level when we’re both students and we’re both learning, is to recognize that relationship and that we can bring the other people along up with us also. They may have different opportunities. But I think, and that’s the difference at the time is kind of as you become a long-term international collaborator and you have projects, say, in Panama, ongoing is to continue to bring those people up with you and not just leave them as assistants or as the ones that collect data. It’s kind of, it’s a responsibility towards the country, I think, in that respect.

So, it’s that on the one hand and it’s also providing opportunities for local students to learn, not just bringing your students, but it’s also providing opportunities for the younger generation. So, while the people that were your peers, kind of bring them up with them, you know, include them in publications, allow them, invite them to conferences. You know, they’re always, I’m a firm believer that if you need money it’s somewhere there to get it and you will be able to get it, so invite them to conferences. Recognize the work that you have started together as a student. And then, again, once you’re, you know, an experienced researcher, make sure that you provide opportunities for locals also to learn. So, that to me has been the way I’ve seen it. And at STRI I worked to get funding for an internship program for Panamanians, so specifically funding for Panamanian students that could then work, ideally, in pairs with US or non-Panamanian students throughout their projects, because that’s just a unique learning experience. You know? At a minimum you’re kind of teaming up against your advisor or mentor or, obviously, teaming up with, but it just builds these relationships that are unique and hopefully at that level making that bridge.

**KL:** Well, and I think you raise a couple interesting points. One is that those relationships can be ongoing and that they don’t have to end if, you know, you have a semester abroad and then you come back to your country of origin, you can maintain that relationship, maintain that bridge. But, also, you really point out the role of researchers from US institutions as having that responsibility of really thinking about what impacts are you having and what relationships are you building, bridges between the two countries? And, it seems to me just based on, you know, some of the things that you’ve said, that it requires really a good amount of self-awareness about kind of what you’re trying to do. What you’re bringing into that country. What you’re bringing from your country of origin and the relationships you’re building. That seems to be a key component, that self-awareness.

**AS:** Yes, indeed. And, it is complicated in the sense that, so, for instance, you know, at the university we have all our permits and IRBs and [unintelligible] and all those kinds of things and we seem to forget that those exist when we go abroad. So, at a starting point is seek out the institutions that have their own requirements for permits and for ethics and bioethics or whatever kinds of committees that you need to get your research approved. You know, that’s an important place. And, in Panama it’s easy because we have the Smithsonian. So, the Smithsonian kind of is this umbrella. It’s been there for 100 years. It’s US federal government, so it’s understandable to go in. It’s really easy to do that, to negotiate that entry. And, that said, it’s also been, at least on my radar, forever, you know, growing up in Panama and being a part of this academic research institution, the way that people do that. I know people who have been going to Panama every year for 20, 25 years. And their children have gone with them every summer and they, you know, own homes in Panama. So, that’s kind of that responsibility, commitment. So, seek those people out. You know, how did you do it? Did you learn Spanish? How did you establish those relationships? And, that’s kind of the responsibility part. You know? Figure out how other people did it, and then see if you can learn something from that.

**KL:** Yeah, that’s wonderful. Well I want to thank you so much, Ana, for sharing about your research and your experience. This has been really fascinating. Thank you very much.

**AS:** Thank you. This has been fun.

**KL:** And thank you so much to our listeners for joining us for this week’s episode of *Research in Action*. I’m Katie Linder and we’ll be back next week with a new episode.

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# Bonus Clip

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**KL:** In this bonus clip for episode twenty of the *Research in Action* podcast, Dr. Ana Spalding discusses the importance of offering students an international research experience. Take a listen.

Is that something that, you know, I guess I would say, can you talk a little bit more about, you know, why that might be important for students who are at a research institution like this to be engaged in that kind of international research?

**AS:** Well, to start out, it’s fun and it provides a fantastic opportunity to see different places. As far as I’ve seen here at OSU, there is a push to internationalize education, and there’s various ways to do that. It could be through the hire of international faculty, which has been happening here at OSU. And support for the international faculty in terms of how we present ourselves and how we present our experiences to students. So, that’s one way at the local level. It’s relatively easy, right? It’s kind of armchair travelling, hearing their different experiences.

The second level, I think, is bringing students, developing courses abroad. So, my past experiences with teaching have been in Panama with field courses and bringing students, that spend a whole semester in Panama actually, and it’s been so fun to see their development from the day they arrived. You know, from me telling them, “You have to drink a lot of water and put a lot of sunblock on” to the last day when they’re taking public transportation, they know where all the great food spots are, they’re part of the social fabric of Panama City and have probably seen more than I have throughout the country. So, that experience is unique. I think it just creates a different kind of sensitivity and awareness, you know, that life happens beyond Corvallis and Oregon.

**KL:** Well, that’s a wonderful opportunity to give them.

You’ve just heard a bonus clip from episode twenty of the *Research in Action* podcast with Dr. Ana Spalding discussing the importance of offering students an international research experience. Thanks for listening.

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