

CHRIS STANDLEY, BRAZIL 2011

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Texas



And I can definitely say that it lived up to every expectation of being a cultural, scholarly, and personal pilgrimage.

While there we met multiple native Brazilians in different cities, not any of whom were uninviting and were just as interested in us as we were in their lives. Our professors definitely kept us busy. We were completing multiple design projects for our rockets propulsion and material structures classes.

After graduation last May, I started my career at the Hyundai America Technical Center. One of the main considerations taken on my application was my study abroad experience, as my position involves traveling to Korea any number of times during the year for vehicle launches and design group conferences. Previous to studying abroad I did not expect to enjoy traveling, but now I am very glad that it is a part of my position as a young professional. Something that is not unique to engineering, the combination of

ideas from different cultures and backgrounds can lead to more innovative and creative solutions. Even though communication might be difficult at times, having the experience on the other end of the language barrier is a very humbling experience and one that can be very eye opening. If given the chance to experience it again, I would go in a heartbeat. The Gilman Scholarship is an incredible program that helped me financially as well as assisted me in helping spread the word to my community.

Having never visited many places as a kid, when I entered college, I was eager to experience living in another place and especially eager to exercise the skills I was learning as an aerospace engineering major. Texas A&M's study abroad program to Brazil was the perfect program for me as it was sponsored by my academic department, two professors were accompanying us to teach, and we had excursions planned for every weekend of our six week stay.

"We were completing multiple design projects for our rockets propulsion and material structures classes in an open, relaxed environment."

FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

For my Follow-on Service Project, I turned to the Brazos County culture festival hosted by the local international center. I helped the study abroad office by being on hand at their booth and sharing my story and pictures with students and parents within the

community, many of whom were prospective college students. I think the biggest surprise to me was how many future engineers were excited by the fact that I had the time to learn and travel despite being in a course heavy major, so I was very glad to have

helped correct misperceptions by retelling my journey as a Gilman Scholarship recipient.