

RHAELYNN GIVENS, HUNGARY, 2011

McDaniel College
Washington

BENJAMIN A.

GILMAN

INTERNATIONAL
SCHOLARSHIP



I always wanted to study abroad, and, in part, chose McDaniel because of its sister campus in Hungary - a place which I have loved from afar for several years but was never certain I would have the means to go and see. As I decided I was going to school on the East Coast and bringing my horse with me in order to complete a degree and simultaneously pursue my equestrienne career, I also set upon the idea that I would study abroad, despite my financial

limitations. Receiving the Gilman Scholarship afforded me that opportunity to study abroad.

In Budapest I took a variety of courses: Biology, Introductory Hungarian, Multicultural Voices, and European Film Art. We were taught by one of the premier scholars of European Film in Hungary. This class piqued my interest in the realm of foreign films, an area I had not yet been enthusiastic about exploring. Now, I watch many foreign films (mostly French), and have even solidified a list of at least two directors whose work I will continue to follow and research.

Though I loved every moment of my time in Hungary, it was only after I returned home to Washington that I realized how much this experience meant to me. There are no real words to describe it, but I now have this feeling that I can accomplish anything. Academically, personally, and professionally, that

attitude is worth its weight in gold. When I'm intimidated or scared, I tell myself: "well, I did it in another country, so I can for sure do it in my home country." The world, literally, had opened up for me.

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In the future I plan to attend graduate school to pursue a Master's degree in Higher Education Administration.

FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

My Follow-on Service Project was a series of personal essays focusing on specific moments of living abroad. My target audience was composed of students from my local middle school. Coming from a small town, most of these students were not aware of opportunities like the Gilman

Scholarship. I met with students in the local middle school and provided a compilation essay book that the classrooms often read during lunch breaks.

In addition, as the President of the Honors Program at McDaniel College, I presented my Follow-on

Service Project and impact at the regional Honors Conference in Frederick, Maryland. The theme of the conference was "Crossroads." Not only did my presentation fit the theme, but also allowed me to continue to express my gratitude for the Gilman Scholarship.