

FAWZIYYA MUHAMMAD, CHINA, 2011

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Profound is the word that comes to mind when I reflect on my experiences in China. I say that traveling to China was “profound” because even to this day when I reflect on my time there, I realize details I had not before, and I gain a deeper appreciation for my experience. Immediately after returning to the United States, I was able to recognize the obvious ways in which my travels influenced me in my academic and professional development, but I am still

discovering the more subtle ways this experience has impacted my life.

The benefits I gained from studying abroad are evident in my academic growth. While abroad with the China Studies Institute, I studied at Peking University, one of the top universities in China. The professors and students there provided me with a

different view of the political, economic, and social structures in China. Due to my observations and knowledge gained about the country, I feel that I can make valuable contributions to class discussions at my home institution in the U.S. For example, in my economic classes, I can readily discuss China’s economic reforms, their impact on the domestic and global economy, and our interdependence as trade partners. By going abroad, I finally gained a part of the global perspective that I so deeply

wanted.

In China, I also had the opportunity to intern in the business department of a carbon-trading firm. Through my internship experience I was able to understand the role of China and the United States in carbon emissions, familiarize myself with the carbon-trading market, and participate in the culture and norms of the company. Along with interning, I also sought to develop personally through volunteer work with the local community.

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FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

The first component of my Follow-on Service Project was the establishment of a Gilman Alumni Chapter at George Washington University (GWU). I recruited past and current Gilman Alumni to join as members of the organization.

After the organization was established, the members initiated a project under my leadership

entitled *Get Global*, working with DC high school students from the *School Without Walls* program. We coordinated with the staff and gave a PowerPoint presentation for their students. In the presentation, we shared our experiences from abroad and demonstrated that barriers to study abroad are not as imposing as they seem. The students seemed very interested in our

experiences abroad. I believe that our presentation helped to dispel some of their concerns about visiting and studying in other countries.

Currently, we are working with the Board of Education and the GWU Study Abroad Office to promote our organization.