

## Gilman Alumni Ambassador Program

The Gilman Alumni Ambassador Program is a diverse group of Gilman Scholarship recipients who have studied abroad in various countries around the world. They are official ambassadors of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program providing presentations and promotional outreach to university and college campuses around the nation to students and advisors interested in learning more about the Gilman Scholarship Program. The Gilman Alumni Ambassadors have been trained by the Gilman Scholarship Program.

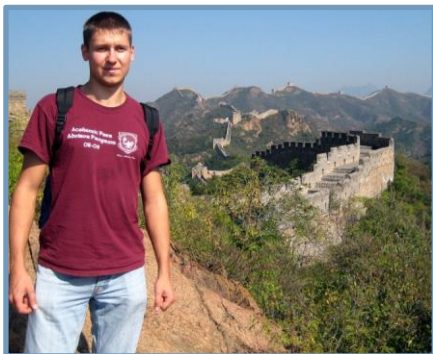
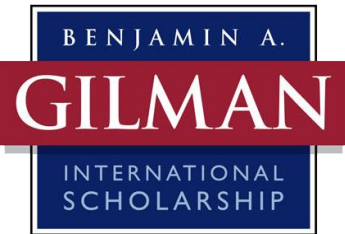
If you would like to request a Gilman Alumni Ambassador to present at your campus or if you are interested in becoming a Gilman Alumni Ambassador, please contact Gilman Scholars by email at [gilman\\_scholars@iie.org](mailto:gilman_scholars@iie.org) if you have any questions.

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## David Belousov, China 2010

Oral Roberts University  
Pennsylvania



**A**s I stepped off the airplane and gazed at the new unfamiliar land all around me, I had no idea what awaited me in this great country. My family came across the Atlantic on the first direct flight to the U.S.A from the crumbling Soviet Union. With nothing besides the clothing on our backs, we had no idea of the great opportunities awaiting us in the United States and beyond.

I always dreamed of working in international business, development, and diplomacy, bringing the world closer together through globalization. Through the Gilman Scholarship, I was given the opportunity to study abroad in China, where I gained a greater understanding of the global community, economy, and potential.

As I traveled to Qingdao to study International Business and learn the language and culture, and experience it firsthand, I learned everything that I could from the entire experience and became a more understanding, responsible, and significant member of the global community. The principles and lessons learned from the entire life-changing experience definitely helped me understand the world better, understand my purpose in it, and empowered me to live an effective, meaningful, purpose-driven life to help others do the same.

Through my entire global experience, I definitely grew in my academic understanding and application of International Business, as a person and member of the global community, and as an International Business Professional. The entire experience was a perfect complement to the International Business theory that I learned at Oral Roberts University, and together this was the perfect combination for a well-rounded education, with which I graduated as the Top ORU International Business Major of the Class of 2011.

Following graduation I travelled with an ORU College of Business

Development Trip to Paraguay to empower entrepreneurs and the leaders of the next generation in this globalized era. I also travelled to Panama with a business owner as a consultant for his international logistics business, utilizing the company I launched upon my return to the USA from South America, and I work with contacts across the globe to create global synergy in commerce and communication.

My academic study of International Business and Spanish at ORU was beneficial, but my global experience through study abroad with the Gilman Scholarship was very crucial in shaping me into the global entrepreneur I am today, and preparing me for the global opportunities that await.

***"My global experience through study abroad with the Gilman Scholarship was very crucial in shaping me into the global entrepreneur I am today."***

## Follow-on Service Project

For my Follow-On Service Project, I organized the first ever Oral Roberts University Study Abroad Council to educate, inspire, and empower students to study abroad. We held our first meeting in conjunction with the Spanish Club, French Club, and Hebrew Club, where all the students who had studied abroad shared

experiences through panel questions, discussions, and multimedia. We set off a domino effect, and were then able to partner with various clubs, organizations, and university faculty and staff to effectively promote study abroad and the Gilman Scholarship.

Through the ORU Study Abroad Council, I laid a strong foundation, which continues on and keeps the fire of study abroad and the Gilman Scholarship forever burning in the heart of ORU.

## ADAM BUSHEY, SOUTH AFRICA, 2002

Le Moyne College  
New York



It was from thought provoking conversations, my own limited financial means, and my yearning to someday be able to help those most in need that made me want to study abroad in South Africa. Receiving the Gilman International Scholarship was the only way I was afforded the opportunity to study abroad and work as a volunteer coordinator during the United Nations' Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

In South Africa, I befriended Africans, learned Zulu, and partook in ceremonies and traditional weddings. I slept in mud homes, and was the first White person ever to enter many

of my new friends' homes. I volunteered every other day for three months at a destitute high school that lacked books and a sewage system. Helping these kids was the pinnacle of my study abroad experience. I was awed by both their humility and pride. Even in their poverty, hunger, and other disadvantages, they still evinced good manners, respect, and a will to succeed. It was an incredibly maturing and humbling experience that shaped my resolve to assist those in the world most in need.

I now work for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as a Democracy Specialist. After graduating from State University of New York, Buffalo's Law School with honors, I was hired to the agency through the prestigious U.S. Presidential Management Fellowship program. The biggest contributing factor to helping me attain my current job at USAID was my South Africa study abroad experience through the Gilman Scholarship Program. At USAID, I have worked on issues related to counter-insurgency, civilian-military operations, Rule of Law (ROL),

anti-corruption, and legislative strengthening worldwide. I support activities to improve the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of governing institutions, systems and processes, as well as assisting with civilian-military operations.

***"It was an incredibly maturing and humbling experience that shaped my resolve to assist those in the world most in need."***

During my 2010 deployment to Afghanistan with the Army, I coordinated the infantry brigade's ROL and governance efforts to: offer Afghans meaningful access to fair, efficient, and transparent justice; and help increase the Afghan government's legitimacy and improve its perceptions among Afghans by promoting a functional and efficient judicial system. I was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service during my ten-month deployment.

### FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

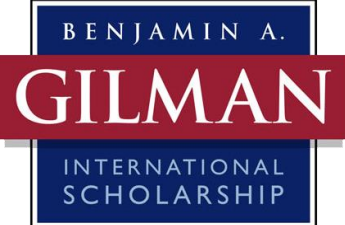
My Follow-on Service Project included speaking at college forums about the importance of studying abroad. I encouraged the audience to study in non-traditional destinations by talking

about my experience in South Africa. In addition, I gave a presentation about Africa to the students I tutored at an afterschool program through AmeriCorps. I wanted the

students to realize that even under financial constraints, it is possible to receive a higher education degree and even study abroad through programs such as the Gilman Scholarship.

## Daniel Chahla, United Arab Emirates, 2009

University of Minnesota  
Minnesota



technology through the eyes of the developer as well as the end user. Much of my work revolved around listening to customers citing their problems, fixing the issue, and explaining to them how and why the problem happened. In each of these phases, I underwent countless iterations of learning by discovery. Intuitively, I designed an innovative software idea that Apple initially invested in and abandoned after discovering I

along with its Bedouin roots enticed me. Without the Gilman Scholarship I would not have been able to afford to attend the American University of Dubai. While abroad, I took mostly business and political science courses that offered an extremely unique international perspective. This perspective not only came from my professors, but also my peers. I had the opportunity to learn from the local Emiratis.

**M**y parents are refugees of the Lebanese civil war. I am the youngest of four first-generation children raised to do what we loved and to do it the best we can. My parents implored that we use education as the keystone to our personal development. During my humble upbringing in Saint Paul, Minnesota, I developed a keen interest in technology. I instinctively developed a passion for repairing broken electronics at a young age. I started to experiment with hardware and software as I repaired broken electronics others had discarded. I came to combine this hands-on learning with my work at the Geek Squad. This enabled me to see

was only 17 years old. Shortly thereafter I founded and operated my own non-profit technical support center with the prospects of gaining credibility in the real world. In return for services, my clients donated to Human Efforts in Aid of Lebanon (HEAL). By my 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, my company (First-VM) had raised over \$30,000 for refugees like my parents. With the support of St. Paul Central's exceptional faculty I was honored with a number of scholarships. My strong support network within the Twin Cities compelled me to attend the University of Minnesota.

Within my first semester, I desired to gain a more international perspective. The large influx of growth in Dubai

Since graduating, I have founded my own web design company in Minneapolis. I recently expanded my developing wings by generating cross platform applications for mobile devices. I focused on designing an interactive user experience that allows non-tech savvy individuals to be rich but intuitive.

*"I took mostly business and political science courses that offered an extremely unique international perspective."*

## Follow-on Service Project

Outside of school, I immersed myself in Dubai's attractions, but my eye often wandered to the immigrant constructions workers who labored at the city's numerous building sites. I was able to find funding to buy these migrant workers first aid kits. One hot day, I received an email from the Gilman Scholarship inviting me to an Education Without Borders

event happening in Dubai. I researched the event online and applied to set up a booth. In the following weeks, I was able to map a cost effective plan to set up first-aid kits in dense construction zones. With a \$2,500 donation, my Follow-on Service Project ultimately benefitted 30,000 labor workers,

giving them new access to proper sanitization and bandage equipment. I gave a presentation at my home campus about this outreach to spread awareness of the Gilman Scholarship and how involved one can be to learn from and help your community no matter where in the world.



## ISTHIER CHAUDHURY, CHINA, 2009

University of Rochester  
New York



**F**or engineering majors, study abroad opportunities are hard to come by and study in China is almost unheard of. So when I got the chance to travel there for a year of language study, I hoped to go beyond my goal of language proficiency and find a way to connect my experience with my scientific background. The Gilman International Scholarship ended up giving me the chance to not only

gain fluency in Mandarin, but to gain cultural immersion and learn about science in China both in a historical context and a laboratory setting.

My study abroad program was officially an academic year of intensive Chinese language study at Peking University in Beijing, China. Once I settled in to my routine of daily language classes, I set off to look around nanomaterials labs both at Peking and neighboring Tsinghua University, before choosing one to carry out a small research project and gain truly unique undergraduate research experience. When my academic program concluded, I stayed on through my summer vacation, learning about China's laboratory and research cultures, as well as lots of technical vocabulary relating to my field of work. Living arrangements varied throughout my year there, as I went from living in dorms on campus in the fall, to a homestay in the spring, and then a student apartment shared with seven other Chinese students in the summer; each one bringing their own comforts and

inconveniences, but all of them bringing lasting friendships with people now all over the world.

***"The Gilman International Scholarship ended up giving me the chance to not only gain fluency in Chinese, but to gain cultural immersion and learn about science in China both in a historical context and a laboratory setting.."***

Outside of academics, I took Tai'chi classes. One place I made a particular point of visiting as part of my personal science enrichment, was the Dujiangyan irrigation system in Sichuan. The system is a testament to the engineering prowess of ancient China, as it was built more than 2,000 years ago to deal with flooding, cut through a mountainside before the invention of explosives, and is still in use today. Finally, before leaving China, I visited the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai. I had a taste not only of China, but of the rest of the world as well.

### FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

For my Follow-on Service Project, I decided to dedicate my efforts to promoting study abroad amongst science and engineering majors, by giving presentations of my experience in China to several

audiences. I also became involved with my school's study abroad office, helping persuade engineering students that study abroad was feasible and worth the effort to plan for. I visited local

high schools for their "International Week," taking the lead in introducing them to life and culture of China.

## KARYN COMEAU, JAPAN, 2008

Mount Holyoke College  
Massachusetts



in rural Massachusetts. I set my sights on going to a Japanese university with one of the most rigorous language programs.

Every day consisted of three to four hours of language instruction, and every night consisted of studying for daily vocabulary

quizzes. Between taking an intensive language class and my daily life in Japan, my written and oral comprehension improved drastically. I was able to hold my own in conversations like I was never able to before.

I decided to live in a public dorm rather than a home stay. I found that this gave me an opportunity to interact with a large group of people, from various areas within Japan and as well as those attending different universities. Through my peers I was introduced to activities such as visiting Shinto shrines to make wishes as well as going to karaoke to sing Japanese songs. Just as I was excited about cultural

exchange, there were also many people who were interested in learning about life in the United States. In a rather unexpected turn of events, I introduced my Japanese peers to the microwave popcorn and California rolls. While learning about Japanese culture I began to look at my own background through a different lens.

*"I knew that in order to achieve a higher level of fluency I would have to pursue Japanese beyond what I could do in rural Massachusetts."*

I find that the year I spent studying abroad taught me many things. I became more aware of myself and the assumptions and beliefs I hold because of my background. I learned to let go of these assumptions, and to see things from a different perspective. As I made a place for myself in Tokyo, a city of millions, I came to appreciate my ability to adapt and thrive in foreign environments. The self-reliance and confidence that I gained abroad still serves to help me to this day.

I have always been interested in learning languages. Throughout my youth I enjoyed studying Spanish and Chinese. When I found that my college offered Japanese, I jumped at the opportunity to broaden my linguistic horizons. I devoured everything that I could get my hands on: Japanese music, television and language exchange. I found that my language skills were not progressing as quickly as I wanted. I heard that the easiest and most effective way to learn a language is through immersion. With this in mind, I knew that in order to achieve a higher level of fluency I would have to pursue Japanese beyond what I could do

### FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

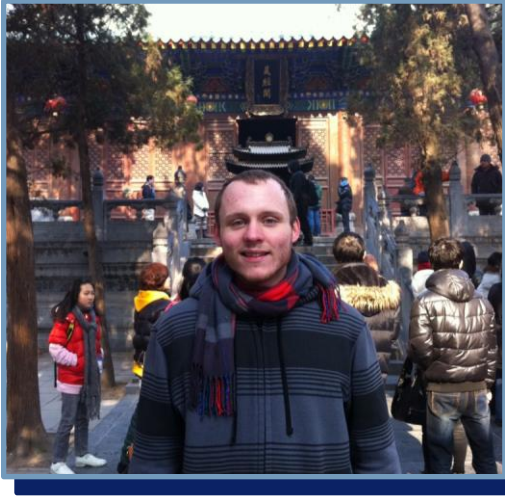
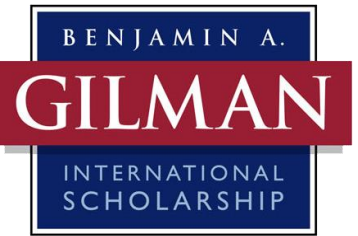
Upon my return to the United States, I collaborated with other students to create a website dedicated to studying abroad in

Asia with a focus on the Gilman Scholarship. I also dedicated time each semester to present to those interested in studying abroad. As

a Gilman Alumni Representative, I am hoping to reach out to even more people who are interested in studying abroad.

## Eamon Devine, China, 2011

Johnson County Community College  
Kansas



**G**rowing up, I assisted my father with teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) courses and developed an enthusiasm for languages. After mastering the Spanish language, I took an introductory course in Mandarin, and my love for it transcended all of my other passions. With the intent of gaining fluency in the Chinese language, I decided to study abroad in Nanjing, China.

My experience in another country, far away and very different from my own, was something that has

molded the way I think about the world. I lived within another culture and brought back a deeper sense of understanding about this big world that we live in. I will also be going back, as much as I can, to continue to learn Chinese and study international business. I simply cannot get enough of traveling abroad now that I have done it. In China I made a lot of very nice friends,

and tutored a student with his English; learning much from these people as I am sure they learned much from me. In addition to these friends, I also had many interactions with people on the street and in places of business. These interactions truly helped my communication skills.

The study abroad experience I had was amazing, just writing about it makes me reminisce about all the great times I had. It has shaped me into a more serious student with an international career goal. Previously, I had planned on majoring in Economics, but now

my current academic plan is to major in International Business and someday return to participate in an internship in China. I would like to thank all of the people at the Gilman Scholarship and the U.S. Department of State for making all of it possible. Because of your scholarship, my life has been enriched and I have more direction than I had before.

***“The study abroad experience I had was amazing . . . It has shaped me into a more serious student with an international career goal.”***

## Follow-on Service Project

As a part of my Gilman Follow-on Service Project, I gave a presentation to an audience of GED students about my experience in China and how the Gilman Scholarship helped with my program expenses. Being a

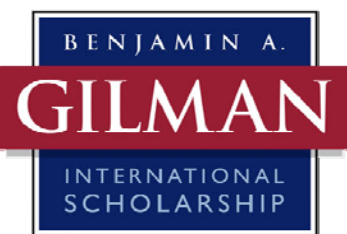
non-traditional student myself, my goal was to give motivation to students who are in the same position I once was and show them how far they can go to achieve their goals. I spoke more about the Gilman Scholarship and

the eligibility requirements one must meet in order to apply. I also mentioned other scholarships and assured the students that there are a lot of resources to utilize if they want to study abroad



## AMANDA EURE, GHANA, 2007

Winston-Salem State University  
North Carolina



**S**tudying abroad in Ghana was one of the most memorable experiences I ever had during my undergraduate years at Winston-Salem State University (WSSU). I studied abroad at the University of Ghana in Legon through the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP). At the time, Ghana was celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary from Great Britain. I had the opportunity to participate in a few of the celebrations around the country and collect souvenirs

commemorating Ghana's independence. On the campus, I took a variety of classes: the Twi language, traditional African dance, and history of Ghanaian music, along with my math courses, Elementary Statistics and Ordinary Differential Equations. I volunteered as a teacher's assistant at University Primary Village Basic School. In my free time, I had private painting classes and group salsa dancing classes. On the weekends, I visited several national monuments and attractions.

I had the opportunity to do a short-term homestay. This experience further helped me practice my newly acquired language skills in Twi and to learn more about the Ghanaian culture. At the end of my study abroad program, I became one of the famous faces on campus after being spotted in the same newspaper as John Legend (R&B artist) and Luciano (Jamaican Reggae artist) after attending the benefit concert for flood victims in northern Ghana.

Since my study abroad experience in Ghana, I have studied abroad in South Africa and Dominican Republic. After I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Winston-Salem State University in 2010, I volunteered as a secondary mathematics teacher at Diamond Secondary School in Guyana for 2010-2011 academic school year.

***"I had the opportunity to do a short-term homestay. This experience further helped me practice my newly acquired language skills in Twi and to learn more about the Ghanaian culture."***

Now, I am entering my second year in my Applied Mathematics Master's program at North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University. After graduate school at NCA&T, I plan to pursue a doctorate in applied mathematics and apply for the Boren Fellowship to study Zulu language and conduct dissertation research in South Africa.

## FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

For my Follow-on Service Project, I had a show-and-tell at my former middle school with the sixth graders. I dressed in African attire and showed the students the many items I collected while staying in Ghana, such as paintings, masks, wood carvings, drums, and kente cloth. I aspired to

encourage the students to live out their dreams and travel across the world to gain more exposure to different cultures and ethnic groups.

At my university, I held an information session for students served by Student Support

Services, which supports first-generation, low-income, or disabled students, about the Gilman Scholarship and WSSU Office of International Program's scholarships and programs to support WSSU students who are considering study abroad.



## ISABELLE FELDHAUS, SOUTH AFRICA, 2010

University of Southern California  
California



**M**y semester studying abroad at the University of Cape Town proved to be one of the most enlightening and rewarding of my college career. Cape Town's powerful history of apartheid and reconstruction, diverse culture, ongoing development, and considerable global health burden comprised an ideal setting in which to explore my varied interests within topics of human rights, international development, and HIV/AIDS. As I explored the country's museums, experienced an array of rich cultures, and encountered a wholly different political environment, I found that I learned more about the world as well as about myself when I ventured outside of the classroom.

The nature of my volunteer work at People Against Suffering, Oppression, and Poverty (PASSOP), a local nonprofit human rights organization, and the Brooklyn TB Chest Hospital, a facility serving those who cannot afford tuberculosis care and treatment, gave direct insights into the lives of a majority of South Africans. Through these roles, I experienced first-hand the operation of the South African health system. PASSOP introduced me to the challenges of policy development amidst a diverse and volatile population, while my position at the hospital demonstrated the implementation of national healthcare policies. Perceiving an intense need for health systems development focused on traditionally underserved communities solidified my commitment to work in international health. Building lifelong friendships, shaping my worldviews, and inspiring my current academic and professional goals, my experiences in South Africa set a course for my life in the field of global public health and policy.

Before entering college, I knew that I wanted to study abroad.

However, despite passion and drive, I realize that the incredible experiences I had in Cape Town would have been impossible

**"The nature of my volunteer work...gave direct insights into the lives of a majority of South Africans. Through these roles, I experienced first-hand the operation of the South African health system."**

without the funding granted through the Gilman Scholarship. The exceptional opportunities that have arisen as a result of my participation as a Gilman Scholar have proven to be critical in shaping my academic and career paths today. As I pursue my life goals further, I am continuing my studies and further research in international health systems at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Working to improve health systems and policies in low- and middle-income countries, I am excited to make my own positive impact upon the world as a conscious global citizen continuing to learn through global service.

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### FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

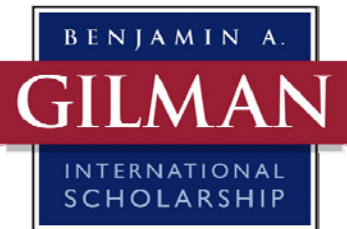
My Follow-on Service Project was a research paper presented at a school-wide study abroad fair and selected campus organizations. Inspired by a young girl at Brooklyn TB Chest Hospital, I focused on the national

health system with regard to its capacity to address HIV/TB co-infection as a major driver of morbidity and mortality in South Africa. Upon graduation, my home institution recognized me as a USC

Global Scholar for my work, awarding me with a \$10,000 grant toward graduate studies. Through these outlets, I inspired study abroad participants to study in non-traditional and diverse destinations.

## D. ARCHIE FRINK, BRAZIL, 2011

Middle Tennessee State University  
Tennessee



In my discipline of Anthropology, research attempts to understand how political and economic processes and institutions affect groups of people both locally and globally. Typically, students do not receive the academic and logistic opportunity to become ethnographers, or researchers, until graduate school. The Gilman International Scholarship Program, in its tenth anniversary year, gave me the unique opportunity to pursue my original ethnographic research while living with a host family in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest.

Accessible only by series of boats big and small, over thirty-eight hours from Belém where the mouth of the Amazon River feeds into the Atlantic Ocean, the state municipality of Gurupá was where I spent my summer. Locals in the central town of Gurupá and along the tributaries in the interior have a unique economic livelihood, political development and culture to the rest of Brazil. The local economy is predominantly

based on subsistence agriculture - highly advanced and traditional slash-and-burn technology - which is utilized to produce a wealth of food. Perhaps counterintuitive to Western visions of lush, green rainforest, due to the natural environmental composition, rainforest soil is generally very low in nutrients. Slash-and-burn technology is highly advanced for maintaining steady and consistent crops, and is resistant to unexpected environmental changes. I learned about these advanced agricultural methods and how they affect communities' political and economic engagement among a small peasant community of African slave refugee descendants. These people, *quilombos*, have shared a strong collective history of solidarity and hold a unique position within the greater municipality district. Thanks to my academic superiors and the Gilman Scholarship, I was able to begin learning about their ways of life by practicing participant observation and interviewing elders in the community.

Conducting this research led to many academic and professional opportunities, as well as a simply incalculable leap in my personal development. I presented research at my university's undergraduate social science symposium, as well as at the American Anthropological Association conference in Montréal. Presenting my research as an

undergraduate at the largest international organization within my academic field was an overwhelmingly rewarding experience, and allowed me to meet and network with superiors, which could provide

*"The Gilman International Scholarship Program, in its tenth anniversary year, gave me the unique opportunity to pursue my original ethnographic research while living with a host family in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest."*

crucial leverage for my future academic development. Due to my presenting research at the American Anthropological Association conference, I have established contacts and written two articles for international web and print publication, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning Huffington Post. Conducting this research was an overwhelmingly humbling experience, and has taught me so much personally and intuitively about the true values in our modern, global world. Because of the Gilman Scholarship, not only have I been able to begin my professional development and gain positive research experience, but more importantly I understand the world a little more intricately, in its frailty, generosity and humility.

### FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

I authored a blog about my personal experiences while in the Amazon which has been read in over twenty

countries across six continents. When I returned, I began mentoring undergraduate students in successful

grant and research proposal writing, which I have continued through graduation.

## TERESE GAGNON, PERU, 2011

University of Georgia  
Georgia



**A**s a Gilman Scholarship recipient, I spent the spring of my sophomore year studying at the Pontifical Catholic University in Lima, Peru. I had the incredible experience of living with a host family and taking upper level anthropology courses taught entirely in Spanish. Among the courses I took was an urban anthropology course in which I worked with Peruvian classmates conducting research on 'bourgeois bohemian' youth culture in Lima. In another course, fieldwork in cultural anthropology, I lived for a week in a remote Andean village studying rural cell phone use; cell service having arrived to the community only a year before and representing the first means of direct communication with

the rest of the country. Additionally, I had the enriching opportunity of volunteering for an indigenous rights organization CHIRAPAQ, where I translated grant applications for UNESCO funding and served as interpreter and aid at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and international indigenous summit. Other memorable experiences during my time in Peru included visiting Manchu Picchu, the central Andes and the Amazon; being present for the celebration of Easter Sunday in Cusco; witnessing the highly politicized national elections; and taking part in a syncretic religious street festival. As a result of my time abroad, I returned home with a proficiency in Spanish far beyond my expectation, an immensely furthered knowledge of anthropology and a greatly altered worldview.

My experiences in Peru lead me to think critically about the relationship between landscapes and cultural and the ways in which notions of 'place' are constructed and perceived. Upon my return to the University of Georgia I took numerous courses related to these themes and eventually began conducting research with refugees from Burma of the Karen ethnic minority, living in Georgia. My ongoing research with

them seeks to examine their transnational 'senses of place' and to document their rapidly disappearing ethno-botanical knowledge and biodiversity. I have been accepted to present my research at the National Anthropology Conference in San

*"I had the incredible experience of living with a host family and taking upper level anthropology courses taught entirely in Spanish."*

Francisco.

As I look past graduation and towards the future, I hope to eventually attend graduate school for anthropology, focusing on relationships between nature and cultural memory, perhaps exploring how this extends into areas such as myth, art, and religion. I would also like to incorporate in my graduate studies, an emphasis on the value of narrative and creative writing as a form of ethnography. However, immediately after graduation I plan to spend one to two years doing fieldwork/ service work in the U.S. or abroad, perhaps working with Karen refugees in camps on the Burma/Thai border.

### FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

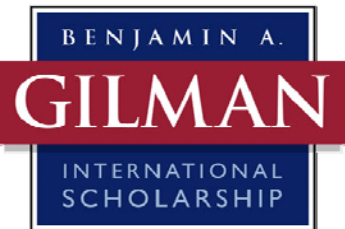
I Skyped with third, fourth and fifth grade classes of an elementary school in my home town, of which a large percentage of the students come from low income and Latino families. I shared with them my experiences and knowledge about Peru's nature,

culture, government, and geography that corresponded with their grade level curriculum requirements. I also shared information about opportunities for higher education and study abroad. Additionally, I presented to the service and

advocacy organization, The ONE Campaign at UGA, where I spoke about agriculture, market integration and poverty in Peru and encouraged other members to apply for the Gilman Scholarship.

## APRIL GILLENS, IRELAND, 2008

North Carolina A&T State University  
North Carolina



I studied abroad at the University of Limerick in Limerick, Ireland. My experience abroad inspired me to expand my horizon and subsequently I traveled to Ghana, Malaysia, and Singapore within the four years of my undergraduate education at North Carolina A&T State University.

As an engineering student I feared study abroad would deter me from graduating on time; however, while abroad I was able to take courses specific to my undergraduate curriculum, which allowed me to remain on schedule for graduation. The most challenging aspect of my study

abroad was being the only African-American in an exchange program of nearly 400 students. I combated this challenge by developing an open mind and

being respectful of the various cultures around me.

My study abroad experience has afforded me the opportunity to better understand my career choice in Nuclear Forensics. In this field I have worked with people across diverse backgrounds and the experience I have gained abroad has aided my ability to understand and adapt to different cultures.

I am currently obtaining a Doctorate of Philosophy in Environmental Engineering at Clemson University. Although my graduate studies are demanding I still aim to find time to

incorporate international travel into my schedule through conferences.

My experience abroad has also influenced me to apply for international job opportunities. My career goal is to become a scientist in the rapidly growing and

***“My study abroad experience has afforded me the opportunity to better understand my career choice in Nuclear Forensics.”***

diverse field of nuclear forensics. Study abroad is a remarkable experience that should be afforded to every college student. The Gilman International Scholarship has afforded me the opportunity to study abroad and it has made a lasting impact on my life.

## FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

I geared my Follow-on Service Project towards encouraging minority students to study abroad. I presented on my study abroad experience to approximately 80 graduating seniors at my former high school, which is predominantly composed of African-Americans. I also took a before-and-after poll to determine

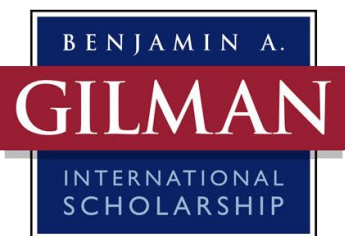
if my presentation compelled students to study abroad. Most of the students were willing to study abroad; however, there were a few students with outstanding obligations which would make study abroad or even attending college very difficult. As an African-American, I have found it initially challenging to embark

upon a study abroad experience due to the lack of international travel among my family members and the fear of displacing myself from my culture. Through study abroad, however, I realized I can understand more about my own culture while exploring others.



## Rhaelynn Givens, Hungary, 2011

McDaniel College  
Washington



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.

*"...it was only after I returned home to Washington that I realized how much this experience meant to me....I have this feeling that I can accomplish anything. Academically, personally, and professionally, that attitude is worth its weight in gold. "*

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.

# HEATHER HUNT, EGYPT 2009

Southern Methodist University  
Texas



I used the research, materials, critiques, and advice I gathered in Egypt to complete my departmental distinction thesis upon my return to Southern Methodist University. I presented my thesis, passed an oral examination and received distinguished honors for my work at my graduation.

I travelled to Egypt with the support of a Gilman Scholarship to pursue Arabic language studies and conduct research for my history distinction thesis at the American University in Cairo (AUC). While attending classes in Cairo I also volunteered as an English teacher with Better World. I taught a class of twenty-five native Arabic speaking refugees the English language. I also worked alongside my Arabic professor with a group of women to promote human rights awareness for women in the Arab world.

The ability to conduct on site research for my history distinction thesis and discuss my paper with leading Egyptologists was priceless.

One of the most gratifying experiences of my time in Egypt was the opportunity of language immersion. While attending AUC, I took both modern standard and colloquial Egyptian Arabic. My daily exposure to the Arabic language in and out of the classroom enhanced my language abilities. Through classroom and daily life experiences I began thinking in Arabic. To understand any culture holistically, one must grasp the dynamics of the language. I experienced this personally, as I saw how the Arabic language drives Arab culture. As I began to think in Arabic I found myself more integrated into society.

I believe that experiences shape and

cultivate a person. Without the Gilman Scholarship I would not have spent a semester studying in Cairo, and therefore my life path would have taken a different direction. I know the Gilman Scholarship changed my life in terms of personal development, goals, interests, and beliefs. My time in Egypt reinforced my belief in the importance of cultural exchange, which led me to apply for a Fulbright Scholarship. I received the Fulbright Scholarship in 2011 to further my knowledge of the Middle East and Arabic. Both Gilman and Fulbright opened my eyes and fostered mutual understanding and cultural exchange!

***"The ability to conduct on site research for my history distinction thesis and discuss my paper with leading Egyptologists was priceless."***

## FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

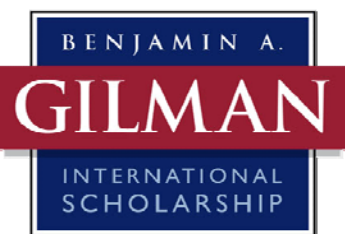
For my Follow-on Service Project, I became a liaison between the study abroad office and students interested in going abroad. While in Egypt I blogged about my experiences. After returning to Southern Methodist University (SMU). I continued my study abroad outreach. Through

email correspondences, phone conversations, and personal meetings I mentored and encouraged students interested in travelling abroad, specifically to destinations in the Middle East. I also began speaking at local high schools encouraging students to consider studying abroad

in college. I stressed the importance of early planning in order to maximize scholarship opportunities. I also served as a panelist on a monthly study abroad question and answer session at SMU.

## CINDY LA, CHILE, 2011

University of California, Los Angeles  
California



In a city as vibrant as Santiago, I never doubted that I would have memorable experiences, but I never dreamed that I would love a place so much that wasn't my hometown. My spirit of adventure brought me closer to the locals and eager to see the city come alive. The thought of being far away from home never registered into my mind until that first morning when I awoke not to the sound of an alarm, but rather to a thunderous boom of jostling feet and shrill cries from an escalating Chilean student protest. Something about the student movement touched me personally and humbled me deeply - students were protesting their rights for an education, while I had the blessings of further broadening my

educational experience abroad.

I have so much to be thankful for and I take away memories that will accompany throughout my lifetime. The route to school - either on foot or by metro - became a journey in and of itself with statues, eccentric casts of musicians, vendors, and crazy drivers. Even the small laboratory spaces of Universidad Andrés Bello, where I studied microbiology, has given me new insight about different research methodologies and techniques in different parts of the world. These experiences studying with amazing professors have academically enhanced my career plans by furthering my interest in microbiology and research. I have learned to immerse myself in a language and culture where I can practice my Spanish and navigate through cultural barriers, something that I hope to do as a physician.

I am so grateful for the opportunities that the Gilman Scholarship has opened for me, and am so proud to be an alumna of a program that invests so much in the future generations of study abroad students. As a pre-medical student, finding a way to fit a study abroad program into my schedule was quite

a challenge, but the Gilman Scholarship willingly accommodated my summer program. They provided me with the financial assistance to help alleviate the high costs of studying abroad and they have given me the necessary tools to encourage others to pursue similar dreams.

I can summarize my experience in a

***"Even the small laboratory spaces of Universidad Andrés Bello where I studied microbiology gave me new insights about different research methodologies and techniques in different parts of the world."***

borrowed phrase by Henry Miller: "One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things." Traveling outside of the U.S., I realized how limited my worldview was, and how much more I had to learn about other cultures, traditions, and pastimes. I saw my world through a different perspective, and coming back to America, I have tried to be less insular and more curious about the world around me.

## FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

As someone who sees travel as a gateway to adventure and self-discovery, my Follow-on Service project aimed to share what I learned through study abroad through a blog and presentations. I

conducted presentations for STEM students, in-coming freshmen college students, and students in high school. Few people realize the wealth of diverse programs offered: classes that can count towards general

education requirements, language requirements, or major requirements. I also presented at the UCLA Study Abroad Fair for students who wanted to learn more about my particular program.



## TASHA SOLOMON, JORDAN, 2010

University of Alabama  
Alabama



I can honestly say that my time studying abroad was the most rewarding experience of my life. It changed the way I viewed the world and allowed me to mature as I became aware of how people outside of my country live their lives. It made me value the simple things in life and appreciate them so much more. These values have stayed with me since my departure of my host country and study abroad experience.

I studied abroad in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the “heart of the Middle East” as many people say, and although it may sound

cliché, living there truly changed my life. I do not believe that the knowledge and experience that I gained while abroad compares to any college course or book I could have read. While there I met with Jordanian politicians, professors, political and social activists, and everyday citizens, while learning about the region, the country, and its culture. I also had two home stays, one in the capital, Amman, and the other in the rural Badia, allowing me to immerse myself into the culture by essentially becoming a member of a Jordanian family. In addition to my time in Jordan, I also spent a week visiting Egypt, which allowed me to experience two very distinct Middle Eastern countries during a very historical time period. Not only did this time abroad impact my academic life, it also impacted my personal life as well.

When I left from the Middle East, I was saddened because I felt that I was leaving behind the wonderful people and places that had changed my life. However, I was also eager because I would be going back to America sharing my stories and experiences, in hopes

of the possibility of others having such an experience. Studying abroad impacted my life more than I could have ever known. I still keep in touch with my teachers, my home stay family, and

*“I became aware of how people outside of my country live their lives. It made me value the simple things in life and appreciate them so much more. These values have stayed with me since my departure of my host country and study abroad experience.”*

the other students from my program. This experience reaffirmed my objectives of wanting to learn more about the region and to work in a field that would allow me to learn, while also making a difference. Jordan will forever have a place in my heart, and I will never forget all of life’s lessons, stories, and experiences that I have taken from there.

### FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

My Follow-on Service Project focused on increasing the awareness of study abroad opportunities to minorities in college, especially African-Americans. My project goals

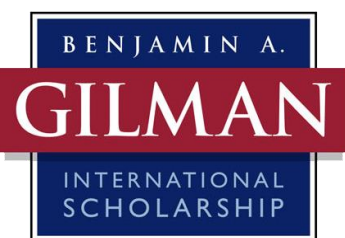
were to encourage the minority community at my university to seek out study abroad opportunities. I networked and used my connections as an active member of my sorority and

Greek council on campus, marketing the advantages of study abroad and promoting the Gilman Scholarship.



## John Spangler, India, 2008

George Washington University  
West Virginia



**A**fter eighteen years on my parents' farm and two years walking the halls of power in Washington, DC, I was ready for an experience unlike any I had previously known. I wanted to go far away, learn something completely foreign and totally immerse myself in a culture. I had to go to India.

As an International Affairs student concentrating on international development and global public health, India was the perfect mix of power, people and circumstance to peak my interest.

I spent many hot afternoons at the local temple watching politicians and paupers, and would return to my host family's modest house in the afternoon for communal meals and lots of laughs. I developed many bonds and life skills that I have carried with me. Additionally, seeing cases of diseases that I can only read about in text books and being able to discuss them with local populations was an invaluable experience.

Upon graduation, I took a one-year job working for a study abroad program in India. By spending more time in India I was able to increase my Tamil language skills, more fully understand an Indian world lens, and help other students to take advantage of their time abroad. Studying and working in India for over a year would not have been possible without the initial study abroad support from the Gilman Scholarship.

This international experience helped me to secure my current position as a health policy assistant

in the Office of Global Affairs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and continues to inform my work.

***"As an international affairs student concentrating on international development and global public health, India was the perfect mix of power, people and circumstance to peak my interest."***

## Follow-on Service Project

When I returned from studying abroad, I presented the Gilman Scholarship and my experience in India to a local Upward Bound program, which seeks to enroll low-income, at-risk youth into post-secondary education. I found this to be incredibly

rewarding, because it helped to transform the students' idea of college from "extra years of school" to an extraordinary opportunity – even better, an obtainable extraordinary opportunity. I gave an overview of study abroad, why I choose

India, what I did while I was there (daily life and culture), how this enhanced my academic experience and coursework in the United States, and what options they have for studying abroad.

## CHRIS STANDLEY, BRAZIL 2011

Texas A&M University  
Texas



And I can definitively 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.

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.

**H**aving 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.

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

***"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.

## KAISHA SUTTON, ECUADOR, 2011

Mount Saint Mary's University of Maryland  
District of Columbia



**F**or the majority of my life, I have always had a desire to travel, to explore and to try new things. Thanks to the generosity of the Gilman International Scholarship, I was given the opportunity to participate in an internship in Ecuador. What I learned while studying abroad will never be forgotten and I am very grateful to everyone who supported me in this endeavor.

The internship in Ecuador was with Fundación de Bienal, a non-

profit organization responsible for organizing an annual cultural event for the city of Cuenca. I was assigned to the International Relations and Communications Department. Among my duties, I translated documents from Spanish to English and vice versa, which really helped me develop my language skills. I also assisted with planning an event called "The Bienal", an event which gives the residents of Cuenca an opportunity to experience the beautiful art and culture of the region.

Studying abroad affirmed my future career goals. I am currently pursuing a Master's of Arts Management at George Mason University. This degree is typically a two-year program that expands traditional arts business and management courses to include public policy, the impact of multiculturalism, cultural education, and innovation in operating and communications technology. It has everything I'm looking for in a career: combining

my love of community service, cultural diversity, music and art. In addition, this year I started working as a Program Coordinator for the U.S. Department of State, Office of International Visitors.

I would like to personally thank the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, for granting me this award and allowing me the chance to fulfill my dreams.

***"Thanks to the generosity of the Gilman International Scholarship, I was given the opportunity to participate in an internship in Ecuador."***

## FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

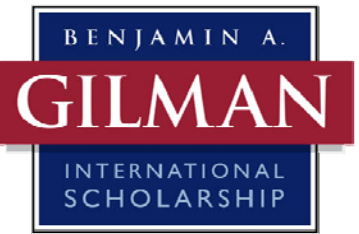
For my Follow-on Service Project, I gave a series of presentations for Global Studies classes at my former high school, Bishop McNamara. Many students expressed an interest in studying abroad and sent thank you notes

expressing their appreciation for my inspirational presentation. In addition, I arranged an information session for students at Mount St. Mary's University who were interested in studying abroad. This presentation was tailored for college students; many

of whom were preparing to leave for study overseas. Most of the questions that were asked pertained to financial aid. I highly recommended the Gilman Scholarship Program as a potential source of assistance.

## SELINA THOMAS, JORDAN, 2009

University of California, San Diego  
California



**M**y study abroad experience in Amman, Jordan neatly brought together my interests in the medical field and in Middle Eastern countries, providing me with a stimulating environment to learn and opportunities to explore professions in healthcare outside the U.S. The program centered around two classes, on public health and epidemiology, taught by a professor from my home institution. In addition to lectures, the courses included field experience that involved shadowing physicians at refugee health clinics and collecting health

data for research. I was also able to visit institutions such as the World Health Organization, Jordanian Ministry of Health, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, where I learned about Jordanian health infrastructure and programs. As a pre-med student, these experiences were invaluable, and sparked an interest in global health. Even with the intensive studying, I was still able to find time to wander-through the local shops, riding horses in the old city of Petra and floating in the Dead Sea.

My study abroad program had a great impact on my academic and professional goals. I added a global health minor to my curriculum, and the required classes proved to be some of the most informative and inspiring ones in my education. I began working on a research project

with my professor in which we are conducting a survey of the health needs of the Middle Eastern refugees in my own city. Since graduation, I have continued to work on this project while I prepare to apply to medical school

***“My study abroad experience in Amman, Jordan neatly brought together my interests in the medical field and in Middle Eastern countries, providing me with a stimulating environment to learn and opportunities to explore professions in healthcare outside the U.S.”***

in a year. My hope is to eventually work as a doctor in a third world country, serving the underprivileged.

### FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

For my Follow-on Service Project, I gave a presentation to a group of community college and transfer students in a pre-health-professional program, the UniversityLink Medical Science Program. As an alumna of the program, I shared about my personal experience of studying abroad, including finding and

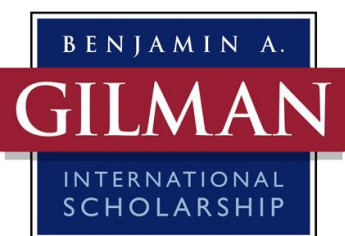
financing the trip and writing scholarship essays. I also promoted the Gilman Scholarship Program. Before a providential series of events that led to my study abroad experience. I had often wished to travel but had never thought it was realistic to study abroad. Being a transfer student and STEM major, I knew

that fitting a study abroad program into the few short years between transfer and graduation appears unfeasible, and the costs frequently look prohibitive. It was my goal to show the students that studying abroad is something they could seriously consider and accomplish.



## Andrea Thompson, South Africa, 2004

Dillard University  
Illinois



**M**y experience studying abroad in South Africa was perhaps one of the most enriching aspects of my undergraduate studies at Dillard University. I studied with the University of KwaZulu-Natal through the School for International Training (SIT). Having never traveled outside the U.S. and holding full-time employment to contribute to my tuition and books at my home institution, I didn't think that I could possibly afford to study internationally. However, I was pleasantly surprised that there were more opportunities for financial assistance than I had imagined. Following a visit to my university's International Studies Office, I was certain that I wanted to experience the benefits of living and studying in another country. I knew that this cultural immersion would not only widen my perspective on

international issues, but also provide me a better understanding of domestic issues. I saw this as a dually rewarding opportunity for me personally; I could learn more about my own culture and ethnicity while helping to provide valuable research on reconciliation and development during the ten year anniversary of the ending of the apartheid system.

The program was structured to provide students with three different homestay families, as well as the chance to live independently for the final four weeks. Having a variety of living experiences complimented the educational component tremendously because it gave me the opportunity to interact with locals on a daily and more personal basis. The intensive Zulu language component of the program proved to be quite useful. As an Urban Studies and Public Policy major, I was most interested in community development and sustainability programs. After gathering research, which included meeting with government officials and volunteering with local NGOs, I completed a 40-page independent research project on the provision of affordable quality housing in the New South Africa.

I am most thankful for the generosity of Gilman Scholarship Program for

providing the financial support for me to spend a semester studying abroad. My experience not only supplemented my undergraduate studies, but has largely shaped my career goals and efforts to contribute to pipeline and diversity initiatives that provide opportunities for students with limited financial means.

Following my admittance to a top law school, which I was unable to accept due to insufficient financial resources, I became very involved in efforts to reform student loan policies. I am actively volunteering with several organizations that provide scholarships and credit counseling to undergraduates.

***"My experience not only supplemented my undergraduate studies, but has largely shaped my career goals..."***

This past summer I had the opportunity to intern with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation through the Federal STIPDG Program administered by The Washington Center. I am currently employed with State Farm Companies and working diligently to finance my law school education.

## Follow-on Service Project

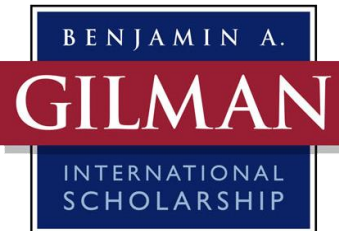
I worked with Dillard University's International Studies Office to coordinate a local symposium in collaboration with the six Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the State of Louisiana. The Symposium was entitled

"Increasing Internationalization at HBCU's" and was well attended by hundreds of local students and faculty. I had the responsibility of being the facilitator of the Financing Study Abroad Workshop, where I discussed my experience and

presented information to students about the Gilman Scholarship and other opportunities for financial assistance. In addition, I served as a pre-departure assistant to five students who applied and received a Gilman Scholarship.

## Amarylis Velez-Perez, Spain, 2007

University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez  
Puerto Rico



**S**tudying abroad early in my academic training played a pivotal role in understanding the importance of developing global awareness. Many of the biggest problems that we face globally will require interdisciplinary knowledge to effectively tackle them. As a doctoral student in neuroscience, I see how many of the skills that I acquired abroad have parallels with good scientific thinking.

*How does our environment shape our brain?* is one of the fundamental questions that the academic field of neuroscience has been interested in answering for quite a long time. This question was also the catalyst for my interest in studying abroad. As an undergraduate, I knew that my professional interests lay in the study and understanding of external influences on the brain. However, I was aware of the fact that my department lacked an offering of courses and faculty with expertise on the study of behavior from a

biological perspective. This awareness triggered my motivation to search for opportunities to learn more about the brain in the context of learning. The Gilman Scholarship gave me the opportunity to explore my professional interests and in the process I found where my passion lay. My study abroad experience shaped my professional and career path in ways that I had not anticipated.

The notion of cognition as the result of biological activity in the brain fascinated me as an undergraduate. I wanted to learn more about plasticity of the brain from a biological perspective and I chose the University of Salamanca (USAL) in Spain for my study abroad experience. The USAL emerged as an attractive institution to study abroad because it houses the Institute of Neuroscience of Castilla and Leon. Their expertise in neuroscience, the facilities and collaborations with researchers in countries around the world was an excellent opportunity to learn about the neuroscience field. I took several courses that introduced me to the study of the brain from a biological perspective. After my experience abroad I was fascinated by the study of the biological mechanisms of behavior and decided that this was the area that I wanted to pursue for my career. I literally fell in love with the brain and its malleability. Receiving

the Gilman Scholarship created a bridge that allowed me to meet what would become my academic and professional passion.

I am currently a doctoral student in a neuroscience and behavior program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. My decision to apply to graduate school was strengthened by my study abroad experience. My initial interest in learning styles, my first exposure to a diverse audience at USAL, and experiencing a different curriculum allowed me to bring back an increased proficiency at communicating the fascinating world of science to the diverse population that distinguishes U.S. institutions. I published a paper in collaboration with my undergraduate advisors on strategies to introduce neuroscience to underrepresented students in a peer-reviewed journal. Furthermore, I was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to pursue my doctoral degree. One of the reasons why I applied to this fellowship is because it provides a platform for potential scientific training abroad and research collaborations that I am very interested in pursuing. Studying abroad not only challenged and expanded my vision of the world but it also allowed me to discover where my passion was.

### Follow-on Service Project

I joined the Olé-RUM Program as a peer mentor, which was created to promote student exchange with universities of Spain and to develop initiatives that propelled

internationalization of the education system. I was able to identify potential Gilman Scholarship applicants and offer advice regarding the Gilman Scholarship application

process. Additionally, I created a blog and was interviewed by my university to help inform the larger student body of my experiences abroad.

## VICTORIA WINSLOW, CHINA, 2010

Spelman College  
Georgia



passion. My infatuation with the uniqueness of the language led me to make a commitment to speak, listen, read, and write only in Mandarin for nine weeks at the Middlebury Chinese School. In that short amount of time, my language capacity increased from beginner to high-intermediate. It was a challenge, a triumph and, most of all, a great experience that encouraged me to build on this foundation and seek new heights.

Mandarin and Spanish inspired an inescapable desire to share my gifts with those who have yet to

***“My infatuation with the uniqueness of the language led me to make a commitment to speak, listen, read, and write only in Mandarin for nine weeks.”***

I am a graduate of Spelman College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies. I began my journey with a Spanish minor. However, since I have developed a great attraction to learning languages, I decided to acquire yet another language - Mandarin. For this reason, I decided to study abroad in China and apply for a Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, which I was awarded for a semester abroad.

Studying Mandarin was a process of self-discovery, because what started out as a simple college requirement developed into a

The Gilman International Scholarship provided a stellar platform for me to make a difference in the way students, families and communities think about academic achievement and made my study abroad experience in Shanghai a rewarding reality. I truly believe that cultural curiosity is the start of new beginnings. Despite losing my parents when I was merely two years old, study abroad taught me how to accept what I cannot change; learning that one in ten impoverished students will attend college sparked the courage in me to change the things that I can. Studying

discover their own.

Ultimately, my experiences as a student, mentor and global citizen were positively influenced by the Gilman Scholarship. I am a Teaching Assistant at a “No Excuses” charter public school in Boston that caters to English language learners. In my position, I aspire to encourage students to actively pursue success, proficiency in another foreign languages, and opportunities of self-discovery abroad. By introducing them to the world beyond their immediate surroundings and encouraging them to travel, my scholars will help change the world.

## FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

I collaborated with an organization called Reach the World for my Follow-on Service Project. Reach the World’s mission is to help elementary and secondary school students and teachers develop the knowledge, attitudes, values and

thinking skills needed for responsible citizenship in a complex, culturally diverse and rapidly changing world. I blogged my entire experience for second grade students in New York. This allowed me to demonstrate that

despite being on the other side of the globe, people are more similar than dissimilar. Together we witnessed China’s unique balance of traditional and modern culture .