

Alexis Reed

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Japan, 2017



“I see myself as a change maker to push the needle toward racial justice and equity.”

Alexis studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar during the summer of 2017 at Doshisha University in Japan. Her time in Japan opened her eyes to the global power and influence of the United States and influenced her awareness of waste. Additionally, Alexis’s perception of her identity was impacted by her experience in Japan. There, for the first time, she felt like an American, rather than a Black person who lives in the United States. Upon return from her program, Alexis ultimately changed her major to interdisciplinary studies with a focus in anthropology, sociology, and political science.

Alexis now works as an outreach strategist and campaign manager for Rebuilding Our Village NOLA, a youth-focused policy platform and campaign developed by the New Orleans Youth Alliance (NOYA). She is also a board member at NOYA, which addresses the toxic stress and systemic barriers affecting Black youth’s health development and financial stability. Additionally, Alexis works as an administrative program coordinator at Tulane University’s Office of Study Abroad and is in the early stages of creating and leading a Tulane #StudyAbroadSoBlack social media campaign to launch during International Week. The goal of this campaign is to increase visibility of Black students abroad and encourage more Black students to study abroad.

- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Anthropology, and Political Science from the University of New Orleans
- Administrative Program Coordinator at Tulane University’s Office of Study Abroad
- Serving as a 2022 Diverse International Women of Color Scholarship Reviewer



Amanda Cortes

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Spain, 2019



“Studying abroad helped me develop the skills to be versatile and flexible in changing environments.”

Amanda studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar during the spring of 2019 in Madrid, Spain. As a sociology major, she was interested in studying and observing other cultures, which she was able to do through her program. While studying sociology in Madrid, Amanda observed the different perspectives Spanish students offered in the classroom. She took courses focused on USA/Spanish relations and Spain's history and visited BlackRock's Madrid office to understand how an American multinational investment management corporation operated in a European context. She knew her interest in finance would lead her to finding a global connection.

Amanda's program leader in Madrid liked to joke that nothing was off limits when it came to protesting, and seeing people march in the streets changed her perspective on what social engagement and participation from citizens can look like.

Amanda is currently a wealth management analyst at Morgan Stanley and completed a two-year rotational program in August 2022. In this program she changed roles every eight months, which meant shifting gears and mindset each time. Studying abroad helped her develop the skills to be versatile and flexible in changing environments.

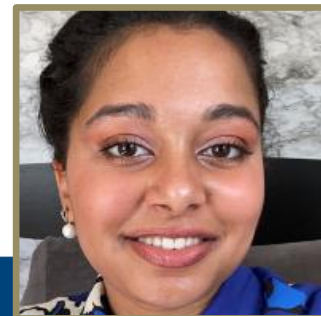
She loves being engaged with the Gilman community and finds it fascinating to see and hear what the Gilman Program has done for others. She looks forward to continuing to be engaged through the Alumni Ambassador Program and meeting more Gilman Scholars and Alumni.

- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Georgetown University
- Holds SIE, Series 63, and Series 7 licenses from The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority
- Wealth Management Analyst at Morgan Stanley



Anisa Rahaman

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Jordan, 2016



“Create opportunities for yourself, don’t be afraid to network or ask questions, and be comfortable in making mistakes and being culturally different.”

Anisa studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar during the summer of 2016 in Jordan. She interned with a Syrian and Iraqi refugee center in Amman, Jordan, and has continued to support unaccompanied minors at the Southern U.S. border and Afghan refugees seeking asylum in the United States. Anisa’s Follow-on Service Project was to write a [graphic novel](#) detailing her experience studying abroad. Five years later, she revisited her passion for creative arts and started her first business, VanRah Design, a fashion art company.

Studying abroad was Anisa’s first time traveling outside of the United States. Her perspective on safety, education, and prioritizing her career goals was greatly impacted by the experience. Studying abroad as one of five Black students in her program was challenging, but having that experience reinforced for her the importance of setting tangible goals and celebrating little wins along the way.

She has continued to work in international development through her role at the Peace Corps. The Arabic language skills she gained in Jordan were invaluable when she volunteered to assist Middle Eastern refugees seeking asylum in the United States in 2021. Anisa also volunteers on Peace Corps’ after-hours international crisis hotline.

- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations, Peace Studies, and Conflict Resolution from American University.
- Founder and CEO of VanRah Design Fashion Art House
- Product Manager at the Peace Corps



Charles Ford III

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Ghana, 2017



“International service and learning are key components of being a member of the global community and capture the importance of helping one another.”

Charles interned abroad as a Gilman Scholar in summer 2017 with the nongovernmental organization Humanity and Community Development Projects (HCDP) in Ghana. Traveling to Ghana and working with HCDP Ghana enlightened him on how his community experiences similar health disparities. The Gilman Program influenced Charles' interests in health and medicine by introducing the significance of public health in a community. His focus shifted from secondary and tertiary forms of prevention to primary prevention in a clinical setting. After volunteering and interning at the local teaching hospital, Volta Regional Hospital, he found an area of health care where he can make a difference that combines his interest in infectious disease and passions for helping others. This experience led him to pursue a master's degree in public health (MPH).

After completing his MPH, Charles immediately began working as an epidemiologist for his local county health department in Florida as part of the COVID-19 response. Building on these experiences the past two years, he advanced his career in public health to focus on infection prevention, and he now works as an infection preventionist for an acute care hospital in Miami, FL.

Charles currently holds a Certification in Public Health (CPH) from the National Board of Public Health Examiners and is working to obtain his Certification in Infection Prevention (CIC) and Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ).

- Earned a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences and Psychology from Florida State University
- Earned a Master of Public Health from the University of South Florida
- Infection Preventionist at HCA Florida Aventura Hospital



Elle Smith

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Switzerland (virtual), 2022



“I have disabilities, a single parent, am from a rural area, and have a low socioeconomic status, but I was able to have an international experience thanks to the Gilman Scholarship.”

Elle completed a virtual international internship based out of Switzerland as a Gilman Scholar in 2022. She would not have been able to do her study abroad program without Gilman. She is a woman with disabilities, a first-generation college student, and from a low socioeconomic status in rural Virginia. Elle's Gilman Program experience enabled her to become better rounded in learning from a global perspective. It was important for Elle to also study Italian so that she could conduct interviews for her research. However, she has dyslexia and autism, making research and change difficult for her to understand. With the extensive research of both Italian and her research topic of "Women in Politics," it took ample time for her to truly create good work. She felt the need to work harder than most students.

Elle is currently an undergraduate at Virginia Tech (VT) studying philosophy, politics, economics, and political science.

- Pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Virginia Tech
- VT Women's Rugby Player
- 2022 Governor's Fellow, working for the Virginia Governor under the Secretary of Education



Emerson Johnston

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Germany (virtual), 2021



“The Gilman Program showed me how important working with people in other countries was to my career and how to network with those communities.”

Emerson studied abroad virtually in Germany as a Gilman Scholar in summer 2021. Her Gilman Program focused on human rights communication and rhetoric in World War II-era Germany. She was surprised to find that her sexual orientation became a significant part of her studies as she learned about the treatment of sexual minorities in Nazi Germany. Learning about the role anti-gay rhetoric played in building the Third Reich was very interesting. Additionally, it was interesting for Emerson to learn about the difference in how lesbians and gay men were treated given how significant the difference in perceived sexual deviance was. Emerson's own identity added a personalized perspective during these classroom conversations.

Emerson believes that studying abroad is a beneficial experience for any student and a must do for students of international affairs or political science. The Gilman Program showed her how important working with people in other countries was to her career and how to network with those communities. She hosts meetings with people around the world almost every week, and that is something she would have found impossibly daunting prior to her Gilman experience. The Gilman Program and the courses it helped fund helped solidify Emerson's path for graduate school. Before studying abroad, she was unsure how much of an international element she wanted to add to her political science background, and now she is applying to master's programs in international affairs.

- Pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics and a Bachelor of Arts in History, Culture, and Law at Northeastern University
- Sergeant and Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps Cadet with the U.S. Army
- Global Partnerships Manager at HUMAN Security



Ishmael Williams

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Peru, 2018



“As a career counselor, I am helping students better their thoughts, actions, and lives.”

Ishmael interned abroad as a Gilman Scholar during summer 2018. His experience as a Gilman Scholar confirmed his passion for public and community health and sharpened his desire to help people. Ishmael believes it is important to explore and experience as much of the world as possible, and that to better understand the world is to better understand yourself. At the beginning of his internship in Peru, Ishmael experienced “culture shock”; this opportunity gave him a new lens through which to view his life.

After returning from Peru, Ishmael completed a fellowship with the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and later conducted research with the Brancati Center at Johns Hopkins University as a Doctoral Diversity Scholar.

As a Gilman Scholar, Ishmael learned that health care is not the only way to help people improve the quality of their lives. Ishmael currently works as a career counselor with the Potomac Job Corps Center at a vocational school for disadvantaged, at-risk youth. Although he is not currently working in public health, Ishmael is helping others better their lives through other important avenues.

- Earned a Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Science from Howard University
- First-generation college student
- Doctoral Diversity Scholar at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine



Jasmine Whaley

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Jordan, 2012



“Studying abroad gives you an additional layer of nuance that is crucial for understanding the political dynamics of a country and, by extension, the world.”

Jasmine studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar in Jordan in 2012. The Gilman Program helped deepen her interest in international politics. Studying abroad gave her an additional layer of nuance that is crucial for understanding the political dynamics of a country and, by extension, the world. Studying in the Middle East and visiting Jerusalem and Jericho also gave Jasmine an appreciation for just how young the United States is. Now that 10 years have passed since Jasmine studied in Jordan, she can say with certainty that every professional milestone she has reached in the past decade was a direct result of her Gilman experience abroad. From learning about human rights in the West Bank to water policy in Amman, the connections she made, both professionally and personally, have proven to be lifelong.

Studying abroad also gave her a perspective and awareness that one simply cannot grasp having only stayed in the United States. The Gilman Program gave Jasmine the confidence to pursue a Master of Public Policy in Berlin, Germany, and is the reason she has been able to work with transnational think tanks, government administrators, and high-level policymakers. Now, as the Founder and CEO of The Whaley Group, Jasmine helps social entrepreneurs, activists, and organizers turn transformative ideas into effective policy change. She believes our current political system is failing the most vulnerable populations and that the solution is redesigning those systems to center the human experience instead of corporate profit.

- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and International Studies from Elon University
- Earned a Master of Public Policy from the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin
- Founder and CEO of The Whaley Group, a policy solutions consulting firm



Kofi Asante Asamoah

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Ghana, 2017



"I am grateful for the opportunities in which the Gilman Program has provided for me over the past few years, including being able to study public health while engaging in an insightful medical internship in Ghana, and being able to meet leaders in various industries through Gilman seminars."

Kofi interned abroad as a Gilman Scholar in Ghana in summer 2017. He participated in a medical internship at the Greater Accra Regional Hospital while studying reproductive health and Twi language at the University of Ghana. His experience as a Gilman Scholar was vital to his graduate studies 5 years later, when in one course he helped develop a public health pilot intervention to tackle maternal mortality in Liberia. Furthermore, being a medical intern enabled Kofi to explore the inner workings of the health care systems in Ghana and West Africa.

The Gilman Program enabled Kofi to explore his passions in health care. He found that the best utilization of his skills and talents is through a combination of engaging in global health and medicine. He wants to leave his unique mark on the world by combining these passions and contribute to decreasing health disparities around the globe. Kofi's medical internship and study of reproductive health in Ghana allowed him to see the globalization of health care. He came to realize the way in which health care connects different countries and cultures through working in collaboration to improve the health of people around the world. Kofi hopes to embody his global citizenry throughout his medical and health care career.

Kofi is currently pursuing a Master of Public Health (MPH) in Global Health Program Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health. In conjunction with his pursuit of his MPH degree, Kofi is also preparing to become a NASBITE Certified Global Business Professional through the George Washington University Center for International Business Education and Research.

- Earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology at Villanova University
- Pursuing a MPH at the George Washington University
- Planning to attend medical school after completing his MPH



Kyla Denwood

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador

Virtual-Global, 2021



“In pursuing this internship, I also learned to be flexible and open to new opportunities.”

Kyla interned abroad through a virtual global internship as a Gilman Scholar in 2021. She completed a virtual summer internship with the Africa team at the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), where she researched and prepared briefs, memoranda, and marketing materials on a variety of development and trade topics. Her internship with USTDA encouraged her to pursue a career at the nexus of economic development, trade, and private sector engagement. In working on a small team, she was able to draft action memoranda and prepare briefs that were seen by top officials at the agency. Researching global market trends in key African economic sectors as well as regional and country-specific development trends helped her recognize the importance of Africa in the global economy, especially as the continent engages in a demographic transition. It also helped her realize the importance of U.S. competitiveness in trade relations.

Since completing her Gilman Program experience, Kyla has connected with other Gilman Alumni, including working together with another Gilman alum to apply for and receive a U.S. Department of State's Citizen Diplomacy Action Fund grant. They are applying their grant to start a nonprofit organization that promotes State Department exchanges and career opportunities to diverse college students from non-coastal areas, places typically underrepresented in international affairs. Additionally, Kyla was selected to represent the United States as a Youth Ambassador at Expo 2020 Dubai. She now works as a Research Assistant with the Africa Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In her position, she is performing policy research on Africa-Europe relations and tech policy throughout the continent.

- Earned a Bachelor of Science in Economics and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a concentration in International Development from Tulane University
- Awarded 2022 Citizen Diplomacy Action Fund grant to develop the Youth International Leadership Initiative
- Research assistant for the Africa Program at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace



Kyle Hetherington

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Spain (virtual), 2021



“The Gilman Program gave me an opportunity to explore a different culture and reaffirmed my love of public service.”

Kyle studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar through a virtual program in Spain in 2021. Through this program, he refined his conversational Spanish skills and developed an understanding of Spanish culture, government, and history. His greatest takeaways from his time with the Gilman Program are the community and relationships he created and maintained during the pandemic. The relationships with instructors, administrators, and fellow students improved his experience ten times over.

Kyle’s virtual study abroad program influenced his interest in both the Spanish language and the culture of Spain. His experience reignited his passion for international exchanges and relationship building with the international community.

Kyle was recently accepted to a Master of Legal Studies program at the University of Arizona, and he looks forward to continuing to work toward his goal of public service, something that his Gilman experience reaffirmed his love for.

- Earned an Associate of Arts in Psychology from Pima Community College
- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Law from the University of Arizona
- Program Assistant with the Metropolitan Education Commission of Tucson, Arizona



Madhat Fares

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
United Arab Emirates, 2017



“By studying abroad, I found that I enjoy learning about people and their traditions while sharing my own.”

Madhat studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar during the 2017–2018 academic year at the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. As a civil and environmental engineering major, the Gilman Program gave him the opportunity to explore a new country and immerse himself in a new culture.

The infrastructure in the United Arab Emirates is among the best in the world, and it was a great experience for him to take civil engineering courses there. Studying and living in the United Arab Emirates for a full academic year also allowed Madhat to explore his Arabic heritage first hand. He took Arabic language classes and practiced speaking with native Arabic speakers. Through studying abroad, Madhat found that he enjoys learning about people and their traditions while sharing his own with them. He wants to continue to travel and gain new experiences and help others do the same.

Madhat is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in civil engineering, with a focus on hydraulics and flood analysis, and hopes to one day teach at the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates.

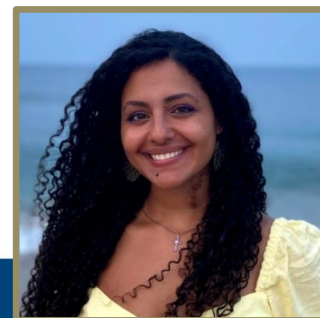
- Earned a Bachelor of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Villanova University
- Earned a Master of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Villanova University
- Currently pursuing a Ph.D. in civil engineering at the University of Michigan



Marina Shenouda

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador

Mexico (virtual), 2021



“Studying abroad with Gilman motivated me to learn more about health systems in other countries.”

Marina studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar through a virtual program in Mexico in 2021. Double majoring in biomedical science and Spanish gave Marina a unique perspective during her virtual program and led her to explore the practice of traditional medicine in Mexico. Studying abroad with Gilman motivated Marina to learn more about health systems in other countries. Additionally, her Gilman experience improved her written and spoken Spanish as well as her cultural literacy. This has proved very helpful so far because she encounters many Spanish-speaking patients and is able to converse with them directly in their own language and help them navigate any health care barriers they may encounter.

Marina's experiences as a medical student, polyglot, and researcher in the field of global health gives her an additional unique perspective that she can share with others. She speaks Spanish, Arabic, Italian, and Japanese. Her passion for foreign languages and cultures has even guided her medical interests. She was accepted into the Global Health Scholarly Concentration at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and is currently spearheading a research project that investigates speech outcomes in cleft palate patients from different language backgrounds. She is expanding this research to work with a cleft palate institution in Cairo, Egypt.

- Earned a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Science and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish from the University of Houston
- Pursuing medical degree at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
- Focusing on global health as part of her medical degree



Matty Lents

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Spain, 2018



“A study abroad experience will shape you in unexpected ways.”

Matty studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar in spring 2018 in Barcelona, Spain. As an applied linguistics major, studying abroad in Spain helped Matty develop a professional network that expanded their career prospects. Growing up queer and Mormon in a small town meant Matty had to work very hard to gain access to the same stability and opportunities their peers were given. Matty was the only queer student in their study abroad group, and the only Gilman recipient. The networking opportunities that became available to them after their experience have created stability and opportunity for them and their community.

Matty now works for a Software as a Service (SaaS) company as an Enablement Specialist. They say working in a tech start-up is a lot like studying abroad; things change every day, and it is important to remain adaptable. They work with international clients, so the cross-cultural skills Matty developed while studying abroad remain useful even today. “A study abroad experience will shape you in unexpected ways. When in doubt, study abroad and apply for the Gilman Scholarship Program!”

- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in Applied Linguistics from Portland State University
- Holds a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certificate
- Enablement Specialist at 15Five, a SaaS company



Nathaniel Sandoval

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Spain (virtual), 2021



“The Gilman Program impacted my passions and interests by tapping into a field I’ve always wanted to operate.”

Nathaniel interned virtually as a Gilman Scholar in 2021 with a program based in Spain. This virtual internship experience allowed Nathaniel to practice his Spanish language skills and learn how to adapt to time zone differences when scheduling meetings as well as working within a flexible schedule as a business development intern.

Virtually interning abroad changed Nathaniel’s perspectives by opening him to a cultural exchange through his computer and understanding the difference between the way of life here in the United States and in Spain. His Gilman Program experience has influenced what he does now by encouraging his desire to pursue other fellowships and scholarships. Nathaniel always wanted to find ways to travel and make a difference in the communities he would be staying in. In addition, Nathaniel is looking to build a professional career around public speaking and is an aspiring educator. Everything he is doing now revolves around these goals and participating in the Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship Program.

- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Rhode Island
- Certified CliftonStrengths coach through Leadership Rhode Island
- Engagement Team Representative with GIVE



Nicole Bettè

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Sweden, 2014



“The most memorable and fulfilling experiences don’t happen in the classroom; they happen with the friendships you cultivate while abroad.”

Nicole studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar in spring 2014 at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden. Her experience abroad fueled her passion for other cultures and languages, and she continued to study Swedish and Portuguese after returning from her time abroad.

Nicole’s Gilman Program experience was fundamental to what she does now. The design thinking coursework she completed abroad inspired her to pursue a career as a human factors engineer and provided her with the experience she needed to kick start a career in medical device design. Design thinking provided foundational knowledge by which she solves problems and makes decisions at work. Without her international experience, that training would have been inaccessible to her, given that the only design thinking course at that time was offered at Stanford University.

Studying abroad as someone with a disability and chronic illness also gave Nicole a unique perspective, and she had to overcome many barriers. She looks forward to supporting other Gilman Scholars with disabilities and chronic illness to help them have a successful experience abroad.

- Earned a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
- Studied design thinking and biotechnology in Stockholm and engineering in a global context at the University of Michigan
- Senior human factors engineer at embecta, a medical device company



Nicole Rothenberger

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
South Korea, 2018



“Don’t limit yourself to what you are comfortable with because it’s harder to grow if you stay complacent.”

Nicole studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar during the 2018–2019 academic year at Hanyang University in Seoul, South Korea. Nicole had dreams of studying abroad since the seventh grade, but, growing up in a very rural state such as North Dakota, she did not have the opportunity to see the world until she received a Gilman Scholarship.

Her time in South Korea was her first immersive experience with another culture. This experience shaped her career trajectory and worldview in many ways. Studying abroad is the best decision she has made for herself, and it has made her a better, more understanding, and compassionate person than she was beforehand.

Nicole gained a newfound interest in cultural studies and intercultural communications, which influenced the rest of her time as an undergraduate. Her senior thesis, using a comparison of the United States and South Korea, focused on how culture affected responses to COVID-19. As she continues her education, Nicole intends to study culture and how it affects our everyday lives, as well as how it affects governmental and political climates.

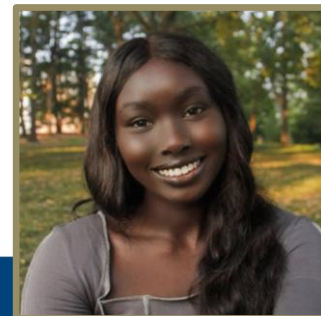
Nicole is currently a social media manager and general manager of a small business in Grand Forks, ND. She is preparing to go back to school next year to pursue graduate education in communications.

- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in International and Intercultural Communication from the University of North Dakota
- Wrote her senior thesis focusing on the influence of culture on responses to COVID-19
- Holds certifications from the University of North Dakota in diversity & inclusion, conflict mediation, and professional & executive communication



Nyamal Gatluak

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
South Korea, 2021



“The Gilman Program allowed me to learn more about topics I’m passionate about.”

Nyamal studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar in fall 2021 in South Korea at Korea University. As a double major in entrepreneurship and journalism/mass communication, her coursework abroad surrounded business, media, and language courses. Nyamal has always had a deep interest in film and visual storytelling, but there were not many opportunities to learn about these topics in depth at her home university in Iowa. While at Korea University, Nyamal was able to take courses such as “Apocalyptic Film,” which furthered her interest in film and digital media as a whole.

Nyamal’s Gilman Program experience gave her the confidence to create a nonprofit. At Korea University, she was surrounded by many entrepreneurially minded students who took the initiative to start their own projects. That environment made her want to achieve more and increased her confidence about what was possible.

She recently cofounded BalangNyal Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing women with wellness and clothing products and helping them recognize the opportunities available to them. Her official title for the BalangNyal Foundation is Executive Director. She also interned in 2022 as a Business Transformation Intern at WorldStrides to learn more about the educational travel industry.

- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in Entrepreneurship and Journalism and Mass Communications from Iowa State University
- Interned at WorldStrides in 2022
- Cofounder and Executive Director of BalangNyal Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting women



Ryuu Uchiha

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Japan, 2018



“While abroad, you can gain new knowledge, look at things from a different perspective, and figure out who you are.”

Ryuu studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar in 2018 in Japan. Studying in Japan allowed Ryuu to explore his Japanese heritage and reexplore career possibilities. He realized that his identity is critical to his career, and his experience in Japan allowed him to reevaluate his desired career path.

Studying in Japan reopened Ryuu’s eyes to international work possibilities. Coming from a family of Mexican, Brazilian, and Japanese heritage has influenced the way Ryuu views international issues, and he believes studying abroad is really important, specifically for multiracial people. A study abroad experience can be healing and help turn a weakness into a powerful strength. While abroad, you can gain new knowledge and perspectives and figure out who you are. The knowledge gained abroad can change your life, your neighborhood, and your family.

Ryuu currently works as a Project Manager for one of the largest electrical contractors in the United States and is also a part-time Senior Corporate Paralegal. He feels he works better in teams and adapts to working culture as a result of his Gilman experience.

- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Government from the University of Arizona
- Project Manager at Rosendin
- Completed graduate coursework in legal studies at the University of Arizona



Samantha Raghu

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Thailand, 2019



“Gilman provided me with the resources and confidence to prioritize creating pathways of opportunities abroad in my future endeavors.”

Samantha studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar in fall 2019 at Chiang Mai University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. As a sociology major, her understanding of the field was strengthened as she witnessed how sectors of Thai society (e.g., demographics, beauty standards, politics) shaped her conversations and experiences with local Thai members. She also valued being able to understand Thai culture on a personal level. As a Guyanese woman, Samantha encountered many similarities to her own collectivist background in her interactions with Thai locals; this provided her with a sense of belonging while abroad.

While participating in weekend homestays in Northern Thailand, Samantha engaged with local Hmong and Karen families, where she learned about their culture and values, and the importance of preserving local heritage in the era of modernism. From these experiences, her interest in community engagement grew, and she pursued similar opportunities in her hometown in Minnesota following her return.

The intercultural communication skills Samantha gained abroad allow her to better interact with a wide array of individuals in her career. Her experience of adapting to different customs and cultural settings in Thailand strengthened her ability to adapt as she transitions into new and different work environments and roles.

- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Gustavus Adolphus College
- 2022 Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Semi-Finalist (Czech Republic)
- Cash management specialist with Premier Banks Minnesota



Scout Osborne

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador

Mexico, 2019



“To study abroad was to see different ways of life: how similar and distinct our cultures and ways of thinking really are.”

Scout studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar in 2019 in Mexico. Studying abroad tested his self-confidence and ability to acknowledge and regulate his own emotions in a completely unfamiliar context. He also became more open-minded, not to simply accept everyone as if they are perfect, but to accept people with all their strengths and flaws as they are.

The Gilman Program solidified his passion and interest in the liberal arts, particularly in culture and language studies. The Gilman Program enabled Scout to think in terms of both science and cultural studies—a way to merge his passions and interests.

Through his experience, it became apparent that his career in research must consider the context of global health. Community practices, spread of health education, and access to medical care is vastly different in different places around the world. In research, we cannot focus so narrowly on only what a disease looks like in the United States if we want to eradicate it worldwide.

Currently, Scout works as a Research Technologist II in the Department of Microbiology-Immunology at Northwestern University. He studies Kaposi sarcoma-associated herpesvirus, a virus known for causing AIDS-defining cancers in patients with HIV.

- Earned a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish from Oregon State University
- Attended U.S. Future Leaders Topical Seminar on Natural Resources in Wyoming in 2019
- Currently working as a Research Technologist II in the Department of Microbiology-Immunology at Northwestern University



Silvana Barbosa

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador

Thailand, 2018



“The Gilman Program helped me affirm my passion for public health and recognize the importance of investing in the environments in which people grow, work, live, and play.”

Silvana studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar in spring 2018 in Thailand. She intentionally selected a program that would allow her to experience and immerse in a culture that is different from her own because she believes it is critical to engage in experiences where we not only learn about our differences as human beings but also embrace them.

While abroad, Silvana lived with a Thai roommate and completed a Thai language course that allowed her to communicate with locals. She also completed field research on local health promotion efforts and participated in numerous site visits to learn about Thailand's universal health care system. Upon completion of the program, Silvana had acquired job-related skills, and her knowledge regarding community public health grew exponentially.

The Gilman Program helped Silvana affirm her passion for public health and recognize the importance of investing in the environments in which people grow, work, live, and play. The program she participated in was focused on community public health and included taking classes, conducting site visits to various medical facilities, and participating in a semester-long health promotion project. At the end of Silvana's program, she has affirmed her interest in public health and is dedicated to finding ways to improving and maximizing the health and quality of life for all persons.

- Earned a Bachelor of Science in Health Policy and Management from Providence College
- Works as a Grassroots Program Administrator for the American Society of Anesthesiologists
- Pursuing a Master of Public Health degree at the George Washington University



Tracy Evatt

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Costa Rica (virtual), 2021



“Challenging myself is something I always want to strive toward. Gilman has allowed me to gain better communication skills and confidence in the unknown.”

Tracy studied abroad virtually as a Gilman Scholar in summer 2021 on a program based in Costa Rica. Initially nervous to participate in the program, he is grateful that he accepted the opportunity. The experience helped him develop better communication skills and confidence in new situations. For his virtual study abroad, Tracy took a Latin American cultures course. This course discussed topics ranging from geopolitics to gender norms and Latin American exports. Among the many varied conversations the class engaged in, Tracy was able to contribute due to his experience overseas and exposure to multiple cultures growing up as a military child. His upbringing allowed him to be able to more fully participate in his virtual study abroad.

Tracy’s Gilman experience helped solidify the idea that he wants an internationally focused career in the future. Though still an undergraduate student, Tracy hopes to gain an internship with an international company that will launch him to an international position after he graduates.

- Pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Marketing at Wright State University
- Grew up in a military family
- Intends to work abroad after graduating



Wisaam Haj

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
France & Italy, 2019



“Upon my return, I internalized a desire to step beyond the confines of the familiar and work towards becoming a globally minded citizen.”

Wisaam studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar in fall 2019 in France and Italy while attending Santa Barbara City College. During his time abroad, he completed coursework in film, art history, cinematography, and screenwriting. The Gilman Program allowed Wisaam to embark on a journey of self-discovery unhindered by what parents, friends, relatives, advisors, or teachers thought he *should* do. Wisaam’s experience as a Gilman Scholar opened avenues for him that he never would have previously pursued, including changing his major from economics to communications.

Wisaam is currently a fifth-year senior at the University of California at Santa Barbara and is teaching English as a second language to high school students. After graduation, he plans to pursue a Master of Business Administration and hopes to one day start his own manufacturing company to capitalize on his background in engineering, technology management, communication, and international business.

- International business major at Santa Barbara City College
- Transferred from community college to University of California at Santa Barbara
- Pursuing a Technology Management Program Certificate at the University of California at Santa Barbara



Xandria Akau

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador
Paris, 2019



“I gained a wider perspective by meeting and working with students from all over the world.”

Xandria studied abroad as a Gilman Scholar in summer 2019 at ESSCA School of Management in Paris. During her time there, she studied luxury brand marketing and international business. Prior to arriving at ESSCA, Xandria didn't like to rely on others. In Paris, she was alone in a country far from home. It was nerve-racking. While she was learning to be independent, she also learned to be a shoulder to lean on, as well as to lean on others. It reminded her to have a collective rather than individualistic mindset.

The experience provided Xandria a wider perspective by meeting and working with students from all over the world. Hawai'i, where she lives, has many different cultures, so having a widened perspective has allowed her to have more productive and meaningful relationships with colleagues, consumers, and everyone in between.

When she returned from studying abroad, she was promoted to Office Manager at the optometry office where she worked. The skills and experiences she gained abroad allowed her to lead and empower her team well. She had to make hard decisions each and every day. She has become more confident in who she is and set an example for her young female employees. In 2022 Xandria made the difficult decision to leave the optometry office after 5 incredible years and now works as a Property Services Coordinator at Mauna Kea Residences.

- Earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo
- Native Hawaiian
- Received Office Manager Certification from the Professional Eye Care Association of America in 2021

