

# Edwin Pineda Catalan

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador  
Denmark, 2022



***“Being away from home made me appreciate my home country and culture. Experiencing a different way of life abroad made me realize the unique aspects of my hometown that I took for granted. It gave me a deeper sense of belonging and pride when I came home.”***

Edwin studied abroad as a Gilman scholar during the fall of 2022 at the University of Copenhagen in Copenhagen, Denmark. His time in Denmark was an eye-opening experience that enabled him to fully immerse in a different culture with its traditions, customs, and ways of living and led to significant personal growth. He was propelled to learn and improve his language proficiency, which was both a taxing exercise and a rewarding experience that made him much more confident in trying to communicate in a new language. In addition, living abroad independently pushed Edwin out of his comfort zone and made him more self-reliant. It helped him boost his confidence and learn to adapt to various challenges with ease.

Edwin credits his Gilman Program experience for opening his eyes to new career pathways. Denmark not only sparked his curiosity through its diverse culture and academic environment but also enhanced his global awareness and deepened his appreciation for social causes. He became more passionate about international relations, human rights, and more, and was eager to delve deeper into these newfound areas of interest. After his return to the U.S., he moved to Washington, D.C., and interned at the Office of Congressional Affairs at the Embassy of Mexico, where he monitored and analyzed over 100 legislative bills from the 117th and 118th U.S. Congress, focusing on central themes in Mexico-U.S. relations such as trade policy, national security, and immigration.

Edwin is currently in California and intends to return to Washington, D.C., for the next step in his career. He is excited to be a Gilman Alumni Ambassador and help expand the Gilman Program's visibility and participation on university campuses. He also wants to give back to communities that may not have had the privilege to participate in opportunities that offer access to funding and academic resources and help students who want to gain knowledge of the world.

- Hometown: Los Angeles, California
- Earned a Bachelor of Arts in political science and a Bachelor of Arts in communication along with a minor in history from the University of California Santa Barbara (2023)
- Recipient of a University of California Santa Barbara Presidential Scholarship (2023) and a Hispanic Scholarship Fund Scholarship (2022)
- Participated in the Gilman Program's Study Tour to Brussels, Belgium, in November 2022 to learn about the European Union, how it functions, and its role in transatlantic relations

