

# Sophia Zheng

Gilman Program Alumni Ambassador  
New Zealand, 2023



*“My experience has broadened my understanding of the world, allowing me to engage with new ways of thinking and living. My time in New Zealand ignited my passion for international relations, deepening my understanding of global issues and social causes.”*

- Bachelor of Arts in economics and global commerce
- Desmond Hamlet Scholarship

Sophia’s journey studying abroad in New Zealand sparked a lifelong passion for exploration, intercultural immersion, and exchange, and helped to shape her personal and academic goals. Navigating daily life in a new country pushed her out of her comfort zone and fostered a greater sense of independence and adaptability.

Her time in New Zealand ignited Sophia’s interest in international relations and deepened her understanding of global issues and social causes. This transformative journey inspired her to explore a career in Washington, D.C., where she hopes to leverage her newfound insights and passions. The experience encouraged her to look beyond the familiar world of finance and banking and into new career paths that will give her opportunities to actively engage with global issues and contribute to meaningful change. Sophia is committed to helping students from diverse backgrounds access transformative opportunities, to show how such experiences are achievable for everyone.

Since returning to the United States, she has sought out opportunities to channel the insights and experiences gained from studying abroad into her academic and professional endeavors. Sophia’s study abroad experience encouraged her to look beyond the familiar and embrace new perspectives, making the unknown known. As a Gilman Alumni Ambassador, she is eager to share her journey and offer support to future Gilman scholars.

