

January 3, 2018

Dear Class of 1955,

It is difficult to comprehend the culture of a country that is more than 6,000 miles away; a place I had learned briefly about in history classes and only mentioned in the news when there are political disagreements. This far away land I am prefacing is China, a place I never thought I would be able to see but am so grateful that I did.

I have had the opportunity to travel abroad before but none of those experiences were quite like the one I had in China. To be honest, I did not really know what to expect of China. Through my economics classes, I knew that their economy and subsequently their living standards are rapidly growing and through my own consumption, I knew that much of what I buy in the United States is made in China. As far as food, people, and environment, I had no idea what to prepare or what to Google search and I suppose there was nothing that could have prepared me better than actually being in the environment and meeting the people and eating the food. I realized that Shanghai is just a larger and cleaner New York City. I learned that in places like Guiyang, there is gross malinvestment and many people are still living in poverty while in places like Shanghai and Beijing are home to some of the richest people in the world. All of these cities I just mentioned are cities I saw with my own eyes, smelled with my own nose, and heard with my own ears. This is something I could have never gotten from a YouTube video or a Google search.

In China, I took an economics class dealing with the macroeconomic economy of China and its history. It was such an eye opening experience that I have hopes to travel back to China and do so with more of a focus on learning their language to better immerse myself in their culture. I would have never been so engaged in the topic of the class and never would have realized how amazing China is without the financial help the Class of 1955 Off-Campus Studies Award. This experience helped me realize that this far away land is really much closer than we think and has inspired me to continue traveling and getting to know other cultures. I do not know where my life will take me after graduation but I hope I can work in a career that deals in international affairs so I am able to use this experience and hopefully gain more.

With warm regards and many thanks,

Ethan Berube '19



Class of 1955 Off-Campus Studies Award



