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Students Interning in Asia Share Experiences

July 22, 2015

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University biology major Jenni Chlebek '16 planted more than 11,000 rice seeds in a lab in the Philippines to test new varieties. In Hong Kong, nursing major Sana Shafiuddin '17 has observed differences in the way Chinese and American caregivers understand dementia. And International Studies major Andrea Fortner '16 is helping plan activities for students attending Technos College International Week in Tokyo.

These students and 12 others are interning in Asia this summer, thanks to a \$100,000 grant from the Freeman Foundation. Two more students will be placed in Hong Kong during their study abroad experiences this fall. The Freeman Foundation grant provides funding for airfare, housing, living allowances and all internship placement costs.

The Freeman Foundation, a private foundation with offices in New York and Honolulu, works to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the United States and countries of east Asia. "All the internships we have arranged not only fulfill the Freeman Foundation's goal of having American students work and interact with Asians in actual work settings, but also give the students the opportunity to work with people from all over the globe," said Illinois Wesleyan Professor of Sociology Teddy Amoloza, who led efforts to secure the grant.

As Chlebek prepared to leave the United States for her experience in the Philippines, she wrote about her gratitude for the opportunity. "I have begun to concentrate in Botany in my undergraduate studies at Illinois Wesleyan University," she wrote in her blog. "*Oryza sativa* is the scientific name for Asian rice. For the next two months, I will be studying this crop and join [the International Rice Research Institute's] mission to help farmers feed the growing population of the world.

"With this scholarship [the Freeman grant] I can make sure I am one step closer to fulfilling my dream of pursuing a career in plant biology research while continuing to also make a difference in the lives of others," she wrote. "I'm going to arrive with open arms, challenge my comfort zone, and let down all barriers."

Each student is sharing observations and travel adventures through a blog, social media posts or presentations on campus.

Student Blogs:



Hong Kong, PRC - Lingnan University
Cindy Basilio
Evan Mok-Lamme
Sana Shafiuddin



Japan - Technos
Andrea Fortner



Philippines - Gawad-Kalinga
Savannah Feher
Rebecca Fiedler
Jazmyne Kellogg
Kirsten Slaughter



Philippines - International Rice Research Institute
Jenni Chlebek
Nicole Chlebek
Jessica Edwards
Ariella Tavor



Philippines - St. Scholastica's
Carly Floyd
Kelsey Maka