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Students to Intern in Asia, Thanks to Freeman Foundation Grant

May 10, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— More than two dozen Illinois Wesleyan University students will intern in Asia starting in June, thanks to a \$400,000 grant from the Freeman Foundation.

The Freeman Foundation grant covers airfare, housing, a living allowance, and all internship placement and visa costs for the students. With offices in New York and Honolulu, the Freeman Foundation works to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the United States and countries of east Asia. The \$400,000 grant, payable over two years, is the second internship grant received from the Freeman Foundation.

"The successful completion of the Asia internship program last year was key to obtaining the renewal funding from the Freeman Foundation. More IWU students will be exposed to Asian culture and will have the experience of working and interacting with Asians in a real work setting," said Professor of Sociology Teddy Amoloza, who has served as director of the program from its inception. She has worked closely with [Hart Career Center](#) staff and the [International Office](#), and with [Asian Studies](#) and [International Studies](#) faculty to implement the program.

The first group of IWU Freeman Asia interns traveled to the region in 2015 as a result of a \$100,000 grant from the Freeman Foundation. Several of the students who applied for the opportunity in 2016 said they were heavily influenced by the "fantastic experiences" of last year's cohort.

One of this year's students is student athlete Eric Rydell '17. He said his track and field teammate Ariella Tavor '16 interned last year at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Baños, Philippines. "She said the whole experience – from the travel to the culture and the people – was great, so she kind of pushed me to apply," said Rydell. He will intern at Human Nature, a top Filipino brand of natural and organic cosmetics and personal products. Human Nature is a new internship site in this year's IWU program.

Rydell said he considered the IWU Freeman Asia program a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel outside of the United States and work for a summer with almost no cost to me and to represent Illinois Wesleyan in a very different way."

He said his experience at Human Nature will focus on social enterprise development. "I'm excited to understand how people work and to compare differences in the workplace to those here in the U.S.," said Rydell.

This year's Freeman Foundation grant has allowed Illinois Wesleyan to expand the number of students in the program and also provide additional internship sites. New placements this year and the students interning at those sites are:

- **Human Nature, Manila** – Elizabeth Oltman '17 (psychology major from Port Byron, Ill.); Eric Rydell '17 (psychology major from St. Joseph, Ill.)
- **Akita International University, Akita City, Japan** – Andrew Litherland '18 (computer science major from Le Roy, Ill.)
- **Food & Nutrition Research Institute, Manila** – Keila Magafas '18 (biology major from Chicago); Susan Tonin '18 (mathematics and economics double major from Beach Park, Ill.); Hyeon-Bin (David) Yoon '17 (nursing major from Bloomington, Ill.); Brianna Dao '17 (nursing major from Rockford, Ill.)
- **Institute of East and West Studies, Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea** – Zoe Bouras '18 (International Studies major from Aurora, Ill.); Molly Johnson '17 (political science and International Studies double major from Westmont, Ill.)

Internship sites continuing from last year and this year's students include:

- **Gawad Kalinga** – Suchana Chaulagain '18 (biology major from Bloomington, Ill.); Morgan Flynn '18 (biology major from Sherman, Ill.); Jessica Gutheil '17 (psychology and Hispanic Studies double major from Libertyville, Ill.); Brandon Honig '17 (environmental studies and political science double major from Elmhurst, Ill.); Christopher Taraszka '17 (environmental studies major from Burbank, Ill.); Nate Wilkins '17 (psychology major from Freeland, Mich.)
- **IRRI** – Piotr Barnas '17 (biology major from Hampshire, Ill.); Kiersten Bergquist '18 (environmental studies major from Oak Lawn, Ill.); Abigail Brown '17 (biology major from Des Peres, Mo.); Jamie Gradishar '17 (biology major from Lombard, Ill.); Mansi Patel '18 (biology major from Schaumburg, Ill.); Vishnu Divya Velupula '18 (biology major from Bloomington, Ill.)
- **Lingnan University, Hong Kong** – Emma Alcock '17 (sociology and Hispanic Studies double major from Wheaton, Ill.); Regina Blaskie '17 (International Studies and political science double major from Shorewood, Ill.); Aida Cheung '18 (history major from Rowland Heights, Calif.); Citlalli Gonzalez '18 (International Studies major from Melrose Park, Ill.)
- **Technos International College, Tokyo** – Kyle Serafico '17 (nursing major from Buena Park, Calif.)



First row from left: Vishnu Divya Velupula, Keila Magafas, Aida Cheung, Susan Tonin, Citlalli Gonzales, Suchana Chaulagain
Second row from left: David Yoon, Zoe Bouras, Brianna Dao, Mansi Patel, Kiersten Bergquist, Morgan Flynn
Third row from left: Piotr Barnas, Christopher Taraszka, Brandon Honig, Kyle Serafico
Fourth row from left: Nathaniel Wilkins, Jamie Gradishar, Emma Alcock, Abigail Brown, Jessica Gutheil
Last row: Elizabeth Oltman, Eric Rydell
Not pictured: Andrew Litherland, Regina Blaskie, Molly Johnson



Carly Floyd '17 (second from right), who interned last summer in the Philippines, like other Freeman interns [kept a blog](#) of her experiences.