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Freeman Asia Interns Blog About Experiences

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Freeman Asia Interns Blog About Experiences

July 20, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— On a Manila thoroughfare, psychology major [Nathaniel Wilkins '17](#) observes people living in extreme poverty next door to extraordinary wealth and compares the same wealth disparities to the United States. From Hong Kong, international studies and political science double major [Gina Blaskie '17](#) realizes her disappointment in the lack of world leadership on the refugee crisis doesn't mean she's blameless for not helping more. And in Korea, [Molly Johnson's](#) humorous yet heartfelt observations of trying to blend in as a 6'1" blond woman in Asia helps her understand what it means to feel marginalized.

These young adults are among 26 Illinois Wesleyan students interning in locations throughout Asia this summer, thanks to a \$400,000 grant from the Freeman Foundation. The grant is the second such award received from the Freeman Foundation; this year's grant allowed expansion of the program to include additional sites in Akita City, Japan; Seoul, Korea; and two locations in Manila, the Philippines.

The Freeman grant covers airfare, housing, a living allowance, and all internship placement and visa costs for the students. Sharing observations and travel adventures through blogs and social media posts, students have written witty missives about rocky starts in their temporary homes; poignant posts about missing family, friends and air conditioning; and thoughtful observations on political systems, privilege and perseverance. They've learned how to pulverize soil while walking behind an obstinate water buffalo, acclimating themselves to workplace cultures in Asia (NEVER be late to work in Japan), and navigate mass transit even though they speak only a few words of Cantonese or Tagalog.

In his final blog post before leaving Japan, computer science major and Freeman intern [Andrew Litherland '18](#) writes: "I would say that I have grown quite a bit professionally after this internship experience, and am really thankful that I had such an amazing

opportunity to visit a country that I have wanted to for such a long time. I learned so much about Japanese culture, language and tradition —and most importantly my interest in the country and language has only increased from spending time here! I can't wait to come back someday."



Student Blogs

Akita International University



[Andrew Litherland '18](#)

Technos College – Japan



[Kyle Serafico '17](#)

Lingnan U. – Hong Kong



[Emma Alcock '17](#)

[Regina Blaskie '17](#)

[Aida Cheung '18](#)

[Citlalli Gonzalez '18](#)

FNRI – Philippines



[Keila Magafas '18](#)

[Susan Tonin '18](#)

[Hyeon-Bin \(David\) Yoon '17](#)

[Brianna Dao '17](#)

International Rice Research Institute – Philippines



[Piotr Barnas '17](#)

[Kiersten Bergquist '18](#)

[Abigail Brown '17](#)

[Jamie Gradishar '17](#)

[Mansi Patel '18](#)

[VishnuDivya Velupula '18](#)

GK Enchanted Farm – Philippines



[Suchana Chaulagain '18](#)

[Morgan Flynn '18](#)

[Jessica Gutheil '17](#)

[Brandon Honig '17](#)

[Christopher Taraszka '17](#)

[Nate Wilkins '17](#)

IEWS – South Korea



[Zoe Bouras '18](#)

[Molly Johnson '17](#)

Human Nature – Philippines



[Elizabeth Oltman '17](#)

[Eric Rydell '17](#)