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## Freeman Asia Internship Program Continues After Pandemic Gap

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# Freeman Asia Internship Program Continues After Pandemic Gap

July 1, 2022

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – This summer, a group of 17 students is traveling to two countries in Asia to participate in internship projects and immerse themselves in rich cultures through the Freeman Asia Internship program at Illinois Wesleyan University.

[The IWU Freeman Asia Internship program](#) is funded by a grant from the Freeman Foundation. In 2015, the Freeman Foundation awarded IWU the initial grant of \$100,000 to pilot the program. In the succeeding years until 2020, the annual grant was for \$200,000. Since its beginning, professor of sociology Teddy Amoloza, who was instrumental in securing the grant, has been the director.

“The opportunity to live in Asia as interns – working with Asians and being immersed in the local culture is an invaluable college experience,” said Amoloza. “This experience will be very challenging to our students but it will be an adventure of a lifetime that will be very impactful to them.”

This year's program comes after a two-year gap due to the COVID-19 pandemic and it has not come without challenges. Beginning with 23 students, uncertainty in Japanese travel regulations resulted in partners of the program rescinding their participation. Pre-COVID years typically saw 34-36 students participating in the program.

Despite the uncertainty, Amoloza has a positive outlook.

“Our persistence and determination paid off and I hope more students will be interested in this program next year,” she said. “We are grateful to our Asia partners who agreed last fall to plan for the summer internship despite the uncertainties due to the pandemic. Thankfully, travel restrictions eased in April and we were able to move forward.”

Students find their work and experience very rewarding. Sarah Baron '24 is an intern at the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) of the Philippine Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and has had a particularly enriching experience with Filipino culture.

“Over the course of this past week, I have been shown so much kindness and generosity,” said Baron. “I am not surprised by this, but I am incredibly grateful. I have so much knowledge to gain and so much to explore while I complete my internship through FNRI.”

All IWU sophomore and junior students – whether domestic or international – are welcome to apply, and all majors are considered in the application process. Accepted students will participate in internship projects lasting about two months. For each intern, the grant from the Freeman Foundation covers airfare, housing, living allowance, placement and visa costs.

Asia partners, internship placements and students selected this year include:

## DOST Food and Nutrition Research Institute - Nutrition Assessment and Monitoring Division – Philippines

Neal George '23, neuroscience major

Ankush Kecht '23, biology and international global studies major

Madelyn Schmitt '23, nursing major

## DOST Food and Nutrition Research Institute - Knowledge Diffusion Section– Philippines

Sarah Baron '24, neuroscience and psychology major

## DOST Food and Nutrition Research Institute - Technology Transfer Section – Philippines

Jessica Tran '23, psychology major

## International Rice Research Institute - Rice Breeding Innovation Platform – Philippines

Aidan Garrett '23, biology major

Garrit Stenerson '24, biology major

## International Rice Research Institute - Rice Genetic Design and Validation – Philippines

Katy Smit '23, biology major

## International Rice Research Institute - Sustainable Impact in Rice-based Systems – Philippines

Siqi Yang '23, environmental studies major

## International Rice Research Institute - Portfolio Management Office – Philippines

Elizabeth Shaver '23, English writing major

## St. Francis Cabrini Medical Center – Philippines

Mia Davis '23, nursing major

Jake Garcia '23, nursing major

Aileen Magafas '23, nursing and Hispanic studies major

## Shiro Oni Studio – Japan

Luisa Jhong Chung '23, art and marketing major

Rory Sloan '23, art major

## World Friendship Center – Japan

Aja Golliday '23, psychology and Japanese studies major

Laura Westpfahl '22, art major (supported by The Fund for Human Rights, Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice)

Follow the adventures of Freeman Asia interns through their [blog posts here](#).



Students participating in the IWU Freeman Asia internship program are traveling to Japan and Republic of the Philippines this summer.