



## Aid takes student abroad

Foundation scholarship helps student achieve dream of studying in a foreign country

BY SUJASH PURNA  
Staff Reporter

A foundation scholarship helped one Truman State student cover the entire cost of his study abroad trip to China. Sophomore Michael Fentress said he always wanted to see and explore places abroad, and the Truman study abroad program and foundation scholarship helped him fulfill his desire.

Fentress said he took language and economics courses at the University of Shanghai in Shanghai, China, last summer, and received a \$2,000 scholarship from the School of Business, supported by the Larry and Janet Rigdon Foundation.

"[The scholarship] was incredibly helpful in paying for the trip," Fentress said. "I was able to then also take a semester of scholarship from the University since I will be graduating a year early and then received an outside scholarship that, combined with everything else, was able to completely cover the cost of my trip."

Truman offers a variety of foundation scholarships, from business to biology to language, and the deadline for scholarship applications is approaching. Students can apply for a foundation scholarship to use for study abroad until Nov. 1, according to the University Foundation website.

After receiving his scholarship, Fentress said he had to plan his trip. He said he did not think it was necessary to know the Chinese language before going to China. He said he learned 10 basic Chinese phrases to communicate with the people there.

Fentress said he never had taken a Chinese language class, but through the program he was able to learn about Chinese culture.

Junior Alicia Hall was in the study abroad program group with Fentress.

"I would say that my time abroad certainly did put a lot of our culture here in America into a different perspective," Hall said. "It was very eye-opening, because you don't truly understand your own culture until you have to explain it to others, and you can't really identify individual aspects of it until you see how different or similar they are to things elsewhere."

Chinese professor Julie Minn said study abroad programs give students an opportunity to learn about a culture or country they didn't know before.

Minn said some students have stereotypical and inaccurate ideas about other countries.

"College students here in the Midwest know less about cultures around the world than college students in the East Coast or the Mid-Atlantic region," Minn said. "They don't know the modern China or India or Bangladesh. Things have changed. Developing countries are no more the way they were 50 years ago. Students should have a globalized concept."

Minn said she thinks every student should participate in a study abroad program.

"It changes your ideas, no matter what major you are. When [students] go to a different country, learn about a different culture, they actually know their own culture more. They can see the difference."

Minn said the study abroad program in China recently has been extended to include Taiwan. There, students will have the opportunity to teach English to elementary level kids. They also can live with a Taiwanese host family.

Readers interested in this program can find more information about the program by visiting [business.truman.edu/chinastudyabroad/](http://business.truman.edu/chinastudyabroad/).



Submitted photos  
Top, a view of the Great Wall. Above, one of the sights Fentress visited while abroad. Fentress said immersion in the culture is what helped him learn the most about China.

## Things I learned in CHINA

as said by Michael Fentress



### WHAT IS THE FOOD LIKE?

"After every meal you feel full, but the leftover food on the table is still a lot. You need to prepare to eat some very weird food, like bumblebee fries, snakes, octopus, shrimp fried with squid-ink, coagulated duck blood, cow brain and stinky tofu."

### ARE THE PEOPLE OF CHINA HOSPITABLE?

"[They were] always offering us tea or snacks. There were a lot of people that wanted to take us out to dinner or show us around the country."

### HOW IS THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA?

"It was magnificent in person. It is so much steeper than it appears in pictures. We got to ride toboggans down the wall [after walking on the wall] which was really cool."

### Submitted photo

Sophomore Michael Fentress poses at the Great Wall of China. Fentress traveled abroad last summer.



## STUDY ABROAD CHECKLIST



\*according to [www.studyabroad.truman.edu](http://www.studyabroad.truman.edu)

- Decide on your program.
- Get or renew a passport
- Determine the visa requirement for your host country. The Center for International Education [CIE] can provide this information.
- Get an International Student Identification Card from the CIE.
- Learn as much as you can about your host country.

- Apply for a credit card and debit card that can be used abroad or check with your current company to notify them of your plans.
- Choose classes and meet with your advisor or the division office about substitution of classes.
- Talk to your advisor about registration for the semester after you return.
- Arrange for housing abroad. The CIE will help you with this.
- Visit the Residence Life Office before you leave if you plan to live on campus the semester after you study abroad.

- Make arrangements with your landlord and roommates before you leave if you are living off campus.
- Check with the Financial Aid Office if you need financial assistance.
- Check with your doctor and the Center for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) for possible health concerns in your host country and to determine if you need vaccines.
- Get an international calling card.
- Update your email address with the Center for International Education.
  - Buy plane tickets to your host country and back to the U.S.
  - If you are living with a family in your host country, contact them before you leave.
- PACK!