

Gilman Scholarship Essays [[Apply Here](#)] | UCR Student 1

UCEAP Education Abroad Program London, UK, and Paris, France Spring 2024

[Statement of Purpose Essay](#)
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Statement of Purpose Essay

7,000 characters (2 pages)

In Spring 2024, I will be studying with the University of California's systemwide education abroad program (called "UCEAP") in two cities: London and Paris. I'll spend five weeks in each city studying humanities, focusing on urban conflict and ethnic diversity in global cities. I decided to study abroad because I want to be an international recruiter: I'd identify and hire talent from worldwide locations, inviting candidates to apply to U.S. roles. I chose this program because London and Paris are two of Europe's most multicultural cities, and having these cities as my school grounds is an experience that would enhance my cultural awareness to blossom in my career and deepen my understanding of diverse identities.

I decided to pursue recruiting in the U.S. entertainment industry because currently, the industry is not internationally inclusive. I strive to make roles in the industry accessible to those worldwide, and going abroad will significantly contribute to this goal. I was introduced to the field during my Talent Acquisition internship. I frequently shadowed my manager, who personalized the hiring process for all candidates based on their backgrounds. She brought to my attention that I currently have one lens - the American lens. This inspired me to study abroad; I want a multicultural perspective to enhance inclusivity in my future work.

My passion for international recruiting stems from my identity as a Black woman who understands the importance of accurate representation that reflects our society. I aim to bridge the gap between international and American recruiting by participating in London Business School's public networking sessions with the "Women in Business" club. Also, I will attend their Entrepreneur Speaker Series, which highlights many professionals' career insights. With these activities, I can connect with local students and ask professionals about their experience with international job hunting or recruiting.

Further adding to my recruiting knowledge, in Paris, my program offers the course "Cinema in a Global City." I want to discover how French cinema's social justice advocacy influences equal workforce opportunities. Additionally, I'd love to attend the film festival Champs-Élysées, which showcases American and French films while having panel discussions and Q&A sessions with producers. These opportunities would allow me to connect with the local community and ask professionals about their experience working in international business affairs.

On a personal note, I'm excited to explore more of my cultural identity in London and Paris. I've felt disconnected from my heritage as my family's history has been lost since the Great Migration. I chose

this program because there is a large African and Caribbean diaspora in both cities that I can explore. Connecting with others the best through art and music, I'm excited to attend Africa Oyé in London, an African music festival highlighting dozens of Reggae and Afrobeat artists! Having never attended a mass African cultural event, this would be extremely fun.

Transitioning to Paris, I will continue exploring Black culture at 100% Afriques, a festival celebrating Black paintings, photographs, and performances. Exploring art sites in the U.S. is a fun pastime of mine, and I'm intrigued to see the cultural differences in creativity. I'll also be taking a course centered around building my identity in modern France and learning how diverse cultures have built French society. In both cities, I'm excited to meet locals from similar backgrounds and foster meaningful connections.

Thoughtfully considering the logistics of my program, I am grateful I can use my University financial aid to cover some of the cost. This quarter-long program was a perfect option because it was cheaper than a semester program. Though there is still a \$6,000 gap I have been working to close. Additionally, as a first-generation college student, my family has fewer resources to provide for overseas opportunities. However, I have proactively worked full-time during the summer and obtained part-time school-year employment to prepare for my studies.

My study abroad preparation also includes building a strong academic foundation before my departure. I've completed 90% of my business degree requirements by taking 4 classes a quarter at UCR to ensure I can solely focus on my upper-division coursework in London and Paris. I've also attended many UCR Education Abroad student seminars and networking events. I have connected with other previous study abroad students and gained valuable first-hand advice on planning, navigating, and excelling in my studies. In Paris, I will be expected to navigate the city and overcome language barriers, so I have been taking a self-study language course to prepare.

Moreover, I haven't traveled much outside of the U.S., so cultural immersion has been a challenge I've been worried about overcoming. To prepare, I've read the book *"Like a Fish in Water,"* a valuable 'how-to' guide to study abroad. I've learned valuable strategies for becoming confident living in an unfamiliar environment. To thrive while studying abroad, I've learned I must drop assumptions and be aware of my host countries' cultural norms and values. My preparation is something I'm still working towards daily, and I'm excited for what experiences lie ahead.

I'm aware that studying abroad can not only bring experiences, but it can come with social challenges. In the past, I have experienced racial stereotyping in an unfamiliar environment. I got involved in a campus organization where most of the general members were of Asian heritage. I struggled with being the only Black woman of color. I had a heightened awareness of our racial differences, which made me feel isolated, disconnected, and struggling to connect with my peers. However, this experience taught me resilience and understanding differing cultural values are key to maximizing a positive experience.

When studying abroad, I may face similar challenges of loneliness and a lack of understanding of my and others' identities. I may encounter stereotypes about my skin color, social status, or personality. While abroad, I'm prepared to do the following: think before I react, redirect, and educate if appropriate. I know that racial stereotyping doesn't always stem from ill intent but from unconscious bias that everyone battles daily or a lack of knowledge. I've also taken time to research my host countries' views on social issues such as race and politics to prepare for difficult conversations that may arise.

Finally, studying abroad in London and Paris is the first step towards achieving my career aspirations and personal growth. With my preparation and ambition, I'm ready to make the unfamiliar familiar to maximize my educational experience. With the help of the Gilman scholarship, I can further prepare myself to excel on this educational journey and contribute to building a more inclusive global community in London and Paris!

Building Mutual Understanding Essay

2,959 characters (1 page)

U.S. citizens are commonly perceived as being ignorant of other cultures. This is depicted in some Americans' travel habits, media portrayals, and lack of geographical awareness. I want to counteract this narrative when studying abroad in London and Paris. I believe our ignorance is primarily due to a lack of exposure to other cultures and the disparity in accessible educational resources across the country. To build mutual understanding when studying abroad, I aim to expel stereotypes through open dialogue and showcase that I am studying abroad to foster multicultural appreciation and understanding.

When studying abroad, I feel I can represent one of America's proudest attributes: its diversity. I exemplify diversity as a Black woman who grew up in Los Angeles surrounded by many multicultural communities. This has led to me embracing many cultures outside my own, such as my passion for salsa dancing with no Latin heritage.

I plan to connect with locals abroad by engaging in cultural events and shared interests. In Paris, I'll attend the Salon du Livre (Paris Book Fair) for literary discussions and games, while in London, I'll participate in London Craft Week to explore crafts and workshops alongside fellow artists. While at these events, when locals inquire about my accent or background, I will have opportunities to highlight my experience being American. I can share my love for its diversity in people, food, and regions. I can also answer any questions about American stereotypes and discuss where they stem from and how they are not representative of all people. By attending local events and fostering meaningful conversations, I can make many cross-cultural connections and friendships.

I also recognize that active listening and creating a space for open dialogue are important tools to build mutual understanding abroad. I am ready to inquire about locals' experiences, passions, and advice during these events. This would allow me to demonstrate the American values of empathy and respect while being engulfed in many life stories.

I plan to cultivate meaningful relationships by staying connected with those I meet at my planned events through social media or phone numbers. I will invite new friends to potlucks at my apartment, where we can share our traditional foods, counteracting the narrative of the U.S. being a gluttonous society. With this, I can encourage friendships while immersing myself in traditional international cuisine!

Our lack of international exposure was another reason why I wanted to be an international recruiter. When recruiting various nationalities into Hollywood roles in the entertainment industry, I hope American viewers will feel more inclined to learn about their favorite figures' cultural and national backgrounds. This would be a great way to bridge cultural gaps. With this international experience, I can develop new skills and perspectives to become a more well-rounded individual.

Follow-on Service Project Essay

3,007 characters (1 page)

As of 2023, only 5.6% of study abroad students are Black. This is a disheartening statistic, and I believe the misconception that studying abroad is too expensive deters Black students, a misconception I held and students have shared with me. Upon my return from studying abroad in London and Paris, I want to encourage other Black scholars to pursue education abroad. My goal is to conduct a series of 3 workshops in our Black Student Resource Center ("ASP" or "African Student Programs") showcasing scholarship opportunities like the Gilman and why studying abroad would benefit them.

My 3 workshops are titled: "Studying Abroad: where do I start?" "Dollars for Scholars: Talking Finances" and "How to Thrive While Studying Abroad." One workshop would occur each week for 3 weeks. ASP is a popular hangout spot for many Black students on campus, including myself. It is common for ASP to conduct workshops on various topics relating to mental health or social game nights. Therefore, I feel students will embrace these study abroad workshops as it's being presented in a safe space by a fellow member of the community. I aim to have these workshops at the beginning of the Fall semester, as that is the high season for study abroad recruiting.

My workshops will all be conducted in PowerPoint style. The first workshop will focus on how to start the process of studying abroad and sharing my positive experience. I will showcase lists of programs and a 6-month timeline suggesting the best time to start applications. At the end of any presentation, I will verbally share my experience of how I navigated being Black while abroad. I aim to motivate and support students, inspiring them to research if education abroad fits them.

My second workshop, "Dollars for Scholars," is where Gilman will be most highlighted. This workshop will be finance-focused, promoting the Gilman scholarship while sharing tips for getting cheap flights, travel student discounts and budgeting while abroad. Then, my third and final workshop will focus on strategies to maximize studying abroad. I want to have previous Gilman recipients share their journeys abroad. I will find UCR Gilman alums and request their participation via LinkedIn. They will speak panel-style on topics such as battling homesickness and assimilating into your host country. This will be a great opportunity for scholars to see the positive impact going abroad has on other students.

With this project, I will heavily collaborate with UCR's study abroad center. Having already fostered connections with my study abroad advisors, they can help me revise workshops to ensure I promote paramount content and resources. At the end of the series, I will send out a Google Form Survey asking for feedback, what students liked and disliked, and what I could improve for future workshops. After presenting to ASP, I hope to present to other cultural resource centers on campus to continue showcasing that studying abroad is an experience everyone deserves.

Gilman Scholarship Essays [[Apply Here](#)] | UCR

Student 2

Opportunities Abroad Program (OAP)

Oaxaca, Mexico

Summer 2023

[Statement of Purpose Essay](#)

[Building Mutual Understanding Essay](#)

[Follow-on Service Project Essay](#)

Statement of Purpose Essay

6,717 characters (2 pages)

Spain's most famous writer, Miguel de Cervantes, wrote in his book *El ingenioso Don Quixote de la Mancha*. "El que lee mucho y anda mucho, ve mucho y sabe mucho". This translates to "Those who read and travel a lot see and know a lot". For me to become the professor I want to be, these experiences are necessary to increase my knowledge of Spanish language, literature, and culture. Studying abroad in Oaxaca, Mexico, through ARCOS, would provide me with valuable experiences I could learn from. I chose Oaxaca because it offered a variety of Spanish electives, which mostly focus on Mexico. The fact that ARCOS offers such a range is especially unique as it is hard to find study abroad programs that are Spanish elective heavy since. I have always loved literature and that interest grew with my AP Spanish Literature class in high school. I had a lovely teacher who was a role model for me, [name]. She showed me there is a career in Spanish and motivated me to study my passion and helped me improve my writing and reading skills. I also learned that Spain was very bicultural due to the great influence of Islamic culture and this made me think about the possibilities of incorporating aspects of Hispanic culture such as literature and film. into bilingual education in the Inland Empire. Since this area of the U.S. is already heavily populated with Hispanics, why not take advantage of that in our education system? I specifically chose Mexico as my host country to reconnect with my motherland as many Mexican immigrants, like my parents, flee the country amid their childhood education. In a way, I want to reclaim an experience that they lost. I had been looking into the ARCOS Oaxaca program but I thought that studying abroad was unobtainable for a first-generation Latino student as I did not have the resources or role models to prove that it was possible. It wasn't until I found out [name] had just received her master's at the University of Salamanca in Spain at 58 years old. This showed me that studying abroad can be for everyone regardless of ethnicity, income, or age.

Studying abroad would feed into my long-term goal of becoming a Professor in Hispanic Studies and ability to participate in relevant research that can help my community. Living in California, I see the potential of the Spanish language and how quickly its importance is in day-to-day life. I would like to contribute to creating a more inclusive space not just for students but for the university I plan to work at in the future. I am academically prepared to be a scholar as my Spanish writing and critical thinking have greatly improved during my first two quarters of upper division Spanish composition courses at UCR. I am prepared to compose high level papers for my courses in Oaxaca and I am capable of creating conversations with other students and professors. I mention this because I feel it is important not just to create professional connections but understand my professors' way of thinking and processes of which

they followed to obtain the knowledge they currently have. My knowledge of speech registers and colloquial language is what separates me from having the average studying abroad trip to Mexico.

Although I am confident in my abilities, there is a difficulty I'm facing in pursuing the right Spanish education which is finding the right courses that support my interests. Since my main focus is Spanish, there aren't many programs that have a vast variety of courses. Studying in Oaxaca would help me find the direction I want to explore with my major. For example, the courses of Mexican Literature and Mexican film which I plan on taking, are not offered at UCR and are an opportunity to study two topics of interest at once, from a local perspective. The list of limiting Spanish courses is something that I plan to solve by studying abroad as I would be taking Spanish Elective courses in universities like Benito Juárez Autonomous University of Oaxaca. Being able to bring what I have learned there and apply it to future teachings as a professor is ideal as I'd be contributing to creating more diverse curriculums so that other students who can't study abroad can have the choice to learn about these topics. Overall, this will also help me to specialize in a few topics that I could focus on as I complete my bachelor's to become a more competitive applicant for the master's and doctorate's program. My interests are not just limited to the understanding of Hispanic film and literature but how to incorporate that into a more holistic curriculum for bilingual education here in the Inland Empire. Most multilingual programs prepare students to become bilingual but not bicultural and to me, culture and language cannot be separated. I believe it's important to include the history of the language and acknowledge achievements and struggles within the Hispanic community, especially here in the U.S.

In addition, my knowledge of Mexican culture will play a big role during my stay in Oaxaca. Although speaking the language of Mexico is extremely beneficial, it is not the only skill I will have to rely on to ensure I have a good experience during my stay. I have not studied abroad but I have visited parts of Mexico like Tijuana, Nochistlan in Zacatecas, and Mexico City. I noticed how the ways of living differ: Tijuana being a border city, is very busy and the influence of the US is very apparent, Nochistlan is much more rural and grounded. I realized that Nochistlan as a whole is very driven by its Mexican culture and norms and is untouched by the globalization of American neo-liberal ideals. Similarly to Nochistlan, Mexico City is really grounded in Mexican culture, especially indigenous Mexican culture. However, politically, Mexico City has been very influenced by life and activism of the US. This is important because as I plan to travel to Oaxaca, I can utilize my experiences in these cities to adapt to whatever atmosphere I will find myself in. I am prepared for any outcome and have learned many different perspectives from Mexicans in each area. Not everyone lives the same and although we are all Mexican, our environment reflects how we portray ourselves.

Though I have accumulated a great amount of knowledge through my upbringing and through my current college education, there is still a lot to learn. Through the Gilman Scholarship, I will be able to pursue my interests while still giving back to my community. Having the support of the Gilman scholarship would assist me in increasing my experience of learning more and traveling more, and to become someone who knows more as advised by the great Miguel de Cervantes in *El ingenioso Don Quixote de la Mancha*.

Building Mutual Understanding Essay

2,929 characters (1 page)

Today the United States is made up of a population of immigrants from countries all over the world. Since the birth of this nation, different cultures and groups of people have contributed to its foundation. As an American of Mexican descent, my parents instilled their culture onto me. Outside of home, I was able to notice the difference that White American culture played in my surroundings. Learning to balance both cultures was an everyday task and culture shock was something I was not

unfamiliar with. However, I've grown to notice and value the cultures that surround me. With this in mind, I hope to represent what an American citizen is by learning about others struggles and achievements, being open, accepting, and embracing other cultures. In doing so I am putting in action what I hope would be done to me. As Romans 12:2 states "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind," this quote to me encapsulates what being American is by challenging the conformities around you and opening your mind to new beliefs and customs. As I prepare to study abroad in Oaxaca, Mexico, a state known for its rich indigenous history which includes a combination of language, literature, and culture. During my abroad program I hope to find common ground and similarities by sharing my ideas, opinions, and way of living as an American but also reconnecting with my Mexican heritage and my American culture.

Through the ARCOS learning abroad program, they not only offer a vast selection of Spanish courses that cover most aspects of the language but planned excursions as well. Aside from the planned excursions that ARCOS offers, I plan on forming relations with local Oaxacan students and engaging in the "everyday" activities (ie. attending church, shopping at supermarkets, eating at restaurants, etc.). In order to better understand the habits of those around me I want to emphasize most of my time there by engaging with the public in conversations about the history and current state of the nation. As a Mexican, I can bond over shared values while simultaneously reflecting my own American culture onto them in a non-chauvinistic way. In reality, there is much in common with Mexico and the American pursuit of liberty and justice. Much like how the colonists fought for their independence from Great Britain, Mexico has also always shared that same drive striving to become one against Spain. Despite how people view the nation today which is made up of stereotypes surrounding corruption and that people are seen as too weak to fight off the injustices. Such as the large quantities of "femicides," we see women in the country taking a stand against these prevalent issues. As an American citizen, I would share my knowledge of how similar movements in the US have transpired and through that I would also be able to form cultural comparisons which are crucial for my studies abroad.

Follow-on Service Project Essay

2,990 characters (1 page)

As a first generation Mexican-American college student, I have realized that those in my community share beliefs that hold them back, one of them being the idea that studying abroad is expensive and inaccessible. My Follow-On Service Project would focus specifically on the Hispanic community in the U.S, targeting opportunities that are well within reach. I would do this by leading interactive activities and workshops hosted by other first generation Latinx/Hispanic students from UCR who have studied abroad. In collaboration with Chicano Student Programs, a resource center on campus that provides help and support for not only Chicano students but Hispanic and Latinx students as well and with the help of Hispanic Studies Department; I will work to build a quarterly workshop that focuses on highlighting programs, projects, and scholarships that support the needs of students desiring to study abroad. CSP constantly creates workshops on various topics so bringing my idea of a quarterly workshop on study abroad is feasible. By working in conjunction with other first generation Latinx/Hispanic students, we can give first-hand experience to help inspire and can enlighten those who have not thought of studying abroad and make them aware of the opportunities that they can have.

As minorities, Latinos and Hispanics from low-income communities often do not consider the possibility of studying abroad since financial means do not make it possible. I would specifically bring attention to the Gilman Scholarship Program, which enables students of limited financial means to study or intern abroad. They also provide skills critical to our economic prosperity. Traveling to Oaxaca, Mexico, would bring me a number of valuable lessons and experiences that I can use to further motivate disadvantaged students to want to study abroad. Many often think of studying abroad as limited to

Gilman Essays: [Student 1](#), [Student 2](#)

Fund for Education Abroad (FEA) Essays: [Student 1](#) (new questions), [Student 2](#) (old questions), [Student 3](#) (old)

students who grew up in wealthy households. Letting peers in my community on campus know that there is an equal opportunity for them to study abroad and connect or reconnect with Latin American countries is important as it attracts students who are already immersed to some level in that specific culture and language. I would like to share my experience of studying abroad in Oaxaca, Mexico, this summer by showing students that you can still have a great experience studying abroad as this opportunity is so close to us. The U.S. should definitely take advantage of education abroad in Mexico because it is the cheapest and closest Spanish speaking country to us. Having the support of The Gilman Scholarship Program would help showcase this growing educational opportunity that's right across the border and rich in culture despite the negative connotation some associate the country with. My passion for developing my workshop project with the Gilman Scholarship Program would only grow as receiving this help would ensure a broad reach within the disadvantaged communities I am familiar with.



Fund for Education Abroad (FEA) Scholarship Essays [[Apply Here](#)] | UCR Student 1

Opportunities Abroad Program (OAP)

Paris, France

Spring Semester 2025

[FEA Essay 1](#)

[FEA Essay 2](#)

FEA Essay 1

Please tell us how receiving an FEA scholarship will impact you in both the immediate future and long term. Consider your reasons for choosing your specific study abroad program or course of study, academic and career goals, or any other relevant aspects. [\[New question as of 2024\]](#)

250 words

I'm studying abroad in spring 2025 in Paris with the International Business and Humanities program to pursue my dream of becoming a Human Resources (HR) consultant. As an HR consultant, I want to provide commercial businesses recommendations on improving employee relations so workers excel *and* be happy doing it! After my month-long study abroad in 2024, I'm pursuing a second experience to deepen connections further and explore international workplace culture. Previously, I met friends in the luxury goods industry who introduced me to France's balanced work culture, including extended vacations, leisurely lunches, and a "work to live" mindset.

In contrast, my experience working in the U.S. HR tech industry revealed a "hustle" culture as employees work long hours and have poor work-life balance. My goal abroad is understanding how, despite both industries being profitable, why one has significantly happier employees than the other and what attributes to its success.

My courses in Paris align perfectly with my career aspirations. "Managing Human Resources" and "Management for Luxury Services" showcase French employee benefits, while "Strategic Management" will offer strategies for implementing these practices in the U.S.! Additionally, I will attend three networking opportunities in 2025 for students in the HR field. I will discuss with peers, learning how to help employees maintain a positive work-life balance.

Continuing to network and embrace diverse work environments in Paris is essential as an HR consultant. With the support of the FEA scholarship, I can take the first step towards making a positive impact!

FEA Essay 2

What should we know about you that is not conveyed elsewhere in your application? Please be specific. This is your opportunity to tell us why you are a deserving candidate and what makes you different from other applicants. [\[New question as of 2024\]](#)

245 words

I deeply resonate with FEA's mission of empowering students. Growing up, my mother ran Wise Kids Daycare from our home, supporting young children who couldn't afford aftercare learning. From teaching toddlers their ABCs on my blackboard to now helping students map out their post-grad career plans, I've discovered I have a passion for mentorship and recognize the importance of education for all; it ignites curiosity, and pushes us toward personal growth. That's an experience everyone deserves. Working with our wise kids sparked my career in Human Resources (HR), as the foundation of the career relies on having a love for people relations, building strong relationships, and promoting a positive environment.

I've continued nurturing my commitment to mentorship, but now on an international scope. As a student from a minority-serving institution, many are discouraged from studying abroad because of the perceived high costs—I've been working to dispel this myth and help my Education Abroad (EA) office through scholarship visibility. This summer, I've been co-presenting at EA scholarship writing workshops, providing advice and helping students 1:1 write compelling narratives.

Despite graduating just a month after my return, I will remain active in my university's EA office as an alumna. I will continue helping students in the bi-monthly writing workshops and being an ambassador for UCR's EA programs. The FEA scholarship will not only allow me to embody the mission but also give me the tools to support and inspire other students on their study abroad journeys.



Fund for Education Abroad (FEA) Scholarship Essays [[Apply Here](#)] | UCR Student 2

UCEAP Education Abroad Program

Berlin, Germany

Fall 2024

[FEA Essay 1](#)

[FEA Essay 2](#)

FEA Essay 1

SPECIAL NOTE (11/06/24): The FEA essay prompts have changed as of 2024, so please use these examples as a general guideline. For up-to-date essays, please see [FEA Recipient Student 1](#).

Please describe your intended study abroad program. Why have you chosen this program and how do you anticipate it will build on your previous experience and support your future goals?

750 words (2 pages)

I chose to apply to UCEAP's The Berlin Experience program because it would fulfill my professional, personal, and academic needs as an incoming fourth-year undergraduate student from the University of California Riverside. The Berlin Experience provides the flexibility of choosing my course schedule so I can fit opportunities that are available to me- such as working for an international company for an internship, taking dance classes from a different culture, and exploring historic sights and museums that have a culture built into every brick. As an aspiring brand marketer in the video games industry, Berlin- the heart of the German gaming industry the perfect place for me to gain invaluable and global work experience through the internships provided in the program. Furthermore, as a dancer of seven years, I look up to Berlin's immensely talented creative community and would revel in the opportunity to create movement with them. Berlin also houses 20,000 Vietnamese residents, one-quarter of whom are of Hoa descent- the same as me! Knowing that there is a strong Vietnamese culture mixed with the diversity of expression that Berlin has to offer, I believe that I will feel connected to a new subset of Vietnamese customs that is thriving outside of the United States.

As a first-generation, non-binary, Vietnamese-American, and queer individual, I have learned that there will always be obstacles I will face in my professional and day-to-day life. Holding a leadership position in my collegiate gaming club has led me to face situations where I have to stand up and speak up for not only myself but also others who are of underrepresented identities. With the ability to change things internally within my club to ensure that everyone in my community is safe and comfortable, I believe that spending time with international club organizations will allow me to fortify the same and learn. With my past leadership experiences in my gaming and dance club, I have learned and grown with my peers in these spaces, shaping me into the human being I am today.

Germany being the first country I will visit in my life outside of the United States is a great opportunity for me to be at the forefront of German literature and dance culture. As a first-generation student with parents who have not yet had the chance to travel outside of the United States or Vietnam, I chose this program because I knew I would have the opportunity to grow in a new country to honor the hard work my immigrant parents have done for me to get to this stage of my life. Being a part of the Vietnamese diaspora from the Vietnam War has made me feel disconnected from my culture for the entirety of my life. Knowing that there is a strong Vietnamese culture mixed with the diversity of what

Berlin has to offer, I believe that I will feel connected to a new subculture of Vietnamese customs that is alive outside of the United States.

The program is located in Kreuzberg- home to infamous contemporary dance studios like Tanzfabrik- where the ability to dance and achieve my academic goals is accessible. With a class I plan to take called Music, Media, and Public Spheres, I hope to learn how music can be a vessel for political and cultural change and apply it in my career as a future marketer. I will also learn different forms and histories of dance with the various studios Berlin houses, something I hope to immerse myself in to learn from professionals outside of California.

Alongside business and marketing and my minor in Media and Culture Studies, my main career goal is to improve ethical media representation for underrepresented identities and create safe, online communities for children and teenagers. As someone who grew up on the internet, I enjoyed the ability to connect with individuals around the world. However, with how fast the modern world is changing, it has become more dangerous for minors than when I was a child. Moreover, I have grown with my peers to see the consequences of the relentless media minors consume on the internet, leading to increased bullying, harassment, and enforced stereotyping. I believe The Berlin Experience will provide me with invaluable knowledge of how media has evolved to affect people negatively and positively—such as the Media, Gender, and Identity class I plan to take, where I will learn from a global perspective on how to navigate and apply media representations outside of an American and Western lens.

FEA Essay 2

SPECIAL NOTE (11/06/24): The FEA essay prompts have changed as of 2024, so please use these examples as a general guideline. For up-to-date essays, please see [FEA Recipient Student 1](#).

Studying abroad is often challenging, requiring participants to be open-minded and persevere in sometimes isolating circumstances. Please describe a personal experience in which you were similarly challenged to demonstrate these qualities.

727 words (2 pages)

Since moving from the bustling city of San Jose, California to Riverside, California, I found myself in a state of dissatisfaction with the drastic change in geography, quality of life, and cost of living. As an eighteen-year-old, these changes led to growing pessimistic about my college experience and quickly grew homesick. It was not until I finished doing my homework one day that I asked myself, “What do I want to do today?” that it was up to me to decide how to live my life. I took the initiative to join a dance team, and a gaming club, and apply for jobs to make sure that I would still enjoy living in the middle of a desert.

The change from a large city with activities and new foods to one with less food diversity and less lush greenery was difficult for me initially. I started to detest the bumpy mountains and lack of aesthetically pleasing flora and fauna that were available to me on my campus. It was not until I took an entomology class that I learned that Riverside was home to a subset of niche insects, trees, and flowers due to its desert climate. I was able to book an appointment to visit my campus botanic garden while I took the class, which is home to over 3,500 plant species and specimens! I then spent the remainder of my freshman year studying and admiring the botanical gardens when the seasons changed to spring to visit the blooming flowers. Here, my hunger for living in a geographically pleasing environment was fulfilled.

My quality of life also changed from moving from a technologically savvy city to a continually developing one. Knowing that I had to drive out 30 minutes anywhere to go to a concert, to go to a flea market, or to do anything that involves recreational fun was discouraging to someone without access to a car. As well as, I fought loneliness as someone who enjoyed video games, dance, and food. How was I ever going to find friends? Quickly, I realized that the Riverside bus transportation system was easy on

my wallet and even easier to learn how to take. After joining my video games club, I found friends who were also struggling with finding friends as introverts who enjoyed playing games. I even took up a leadership position I am still a part of today as the Co-Head of Media, fulfilling my professional and social needs. Next, I auditioned for my dance team, where I have spent the last two years creating lifelong friendships and satisfying my artistic desire to create movement. Now, taking the bus is a fun activity to do with my friends when we want to go to the Rosebowl Flea Market in Pasadena, all thanks to finding the right people and hobbies that I wanted to be a part of.

I quickly realized my freshman year that I needed to get a job for two reasons: professional experience and money! I was able to land a marketing and events assistant role with the UCR Center of Ideas & Society where I have been able to create social media campaigns to advertise research and social studies important to our campus and internationally. It is also where I found out that the ability to study abroad was an opportunity with the international students I would meet through the events my work department would host. Though I am still learning with this job, I used the skills I learned to work for NBCUniversal for their Franchise & Games department for the Marketing team in the summer of 2023. Finally, I have been able to quench my thirst for marketing, media, and video games through an internship that allowed me to gain insight into the career I would like to pursue. It was through my tenacity to understand what my identity was to the external world and to myself, that I have honed my career goal to be an underrepresented individual representing the underrepresented identities in media and entertainment.

By supporting myself financially, socially, and mentally, I have found to prioritize the needs and wants of one individual only: myself. I am confident that I will be able to thrive in the city of Berlin by joining club organizations, taking dance workshops, and working with an international games studio as a marketing intern.



Fund for Education Abroad (FEA) Scholarship Essays [[Apply Here](#)] | UCR Student 3

Faculty-Led Education Abroad Program (FLEAP)

London, UK

Summer 2024

[FEA Essay 1](#)

[FEA Essay 2](#)

FEA Essay 1

SPECIAL NOTE (11/06/24): The FEA essay prompts have changed as of 2024, so please use these examples as a general guideline. For up-to-date essays, please see [FEA Recipient Student 1](#).

Please describe your intended study abroad program. Why have you chosen this program and how do you anticipate it will build on your previous experience and support your future goals?

648 words (2 pages)

The study abroad program that I am applying to this scholarship for is through the Faculty Led Education Abroad Program (FLEAP) at the University of California, Riverside. This opportunity is focused on undergraduate students in the English department, which includes taking two upper-division courses in English literature while experiencing the cultural significance of the Romantic Era on a trip to London, United Kingdom from July 8th, 2024 to July 26th, 2024. This opportunity is the study abroad trip of my dreams, as I have been a lifelong lover of English literature, which influenced my choice to major in the subject in college. I transferred to UC Riverside from a local California community college, Mt. San Jacinto College, last year, which means that I will be set to graduate with my BA in English by the end of 2024.

Being a first-generation, nontraditional student, I have made it a priority to seize every opportunity for academic exploration and career development while at this university. Prior to transferring institutions, I spent my time working full time and attending community college classes, unsure of what the future may hold for me. Transferring to this esteemed institution has graced me with confidence in my future and an appreciation for the uncertainties of my past, because my past experiences led me to become a determined, highly motivated student. This program is meaningful to me for several reasons, with one being that I will experience firsthand the culture that has been present throughout the majority of my studies. I will also have the opportunity to study and travel with the professor that is leading the program, whom I've had the privilege of studying under in past quarters.

The professor leading this excursion, Dr. Fuson Wang, specializes in Romantic Era literature and is planning to offer two courses during our experience abroad, a course focusing on Jane Austen, and the other focusing on the revolutionary writers and ideas of English Romanticism. I have intentionally held off on taking either of these courses while at this institution until I have the opportunity to take them with Dr. Wang, because his passion and knowledge on the subject is unparalleled – which is evident by his planning of this education abroad program. With the opportunity to take these courses abroad, I am most excited to encounter the culture that influenced the Romantic-era poets and novelists that marked the era, as well as to become culturally-transformed myself, through visiting the very streets and neighborhoods that great writers like Jane Austen, Percy Shelley, and William Blake dwelled within.

Thinking towards the future, this FLEAP opportunity will allow me to have a connective experience to the literature that I plan to research and write about in graduate school, as well as gain an experience that will inform my own motivations in becoming an English professor, which is the career path that I feel innately drawn to and immensely passionate to pursue. I have always felt drawn to becoming an educator, which is influenced by the formative experiences with every English teacher I've had since elementary school! Many teachers, bosses, professors, and peers have urged me to pursue a career in academia, or to become an educator in any capacity, because of my passion for literature and skill in communicating it to others. Creatively, this opportunity will also allow me to gain hands-on experience with one of my favorite artistic mediums: printmaking – in which the program highlights that students will encounter William Blake's unique printing process.

At the end of my study abroad experience, I aim to have a unique perspective on Romantic Era literature and English culture, experiences that I can use to inform my potential graduate school research, as well as academic papers and creative writing that will be completed while in London that will exist as tangible reflections of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that studying abroad in college has to offer.

FEA Essay 2

SPECIAL NOTE (11/06/24): The FEA essay prompts have changed as of 2024, so please use these examples as a general guideline. For up-to-date essays, please see [FEA Recipient Student 1](#).

Studying abroad is often challenging, requiring participants to be open-minded and persevere in sometimes isolating circumstances. Please describe a personal experience in which you were similarly challenged to demonstrate these qualities.

722 words (2 pages)

After graduating from high school in 2017, I was unsure about whether or not I wanted to attend college right away, so instead, I made the choice to travel by myself to Cairo, Egypt. Most members of the paternal side of my family live in Cairo, though I had only met them once before this solo trip, when I was a child. My mother and sibling were worried for me, because I was not entirely fluent in the local language, Arabic, and I had never traveled outside of the United States on my own before. I had three intentions when I embarked on this trip: prove to myself that I am capable of handling situations while alone, stay for a period of six months, and to overcome my own fear of being alone. The first big hurdle happened early on in my trip, before I even made it into Cairo. While on layover in Frankfurt, Germany, I was met with the knowledge that my luggage was accidentally put onto a different plane, which was traveling to a different country than the one I intended to be in within the next 5 hours. I was alone in the airport, with a cellphone that had no data and spotty internet connection, and the impending fear that my trip was already off to a negative start, which might foretell a sense of misfortune to come. After filling out paperwork and speaking with the airline associates, who had a myriad of other responsibilities to attend to, I sat in the terminal to wait for my luggage-less flight. I felt emotional, and as though this random happening meant something about my own capabilities as a person, or lack thereof. Another solo traveler, an older man about the same age as my mother, noticed the flush in my face and furrowed brow, the way I look when I'm holding back tears. The man asked if I needed anything, or if I wanted to be simply left alone, to which I responded by briefly explaining the reasoning behind my melancholic mood. Though the man knew he couldn't do anything to fix my situation, or will my lost luggage back into my possession, he offered to cheer me up with a hot cup of tea and conversation, to which I gratefully accepted. The piece of advice that I remember the man giving me was to "try not to let the little things get to you." He assured me that traveling alone at 17-years-old was already a tremendous feat, and that most of the things that happen while traveling abroad are out of our control – like the airline misplacing your luggage. It comforted me to know that, regardless of my own preparedness, there are some situations that are impossible to prepare for, and that has nothing to do with my capabilities. It also continues to inspire me

Gilman Essays: [Student 1](#), [Student 2](#)

Fund for Education Abroad (FEA) Essays: [Student 1](#) (new questions), [Student 2](#) (old questions), [Student 3](#) (old)

to think about the fact that we are never truly alone in the world, even when traveling solo to an unfamiliar place. Within a few hours, we boarded the flight to Cairo, and I didn't see the man again until I was in the Visa line at the Cairo International Airport. He gave me a friendly nod and wave, wishing me luck on the rest of my travels and assuring me that all will be fine. To speak to the wisdom of this stranger continues to leave me with warmth in my heart, because he was right in his advice and predictions. My luggage arrived in Cairo after me, and I realized how presumptuous it was of me to think that my trip could be ruined by a small discrepancy in plans. The layover experience influenced the way I handled my own emotions and reactions to things outside of my comfort zone and control for the rest of the trip, which indeed lasted six whole months. There were many more moments that I felt lost, confused, at times regretful, or even fearful of being uniquely isolated from the American culture I was accustomed to, the language, and the lack of immediate family members around me. However, I was able to reflect on my layover experience, which kept me grounded in my own confidence in myself to overcome adversity and unplanned situations – which is a trait that I proudly embody even today, seven years later.

