

For Immediate Release

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Texas A&M Boasts Highest Number of Gilman Scholars in 2008

International Programs announced that eight undergraduate students at Texas A&M University were among the 700 outstanding American undergraduate students from over 320 colleges and universities across the U.S. who were awarded the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship in 2008 – two in the spring semester and six in the fall.

Emily Ashworth, associate vice president for International Programs said the numbers of applications and scholarships have increased since the first Texas A&M student was awarded a Gilman Scholarship in 2002.

“I am pleased to see a steady increase in the number of applications and the awards received by our students,” said Ashworth. “This is a strong indication of our students’ growing interest in gaining international education experiences.”

Ashworth said the Gilman International Scholarship Program is a wonderful resource for U.S. undergraduate students who have limited financial means to pursue academic studies abroad. Texas A&M has long held that international study better prepares U.S. students to assume significant roles in an increasingly global economy and interdependent world.

In the spring of 2008, Samantha Chiu, class of 2009 and Andrew Brown received Gilman Scholarships. Chiu a political science major studied in China and Brown a Senior Environmental Design Major headed to Italy.

Chiu said she is very proud of her Chinese – American heritage and is grateful for the opportunity to study the culture of her parents and to better understand her family’s history.

“As a result of observing the China Archive Survey Project with Dr. Bob Harmel, I was invited by the Research Center for Contemporary China at Peking University to pursue advanced training on Asian economic and policy reforms,” Chiu said. “Not only will I participate in a valuable intellectual exchange, I will take an intensive mandarin course and begin researching for my senior thesis.”

Brown said that as an Architecture student, he is required to spend a semester away from Texas A&M to expand his understanding of the world. He could choose to study abroad or intern with an Architecture firm.

"Because I come from a low-income, single parent family, I immediately shot down the possibility of leaving the country for three and half months," Brown said. "It wasn't until I sat in on a study abroad presentation that I learned about opportunities like the Gilman Scholarship."

He said he was prepared to take out a loan to study abroad, but decided to pursue the Gilman Scholarship.

"Receiving this scholarship will help me reach my goals of visiting historic landmarks of Italy, Turkey and Greece," Brown said, "and help expand my cultural knowledge, which will further my business career and add rich detail to my architectural designs."

The Fall 2008 recipients include Pamela Humphrey, a senior in Landscape Architecture will study in Germany; Jack Simeon, a junior in Industrial Engineering will study in Spain; Alexander Trahan, a junior in Geophysics will study in Russia; Elyse Wong, a senior in Environmental Design will study in Spain, Chelsea Young a Junior in International Studies will study in Egypt; and Aaron Hughes a junior in International Studies had the opportunity to study in Japan, but had to decline for this semester.

Over 1,200 scholarships of up to \$5,000 were awarded in 2008 for U.S. citizen undergraduates to study abroad. Award amounts will vary depending on the length of study and student need with the average award being \$4,000. Students who receive the Gilman Scholarship to study abroad are also eligible to receive an additional \$3,000 Critical Need Language Supplement from the Gilman Program for a total possible award of up to \$8,000.

Established by the International Academic Opportunity Act of 2000, the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship has to date made awards to 3,102 U.S. undergraduate students. These scholarships have enabled recipients to study worldwide in over 80 different nations including Cameroon, Egypt, Uruguay, Latvia and many more. Past Gilman Scholars have gone on to receive many prestigious awards including Fulbright Scholarships and Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarships to pursue graduate work and research abroad; are working overseas in a variety of capacities; are pursuing graduate study within the U.S. and are working in their chosen professional careers.