Abigail Gleason

Abigail's Major: Undecided

Program: UW Intensive Chinese Language, Summer

Academic Life: Our study abroad program followed the UW-Madison Chinese language program on campus. We used the same textbooks used at UW-Madison and had four class periods per day. During our lecture periods, our teacher went over the text of a lesson and went through examples, sentence patterns, and grammar. Only fifteen people were in second year Chinese, the course that I took in Tianjin and each discussion had only five people, so we were able to get one-on-one practice with our teachers. In addition, we attended one “culture class” per week - either calligraphy, erhu, singing, or taichi. Our classmates were mostly UW-Madison students, and a few students from other American universities.

How Study Abroad Changed Abigail: I am much more independent since studying abroad. I rely on myself, rather than others, to make decisions and solve problems, and I take the initiative to finish a task or solve a problem myself, rather than waiting for others to help me. While in China, I had to travel and find my way in a country with a completely different language, one which I did not speak fluently. Although I sometimes made mistakes, I learned that I had the ability to communicate with Chinese speakers even though I was not fluent in the language, and learned to trust myself to solve problems.

Study Abroad and Abigail’s Future Aspirations: I will be more open-minded toward other cultures and will be able to more easily interact with people in other countries. I plan to teach English in China for several years, so this study abroad experience helped me to begin to understand Chinese culture and better speak the language.

“I feel that I have a different outlook not only on other culture, but also on American culture.”