

Torian Riley

Graduation Year: Sophomore

College: Arts & Letters

Major(s): PLS

Minors(s): Architecture, unofficially

Scholar Group Membership: n/a

Did you received other funding for this project?: Career Center, Liu Institute, NDI

Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding? No

More details on CUSE funding assistance?

Project Title: Work Study

Project Location: Beijing, China

ND Faculty Mentor: Dr. Noble

Project Type: work study

Why did you undertake this project/experience? Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue, Prepare for professional school (MD, MBA, JD), Career discernment and/or preparation, Internationalize your Notre Dame experience

Did your funded experience help you:

[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]: Yes

[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]: Yes

[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]: Yes

[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]: Very Much

[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:Yes

Tell us about your experience.

When I arrived at the office in Beijing, my boss was away on travel and the individual in charge of welcoming me was expecting me to be a law school graduate who was fluent in Chinese so for the first few days while the boss was gone, it was a little uncertain what I would be doing. During that time I became familiar with arbitration proceedings for the Chinese and Singaporean national and international arbitration courts, the basics of intellectual asset management (IAM) law in major economies, recent policy developments in the field of IAM - particularly regarding software patents, and cyber-security policy in the US and China. After the boss returned I was assigned with proofing all correspondences sent out of the office to English speaking clients including invoices, e-mails, legal advice, policy changes, and news. I was also tasked with running a two-week public speaking workshop for selected attorneys who had upcoming trials, arbitration meetings, presentations, and lectures; but who lacked a solid foundation in public speaking. In addition to these tasks, I also worked with the web development team to edit the English version of the company website and with individual attorneys who struggled to communicate effectively and confidently in English. In terms of cultural experience what I learnt amounts to far too much to express here. Through joining an after-work badminton league and attending lunches and dinners

with attorneys and their colleagues from outside of the firm, I had many a conversation about cultural and political matters from race relations, to family tradition, to current events. Some "friends of the firm" I was able to sit down and speak with include CCP officials, judges from the Supreme People's Court (federal supreme court), and academics. There are also a couple of learning experiences I had which I consider the most valuable parts of my experience but which I cannot share because of signing an NDA.

Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.

This project impacted me most through the relationships that I formed with my colleagues and their friends which allowed me to discover the inner workings of Chinese politics and law, especially in regard to gray areas like religion and US-Chinese relations. Had I not developed these relationships, I don't believe that these individuals would have opened up to me about their personal lives and opinions, especially on topics which are so publicly taboo. Additionally, I feel that completely immersing myself in the work (~12 hours a day, six days a week) gave me a solid foundation of knowledge of patent law and arbitration that 1) has helped with my career discernment and 2) will give me a leg up going into law school in the future.

In terms of how I impacted the community that I was working in, I really can't be sure. However, where other interns could not even name the attorneys and legal advisers working on their teams, I was having lunch and dinner and playing badminton with my team's members and sometimes even their families six days a week. I also received quite a bit of positive feedback from the attorneys that I coached in public speaking and English-language skills, both from the attorneys I worked with and from their bosses, which I believe indicates positive contributions I made to the company.

Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.

This experience is most strongly connected to my future plans by way of contributing to my career discernment and significantly building my professional network. This is the first substantial experience I had in the legal profession and through personal interviews that I conducted at the office and the work that I completed, I feel that I have a much stronger foundation moving forward toward a career in law.

What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?

The most important piece of advice I would like other students to know is that the more they reach out to and connect with individuals on a personal level, the more they will benefit both personally and professionally from their experience. The majority of my memories and experiences in China stem from the relationships that I developed.

