

2017-18 Fall Internship Award Winners

Michelle Xie, UC Santa Barbara, National Taiwan University, Taiwan

Michelle found her internship through a guest lecturer in her *Science for Policymakers: A Discussion Seminar on Environmental Sustainability* course at the National Taiwan University (NTU). Dr. Kunz –



the lecturer and leading researcher in the field of microplastics in Taiwan – sparked her interest in microplastics, and after sharing her enthusiasm with him– she was offered an intern position at the Department of Geosciences.

Dr. Kunz asked her to conduct a pilot study on microplastics in Taipei’s rivers, and with her passion in hydrology, Michelle was excited about the unique opportunity to perform tasks in various steps of original research. During the study, she learned to design efficient sampling methods and negotiated with manufacturers to design a cost-efficient sample collecting net. To identify potential sampling sites along Taipei’s three rivers, she researched online or walked along the river shores, before taking samples back to the lab to purify and analyze them. Through these tasks she developed unique laboratory skills and made big strides on her path to becoming a hydrologist.

In her quest to tackle global environmental problems, she wants to take advantage of the professional connections she made at NTU, and she is now considering a master’s degree in Environmental Engineering at NTU so she can continue her work in Dr. Kunz’s laboratory. After graduation, her goal is to bring her skills back to America and solve environmental issues. Because as she observed during her time in Taiwan, *“the general Taiwanese public are environmentally conscious but not active, [and] America is quite similar to Taiwan in this aspect.”* While she realizes that the solutions cannot be identical because every country’s economic and political situation is unique, she believes humans should always learn from one another, something she considers important for a career in any field.

Lincoln Liechti, UC Santa Barbara, International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan

As a communications major, Lincoln’s goals were to bring value to the internship company and further develop his professional skills. He hoped for a better understanding of content marketing as well as the operational side of running a business-to-consumer organization. As a result of interning for [Okayama Denim](#), he not only learned about a new industry but was able to apply his education and previous work experience to creating effective marketing campaigns.

One of the challenges Lincoln faced was learning an overwhelming amount of information, researching where the jeans were made, how the construction process worked, the pricing structure and discovering the target



market. This expertise allowed him to better communicate the Okayama Denim brand and increase sales as a result.

“In the future, I intend to work in international business and this internship has helped prime me for the rigors of that career. It exposed me to the Japanese work culture and allowed me to practice my new found language skills. Having the ability to operate in both Western and Asian work environments will be instrumental in determining my future success.” According to Lincoln’s supervisor, Lincoln was able to put his artistic skills to use as well. He developed a visual comic strip to explain the product care in a rich graphical way. The content explained complex information in a useful way that can be easily comprehended by customers.

Lauren Roberts, UC Santa Barbara, University of Bologna, Italy

As an Italian studies major, Lauren anticipated that she would spend little to no time on her study abroad program speaking in English. However, when she came across the opportunity to teach English at a local Italian middle school, she was opened up to an internship that afforded her the opportunity to learn in-depth about Italian culture, to share her own culture with eager and enraptured students, and to create global learners who have a desire to help their community. There



was little structure given to Lauren in the creation of her lesson plans, this allowed her to be creative and work on her flexibility as she would adjust her lecture to the needs and interests of each class. She also grappled with the challenges of teaching Italian youths who have different cultural norms when it comes to talking during class. She often found herself lecturing over a small murmur in the classroom *“This forced me to become more creative and to develop ways for the students to interact better with each other. Introducing the “talking ball” was a very effective strategy as only the*

student with the ball was allowed to speak. As a generally soft spoken person, it also taught me to get loud and to know when it's appropriate to demand silence, respect and cooperation.”

So even though Lauren didn’t originally want to speak much English while she was abroad, her internship using her English skills actually led her to have a much deeper connection with her Italian community. It improved her public speaking skills, gave her insight into Italian culture, and provided cross-cultural connections. Lauren came away from her internship with a great appreciation for the importance of education and the ways in which a learning environment can be fostered. She will be participating on the UCEAP program in Chile in fall 2018 where she would like to continue teaching English at a local Chilean school. After she graduates, Lauren aspires to join the Peace Corps where she will use the skills she gained on her internship to teach English in rural Central America.

Elena Lippi, UC Davis, University of Ghana

For her internship at [Mawulolo Youth Network](#), International Relations major, Elena Lippi, had three main goals—to provide quality interactive lesson plans for students ages 10-14; develop content for the website and create a business plan to send to international donors; and fundraise. Mawulolo Youth Network is an after-school program for disadvantaged children in Ghana that seeks to raise children out of poverty. The organization networks with international donors to financially support children’s primary education, school supplies, and medical care. Elena was assigned to teach a class of 28 students and liked to challenge her students to think critically about what they were learning and to use their imagination and creativity rather than focusing on memorization.



The experience prompted Elena to pursue a job teaching English after graduation. After returning from Ghana she enrolled in a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) course to become certified to teach English abroad. *“Spending four months in Ghana helped me understand what I want in life and gave me more determination in getting there. Interning at Mawulolo Youth Network taught me how much I enjoy teaching. It was incredibly formative experience to be able to help children and see their improvement over the semester.”*

Charles James, UC Berkeley, Language & Culture, Tsuru University, Japan

Charles James interned as an English teacher at Kojokan High School in Tsuru, Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan. As a Japanese-American, he was looking for ways to connect with his heritage and he thought this internship would be an additional opportunity to learn more about Japanese language and culture. Additionally, he felt grateful to his Japanese language instructors and tutors and thought that this opportunity to teach others English might be a small way to return the favor. He was nervous when he was immediately placed in a classroom and was expected to lead a lesson. He overcame that initial shock and through short, simple lessons, he was able to encourage students to participate.



Charles came to realize that English education in Japan focuses most on reading, writing, and listening, with little opportunity for students to speak. He decided to make speaking the primary focus of his lessons and quickly realized that students were excited to speak and engage. He found that even with an effective teaching strategy, which he admits he gained through trial and error, student motivation and engagement mirrored his own. If he was discouraged or disinterested in his lessons, often, the students were too. *“Through providing a welcoming teaching environment, student reactions to the material became engaged, and their attention allowed me to tell if they were genuinely interested, learning, or confused.”* He learned that teaching was about constantly tweaking his methods to meet the needs of the students. He feels that this internship confirmed his long-term career goal of becoming a professor of socioeconomics. Teaching English in Japan made him realize how much he enjoys facilitating the learning process and he now feels excited to teach others.