

2016-17 Spring Internship Award Winners

Juitung Raya Kuo, UC Berkeley, National Taiwan University, Taiwan

As an Electrical Engineering and Computer Science major, Juitung entered into her study abroad experience looking for an opportunity to find a practical application for her major and was particularly interested in understanding how technology should be built in today's world. Juitung cold-emailed



employees at Microsoft, explaining to them what type of position she was interested in along with her goals for her internship, and was offered a Program Manager internship at [Microsoft Taiwan](#). In addition to working on the Cortana partner enablement team, Juitung took the initiative to seek out additional learning opportunities by reaching out to each team member to see where she could be of assistance. Cortana is Microsoft's voice-activated digital personal assistant. Before attending Computex, a global technology tradeshow, Juitung did research on the companies attending the conference and made a plan to visit those that were related to her passion—public health—in order to better understand the ways in which technology and health can function together. Towards the end of her study abroad program, Juitung used the skills she learned in her internship to evaluate and improve on a group project for one of her classes. *"Later I realized that moment*

[working on my group project] embodied a lot of what my entire Program Manager internship had taught me—I'd identified the goal, pinpointed issues in the way, and assertively communicated to correct course. Knowing how to do so empowers me to face my future academics and career."

Que Do, UC Santa Barbara, Thammasat University, Thailand

Que Do expected that she would sign up for a Public Relations or Marketing internship in Thailand because it had a logical connection to her Communication major. However, upon arrival she found herself immediately connected to the work done by [Boat People SOS \(BPSOS\)](#), a non-profit that serves asylum-seekers and refugees in Bangkok, and decided to intern with the goals of directly working with urban refugee communities and improving her understanding of immigration politics in Thailand and Southeast Asia. Que had a dynamic experience with BPSOS, working on several projects such as teaching English language classes to students of all ages and levels, collecting data in Vietnamese for the legal clinic's research project on

human rights violations and repatriation, conducting 2-3 hour long interviews with refugees in Vietnamese to assess their qualifications for emergency assistance funding and translating their responses to English, and developing marketing



materials for a start-up social enterprise that assists asylum-seeking women to generate income through their traditional arts. In the end, Que found that her internship did have a strong correlation to her major. *“While these tasks on the surface do not have direct relations to my academia, skills such as research assistance, teaching, and project coordination are undeniably applicable to Communication studies. By engaging with different groups of refugees, I could observe and understand the important effects of positive interpersonal communications.”* Que plans to pursue an ESL teaching career in order to use her trilingual and teaching skills to work with the growing number of Vietnamese and Hispanic speaking immigrants in her home city.



Esther Cisneros, UC Santa Barbara, University of Geneva, Switzerland

As a participant on the Global and International Studies program at the University of Geneva, Esther Cisneros concluded her study abroad experience by participating in an internship with [Geneva for Human Rights](#), a non-governmental organization based in Geneva that monitors the various human rights bodies and mechanisms of the United Nations and uses its knowledge to train and empower human rights defenders around the world. Esther had the opportunity to put her bilingual Spanish-English skills to use in one of her larger projects, facilitating an Expert Seminar during the Expert Mechanisms on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP). Esther worked closely with two of the panel members and was able to greatly improve her translation skills in addition to serving as a facilitator and ambassador to the guests from Guatemala and Ecuador.

“As a Language, Culture, and Society major, this experience allowed me to apply the knowledge I accumulated through

my studies in a practical and incredibly rewarding setting. Having learned about the aims and goals of the EMRIP, as well as the Indigenous Fellow, representing their people from all corners of the world, and their inspiring stories of leadership and perseverance, I was incredibly humbled to have contributed to an event that, in however small a way, served to forward the rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

Victor Hiltner, UC Berkeley, Carlos III University, Spain

While studying in Madrid at Carlos III University, Victor Hiltner undertook an internship with the [Asociación Sociocultural y de Cooperación al Desarrollo por Colombia e Iberoamérica \(ACULCO\)](#), an NGO that works to improve the process of integration for immigrants to Spain—specifically immigrants from Latin America. Since immigrant populations are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, ACULCO creates opportunities for individuals to escape difficult or dangerous situations. Victor worked closely with the certified psychologist on staff, conducting interviews in which immigrant clients could share their stories and personal histories. He also worked with the employment assistance program matching clients with relevant available positions.

As a psychology student at UC Berkeley, he found the interactions with ACULCO clients to be an extremely eye-opening learning opportunity. The personal experiences of the individuals he interviewed

were often quite difficult and these interactions allowed him to better understand and recognize the emotional and mental health issues he had learned about in his psychology courses. Navigating these interactions taught him a lot about the importance of communication, particularly when all communication was happening in Spanish. He learned to get over the embarrassment of making mistakes and instead saw those mistakes as chances to learn and get better. He walked away from this internship with the utmost respect and admiration for what the ACULCO staff does every day. It serves as inspiration for himself that he may end up in a profession where he is doing some good in the world.



Sophia Osborn, UC San Diego, Waseda University, Japan

When Sophia decided to pursue an internship during her time at Waseda University in Tokyo, she knew she could have easily found a placement teaching English to school children, but as an International Studies major at UC San Diego, she wanted to find something more relevant to her studies. Through Waseda's School of International Liberal Studies she found a credited internship program for bilingual students with placements in her field. After the application and interview process, she accepted an intern position with the [Japan Forum on International Relations \(JFIR\)](#), a non-profit and non-partisan think tank focused on researching and discussing Japanese foreign policy. Much of Sophia's work involved researching, reading, and summarizing journals and articles written in English to help with the Forum's research initiatives. JFIR hosted several symposia and conferences that brought together American and Japanese Policy analysts to discuss the future of the US-Japan Alliance during the current presidential administration. As a native English speaker, she was helpful in transcribing the discussions, which were conducted in English.

Not only did this internship spark her interest in international relations in Asia, it also gave her first-hand experience with Japanese office culture, which is significantly different from American office culture. As a direct result of her internship at JFIR, she feels confident in her ability to navigate and adapt to different cultural environments—skills she could not have learned in a classroom. Her experience has



also helped to define her future academic and career goals. After graduation, Sophia plans to apply for a fellowship to work at a non-governmental organization in Asia to gain additional experience in non-profit management. She is also considering pursuing a Master's degree in Public Policy or International Relations. *"My time abroad has brought me in contact with many NGO/NPO organizations that I greatly admire and would love to work for in the future, and it has been invaluable in helping me visualize a potential career-path."*