

## **International BBA Summer Program**

*I wanted to go abroad to study international business, so I selected China for my three-week BBA summer program. China is not only a fascinating country, but it also has a booming economy with the potential to become one of the world's largest consumer markets. Often study-abroad programs are targeted at MBAs and other graduate-level students, so as an undergraduate, I felt I was part of an elite group. Overall, my experience in China was very beneficial and I'm glad I went.*

*Our group of 38 BBAs stayed at an international hotel in Beijing, just a short walk from the prestigious Tsinghua University School of Economics and Management, where we attended morning and afternoon sessions taught by Chinese professors and Brad Farnsworth, director of CIBE. I learned an incredible amount about Chinese language, culture, history and economics in three weeks. I was able to retain more of this knowledge than I would have if I had been sitting in an American classroom because I was immersed in the actual Chinese environment. I had opportunities to apply much of what I learned in my everyday experiences. I also developed a much different perspective on China and its people than the one conveyed in U.S. newspapers and magazines and on television.*

*As part of the BBA study-abroad program, we visited several private and state-owned companies. At Lenovo Computers, a private enterprise, we were allowed to see the assembly-line operation. I was particularly impressed with the company's automated storage facility where boxes are moved via computer-controlled conveyor belts. Lenovo used this technological advancement to reduce its costs dramatically by cutting staffing levels and renting out space to suppliers. At a state-owned ice-cream company, we spoke directly with managers and were able to compare the scale and efficiency of the operation to that of a privately held company. We also visited China Telecom, where our guide took us on a tour of the company's facilities.*

*Naturally, no trip to China would be complete without seeing the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, the Temple of Heaven, the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace. One weekend we ventured to Xian to see the famous Terra-cotta Warriors. Our travels served as a welcome mental break from the intensity of our studies and enabled us to enjoy the countryside. During our free time in Beijing, we went to local markets and shopping areas to seek out bargains in pearls and chopsticks. Buying shirts for the equivalent of \$2 or \$3 was a dream come true. We practiced our language skills by bargaining with vendors and taxi drivers.*

*One of the most enjoyable aspects of our study abroad was meeting Chinese students. They spoke English very well and were both curious and open-minded in talking to Americans about such issues as democracy vs. Communism. When we learned how hard they had to work and compete to enter the university, we realized our lives were considerably less difficult in comparison.*

*In retrospect, I think studying abroad is a good way to learn about yourself, especially when you are isolated by language barriers and find you are the only*

*American in a Chinese grocery store. I realized that in order to do business in China, you have to be fluent in the language and knowledgeable about the culture. My study abroad provided insight into how to do business in China successfully and put it within the realm of possibilities. I'm glad I went to China and would certainly do it again. Three weeks just wasn't long enough to accomplish everything I wanted to do.*

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