

The Study Abroad Foundation, Mainland China Office

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SAF SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

SAF 奖学金申请指南

SAF 为学生提供两个名额奖学金, 每个名额奖学金金额为 2000 美元。请有意申请 SAF 奖学金的同学按照以下流程进行 SAF 奖学金申请。

1. 用英文根据下面问题撰写文章;
2. 在报名申请截止日期之前, 将 SAF 奖学金申请表和 SAF 项目申请材料一起递交给 SAF 国际项目中国办公室;

SAF 奖学金获奖名单将在每年 6 月及 11 月公布。

Date Applied Mar.31.2012

Student Name Yushan Ao

Home University Jinan University

Please write an essay on the question below in English.

Essay Question: Why do you want to study abroad?

A DREAM, A LIFE

'Many things in this world may tempt you, but only one thing can ignite you.' -Dong Liang

It is fair to say that I found my sophomore year here at the Jinan University rather confusing since as our excitement gradually faded, we began to think about our future. Such a challenge was further heightened when at my high school re-union with my former classmates who were attending other universities, it became clear that regardless of the universities we were at, we were all facing the same sorts of dilemmas: is our current major the one which we would like to devote the rest of our lives to; have we in fact studied in the right fields of learning we are best suited to or the right fields to pursue? We all agreed that we were not alone in this—it is a common confusion among all young Chinese youth who seek to be achievers of the future, in the highly competitive world we live in today!

It is a fact that for the past 12 years, we have been so accustomed to accept what others tell us that we seldom asked ourselves what do we want to learn, what do we want to do or what kind of person we want to be. So, as we finally entered our dream university after a tempestuous and work-filled three years of high school, we suddenly realize we have lost clarity as to what is our next destination. What's more, due to the lack of such a rudder to guide us, we are very much tempted to, in an extrovert fashion to follow certificate, go-abroad or postgraduate craze in the fields we are most familiar. Then in seeking to as it were 'smell the roses' for a moment, many of us mature out thoughts to realize we can hardly attain long-lasting happiness by just meeting the expectations of others near and dear to us, without in tandem, following the dreams inside our own hearts. And that, when all is said and done, is the dream that ignites all our passions for improving ourselves and achieving our long-term dreams. Having reflected on this for quite a while, my thoughts mature further in that I began to wonder, in what way can I help other members of Chinese youth to find their own dream too?

Obviously, a dream doesn't come from imagination alone, it also needs to be fuelled by inspiration. And on this, my personal experiences did suggest that it is communication which fosters inspiration. On campus, my communication with the teachers and students showed me new possibilities in terms of my intended future career. So, through the study of Hotel Management, I have learned of the increasing trend towards 'green hotels'. Also, through the participation in the "Challenge cup" National Undergraduate Business Plan competition, I have come to appreciate much better the burgeoning social industry, that is now known by the label-"voluntourism", which perfectly combines the dynamics of the commercially-based-travel industry with that of charities.

In the meantime, my contact with the community opened my mind to a more complete world. As a village volunteer of the 26th Summer Universiade, I was lucky enough to make friends with peers worldwide and experience a fascinating multicultural mix of attitudes and ideas. Likewise, during my time in the Shenzhen Autism Society, my close interaction with those innocent autism children further catapulted me to work on issues of youth education. As you can note what I have stated earlier, none of these inspirations came to my mind when I enclosed myself in my own world. To the contrary, such thoughts came along naturally as I opened my heart to others. This led to my conclusion that the more we communicate with the outside world, the more likely we are to acquire inspirations for our dreams.

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How then might I achieve this such that I might communicate more freely and effectively with people? In this, TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) has set an excellent example for me since when founded in 1984 in California, TED was formed to disseminate 'ideas worth spreading' through a set of conferences attended by the world's most inspired thinkers and a community of curious souls. Since TED Talks were made available online through TED.com, they have been translated into over 40 languages and viewed by more than 500 million global audiences! Actually, I am a huge TED-fan. The great impact that TED has made on U.S., Europe, Asia and other parts of the world does make me believe that internet can be an ideal platform for communication.

Armed with this conviction, my mission soon becomes clear. Namely, I wish to establish an NPO and build our educational website to help the Chinese youth of today to seek their dreams. Like TED, we wish to offer free knowledge and inspiration, as well as enabling people to engage with ideas and each other. Unlike TED, however, our content will be more comprehensive while our target population will be more specific. Basically, all our programs will be designed especially for youths. Aside from offering the most advanced development of every sector, we will also present to those interested the most ancient wisdom of Chinese traditional culture. Perhaps still, we will help our audience to better keep up with current issues by inviting some of them to broadcast world news from their perspective. In this way, the Chinese youth can gain inspiration from communication with the past, the present and the future and ultimately find the dream that ignites them.

However, to build a website like that, I am supposed to have a profound knowledge, an extensive horizon and a broad interpersonal network.

Thankfully, I believe studying abroad can meet all my needs. To begin with, immersing in a different culture setting can facilitate my personal growth and maturity, both mentally and intellectually. It is not so hard to imagine that after conquering such challenges from both study and life, I will be more confident and resilient in response to future adversities.

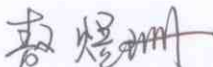
Additionally, my worldview will be expanded as I walk out of the door of my own country and meet people from different backgrounds and beliefs. Through such an experience I will be able to assess and re-evaluate the views I used to hold alongside embrace new concepts and ideas. Furthermore, the international friends I make now can be perfect potential partners in the future. Just as Purdue University has absorbed elites from all over the world, it is likely that the students which graduate from here can also become the backbone of this field. On that day, I can invite leaders from all walks of life to our program and bring the richest experience to our youth.

Also, I want to learn something from the educational system and styles in my school and the critical thinking of my fellow-students and professors. Perhaps most appealingly, I may have the chance to attend the live TED conference in California and further explore their operational modes directly! Hence I believe that these study-abroad experiences will collectively lay a solid foundation for me to accomplish my mission.

Thus, when I come back to China, I hope that the ending of my dream-seeking adventure will become the beginning of that for others. For the majority of people who don't have the opportunity to reach out to the world, I am going to bring back what I've learnt and make the world walk towards them. My vision then is for an influential website, through which those who feel confused can find their dream while others can find the path to actualize it. Hence, under the power of dream, I wish to see every Chinese youth fully exploit their potential and achieve greatness in the best interests of social efficiency as a whole. My vision may appear somewhat out-reaching, but just as Steven Jobs said, 'The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do!'

Thank you for reading

Student Signature

Yushan Ao


Date (Month/Date/Year)

Mar. 31. 2012