

From the Office of Awards

And Scholarships

At West Virginia Wesleyan College

Fall 2011

Questions for David Young Global Entrepreneur

David Young is a 1987 graduate of West Virginia Wesleyan College. He has lived and worked in Japan, Germany, Austria, Belgium, and England. He speaks German fluently and is conversant in Italian, Spanish, and French.

Q: You are now living in London, but where did your international interest begin? What was the first place you wanted to see abroad and what drew you to that location?

I was always interested in international travel, but my interest became strong while at Wesleyan. It was during my junior year when I had the idea to study a semester overseas. I wasn't that set on where to go and after I did some research I found myself drawn to Switzerland, mainly on account of the mountains. But it was a professor, Dr. Ernie Capstack, who said to me that while Switzerland would be nice, a more different place like Japan, would change me, and he encouraged me to stretch myself and to go beyond my comfort zone. So, it was essentially his challenge that made me decide to go to Nanzan University in Nagoya, Japan, for a semester during my senior year.



Q: Wesleyan affords the students the option of travel abroad as a part of their educational experience; did you travel as a student?

Back when I did my semester overseas, Wesleyan had no formal exchange or study-abroad program, but they supported me nonetheless. They helped me on all levels and it turned out to be the opening of new doors for me. Living in a different culture, I realized there was a lot I didn't know about myself or about the United States.

It's great that Wesleyan offers students the chance to travel abroad, whether it's for a more focused trip of a week or two, or something longer like a semester or a year abroad. But I would go further, however, and not just give the option but would encourage overseas travel during your time at Wesleyan! You learn so much more about yourself and your own country when you travel abroad, and it's amazing the different perspectives people can have on the same topic.

But sometimes you can't travel, and what's great about Wesleyan, or any school that attracts foreign students is that you can meet face-to-face with these students. By talking with these students you can sometimes learn more about global affairs and what genuinely is going on than by watching the news.

Q: What is the most interesting or exciting aspect of living abroad either as a student or a professional?

Living abroad, your opinions and beliefs are challenged by those with different perspectives. You re-think hard about things you used to just gloss over, and you learn to distinguish the things you genuinely believe in from the stuff you are told to believe in. Traveling and living overseas helps you do this, just as surrounding yourself with people who have different opinions does. Being faced with people who collectively hold the

opposite opinion about something makes you wonder “why not”. You don’t necessarily become them, but you do broaden the base of your own beliefs.

For me, traveling and living overseas helped me realize that the delineation between right and wrong is not actually as black and white as I thought growing up. What’s frowned upon in one country is considered completely benign in another. What’s hidden in one is exposed in another; it’s more about social appropriateness, and this changes depending on where you live. To be able to experience things outside the confines of the culture you grew up in can be exciting and thrilling, but more importantly it helps you more clearly define yourself without the pressures and influences of others.

The other part of living abroad is to actually visit all those places we only heard about in history class. I remember when I lived in Vienna and would often travel to Budapest, which was only two hours away by car, and I regretted not having paid more attention to the lessons on the Austrian-Hungarian Empire because it was now all around me in architecture and tradition. History helps to explain people’s behavior, their language, and even their logic when they communicate. It’s all linked.

Q: What kind of work are you doing now and how has traveling helped you in your career?

I currently have my own consulting firm, which focuses on global branding for pharmaceuticals. Essentially, we advise companies on how best to communicate the unique strengths of their products so that people understand the differences between one product and another. I work with the headquarter offices and my clients are the global marketing teams, so my work is strictly international. I’m constantly dealing with clients from cultures very different to the one I grew up in and frequently have to get people to agree on a common approach—all of whom have very different mindsets and perspectives. Being raised in America, but living 20 years abroad gives me

credibility in these global situations because my clients see that I understand both sides of the Atlantic.

While reading about and visiting other countries is helpful, actually living in a different country helps you truly to understand these cultural differences and what motivates people. In Europe, where you can be in another country within a couple of hours’ drive, this is well understood. As a result, I’ve always felt there is more respect amongst Europeans for the individual—even if that individual runs his life under different guiding principles than you do. But, this attitude doesn’t just apply to dealing with people from different countries; it also helps you respect the individuals within your own country.

For example, Americans tend to be rather linear in their thinking; and you see this in advertising. Almost any ad in the US starts with an unhappy person with a problem, followed by the product, followed by the happy person with the product. In Europe, things are less linear and more emotional or symbolic, and this varies greatly from country to country. So instead of the linear approach that tells you product X is for a certain purpose, the European advert may simply show the product in an emotional setting and not bother telling you that Evian will quench your thirst.

Q: Not every alumnus gives with a specific intent in mind. What prompted your decision to make funding available for students who wish to study abroad?

Wesleyan gave me a great education. And after working a few years, I went to the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona to get an international MBA. Thunderbird focuses almost exclusively on global issues and a large percentage of the students either come from overseas or end up living overseas. I’ve been very fortunate in my career, and I feel that a large part of my success comes from the time I spent at Wesleyan and at Thunderbird; the skills I learned, the people I met, and the professors that pushed me beyond my comfort zones.

“There was no study abroad scholarship when I was at Wesleyan, so I was thrilled to find out about the Dr. John Saunders Award for overseas study. Supporting it was, for me, a no-brainer. Knowing that John Saunders is involved in it means that the awardees will be getting great support from one of Wesleyan’s top educators. At a certain point, you have to give back, so I strongly encourage others to do the same and contribute to this program!”

At Wesleyan, I have especially strong memories of Annette Hiedemann, John Saunders and the late Ernie Capstack, who were amazing instructors for me and for many people I know. To this day, I still keep in contact with Dr. Hiedemann and Dr. Saunders.

Studying overseas while at Wesleyan did change my life, and it was my parents and several professors that made it possible. But not everyone can afford the additional cost of making an overseas experience part of their education.

Q: What advice would you give to students who are considering study abroad? Are there things you wish you had known prior to your travels?

Do it! And choose the most challenging place and circumstance. Go beyond your comfort zone, and consider something at least six months. A year would be even better.

And, while it's fun to hit as many places as you can, you get an entirely different perspective by more deeply getting to know one place. Spending more time in one place is also the only way you'll truly have any chance to get to know the people.

I would read up on the place. Know something about the political and social situation of where you are going because the people there are going to know quite a lot about the US. Do consider taking some language training before you go. While most people do speak English, learning a foreign language helps you understand the mindset of others. It's not just about different words; it's about how other cultures make an argument. Understanding their language, even a bit, can help you understand the people.

Catching up with Fulbright Scholar Lucy Swecker



Lucy Swecker graduated from West Virginia Wesleyan Spring 2011. She is currently fulfilling a Fulbright Scholarship in South Korea.

Q: What made you decide that you wanted to apply for a Fulbright?

A: After learning of the outstanding experiences of past Wesleyan Fulbright grantees I was convinced that I would gain much personally and professionally from this program. Participating in a program with a purpose of creating mutual understanding through education and service seemed like the perfect post-graduation step. As an education major, the strong ETA (English Teaching Assistant) Program in South Korea was very appealing. With 2010 Wesleyan grad Jillian Moga speaking highly of her grant period in Korea and hearing only wonderful things about the country from my Korean American roommate and exchange students to Wesleyan from Ewha Women's University, the decision was easy.

Q: You're now living in South Korea. How has it been so far?

A: A phenomenal two months. Immersing myself in a culture nearly opposite that of America has been an adjustment, but one I am thankful for. Although I am a foreigner, the warm hospitality of the Korean people makes this the perfect place to be out of place. An intensive language course and cultural study during

Fulbright orientation made my transition to full-immersion home-stay living very smooth.

Q: What has been the biggest benefit of traveling so far?

A: Exposure to the things you read about, hear about, and study day in and day out but cannot possibly understand without experiencing firsthand. Traveling with purpose enables one to gain cultural understanding-.When I saw a map for the first time with Korea in the center, not the United States, it was the perfect visual reminder that although the US is undoubtedly an influential nation, it is not necessarily the center of everyone's world.

2011 Student Summer Travel: Bruhns Scholarship

This past summer three students received the opportunity to travel to the country of their choosing, the only stipulations—no English speaking countries, and none of the Americas. Their travel experience was made possible by Wesleyan Alumna E. Maxine Bruhns, who gave funding for three scholarships. Along with Mackenzie Clark (destination-Israel), and Danielle Mullins

(destination-Kenya), Rich Sutphin, from Seth, West Virginia, was one of the three chosen. He is a junior at West Virginia Wesleyan College majoring in Biology. Tanzania was his destination and he had this to say about his trip: "This experience broadened my horizons in ways that are hard to put into words, but living and interacting with a culture which is nearly equally distributed



Christian and Muslim with nearly no violence definitely made an impression on me." Rich went on to say that one of the most life changing aspects of his travel was working in an underfunded reproductive and children's health clinic. "Another facet that definitely made my experience life changing was seeing and interacting with infants who tested positive for HIV." Rich also made

extensive study of Swahili and hopes to continue studying it in the future.

A Little Advice from Mitchell Scholar Katie Marcum



Ask lots of questions: this is my advice to anyone thinking of traveling, living, or studying abroad. While the idea may seem clichéd or simplified, my current and previous experience in Ireland has shown me that in order to make the most of your journey, you must be absolutely willing to step outside the comfortable bubble of existence you've developed at home and at school. Voicing the questions

you will undoubtedly have about this new place will, in the end, make your life much easier and your trip more fulfilling. Questions will come in very different forms--from asking your professor more about the place you're going, to reading information on your own about your new destination, to approaching the mildly frightening man in a trench coat inevitably loitering at the bus stop for much-needed directions--but are vital to improve your understanding of the place and culture you have chosen to immerse yourself in. While no one wants to be the clueless American tourist, seeking assistance from those who likely have the information you need will greatly reduce your stress, and you'll probably find people friendlier than you anticipated, while learning a great deal more about yourself and this new place.

-Katie Marcum is a 2011 graduate of West Virginia Wesleyan College. She is currently studying Anglo-Irish Literature at University College Dublin in Dublin, Ireland, through a highly competitive Mitchell Fellowship.

NCAA Postgraduate Scholarships and other National Award Winners

In addition to the Bruhns, Mitchell, and Fulbright scholars, Wesleyan students have picked up an additional eight nationally competitive scholarships:

Ryan Hoehner (2010) – NCAA Scholarship (now attending Ohio State University School of Dentistry)

Meghan Zayas (2010) – NCAA Scholarship (now attending Southwest Baptist University in Physical Therapy)

Cy Mozingo (2011) – NCAA Scholarship (now attending West Virginia University School of Medicine)
– Phi Kappa Phi (national honorary) Scholarship

Jennifer Elkins (2009) – Benjamin Gilman Scholarship for Study Abroad (in London, England, now attending the University of Maryland in Information Science)

Megan Lewis (2010) – Clinton Global Initiative (now working for the National Security Administration)

Meaghan Cochrane Morton (2010) – Rotary Ambassador Scholarship (Antwerp, Belgium, now working at Ohio Valley University)

Kate Turner (2011) – Alpha Lambda Alpha Graduate School Scholarship (now attending Duke University)