

News Release

Adventure Abroad takes Senior Daija Williams to China, Japan

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Wednesday, November 15, 2017

Daija Williams, a senior at the University of Minnesota Crookston, never imagined herself going out of the country let alone two countries, but a study abroad trip last summer changed all that and she's glad it did.

"My study abroad trip was amazing and life changing," Williams says. Under the guidance of Study Abroad Coordinator Rae French and Associate Professor Rachel McCoppin as well as professional tour guides, a group of nine students from the U of M Crookston visited China and Japan. For Williams, a communication major, the 18-day adventure would take her more than 7,000 miles from her home in Minneapolis, Minn.



"Before the trip we had assignments related to what we would be experiencing in the two countries and during the trip we had to write about 10 sites that we visited in a journal as well as a final project including a slide show of the trip," she explains. "I was incredibly fortunate to have financial support from Northwest School of Agriculture alumnus Les Nielsen and his wife whom I have known since I was a child. I know not everyone has this kind of support, and I am grateful to them for helping me. I wish everyone could have the experience."

The trip proved to be an eye opener for Williams as well as a blessing. "I never imagined myself going out of the country, but this trip taught me a lot about myself," she says. "There is great reward in learning about who you are when you have to rely on yourself. Things don't always go as planned and you learn to handle change and overcome fear."

The best part of the trip for Williams was being 12,389 feet high to experience the beauty of Mount Fuji, the highest mountain in Japan. Something that stands out in her memory was seeing ducks on leashes. "It was definitely a bit of a culture shock because in the United States it would be dogs on leashes," she smiles.



"My favorite part of the trip had to be in Kyoto, Japan, where we went hiking up the monkey exhibit to see monkeys in their natural habitat," she recalls. "We were able to feed the monkeys mangos and I captured a rare picture of a monkey with her baby; it was the most precious view I've ever seen."



The trip was a once-in-a-lifetime for Williams; however, she says she would not mind going again. "China and Japan are both amazing to experience," she says.

Williams hopes others will have the opportunity to venture beyond their comfort zone, and experience the culture of another country. "Getting to know both China and Japan—both customs and culture—really puts a new perspective on life."

The University of Minnesota Crookston now delivers 34 bachelor's degree programs, 22 minors, and 40 areas of emphasis on campus as well as 14 degree programs entirely online. These degrees are offered in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from more than 20 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

In the photos: Top, right: Daija Williams

Middle, right: Daija Williams, Ben Koisti, and Maggie Mills work in University Relation and the Office of Development & Alumni Relations.

Bottom, left: Mother with her baby at Japan taken when Daija Williams studied abroad in summer 2017.

Contact

Elizabeth Tollefson

University Relations

218-281-8432

Mentioned in this Article

[Rae French](#)

[Rachel McCoppin](#)

News Categories

[Department - Liberal Arts and Education](#)

Tweet

[News Home](#)

[News Archives](#)



Small Campus. Big Degree..

[Employment](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Academic Calendar](#)
[Library](#)
[Directories](#)
[Maps, Directions & Parking](#)
[Quick Facts](#)
[Bookstore](#)

[Faculty & Staff](#)
[Email & Calendar](#)
[Contact Webmaster](#)
[System Website](#)
[Home](#)

2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu

© 2021 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.
[Privacy Statement](#)