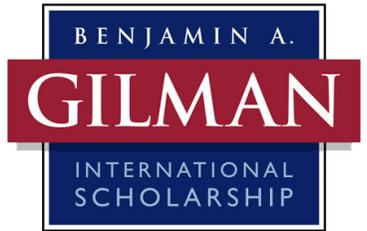


## PATRICK CHIANG, IRELAND, 2012

University of Mississippi  
Mississippi



I received a Gilman Scholarship to participate in an Information Technology internship for academic credit with a company based in Dublin, Ireland.

As an adult with spastic cerebral palsy, I understand that there is more to life than meets the eye. When I considered going abroad, I understood the challenges that may await me in a new environment. Before leaving for Ireland, my mother and I discussed the possible physical challenges that I may encounter during my stay, as I was currently seeing a physical therapist in order to improve my walking ability. I told her that going abroad would

deepen my understanding of different cultures regardless of any challenge that I may face. She then told me, "do what you feel is right in your heart, and continue to live with an open mind." So I ventured abroad with her words in my thoughts. There are some people, with or without disabilities, who might have been afraid to live in a new environment. I was once one of these people, but I understood that the future is only what I make it to be, whether personally or academically.

In my position as an IT intern, I dealt with product testing and technical writing. As a student of Management Information Systems and Marketing, I understand that the world is slowly becoming a smaller place with the advances of technology, along with the business practices that have merged with technology in order to increase efficiency. My internship strengthened me, both academically and personally, by helping me understand this growing field of technology. In

addition, this internship allowed me to achieve what some college students find difficult to incorporate in their academic experience - working full time. Working in an office environment abroad taught me how to conduct myself professionally and be adaptable.

*"There are some people, with or without disabilities, who might have been afraid to live in a new environment. I was once one of these people, but I understood that the future is only what I make it to be, whether personally or academically."*

My experiences abroad taught me that despite cultural differences, in the end, most people want the same things out of life. This conclusion has made me realize that people should not be afraid of venturing outside of their comfort zone.

### FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

I worked with the study abroad office at the University of Mississippi for my Follow-on Service Project. At the annual study abroad fair, I spoke with students who were interested in studying abroad, but faced challenges just like I had. These

students had questions such as "Will I fit in?" and "Will people think of me as being too different?" At the end of the fair, some of the students that I had spoken with were very eager in exploring a world that they may have only heard of or seen in the

news. In addition, I spoke with my network of professors and the members of AITP (Association of Information Technology Professionals) in which I am a member, explaining why more students in the IT field should be encouraged to study abroad.