Pre-med Students Gain an International Perspective

By Rosalind Early

Pre-med student Jenny Liu, Arts & Sciences Class of 2016, wanted a more global perspective on her field before going to medical school, so she applied to the Global MedPrep Scholars Program, which sends students to Shanghai for a semester. Students take classes at Fudan University, study Chinese and shadow doctors. Liu did her shadowing in a Western-style community hospital, a psychological clinic and a traditional Chinese medical practice. At each location there were vast differences in approach.

“I sat with one of the doctors [at the Western-style hospital] for daily rounds one day, and within an hour she saw 20 patients,” Liu recalls. Patients didn’t make an appointment. Instead, they took a number when they arrived. “Usually, the place was crammed with people, and they would just come and go; come and go.”

It was a stark contrast to the traditional Chinese medical practice.

“The doctors would sit with patients for a while and ask them about day-to-day things,” she says. “They would check the patients’ pulses with their hands instead of a stethoscope and would ask the patients to stick out their tongue, so they could observe if it was too dry or what color it was.”

The experience changed Liu’s perspective on medicine. “I realized medicine can sometimes be seen as culture,” she says.

Such insights are what Gregory Polites, MD, associate professor of emergency medicine, wants students to learn when they complete the Global MedPrep Scholars Program, which he oversees.

“We’re looking for students who are interested in global health and have an interest in how medicine is practiced in other parts of the world,” he says. “China’s system is similar to our system in some ways and very different in others. This program gives them a first-hand view of the similarities and differences in a way they will never forget.”

Polites took over the Global MedPrep Scholars Program in 2014. Previously, it was called the Pre-Health Semester in Shanghai, but Polites re-tooled it, gearing the program more exclusively toward pre-med students.

Polites also oversees the MedPrep courses at WashU. The required “MedPrep 1” covers what to expect on the journey to becoming a physician, from the medical school application process to eventual specialty board certification. Between 200 to 300 students enroll in the class each semester, allowing Polites to easily spread the word about the Global MedPrep Scholars Program. Since he’s taken it over, the program has quadrupled in size.

continued on back page
Two Washington University faculty members with strong global ties have been appointed assistant vice chancellors for international affairs, announced Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton.

Shenyang Guo, PhD, the Frank J. Bruno Distinguished Professor of Social Work Research in the Brown School, began serving as assistant vice chancellor for international affairs – Greater China (Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) on Sept. 1, 2015.

Gautam N. Yadama, PhD, professor in the Brown School, began serving as assistant vice chancellor for international affairs – India the same day.

“Shenyang and Gautam are both gifted and creative scholars and wonderful ambassadors for the university,” Wrighton says. “Their work as assistant vice chancellors will greatly help us strategically expand our global reach in two vast and important regions of the world. I am grateful for their willingness to take on these key positions.”

“Washington University has a growing global presence, and we would like to see us have more impact and visibility in India and Greater China,” says James V. Wertsch, PhD, vice chancellor for international affairs, director of the McDonnell International Scholars Academy and the David R. Francis Distinguished Professor in the Department of Anthropology. “We already have many varied activities for students and faculty members under way in India and Greater China and are ambitious about creating more.” Guo and Yadama will report to Wertsch as part of their new roles.

Wertsch says one of Guo and Yadama’s responsibilities will be to convene and coordinate faculty and students at Washington University who are already engaged in activities in China and India.

“I am thrilled that Shenyang and Gautam have agreed to help develop an increasing presence in these two regions,” Wertsch says. “They will be instrumental in coordinating our efforts to find new synergies and develop more visibility for all the impressive things Washington University is already doing.”

They also will work closely with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to help recruit more students from the two regions and with Alumni & Development to organize more alumni activities in China and India.

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Fast Facts: Shenyang Guo, PhD

- Serves as the McDonnell Academy’s ambassador to Fudan University in Shanghai
- Earned both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in economics from Fudan and a doctorate in sociology from the University of Michigan
- Conducts research in child welfare, child mental health services, welfare and health care
- An expert in applying advanced statistical models to solving social welfare problems
- Co-author of Propensity Score Analysis: Statistical Methods and Applications (2010), a comprehensive guide to statistical techniques that estimate the effects of social and health programs
- Came to WashU in 2015 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work, where he had been the Wallace H. Kuralt Sr. Distinguished Professor

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Fast Facts: Gautam N. Yadama, PhD

- Serves as the McDonnell Academy ambassador to both Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai
- Research focuses on the social and environmental challenges of rural poor in South Asia and China and sustainable interventions to improve their well-being
- Created Fires, Fuel & the Fate of 3 Billion: The State of the Energy Impoverished (Oxford University Press, 2013), with photographer Mark Katzman, a 152-page collection of essays and photos examining the complex nexus of energy, poverty, ecology, environment, gender inequality and technology
- Implementing several transdisciplinary research projects in India, including a randomized control trial to study sustainability of new and efficient stove technologies to improve household air pollution, health and environmental outcomes for rural poor in India
- Instrumental in building professional and educational initiatives for the Brown School in India, China, Nepal, Thailand, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Georgia
Leading and Learning in Shanghai

When Thomas Cheong, EMBA ’13 (Shanghai), entered the Washington University–Fudan University Executive MBA program, he had already been working for 20 years, becoming a CFO at age 32 and a CEO by age 40.

“I wanted to go back to school to recharge and learn new skills to prepare for bigger roles in the second half of my career,” he says. He chose the program because of the reputation of the universities and the opportunity to learn concurrently from a Chinese and American university.

“The professors at both schools were top-notch,” Cheong says. Even today he sits in on lectures when he has time, thanks to the program’s lifelong learning provision.

During the program, Cheong became the class president and won the William Emory Award for Outstanding Leadership.

“I wanted to make the 18-month program as good a learning experience for every participant of the class as it was for myself,” Cheong says about why he took on the leadership role.

His class became the first to have its midterm residency outside of China at the National Taiwan University in Taipei.

“This has evolved into a midterm residency at the Brookings Institute in the U.S.,” Cheong says. “No other EMBA program in China offers its participants the opportunity to study and learn at one of the top U.S. think tanks.”

After graduating, Cheong became a CEO at an asset management company in Taiwan. There, he doubled the company’s assets under management in one year by building a strong team, developing a strategic plan for the future and forging productive relationships.

“All the stuff I learned during the EMBA program was put to good use,” he says.

From there, he was recruited away to be vice president of North Asia for Principal Financial Group, one of the largest pension asset managers in the U.S. and South America. They were looking to grow their operations in Asia. Now, more than 500 individuals report to Cheong.

“I am thankful that the EMBA program — particularly its courses on leadership, strategic thinking, innovation and marketing — has prepared me well for my current role,” Cheong says. “And the friendships and support of fellow participants and the mentorships of professors have also helped me a lot.”

Cheong also gives some of the credit for his path in life to high school teacher Jagit Than, who encouraged him to apply for the prestigious Public Service Commission Scholarship from the government of Singapore (his home country), which he won. That enabled Cheong to attend the London School of Economics as an undergraduate.

“Because of her belief in me, my life took a different path,” he says. He’d one day like to have the same impact. “I love teaching and sharing my experiences with others,” he says. “If the opportunity arises, I would like to teach at one of my alma maters to share my experiences of running businesses in Asia.”

WashU Spotlight

Bill Xu, Head of the China Office in Shanghai

By Rosalind Early

In May 2015, Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton opened Washington University’s China Office in Shanghai near Fudan University. Since then, the China Office has hosted workshops, provided support and local media coverage for Wrighton and others visiting Beijing and Shanghai, and established a social media presence. Now, more than 1,300 alumni and friends are connected on China’s popular WeChat, an instant messaging and social media platform.

Behind every success is Bill Xu, the head of the China Office.

From 2007 to 2012, Xu worked for the university’s joint EMBA program with Fudan University. He left to head up another China office for a Singaporean university, but was recruited back by James V. Wertsch, PhD, vice chancellor for international relations and director of the McDonnell International Scholars Academy.

“We were fortunate to recruit Bill. He makes a big difference for us in Shanghai, and China more generally, as we strive to give Washington University the visibility it needs in this part of the world,” says Wertsch, who is also the David R. Francis Distinguished Professor in the Department of Anthropology.

“The main goal of our office is to increase the university’s visibility in China,” Xu says. And it’s working. “When talking with people in China, quite a lot are impressed that we are such a great university. Previously, they didn’t hear too much about us.”

Xu also organizes alumni events, holds information sessions for WashU’s joint programs with Fudan, helps the admissions office recruit students and aids the career development office in locating opportunities for graduates.

“WashU has established official partnerships with some top universities in China, and it’s the biggest market outside of the U.S. for the university,” Xu says. “As the China market becomes more important, the China office will help the university become more firmly established.”
**Gordon Receives Keio Medical Science Prize**

Jeffrey I. Gordon, MD, director of the Center for Genome Sciences & Systems Biology at Washington University School of Medicine, received the 2015 Keio Medical Science Prize.

The prize, awarded by Keio University in Tokyo, recognizes scientists who have made outstanding and creative contributions to medicine or the life sciences for the benefit of humankind.

Gordon was honored for his pioneering role in establishing a field of research devoted to the human microbiome. His numerous studies have linked the community of microbes in the gut to good health and disease, providing a new and expanded perspective of the body as a tapestry of interacting microbial and human parts.

Gordon’s research fundamentally has changed the understanding of two global health problems: obesity and childhood malnutrition.

Gordon, the Dr. Robert J. Glaser Distinguished University Professor, shared the prize with Yoshinori Ohsumi, PhD, of the Frontier Research Center at the Tokyo Institute of Technology.

The two received the award on Nov. 25, 2015, in a ceremony in Tokyo.

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**Tomatoes Get Boost in Growth, Antioxidants From Nano-Sized Nutrients**

When zinc oxide and titanium dioxide nanoparticles are sprayed on the leaves of a tomato plant, the tomatoes better absorb light and minerals, and the fruit has a higher antioxidant content.

This finding is what Pratim Biswas, PhD, the Lucy & Stanley Lopata Professor and chair of the Department of Energy, Environmental & Chemical Engineering, and postdoctoral researcher Ramesh Raliya, PhD, both in the School of Engineering & Applied Science, published in the online journal *Metallomics* in 2015.

“When a plant grows, it signals the soil that it needs nutrients,” Biswas says. “The nutrients it needs are not in a form that the plant can take right away, so it secretes enzymes, which react with the soil and trigger bacterial microbes to turn the nutrients into a form that the plant can use. We’re trying to aid this pathway by adding nanoparticles.”

The researchers found that depositing the nanoparticles on the leaves of the plant was much more efficient than putting more nutrients in the soil. “A plant can only uptake about 20 percent of the nutrients applied through soil,” Raliya says. But in this study, the tomatoes produced nearly 82 percent (by weight) more fruit than untreated plants. Plus, the treated tomatoes showed an increase in lycopene.

Increasing the nutritional value of food could help feed a growing population (the world population is expected to reach nine billion by 2050) without further taxing our natural resources.

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**McDonnell International Scholars Academy Celebrates 10-year Anniversary**

The McDonnell International Scholars Academy celebrated its 10-year anniversary in November 2015 by hosting an alumni workshop on the Washington University campus.

Founding benefactor John F. McDonnell, DSc ’06, MBA ’14, and other university leaders spoke about the impact of the academy and hosted discussions on career paths for scholars present and past.

McDonnell International Scholars Academy is a highly selective program that recruits graduate and professional students from a network of 29 partner universities around the world to come to the university and learn to be future global leaders. There are currently 67 scholars in residence and 72 academy alumni. The program itself has become a model for international cooperation and collaboration among leading research institutions.

“The McDonnell Academy has far exceeded my expectations with respect to the value and impact of collaborative education and research programs with our partner institutions,” says Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton. “The McDonnell Scholars are among our most outstanding graduate and professional students, and it is rewarding to see our academy alumni now emerging as the leaders we hoped they would become.”

In addition to the scholars program, the McDonnell Academy also offers faculty at Washington University and the 29 partner institutions the opportunity to collaborate on finding solutions to global challenges. The academy has convened five international symposia focused on energy and other world challenges like public health and population aging.

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**Jim Little to Receive Business School Dean’s Medal**

Jim Little, PhD, the Donald Danforth Jr. Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Business, taught at the university for more than 40 years, first in the Department of Economics and later in Olin Business School. There, he served as dean of academic affairs and as academic director of Olin’s Executive MBA Program. He also helped create Olin’s Executive MBA Program in Shanghai at Fudan University, all while conducting research on globalization and economies across the globe. Though he’s retired, he still serves as EMBA director of the Shanghai program.

With such a legacy, it’s no wonder that Little will receive the Dean’s Medal at the Olin Distinguished Alumni Awards in April. The award recognizes Little’s exceptional service and dedication to Olin Business School. His efforts have enhanced the school’s reputation around the world.
Glimpses

Freshman Serena Lan checks her time after competing at the 32nd annual WU Invitational at Millstone Pool. The Bears swept the invitational, winning 30 of the 34 events.
“I think having a large group was really valuable,” says Naveen Jain, Arts & Sciences Class of 2016, who, like Liu, was part of the inaugural fall 2014 cohort. “You get a group of people who have similar goals. I’m still good friends with a lot of people I met during the program.”

Though Polites oversees the program, Judy Mu, PhD, senior lecturer in Chinese in the Department of East Asian Languages and Culture, stays with the students in Shanghai, acting as the university liaison while Polites returns to campus to teach and fulfill his clinical and medical school obligations.

For Jain, the program was eye-opening. “When you see how health care differs in China, it makes you wonder why things are the way they are in America. Thinking about why our medical system is structured the way it is and how we might improve it is important for anyone who wants to eventually be a physician.”

Jain, like the rest of the participants, worked in a Western-style hospital and a traditional-Chinese-medicine practice. From the latter, he learned about viewing the body as a holistic system. But from the experience as a whole, he learned about a problem that affects medical centers around the world.

“Most people in China, whether from the big city or a rural province, all converge on the same medical centers, but the types of care they receive are vastly different,” he says. “The experience really made me cognizant of those types of disparities, and that’s something I want to address as a physician here in the United States.”

Help Recruit Talented Students Through the Alumni and Parents Admission Program

Throughout the world, many university alumni (undergraduate) and parents of current undergraduate students are ambassadors for the university as they help recruit, interview and enroll talented students from their areas. Working as part of the Alumni and Parents Admission Program (APAP), they offer interviews to applicants (students), help staff college fairs, refer prospective students to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, and contact and respond to questions from parents of admitted and enrolling students. Some volunteers also host summer send-off parties for incoming freshmen in their areas prior to the start of the fall semester at the university. In addition to APAP volunteers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo, volunteers can also be found in the Asian nations of South Korea, Taiwan, India, Malaysia, People’s Republic of China and Thailand.

If you are interested in becoming involved in APAP efforts, please contact the APAP office at apap@wustl.edu or 1-314-935-4826.

In Asia, the APAP committee chairs are:

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