How I Spent My Summer

By: Emily Turner, Senior with a quadruple major in International Business, Economics, Political Science and Asian Studies with a minor in Mandarin Chinese.

This summer, I spent several weeks in Southeast Asia on a Global Learning Experience with the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business. We traveled to Vietnam, Thailand, China, and Hong Kong to meet with businesses, government agencies, and international organizations. Our group included Dean Anderson, Dr. Vijay Kannan, Dr. Zsolt Ugray, and 13 students in various majors in the Huntsman School of Business.

The most important aspect of the Huntsman Global Learning Experiences involves visits to businesses in finance, accounting, marketing, manufacturing, and other fields. Two of my favorite visits on the trip were to the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, Vietnam, and to the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok, Thailand. In both visits, we were able to see the interconnectivity of business and government on a global scale. It was fascinating to see the way that policy decisions made by individual governments and international organizations impact different aspects of business in every nation.

In the past couple of years, I have had the opportunity to learn Mandarin Chinese while living in Taiwan and continuing study through Chinese courses at Utah State. I chose the Asia trip over the other trips offered by the Huntsman School out of a desire to return to Asia and use my language skills in a business context. During our business visits in mainland
China, I had the unique experience to engage with business leaders in their native language. I also loved the opportunities I had to start conversations with and translate for restaurant owners, taxi drivers, and other people we met as we were out exploring on the street. Although English is the language of business throughout the world, I understood the value of learning a widely-used second language more clearly.

The trip was also an incredible adventure. We rode elephants in Chiang Mai, Thailand. We took buses, trains, bikes, tuk-tuks, taxis, Ubers, subways, and planes. We got lost in street markets in every city we visited. We used a rainy night to get in a hilarious session of karaoke. A group of us met up with a bunch of locals in a park at 6:00 in the morning and they were happy to have us join in on their laughing yoga class. We watched the sunrise at one of the most beautiful temples in Thailand. One of my favorite adventures was on our last night in Hong Kong. Another student, Skylar Faidiga, and I just barely caught the last train of the night to Victoria Peak. We saw the most incredible view of the city and we just felt lucky to be there. Especially when traveling, you have to take some chances. You have to get out there with a map in a language you can’t read, make friends, and find the coolest things you can see.

The trip gave the students the experience needed to raise our global vision. I built a global network and engaged with business professionals in a wide array of fields. We saw incredible sights that I never imagined I would be lucky enough to see in person. When it comes to understanding the way that business operates in other countries, nothing short of experience will do. My experience in Asia this summer absolutely transformed the way I think about my future.