TWO UW POLITICAL SCIENCE HONORS SENIORS SELECTED AS CHINA’S YENCHING ACADEMY SCHOLARS

Submitted by Stephen Dunne on March 20, 2018 - 3:41pm

UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS // MARCH 13, 2018

University of Washington seniors Tobi Du and Caleb Huffman will join approximately 125 scholars from around the world as part of the Yenching Academy of Peking University's 2018-19 cohort. A U.S. News & World Report poll ranked Peking University the fifth best global university in Asia, and second-best university in China. The opportunity to join Yenching Academy is highly competitive. In 2017, only 4 out of 124 Yenching Academy Scholars from the states studied at public research universities in the United States.

Launched by China's Peking University in 2014, the Academy aims to build bridges between China and the rest of the world by educating the next generation of leaders and innovators. As Yenching Scholars, students design their own research in humanities or social sciences, take language classes and study China's past, present and future. The 1-2 year program culminates with students earning a master's degree in China studies. In addition to covering the costs of tuition, the award includes round trip air travel from the student's home country, housing on campus and living costs.

"Undergraduate education at the UW aspires to prepare students for cross-cultural leadership, scholarship and impact in the world," explains Ed Taylor, vice provost and dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs. "We are so proud of Tobi and Caleb for this recognition of their accomplishments-to-date as well as the promise of their future work and impact in the world."

This opportunity for a focused look into China's role in the world closely aligns with both Du's and Huffman's academic interests and future career goals.

TOBI DU

Major: Political science (departmental honors)
Expected graduation: June '18
A Taiwanese-American student studying political science with a focus on international security, Du plans to pursue a career in diplomacy and policymaking as a foreign service officer with the U.S. Department of State. While at Yenching Academy, Du seeks to study the role of China in global politics, envisioning a close diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and China as critical to the international community. “[The Yenching Academy] will strengthen my personal and professional development by honing my cultural adaptability and personal resilience, and provide a basis for future intensive international assignments,” says Du. “The regional expertise that I will gain from this program is invaluable to my potential career as a diplomat.”

To deepen her knowledge about East Asia, the Sammamish native served as a project leader in her Korean Peninsula and World Politics course and studied the construction of Japanese identity in Tokyo via an Honors Program study abroad class. She is currently writing her honors research thesis about how North Korean domestic political changes and Kim Jong-un's external and internal threat perceptions have affected the country's accelerating nuclear and ballistic missile agenda.

Beyond her studies, Du is focused on giving back to the community. She serves as volunteer director for the UW Foundation’s Senior Class Gift Council and is a lead of a local Family Readiness Group, connecting families of soldiers with information from their commanders.

**CALEB HUFFMAN**

Majors: Political science, communication (college honors)
Expected graduation: June 2018
Originally from Onalaska, WA, Huffman’s eagerness to build bridges between cultures prompted him to take advantage of any and all foreign-service-related opportunities. As a freshman, he was selected as a Gilman Scholar to study human migration in Rome and Amsterdam. He next served as a Husky Presidential Ambassador, traveling to Tsinghua University in Beijing and went on to earn a fellowship with the U.S.-China Initiative Student Fellows program at Georgetown. There, he attended conferences with senior U.S. and Chinese diplomats in Washington D.C. and Beijing. Most recently, he served as a delegate as part of the Forum for American/Chinese Exchange at Stanford, attending conferences at Stanford and Peking University. Huffman believes that the U.S.-China relationship will be a critical, and perhaps, the most important bilateral relationship of his lifetime. He is eager to improve his Mandarin skills and gain a better understanding of Chinese law, history and culture.

“Studying China’s legal system at Yenching Academy will be my foundational study of a legal system (my master’s degree will be in Chinese law and society), the first of many ventures examining legal systems around the world. I aim to be a leader, one who sees a vision of what could be with an ability to understand what is, while always working to persuade others to change what is because of what could be.”

Huffman’s interest in cross-cultural leadership and international policy led him to double major in political science and communication. His future plans include pursuing a degree in international law, with the aim of holding an influential role in American foreign relation’s peace-building efforts.

Learn more about scholarship opportunities at UW
The Yenching Academy application process is supported by the Office of Merit Scholarships, Fellowships and Awards (OMSFA), a UAA program. OMSFA works with faculty, staff and students to identify and support promising students in developing the skills and personal insights necessary to become strong candidates for this and other prestigious awards. The UW campus application process for students interested in Yenching Academy (and other scholarships supporting graduate studies around the world) will get started this spring for 2019-20 awards. Watch for updates about OMSFA’s Global Fellowships Prep program.