VSU STUDENTS AWARDED BENJAMIN A. GILMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP TO STUDY ABROAD

Two Virginia State University Hospitality Management majors—Chelsea J. Harris, a senior, and Lillian Coffey, a junior—are among over 700 American undergraduate students from 341 colleges and universities across the U.S. selected to receive the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Chelsea and Lillian will participate in a Hospitality and Tourism Management International Internship program in Chengdu, China, during the spring and summer 2014 academic terms. In addition to studying Mandarin language, the students will complete courses in Global Issues and Tourism, Chinese Food and Culture, and Multinational Business in China. Their program will be completed with an 18-week internship at an international luxury hotel in Chengdu.

A resident of Charlotte, NC, Lillian is treasurer for the VSU Chapter of the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality. Her career goal is to become a general manager of a luxury hotel. Chelsea, a resident of Glen Allen, VA, was a recent inductee into the VSU College of Agriculture Honor Society and the Eta Sigma Delta International Hospitality Honor Society. She is pursuing a career in lodging operations management.

Gilman Scholars receive up to $5,000 to apply towards their study abroad program costs, and a limited number of Critical Need Language Scholarships are given each year for a total award of $8,000. Scholarship recipients have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of other cultures, countries, languages, and economies—making them better prepared to assume leadership roles within government and the private sector. The full list of students who have been selected to receive Gilman Scholarships, including students’ home state, university and country of study, is available on their website: www.iie.org/gilman.

Administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE) in Houston, Texas, the Gilman Scholarship Program seeks to bring diversity to study abroad participants and the countries and regions where they study. According to Allan Goodman, President and CEO of IIE, “International education is one of the best tools for developing mutual understanding and building connections between people from different countries. It is critical to the success of American diplomacy and business, and the lasting ties that Americans make during their international studies are important to our country in times of conflict as well as times of peace.”

Since the program’s establishment by the International Academic Opportunity Act of 2000, over 13,000 students nationwide have received this prestigious award. The scholarship is named after Congressman Gilman, who retired in 2002 after serving in the House of Representatives for 30 years and chairing the House Foreign Relations Committee. Program details and 2014 deadlines are available at http://www.iie.org/en/Programs/Gilman-Scholarship-Program.