

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE *Current*

November 15, 2016

Shelly Leachman

Going Global

It's a long way from Wilmington to London. But Georgina Aguilar will soon make the trek from her home city of nine square miles and 57,000 people to 600-square-mile London, nine million people strong. And she'll do so by way of UC Santa Barbara.

Aguilar, a second-year sociology major and Promise Scholar at UCSB, has received a Frederick Douglass Global Fellowship from the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) and the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions (CMSI). She is one of only 10 college students nationwide named to the inaugural cohort of Douglass Fellows, who will spend summer 2017 studying in London.

"I feel extremely honored to have received this fellowship and to be given the opportunity to study abroad," Aguilar said on learning of her selection. "This will be a great experience for me to grow as an individual both academically and socially. I know that I'll come across various obstacles, but they will only serve as motivation to further develop myself and fully realize my abilities. Not only will this fellowship allow me to experience a different environment from UC Santa Barbara, it will also give me greater exposure to the world overall."

The Frederick Douglass Global Fellowship is a nationwide initiative designed to break down the barriers of cost, curriculum and culture to make study abroad accessible to students from minority-serving institutions. The fellowship is part of a strategic, three-year partnership between CIEE and CMSI to increase study abroad at MSIs. UCSB is a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution.

“In my time abroad I primarily just hope to learn,” Aguilar said. “I want to learn as much as I can about the culture, the city, the people, their history and traditions and — last but not least — about my personal abilities. I have never been in foreign country without my family so I am admittedly scared. But I know that everything is a learning and growing experience, therefore I strive to continuously be ambitious in everything that I do. With this experience I hope to gain better personal development skills and lifelong memories.”

To be selected as a fellow, applicants must demonstrate high academic achievement, possess exemplary communication skills, display the hallmarks of self-determination, exhibit characteristics of bold leadership and have a history of service to others. And in the spirit of Frederick Douglass — the African American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer and statesman — they must commit to sharing their experiences and intercultural growth with peers and classmates before, during and after their summer abroad.

“These fellows exemplify the wonderful kinds of students that attend minority-serving institutions,” said Marybeth Gasman, a Penn professor and the director of CMSI. “They’re determined and inspiring, and they represent the future leaders of our increasingly diverse nation.”

Aguilar and the others in her 10-student cohort in summer 2017 will travel to London for a summer study abroad program designed to enhance their leadership and intercultural skills. Future Frederick Douglass Global Fellows will study abroad in Cape Town, South Africa (2018) and Seoul, South Korea (2019).

“Frederick Douglass was an American icon. He escaped from slavery, wrote and spoke widely on issues of human rights and social justice in America and Europe, and became one of the most influential figures of the 19th century concerning the abolition and suffrage movements, as well as domestic and international relations,” said CIEE’s President and CEO Jim Pellow. “We’re honored to partner with Penn CMSI to enable a new generation of student leaders to build on their impressive credentials with an international experience in London, similar to Frederick Douglass’ international experience in 1845.”

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.