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MPA students to study at Beijing Normal University

1:47 p.m., Jan. 28, 2010---Two University of Delaware [master of public administration](#) (MPA) students will travel to Beijing for the spring semester to participate in an exchange program with Beijing Normal University (BNU).

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Malia Gilbert and Olufemi "Femi" Adedoyin, both graduate students in the [College of Education and Public Policy](#), will be the first MPA students from the University of Delaware to study at BNU, and both students say they are looking forward to the experience.

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The Academy Building
 105 East Main Street
 University of Delaware
 Newark, DE 19716 • USA
 Phone: (302) 831-2792
 email: ud-ocm@udel.edu
www.udel.edu/ocm

"I look forward to gaining insight to Chinese governance, and the ways in which Chinese-American partnerships effect the global economy," Gilbert says, adding, "I'm also looking forward to being immersed in and learning about Chinese culture."

Adedoyin says that she will be happy just being in China, "taking in the sights and sounds of the country, navigating through the public transport system of Beijing, learning about the Chinese school system and Public policy in China, and all while trying to learn a bit of the most difficult language I have ever seen in my life. Yes, there is a lot to look forward to."

While both Gilbert and Adedoyin found out about the program through advertisements by the college's [School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy](#), Adedoyin says that she also spoke about the opportunity to a UD student who participated in the exchange program last year.

Gilbert, who one day wants to work with fundraising and planning initiatives for the public or nonprofit sector, says that she will be taking classes "in English related to my specialization in financial management. I will also be conducting research on rural workers who migrate into urban areas. Additionally, I would like to serve as an English tutor."

Adedoyin, who wants to either pursue her juris doctorate or get a job "somewhere warm" after graduation, will be taking "a

couple of courses, probably with either a public health or economic focus -- or both -- and I'll be working as a research assistant in BNU's School of Social Development and Public Policy (SSDPP)." She also says that she plans to travel within the country to visit other cities and regions.

One of the reasons that Gilbert wanted to travel to China to study is that in such difficult economic times, she thought "it would be invaluable to learn about the ways that such a powerful country contributes to the global economy. Furthermore, as a future public administrator, I think it is equally important to learn about the ways in which other countries operate, as a means of examining the strengths and weaknesses of ones own nation."

Both say they hope to gain something significant from this experience.

Gilbert says that she hopes to have "deepened my understanding of the importance of international collaboration and relationships in an increasingly global society. Moreover, I hope to have gained a more globally-oriented perspective on public administration in the United States that I can use to inform my experiences in any workplace."

Asked what she hopes to gain from the experience, Adedoyin says, "The world -- but I'll settle for heightened cultural competency, empathy for lifestyles very different from my own, and great friends."

Article by Adam Thomas

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