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Studying abroad was a huge leap for me especially because I am in a wheelchair. Traveling with a disability poses unique challenges. Simply getting onto an airplane and getting around in a foreign country were big obstacles for me to overcome. My experience in Australia reinforced for me just

how capable and independent I am. For the first time in my life, I was thousands of miles away from my family and living on my own. During my time in Australia, I had the opportunity to take courses in geology, history, and Australian identity. An objective of mine for studying abroad was to broaden my understanding of other perspectives, as well as to grow an appreciation of other cultures. However, learning about other perspectives did not just happen in the classroom, but also in the friendships that I developed in Australia.

Studying abroad has opened a world of possibilities for me and for my future. Before going abroad, I had a set idea of how I saw my future: getting a job at a

local hospital and then eventually coming back to the University of Arizona to do my graduate studies. Now, I am considering the possibility of doing my graduate studies at a university abroad.

Currently I am working full time at the University of Arizona for THINK TANK the Student Academic Learning Center. I am beginning to put serious thought into the graduate program I want to pursue. I would like to one day have my Ph.D.

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FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

My main project goal was to create and facilitate study abroad informational sessions that targeted two specific groups: students with disabilities and Arizona Blue Chip members. I really wanted to encourage other students with disabilities to study abroad.

Without a doubt, going abroad with a disability poses additional challenges that the average college student does not need to take in consideration. Special arrangements have to be made. I learned a tremendous amount

from planning my study abroad experience and would like to pass on what I learned to other students. Not to mention, also showing students with disabilities that traveling does not have to be just a dream! To reach students with disabilities, I contacted the Disability Resource Center (DRC).

For the informational sessions, I put together a PowerPoint presentation. For my DRC study abroad sessions, I included specific information about arrangements I had to make such as airline

transportation, housing, and medical related needs. At both group presentations, I included detailed information about paying for studying abroad. I specifically mentioned the Gilman Scholarship and how it assisted me in being able to go abroad. In my Blue Chip sessions, I discuss in particular my experience participating with the Black Opal program; from how I was able to put my leadership skills to work with our campus project to going on Diversity Camp and opening my mind to new ideas and thoughts.