

China QUT Journalism Trip Application

Dear Professor Knight,

When I was still in high school, I first realised the abilities journalists possessed to positively contribute to, if not initiate, change. Being quite the believer in Ghandi's "be the change you wish to see" quote, I decided to study journalism on that notion.

As a second year journalism student, I now know that I want to write words that will bring about understanding and agreement; I want to publish articles that will instigate tolerance and appreciation. My support for 'freedom of information' rights has led me to develop a passion for political journalism, motivated by the Australian Democrats concept of keeping "the bastards honest". At the 2008 QUT Journalism Awards, my political story for the unit 'Journalistic Inquiry' won Best Print News Story. It is these skills that I wish to develop further during the China reporting trip.

Having spent a lot of time in the Asia-Pacific over the past few years (i.e. recently travelling to Vanuatu once and Japan twice recently) has helped me realise the significance of Australia's neighbours, and the wonderful examples of varying political frameworks that they offer. I find the political circumstances of Asia – particularly the speedy development of the Peoples Republic of China – fascinating.

Of course, no country has a more interesting political framework than China: a country undefinable in its communist yet authoritarian rule. Because the extent of any future success depends on how well I utilise the opportunities presented to me, it would be incredible for me to investigate such situations further by experiencing China's political climate hands on as an international journalist, while reporting with QUT.

The possibility to work alongside a foreign correspondent would be enormously rewarding, as would the opportunity to immerse myself amongst China's rich culture and local peoples. Over the past year I have had a lot to do with cross-cultural communication – not only through my travels, but by broadcasting regularly on Radio 4EB (after winning the station's QUT scholarship in 2008).

In my recent summer holidays, I volunteered with ten other young people on Vanuatu's Tanna Island. During those ten weeks, not only did I positively contribute to a community, but I believe I positively changed myself. I learnt about development, leadership, teamwork, and by the end of the project was able to understand quite fluently and speak basic Bislama (a form of pidgin English).

I believe that the skills gained on the Vanuatu project will assist me to be a positive asset to the QUT team in China. I am able to adapt very well to new cultures, languages and situations. I also regularly travel alone and have no problem displaying the responsibility and initiative necessary for such an excursion.

To be selected for QUT's journalism trip to China would be a dream come true. The opportunity would not only be an enormous learning experience, but a chance for me to take another step closer to "being the change I wish to see" and reporting on issues I am passionate about, all whilst being immersed in a culture with an abundance of history and news story potential.

Yours Sincerely,

Melanie Arnost