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Korean culture immersion in store for Morris student

Summary: Christine Hoffman was awarded a scholarship to travel to South Korea over spring break.

(February 29, 2012)-For many, the words “spring break” stirs images of warm weather, beaches, and sunshine. For others, spring break is time to visit family and friends. For Christine Hoffman ’13, spring break means a unique opportunity to be immersed in Korean culture.

Hoffman was awarded a scholarship from the Council on International Education Exchange (CIEE) and the Korea Foundation to travel to South Korea over spring break to learn more about the language, culture, and history. The scholarship is intended to be the first step for students to experience Korean culture, language, customs, and daily life.

CIEE is a non-profit, non-governmental organization with a mission to help people gain understanding, acquire knowledge, and develop skills for living in a globally interdependent and culturally diverse world. The non-profit Korea Foundation seeks to promote awareness and understanding of Korea throughout the international community.

Hoffman leaves on March 8, and after a brief orientation will arrive in Seoul, South Korea after thirteen hours of flight. While in South Korea, Hoffman will attend academic lectures for language, culture, and history at Yonsei University in Seoul, go on excursions to ancient places, and visit the National Museum of Korea and the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea. She returns on March 18.

Hoffman, a Mathematics and Spanish major from Alexandria, Minnesota, learned of this opportunity from another member at a German club meeting. She applied during the 2011 winter break. As the program seemed very competitive, she was doubtful about receiving the scholarship but after three weeks of waiting received the exciting news—she had been chosen for the trip.

Hoffman has previously been to Europe and feels connections to many people there and is truly excited to go to South Korea. “I believe this will give me a chance to experience a culture that is uniquely different from ours. From eating with chopsticks to experiencing the hierarchy of respect in South Korea first hand, I believe this will be a deep cultural experience for me,” she said.

As part of the scholarship, Hoffman will be blogging about her experiences in South Korea and encourages everyone to consider studying abroad in South Korea or other parts of Asia.

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