

Intro: You are on with career talks presented by the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at Georgia Tech a regular podcast featuring students, alumni, and friends of the school offering advice to help you succeed in your career endeavors.

Q: All right so if you could please tell us your name, major and your year in school.

A: So my name is Lizzie Clark and I am a fifth year International Affairs and Russian major.

Q: And so just in your own words, tell us a little bit about what the Boren Awards are and what the Critical Language Scholarship is.

A: Absolutely, so the awards are fairly similar. C.L.S. can be thought of as kind of a baby Boren, it is a group program that is sponsored by the Department of State and they send you to a country to study a critical language for somewhere between eight to ten weeks. So I studied Russian and was sent to Russia it was fully paid for and I lived in the host family and had about thirty hours of intensive classes per week and the scholarship was only for critical languages. I think now they have thirteen so languages like Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, Swahili, Urdu, languages like that. Boren is a similar program and that it focuses also on critical languages and you have to go somewhere that is not Western Europe or generally also Latin America and they fund overseas programs from six to twelve months for intensive study and one of these languages so I chose Arabic as my language. And I just spent eight months in Jordan and also taking intensive classes but Boren is a lot more self-driven than C.L.S. C.L.S. and is paid for by the government they they create the program for you where is Boren they give you money and you find your own program.

Q: And so what was your motivation in applying to each of these programs and in choosing the particular languages that you selected.

A: Well the language selection came from my regional interest I have been interested in the ex-Soviet region and the Middle East since high school and I always knew even at that time that I wanted to study Russian and Arabic. So I started studying Russian at Georgia Tech but you know anyone that studies a language knows that the best way to learn is to go abroad and study that language. And so these programs offered me the opportunity to do that for both of these languages which I might not otherwise have had especially for Arabic because that time tech didn't really have an Arabic program so in order to study Arabic I had to go abroad.

Q: And so throughout both of the programs what would you say was the most enjoyable experience.

A: The most enjoyable and also the most challenging was using the language to communicate with people. That was what I kind of made the focal point of both of my experiences was using my languages as a means of making friends with locals and you being you know going to locals' homes and having dinner and meeting their friends and families. And doing weekend trips with

them and struggling to understand them and to make yourself understood but having fun trying.

Q: And so what would you say is the most rewarding.

A: Similar answer I mean the relationships you make with the people and the experiences that you have with them I mean I still keep in touch with many of my friends and my host families from both of these places and those are connections that I otherwise would not have made had I not gone abroad but also if I had not known these languages because most of the people that I encountered that I'd befriended and both of these programs were people who did not speak English or maybe spoke very little English and so you know, you go abroad and you realize how many people you have access to through knowing their language and I would never had that without these programs and so those relationships which I know that I will keep for many years going forward are very valuable to me and definitely the best thing that I took from both of those programs.

Q: OK, and so how would you say Georgia Tech prepared you for these experiences and for the application.

A: Of course the academic rigor of tech is a great preparation. The applications for both of these programs are fairly rigorous but also Tech did a great job helping me be aware of these opportunities and in supporting me and in guiding me and as far as the options that I have and you know making my timeline work and making my graduation work and fitting in both of these programs and other things so that the resources that are available at Tech as far as guidance and support and pursuing those programs was very useful.

Q: And do you have any tips or advice for students who are prospective applicants to either program.

A: This answer is a little bit self evident but really go through the materials on these websites the essays are the most important part of both of these applications and there are so many resources on C.L.S. and on Boren website that will help you write your essays and tell them exactly what they are looking for and I think a lot of people don't go through those resources and so they have weak applications and that is you know your biggest hindrance from getting into one of these programs and Boren for example does. CLS is why I believe they do webinars where they explain do's and don'ts for the application process and what they want to see in the essay and that is really really important and I listen to every webinar they had and I made a do and don't list and as I was writing my essay, I periodically would go back to that list and you know ask myself Am I doing what I'm supposed to be doing am I including things that I'm not supposed to be doing and really use the guidelines that they said to shape the way that I wrote my essays.

Q: And so finally and now that you've returned from both of these programs what is next for you?

A: That's the question right now. Right now I'm actually looking for other fellowships to go back to Jordan for a while if I fall in love with that much and want to live there again but I'm graduating within the next year and I'm starting to look at government jobs because one part of the Boren program which I didn't mention earlier is a one year service requirement so the government will give you you know twenty to thirty thousand dollars to go study abroad and then in return they expect you to work for a federal agency for a year after graduation. And so I they just sent me to D.C. for a networking conference and so now I'm looking at jobs to apply for to help fulfill that service requirement and then also looking for other programs to take me back to Jordan to continue my Arabic study and that probably wouldn't have been on my plate or you know even in my ideas of what to do after graduation if I hadn't done Boren and so I'm very thankful for that and for both of these opportunities.

OK all of that concludes our interview thank you so much for sharing your experiences with us.

Thank you.

Outro: This has been career talks a podcast of the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at Georgia Tech brought to you by the Nunn School academic services this and other podcast can be found on our website at www.inta.gatech.edu. Thank you for listening.