The plane flight between Beijing and Urumchi braced me for what I was in for. After taking off from Beijing, we sailed out over the Gobi desert, a vast expanse of rocks and sand, sculpted into surreal shapes by eons of wind and water. When we reached cruising altitude, I could see the uplift of the Tibetan plateau, the path of the Silk Road, and the harsh landscape early settlers must have faced in this great unwatered basin.

Driving into Urumchi from the airport, I stared at the windswept brownness of Northwest China for the first time. Ice sculptures of minority women dancers graced the entrance to the airport. Through the windbreak of poplars, I could see workers driving their three-wheeled jeepneys past agricultural fields, factories, and developments that covered much of the terrain.

This was the first time I had been in this part of China, and I was planning to spend close to a year in one of the coldest, most remote parts of the country.

In 2005, my last year of study at UNO, my application to do research in China as a Fulbright Scholar was accepted. I had always wanted to live in that country, but the application process itself proved difficult. Fortunately, UNO has a number of people (especially Dana Criswell, UNO’s Fulbright Representative) who can help you through the process.

(Continued on page 2)
Welcome to the third issue of the BAIS Newsletter and greetings from our new location! The BAIS offices have moved from their comfortable niche in the Department of History in the Bicentennial Education Building to new spaces in Milneburg Hall, Rooms 237 and 243, in the heart of the Political Science Department. We’re still setting up, but we should be fully ensconced by December. We’re happy to report that Political Science has provided us not only with space, but also with a new Graduate Assistant, Cynthia Hunter-Summerlin, who will be available to assist you with advising questions and will be responsible for a number of our daily operations.

In this Newsletter, we’re highlighting, once again, former and current BAIS students. Angela Drinkwitz (BAIS, ’10) writes to us from her current post in Baghdad. Cherie Fontenot, our former Graduate Assistant, has completed her research year in western China. And Yota Karavagelis (BAIS, ’05) sends in a report on job hunting in Washington, D.C. We’re also including a list of what some of our other recent grads are doing. We hope you find their activities helpful as you think about your own future. In forthcoming issues we plan to feature some of the new faculty in Anthropology, Political Science, Urban Planning, Geography, and History, as well as some of the many international events that are taking place on campus and around town. We’re also always eager to hear from you. If there is a BAIS-related topic, organization, person, event, or course you’d like to see covered, or if you’d like to contribute something yourself, contact me at jhazlett@uno.edu.

Finally, we plan to publish the spring list of courses in international studies within the next couple of weeks. We’ll be sending out an email blast soon with new instructions about our revised advising procedures. See you soon.

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**FULBRIGHT (CONTINUED)**

who were so supportive. The entire process took almost a year.

Not only did I have to write a lengthy application, but I also needed to find a school and colleagues in China to accept my study plans. However much extra work it added to my last year, I believe it was completely worth the time and energy. It was one of the most interesting years in my life so far, and I cannot encourage others enough to try for this scholarship.

During my year as a Fulbrighter, I lived in Northwest China studying international trade and languages such as Chinese and Uyghur.

This was an area of the country that I had always wanted to experience, but I had never thought I’d be able to live there because there were no jobs for foreigners.

Through this experience, I saw the other China—the one we hear so little about as it languishes in isolation and poverty, its wealth sent to develop the eastern seaboard. I saw others’ humanity in the relationships I formed with my classmates and teachers, with shop owners and restaurateurs, and with other local people who had never had day-to-day relations with a foreigner. I crossed the border into Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, interviewing Chinese and American businessmen in an attempt to understand how trade affects this part of the world.

Since I have returned from my scholarship year, I have been invited by the Fulbright organization to a number of events and conferences where I have met and gotten to know many interesting people from all around the world.

The first year after I returned, I went to Miami for a weekend with a number of international scholars that the Institute of International Education (IEE), the parent organization of the Fulbright Commission, had brought to study in the U.S.

The second year I participated in a mock election in New York. This simulation was organized to help in-coming Fulbright scholars understand the American electoral process.

The people that I met at both these conferences were committed to the idea that global understanding occurs most effectively on a personal level.

Through my Fulbright experience, I am now a permanent member of an international organization. I expect this experience, and my on-going association with the other Fulbrighters, to enrich and benefit me for the rest of my life.

If you are interested in applying for a Fulbright, contact Dana Criswell at DCriswel@uno.edu
WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE THEY NOW?

For those of you who wonder what in the world to do with a BAIS, here are just a few things our grads are up to:

Aaron Forbes (’05) In Benin for a two-year stint in the Peace Corps. Has a blog you may enjoy at http://www.aaronforbes.blogspot.com/.

Malado Cisse (’06) Living in Chicago, started a graduate program at DePaul and finished first quarter, taking core classes for an MBA.

Ronald Lee Gardner Jr (’07) Third semester in Innsbruck MA program in Peace & Conflict De-escalation, with future chance to work in Costa Rica/Spain.

John Day (’08) has been commissioned as Second Lieutenant, US Army as a Military Intelligence Officer, Aviation Brigade. UNO’s critical languages program and study abroad helped John achieve this goal.

Tori Martiny (’06) acquired a job with the FBI and is in training at the academy.

Cherie Fontenot (MBA ’05) See article this issue, Page 1.

Puninder Singh Jaitla (Punnu) (’06) Returned to the US after three months in India and Pakistan doing research for his MA thesis, with help from two Foreign Language & Area Studies Fellowships studying Urdu through the U of Michigan Center for South Asian Studies, and has also been the recipient of a Rackham Graduate School Research Grant, Foreign Language & Area Studies Fellowship to study Panjabi through the U of Calif., Santa Barbara.

Kier Haemmerle (’07) Doing independent study and is in process of applying to several colleges including Univ. of Colorado at Boulder, Univ. of Washington, Univ. of Idaho, and LSU. Is deciding between degrees in political science, sociology, or history.

Christina Dillon (’06) started graduate school in Fall of ’07 at UNO in Urban Studies with an Applied Anthropology track. Her goal is to enlist in the Peace Corps upon graduation.

One of our graduates (anonymity required) is now in the CIA’s Clandestine Service.

JOB HUNTING WITH THE BA IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES DEGREE

Dear Dr. Hazlett,

I can’t say that my job hunt here in Washington, DC was difficult at all. I had difficulty finding a decent job in New Orleans which is mainly why I left. I always wanted to move to the northeast, but I think if I had found a job in my field, I would have stayed in New Orleans. Unfortunately, New Orleans is not a very international city and there are no major organizations based there. I also always wanted to work for the federal government, so DC is the place to be.

After I graduated in December 2004, I spent some time in Greece looking for employment but couldn’t find anything decent, so I came back right after Katrina. I worked for the Salvation Army in NOLA for a couple of months, processing applications for assistance, and then I got a job with the Fairgrounds as a human resources assistant. I finally decided to move here, to DC, in early 2007. I came up first for about a week in April of that year. I had a couple of job interviews lined up and I also went to a job fair. One of my goals had been to work for the Greek Embassy, so I had an interview with them. Right before coming up, I thought about sending my resume to the Embassy of Cyprus as well, but I didn’t really take it seriously. I didn’t even make a follow up call, and by the time I got to DC, I had pretty much forgotten about it altogether.

The interviews and the job fair did not go well. On my last day in DC I had the interview at the Greek Embassy, which did not go well either because they told me they weren’t really hiring. At this point, I was getting really disappointed. Just after I left the Greek Embassy, I got a call from the Embassy of Cyprus and they wanted me to go in for an interview the next day. I explained to them that I was flying out of DC the next day and they agreed to interview me that day. I went in and the interview went really well and they made me a job offer on the spot. Of course I accepted even though the salary was very low.

When I went back to New Orleans I put in my two weeks’ notice at the Fairgrounds. These two weeks were very stressful because I had to get everything ready for my move, plus find an apartment. I had a friend here in DC who gotten engaged and had just moved in with his fiancée, so he let me stay at his apartment until I found a place. I’m very grateful because I got lucky in many ways, both with the job and having a place to stay.

The experience at the Embassy was borderline nightmare. The Embassy was ridiculously understaffed, and I ended up performing the duties of about three people at once. I had to do things that I didn’t know how to do, and no one was there to train me because a lot of people had either retired or quit. I was constantly exhausted because I worked really long hours trying to figure things out on my own and couldn’t sleep at night because I was so stressed. But since I tend to take a “glass half full” approach, I would do it all again because I learned

(Continued on page 5)
center to receive a physical examination, several immunizations, uniforms, a protective (gas) mask, and training in first aid and casualty assistance. When I left the center, I flew to Frankfurt, Germany for an 8-hour layover and then on to Kuwait International Airport. There I was picked up and driven to Ali Al Salem Air Base where I waited and stayed up all night for my flight into Baghdad International Airport (BIAP). Once I arrived at BIAP, I was driven to the USACE office at Camp Victory. I waited another few hours for the Personnel Security Detail (PSD) to drive me to the International Zone (IZ). These PSDs consist of heavily armored vehicles driven by burly men with weapons. Their mission is to get their passengers safely from one location to another and never to offensively engage in hostilities. Most of these men come from Great Britain, Australia, and the United States.

Picture being a student at UNO and living in the dorms, but never being allowed to leave campus—that is what it is like living in the IZ of Baghdad. When I do get to leave, it is by PSD. Life in the IZ is pretty sheltered, not just for those of us not from Iraq, but for those Iraqis who live in the IZ. Iraqis who live within the walls of the IZ often do not leave because they fear for their safety.

Aside from my work as a paralegal, I also engage in humanitarian activities. I am currently the Co-Chair of the Green Zone Council, which is an organization dedicated to supporting the Iraqi Scouting Movement. It provides activities for local Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, and you can learn more about it by looking up “Green Zone Council” on Wikipedia. The information there is pretty accurate. Additionally, in conjunction with others, and supported by the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sport, I am working to create a community center for girls of all ages to take part in various activities, such as physical fitness, computer classes, and sewing classes. I am specifically in charge of organizing the sewing room. I am working in conjunction with a non-profit organization called Spirit of America to obtain the equipment and other items needed to get the sewing room up and running. I’ll then be able to teach the girls how to sew.

Dust storms are a frequent occurrence here. Yesterday, 15 September, was exceptionally strange though. The sky was bright orange. I have never seen anything like it. The storm is currently in its fourth day. The summer heat has finally broken and the high today was 96. In the high heat of the summer it felt like I was walking around in a convection oven. Yes, it is a dry heat; no, that does not make it any more comfortable than a hot and humid day in New Orleans!

So far, I am enjoying this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience first-hand the rebuilding of a nation.
don't ever give up or let someone
tell you that you can't do something
or that you're not good enough.

Sincerely,

Yota
International Trade Analyst
U.S. Department of Labor
Division of Trade
Adjustment Assistance

A couple of months after I started I
began to look for something else. I
had applied to many positions but not
at the Department of Labor (DOL). I
had posted my resume on Mon-
ster.com so they actually found me.
I'm a contractor so I'm not actually
working for the government, but I do
the same thing that federal analysts
do. I recently interviewed for a fed-
eral analyst position in the same of-
lice, and I'm waiting to hear back
from that. I work in the Office of
National Response, Division of Trade
Adjustment Assistance (TAA). TAA is
a program designed to help workers
who have lost their employment due
to foreign trade competition. I'm at-
aching a link below so you can read
more about it:

http://www.doleta.gov/tradeact/
benefits.cfm

As an analyst, my job is to investigate
if the worker groups that petition
qualify for benefits under our pro-
gram and make a determination as to
their certification or denial, if they
don't meet the criteria. The position
requires an economics background,
but with strong knowledge of global
economy, import/export trends,
politics, and geography. One of the
things the hiring managers really liked
on my resume was my BAIS intern-
ship experience as a Trade Consultant
at the World Trade Center in New
Orleans. I'm not sure what my next
steps will be, but I'm happy here for
now.

The only advice I'd like to give to
give to new graduates is that nothing
comes easy, and we have to set goals
and focus and work hard to achieve
them. Sometimes it takes lots of hard
work but it's all worth it in the end
because there's nothing more satisfy-
ing than fulfilling a dream. Oh, and