



Good news for aspiring neuroscientist

Lacy Goode (right) with her lab team at the College of Medicine

Recent FSU graduate Lacy Goode tackled Chinese mostly so she could communicate better with the researchers she'll encounter in her career, but her choice of Chinese indirectly led to a prestigious Fulbright scholarship. What's more, she's also been accepted into a graduate program that's willing to wait a year for her to complete her Fulbright.

"I decided to do Chinese because it seemed the most relevant," said Goode, who has taken three semesters of the language. "One in five people on the planet speak it. I really fell in love with the language and the culture."

At the same time, Goode — one of 40 Fulbright scholars selected for Taiwan out of 275 applicants — relished the guidance of Biomedical Sciences professors Pradeep Bhide and Ioanna Armata while pursuing her interest in neuroscience.

"Dr. Armata had just moved here to work in Dr. Bhide's lab, and it worked out perfectly that she needed students," said Goode, one of many undergraduates who work with the college's research faculty. "I've been doing research with her on dystonia, a neurological movement disorder. I've been able to figure out that neuroscience is the path I want to pursue."

Goode also began to see how her academic interests complemented one another.

"Dr. Bhide is working with a lab in China, so last summer we had people from there come over here," said Goode. "I realized how important it is to build cultural ties and communicate with another culture, especially places like China and Taiwan. That's the forefront of a lot of research, especially technology."

Then the Fulbright entered the picture.

"One of my classmates said, 'You should really think about applying for a Fulbright,' and I had never even heard of it," said Goode.

The Fulbright is an international academic exchange program established in 1946 by the U.S. Department of State to promote peace. Scholarships

are awarded to approximately 1,600 U.S. students each year. Alumni include Nobel Prize winners, Pulitzer Prize recipients and heads of state. Goode will teach English in Taiwan for a year on her Fulbright scholarship. She'll defer graduate school until her return.

"Throughout my graduate school applications, in the back of my mind I was still thinking, 'I want Fulbright,'" said Goode. "I wanted graduate school eventually, and I did the applications as an exercise, so they would be less scary when I applied again."

Applying once was enough. She was invited to interview at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

"I met with the neuroscience program director at UAB," said Goode. "He said, 'If you could do the Fulbright and come back to us, we would want you even more.'"

Bhide also saw advantages.

"A good scientist not only needs to be very skilled in the lab but well-rounded in all spheres of life — able to interact well with diverse groups," he said. "The Fulbright scholarship will afford Lacy the perfect opportunity to ease into the professional world."

Goode is especially excited about acquiring teaching skills.

"UAB does a lot of outreach with younger children in the community. Gaining teaching skills and being able to take that back — I can apply that to teaching science."

She also sees the practical value of her language studies. Within the Department of Biomedical Sciences, for example, almost 22 percent of faculty, staff and students are Chinese.

"In my lab alone, there are several people whose primary language is Chinese, and their English is really impressive," said Goode. "At the same time, there are moments when they can't quite express themselves. It's going to be helpful to be able to communicate with my colleagues from China."