



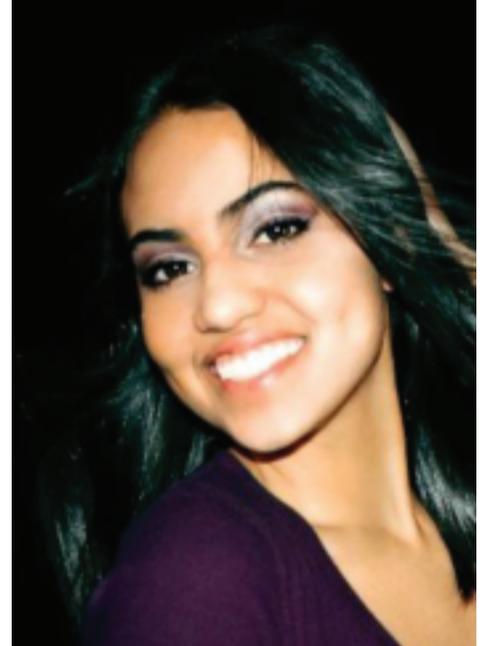
December 8, 2010

Criminology Major Gianexis Lopez Receives Gilman Scholarship

University of South Florida student, Gianexis Lopez, won a Gilman Scholarship to study abroad for Spring 2011. Gilman Scholars receive up to \$5000 to apply towards their study abroad program costs. There were only 850 Gilman Scholars selected out of 2900 applicants nationally.

Lopez, a USF junior double majoring in criminology and Italian Language and Culture, will use the scholarship to study abroad in Florence Italy for four months beginning late January 2011. While in Italy, she will continue courses for her Italian major. Lopez will take two classes on the food and culture of Florence and a course on Italian cinema that will be taught in Italian. She will also take a class on the fashion of Italy.

"I am so grateful for being a Gilman's recipient," states Lopez when asked about the scholarship. As part of the requirement of receiving the scholarship, Lopez must carry out a Follow-on Project to share information about the Gilman program within the university and community. In regards to her project, Lopez shares, "When I was first admitted to the University of South Florida, I took part in a program called the Freshman Summer Institute (FSI), which is strictly reserved for first-generation college students with low income. While in FSI, I dreamed of studying abroad but never thought it would be possible due to the high cost. This is why I am choosing to give back to the FSI, where all my dreams began, as well as the organizations in which I take part. I hope to inspire the freshmen in the program today and inform them about how studying abroad can be a possibility for them."



Lopez was born in the Dominican Republic and moved to the United States when she was six years old. She loves learning about different cultures and has a passion for traveling, with hopes of one day traveling the world. She is vice president of USF organization *By Your Side*, a member of the campus Italian Cultural Club and is on the Dean's List. After graduation, Lopez plans to get a master's degree and go on to work for Immigration Customs Enforcement as an agent to help with human trafficking. She has a true passion for Italy...the language, culture, food and people...and has been studying Italian since a freshman in high school. She feels the Gilman Scholarship will give her an opportunity to explore a place where time stands still and where she can take her education beyond the realm of textbooks.

The Gilman Scholarship Program offers awards for undergraduate study abroad and was established by the International Academic Opportunity Act of 2000. This scholarship provides awards for U.S. undergraduate students who are receiving Federal Pell Grant funding at a two-year or four-year college or university to participate in study abroad programs worldwide. Congressman Benjamin Gilman, who retired in 2002 after serving in the House of Representatives for 30 years and chairing the House Foreign Relations Committee, commented, "Study abroad is a special experience for every student who participates. Living and learning in a vastly different environment of another nation not only exposes our students to alternate views, but also adds an enriching social and cultural experience. It also provides students with the opportunity to return home with a deeper understanding of their place in the world, encouraging them to be a contributor, rather than a spectator in the international community." Since the establishment of program, over 6500 students nationwide have received this prestigious award.