

AHASANUR RAHMAN

I am applying for the Monteverde, Costa Rica – Tropical Ecology and Conservation Program for the Fall 2011 term. I am applying for the John E. Bowman Travel Grant, the Robert B. Bailey Scholarship, the CIEE-ISP Scholarships, and the Jennifer Ritzmann Scholarship.

Participating in the Tropical Ecology and Conservation Program will help me develop my career goals and will allow me to conduct field research. At my small liberal arts college, research opportunities are limited and therefore I need to look elsewhere to gain research experience. Furthermore, this program will allow me to experience life as a citizen rather than a just a student. I am not interested in going to another country to simply take classes at another university abroad. I want an opportunity for a cultural immersion and a home-stay will allow me to do just that.

A home stay is important to me because I want to broaden my horizons as a global citizen. I want to experience and understand the lives of people different from my own as a US citizen. I think to understand our role in an increasingly global community we need to understand the kinship we hold to people who seem so different and distant from us. My program offers Humans in the Tropics—a course exploring different industries of agronomics, their implications for the people and ecosystems, and a transition to sustainability. This component is of critical interest to me to understand the role we play as citizens of the United States on the welfare of the people of Costa Rica.

I am an immigrant and a first generation family member attending college, and I am of an ethnic minority. My parents emigrated from Bangladesh because they knew they could provide my brother and I with opportunities for success that would not be available to us otherwise. In my community, I know few peers who show an interest in a study abroad experience, especially traveling to developing countries. I hypothesize that this may be due to a stigma of against impoverished nations. Rather than trying to address the issues, people try to flee from them. Through studying abroad, I hope to experience the challenges of developing nations, and in turn educate my community and promote responsible global citizenship.

What I am most passionate about are environmental issues—to study the effects and impacts of humans and other organisms. I am on a quest to fuse my interest in biology and my passion for the environment to develop a career path that can be both intellectually stimulating and spiritually rewarding. I want to explore environmental issues to find solutions at an ever more demanding and pressing time. Science gives us the power to understand our world, so we may know how to properly treat and respect this planet. Global climate change and human appropriation of natural resources demands our attention, and we must devote ourselves so we are able to understand its effects on ecosystems, and be able to adequately address the challenges we face.

My professional goals relate to ecosystem ecology. I am interested in studying ecological patterns and relations in a large, biotic and abiotic community. I am

AHASANUR RAHMAN

interested in studying macroecology – the interplay and relations of community members. From my study abroad experience through CIEE I hope to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of the value and role of ecological players. I am particularly interested in doing research in Costa Rica because tropical forests are the most productive regions of the world. Their immense biodiversity allow ecosystems more complex than any we find in the United States. The challenge of working in and understanding such a complex ecosystem will prepare me for any other work that will lay ahead.

While I have tried sufficiently to explain the objectives and value of my study abroad experience, none of this will be possible without financial assistance. The CIEE scholarships will make it feasible for me to participate in the CIEE Costa Rica program. Without your generous support, I will seriously need to reconsider the possibility of studying abroad. This concern is extended to my ability to continue my undergraduate education. While I have received very generous federal grants and loans, and other grants through my college, the remaining tuition costs are very crippling for my parents. My parents, after two years of spending their life saving to pay the bills, have asked me to look to other sources to acquire my college funds because it has become increasingly difficult for them to send me to college. Collecting funds for study abroad is especially important because study abroad requires me to bare additional costs to tuition, such as airfare, visa, immunization costs, institutional fees, etc. As a result, I am in need of high financial assistance, and support from the CIEE scholarships will allow me to study abroad.