

Lucas Knight, B.A. Chinese, Political Science, International Affairs, Asian Religions & Cultures, 2021

By Cody M. Smith

Written: Spring 2022

M.A. Student, University of Wisconsin-Madison, International Public Affairs



“... Language skills can be useful in a surprisingly large number of fields, so majoring in a language is a great way to open new doors.”

Lucas Knight is a recent graduate of Western Kentucky University and earned a quadruple major in Political Science, Asian Religions & Cultures, International Affairs, and Chinese. Additionally, Knight successfully completed the WKU Chinese Flagship Program, a federally-funded, four-year intensive Chinese program which brings students to superior levels of proficiency by graduation. Knight is currently at the University of Wisconsin-Madison gaining his M.A. in International Public Affairs but sees a number of opportunities after graduation and believes that Chinese will be an important skill to have.

The Chinese Flagship Program at WKU sparked Knight’s passion in Chinese and was a fulfilling process, in his own words. He explains that throughout his program three factors were prominent—study abroad, comradery, and proficiency. During his time on the Hill, Knight studied abroad once in China and once in Taiwan, and found that he was able to connect with local communities and understand the local culture through these experiences. Additionally, Knight said he met many wonderful individuals throughout his program which created positive experiences in the language learning process as well as a close-knit community. Through this program, he found that he had peers to support his own learning of the language. Moreover, these two experiences

yielded Knight's current skill in Chinese: he explains that when he started his program, he could only say a few words in the language but now is able to complete internships exclusively using the target language.

Knight acknowledges the difficulty incurred when studying a world language, but also recognizes the large amount of benefits that the study reaps. For Knight, one of the most exciting things has been to appreciate foreign entertainment and media and has found that this can make the learning process even more enjoyable. Although it is a long process, Knight wholeheartedly recommends majoring as a way to open new professional doors and explains that persistence and using the language are key. Knight explains that while the process of developing language proficiency is difficult, it can also be very rewarding.

