



Greetings from the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University. Thank you for signing up to receive information from the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid.

The email newsletters we send are meant to provide you with information about the opportunities available to SIPA students and details related to the process of applying for admission and financial aid. An archive of the emails sent can be found by visiting the following site:

http://sipa.columbia.edu/resources_services/admissions/newsletter.html

SIPA Interviews

In early December we launched a new page on our web site. The page features video and text interviews. The number of interviews will grow over time and we will include alumni of our program as well. To view or read the interviews, visit the following page:

http://sipa.columbia.edu/resources_services/admissions/interviews.html

The Market for a SIPA Degree

Anyone who follows world news should not be surprised by the findings in a recent report published by the Committee for Economic Development. The CED is a nonprofit group of business and academic leaders and Lee C. Bollinger, President of Columbia University, is on the board of trustees. A recent report released by the CED noted that the demand for graduates with strong international skills was outstripping supply.

The pace of globalization continues to increase and jobs in all of the sectors, public, non-profit, and private, increasingly require employees to be able to adapt to change. The MIA and MPA programs at SIPA are focused on producing graduates that are able to meet this demand.

For more information on the CED and to read the report, Education for Global Leadership, please visit the following links:

<http://www.ced.org/>

http://www.ced.org/docs/report/report_foreignlanguages.pdf

The Global Public Policy Network

SIPA students not only have access to the vast resources of both New York City and Columbia University, they have access to resources around the globe. The Global Public Policy Network (GPPN) is a partnership formed between SIPA and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), Sciences Po in Paris, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP) in

Singapore, and the Hertie School of Governance (HSoG) in Berlin. The GPPN aims to increase cooperation between these programs through academic exchanges and dual degree programs.

In early 2007, students from LSE decided to strengthen the partnership further by hosting a conference in London where students could get to know each other and the LSE program: the first student conference of the GPPN was thus established. The Hertie School of Governance volunteered to host the second conference, and last May a team of eight HSoG students began to plan the October conference. The organizers chose the title "Governance within the 21st Century," and planned a five-day program consisting of panel discussions, student presentations, class visits, and social events.

The conference highlighted the opportunity for the GPPN to be much more than just dual degrees and exchanges. The students wanted to bring home the message to their fellow students that they should be more aware of the network and its potential for collaborative exchange: they might submit articles to journals, establish new case studies, and help keep one another informed of interesting events.

The conference concluded with a discussion on how to strengthen the relationship between the GPPN schools. Students from Sciences Po graciously volunteered to host next year's student conference in Paris!

For more information about the conference, please follow this link:

http://www.hertie-school.org/content.php?nav_id=1024

About the GPPN at SIPA:

<http://www.sipa.columbia.edu/academics/gppn/index.html>

Application Information

Two important pieces of the application for admission are the résumé/CV and personal statement. The Admissions Committee is looking for two different things from these documents and one comment the Committee consistently makes is that the two documents contain the same information but in a different format. We are looking for distinctly different information in the two documents and the following comments address the information the Committee wishes to see.

The résumé/CV gives an applicant the opportunity to share information about the past. This document is biographical in nature and often lists accomplishments, achievements, involvement, language learning, travel, etc. Concerning format, it is acceptable to submit a three or four page résumé/CV. Do not feel compelled to limit your document to a single page. Such efforts are often hard to read and are not of adequate length to give the Committee an idea of your history as it pertains to your application for admission.

The personal statement should focus on passion and purpose. The Committee wants to know what the applicant is passionate about and what purpose a SIPA education will play in the future aspirations of the applicant. This should be a future oriented document that is as specific as possible concerning future aspirations. The Committee recommends that you state what your overall goal is early in the statement and then spend the rest of the statement talking about what has influenced you to pursue this goal and how a SIPA degree will help you to achieve your goal. Biographical information certainly can be an important part of personal statement, but the Committee recommends that the statement not be a chronological document that contains the same information the résumé/CV contains.

Student Interview: Admissions Program Assistant, Jia Wang

Jia is a second-year SIPA student pursuing an MPA degree with a concentration in International Finance Policy. Her coursework includes Capital Market and Investments, Corporate Finance, International Monetary Policy and International Trade.

Jia is currently interning at Merrill Lynch and spent the summer interning with a New York-based asset management company. There she was responsible for covering mid-cap consumer sector stocks in the U.S. equity market. She is currently working part-time at Merrill Lynch, Global Private Client Group, and making customized equity recommendations for high net-worth individual investors. Prior to SIPA Jia worked as a production assistant for China Central Television from 2005 to 2006. After obtaining her MPA degree, Jia plans to continue in finance field as an equity analyst. Jia recently answered some questions about her time at SIPA and here are some of her remarks:

How did you obtain your internship?

"A friend at the School of Engineering forwarded a job vacancy advertisement to me. I turned in my résumé and got an interview one week later. Shortly thereafter I was offered the position. It was exciting to start my career from buy-side."

What drew you to SIPA?

"SIPA offers a comprehensive program for people who want to enter the finance career but do not have a finance background. And New York is the financial capital of the world. The location of SIPA is a comparative advantage in choosing internships as well. Internships are available while you are taking classes and during the summer if you choose to stay in the city."

What has been the most challenging part of your time at SIPA?

"You really have to work out a balance. To study at SIPA and live in New York makes you struggle between the coursework, networking, and working. There are so many opportunities and choices that you really have to weigh the opportunity cost of everything."

What has been the best part of your SIPA experience?

"I would say the chance to hear what cutting-edge scholars think about the current market. It is great to know the Nobel Laureates' opinion on current market conditions. The interaction with them makes people more mature intellectually."

How did you find the first-year core curriculum?

"I hated the core courses during the first-year due to heavy coursework and weekly assignments. But I realize now that it built up a solid academic foundation for any career that has something to do with analysis. The study of economics and statistics cannot be more useful in a career in financial services."

Financial Aid

Attending graduate school can be expensive and we recommend that all applicants spend time searching for scholarships and grants. SIPA does offer fellowships for students but we are not able to make awards to everyone who is admitted. Scholarships and grants are also provided by a number of corporations, foundations, government agencies, and philanthropic individuals.

SIPA students have a successful track record of being awarded outside funding. For the 2006-2007 academic year SIPA students were awarded close to \$5 million in outside scholarship and grant funding. The following are some practical tips to assist with your search for outside funding.

1. Networking is a very effective way to get started. Talk with alumni associations, careers service offices, employers, HR Departments, family, friends, former students, etc.
2. Internet search engines are obviously good tools, but you can also use RSS feeds and news alerts. Most internet email accounts come with a news reader or news feed. You can program these feeds with search terms and they will send emails to your account when relevant information is found. Use search terms like "International Affairs Scholarships," "Graduate School Grants," etc.
3. Utilize the list of resources on our website. You can access the list of resources at the following link:
http://sipa.columbia.edu/resources_services/financial_aid/external_grants.pdf
4. Many applications for scholarships require one or more letters of recommendation. Contact recommenders early and have the recommenders print letters and give them to you in sealed envelopes so you are always ready.

In addition, U.S. Citizens and permanent residents should be prepared to file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid after January 1st, 2008. Filing the FAFSA will qualify applicants for federal funding. More information can be found at the following link: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>.

International applicants who are accepted to our program are often able to qualify for loans through private banks. More information on this process is available after decision letters are made available.

Office Information

Please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have questions. In addition, if you plan to visit New York City you are welcome to visit campus and attend an information session. We do request that you contact us at least one week prior to your arrival so we can make the proper arrangements. Thank you again and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

The Staff of the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid

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