



MAGGI

WHISTON

- **AWARD:** Dr. Richard Walker Memorial Endowed Fellowship
- **MAJOR:** International Business Masters
- **YEAR:** Graduate Student

WHY DID YOU APPLY?

"I knew that this year in China would likely be a once in a lifetime experience. I wanted to make the most of it by traveling, learning, and fully immersing myself in the culture. At the same time, I have been deeply interested in how people in the U.S. and China engage with social media differently. That curiosity led me to focus my thesis on the uncanny valley effect caused by AI and how it is perceived across these two societies. This scholarship made it possible for me to continue that research while also exploring China more fully."

PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF WHAT YOU DID WITH YOUR SCHOLARSHIP OR GRANT.

"The scholarship allowed me to explore two very different parts of China: Beijing and Guilin. Beijing gave me the chance to slow down and truly take in the history that shapes so much of the country. Standing on the Great Wall was one of the most powerful and emotional moments of my life. Guilin offered a completely different kind of beauty through its landscapes and scenery. The funding also supported my thesis research by allowing me to provide incentives to Chinese participants who completed my survey."

HOW DID THIS SCHOLARSHIP OR GRANT HELP YOU?

"This scholarship made experiences and research possible that I would not have been able to pursue in the same way on my own.

It gave me freedom to explore, learn, and push my academic work forward without the constant stress of finances."

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR FUTURE APPLICANTS?

"During undergrad, I rarely applied to scholarships because I always assumed someone else was more deserving or that the odds were not in my favor. Looking back, I wish I had taken more chances. My advice is simple: apply. You never know what doors can open, and the financial support can change both your opportunities and your peace of mind in a big way."