

### **From Negotiation Table to a Research Career in International Trade**

Two and half years ago, I was a trainee at the Sino-EU Interpreter Training Centre (SITC) and a freelance interpreter in Beijing, interpreting for trade negotiations between Brussels and Beijing, business forums by China and the United States, and a variety of other meetings and conferences within the context of international trade. After successfully passing the highly competitive eliminating exams of SITC and becoming an EU-certified conference interpreter, I started to yearn for a different career—a career in International Trade. Thanks to my extensive exposure to high-level discussions on trade issues between China and the English-speaking world, I witnessed how international trade can cross ideological boundaries and change the landscape of global political economy. Driven by a strong aspiration to explore deeper in this field, I declined the opportunity of working as an in-house interpreter at the China Banking Regulatory Commission and came to Monterey Institute of International Studies to pursue a Master's Degree in International Trade Policy. It turned out that this is a decision I will never regret.

At MIIS, I get adrenalized every time a trade-related topic I worked on as an interpreter is mentioned: Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights reminds me of the details of the negotiations on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin between AQSIQ (Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine), China, and DG SANCO, EU; Trade Compliance triggers my memory about the Chinese and American experts' discussion on export control in the China-US Business Forum. I even did a simultaneous interpretation for a workshop on US-China Trade Relations given by a Chinese professor. I am so excited to dig into the issues that I have a tremendous interest in but could only slightly touch upon in the past. The workshop "Making Trade Policy -- Preparing for a Career in International Trade" given by Ambassador Alan Wolff, who served as United States deputy special representative for trade negotiations from 1977 to 1979, inspired me to seek a career in the policy-making level of international trade, which necessarily involves more theoretical thinking and academic research. Subsequently, I applied for a research-assistantship at the renowned James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS), which is the largest nongovernmental organization in the United States devoted exclusively to research & training to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. At CNS, my focus has been export control, a policy issue where international trade and national security interconnect. Specifically, I did a case study on how the U.S. export control policy towards China evolved and what impact it had on the bilateral trade relations. Working at CNS equipped me with a more systematic view on the factors affecting international trade, as well as strict training in doing good, practical research.

Another increasingly prominent issue in the field of international trade is the social responsibility of multinational corporations. When the world has become more and more globalized, "race to the bottom" in developing countries and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) have become problems that both trade practitioners and policy makers cannot afford to ignore. Inspired by Alexander Harney's book "The China price: the true cost of Chinese competitive advantage", I took part in the research

project of “China Corporate Social Responsibility” from December, 2009 to June, 2010. During the six months, I independently produced three reports on CSR development in the world and in China, and finally played a leading role in the well-received workshop on CSR at Beijing WTO Affairs Centre participated by representatives from 25 multinational companies, including Wal-mart and Itoyokado.

Now I am in my third semester at MIIS and have decided to pursue a Ph. D in International Trade and Investment Policy, because I am amazed by the role international trade plays in the interaction of countries and aspire to make a difference in the formation of national/international trade policies. I am truly grateful for this opportunity to apply for the WIT-NC scholarship, which has been such a consistent and heart-warming support to students like me who are interested in pursuing a career in international trade.