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### Report on the Use of my IRIS Award

As part of my entry package to the La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I received an IRIS Area and International Studies Award for Incoming Graduate Students. I want to first give my sincere thanks for this award, as it was a contributing factor in my decision to attend the school. I very much appreciate the investment in my education. This brief report serves to detail how I used the funds from the Award.

Prior to coming to the La Follette School, I studied the Chinese language and spent the three summers during my time in undergraduate school in China. These experiences provided me with a basic understanding of the Chinese language. However, I still wanted to push my abilities further, both for personal and professional fulfillment. For this reason, I decided to use my IRIS Award to study Chinese in China.

I decided the best time to undertake this endeavor was over winter break in my second year. With that in mind, I set out to find a program that would enhance my skills as much as possible in as cost-effective a manner as possible during the break. I settled upon the Keats Chinese Language School (<https://keatschinese.com/>) in Kunming, China. There were several factors affecting this decision but a large one was the fact that if I had enrolled in a course in Shanghai or Beijing, I would've had to take group lessons. At Keats, I had private one-on-one lessons in Chinese for six hours per day five days a week. The tuition also covered my room and board.

As hoped, my Chinese abilities improved dramatically during my studies at the Keats School. At the end of my studies, I was able to hold basic conversations with random people on the street. While I have not yet been able to return to China, I would certainly be more confident and willing to do so having gone through these courses.

Thank you again for the Award and I hope it continues to benefit many incoming graduate students in the future!