

Brandon Brion, Chinese Flagship, Biology, Minor in Chemistry, Class of 2026

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"I believe that studying abroad is a gold mine for knowledge as a way to learn how different countries have different methods in their practice of medicine."

Brandon Brion is a freshman at WKU majoring in Biology, minoring in Chemistry, and participating in the Chinese Flagship program. During his first year at WKU, he has gotten very involved. He is a member of numerous organizations on campus, and he holds many leadership positions. After completing his undergraduate degree at WKU, Brandon plans to go to Medical School and become a surgeon.

Brandon says that when he came to college, he originally planned to major in Biology and Chemistry. However, at the Mahurin Honors College H4 Camp before his freshman year, he learned about the opportunities that Chinese Flagship offers. Through speaking with the Program Manager of Chinese Flagship at WKU, Melinda Edgerton, Brandon learned about other students who were STEM majors and studied Chinese, and he learned about the research opportunities available through the Capstone year in the Chinese Flagship program. He decided to pair the Chinese Flagship program with a major in Biology and a minor in Chemistry to strengthen his applications to Medical Schools and learn more about medicine in other countries.

One thing he particularly enjoys about the Chinese Program at WKU is the cultural emphasis. He says he has learned about the culture and history of China in his Chinese classes, and he has gained a cultural understanding in addition to learning the language.

His main advice to students studying a language is to remember it will be hard in the beginning, but you must trust the process in order to see yourself grow. He says he struggled at the beginning of his first Chinese class, and he thought Chinese was not made for him. However, through consistent practice, he has grown his Chinese skills

drastically and is now able to hold a conversation in Chinese after less than a year of studying the language. He says, "It might be slow growth, but it will come eventually with the help of hard work and people there to support you."

