

Today is FLIA's two-year anniversary. As the Founder and President, I felt I should write up something about the past two years FLIA has made it through. As a young professional from China studying in the United States, FLIA's story is part of my story. I hope this story will be something you can relate to.

To climb a higher mountain and get to a higher summit, you have to get down from the one you are on. Sometimes, it even means you must give up what you already have and leave the beautiful scenery you can see behind your back.

Before I came to the US, I had the perfect scenery -- highest GPA at school, respected student leadership, more than 40 awards for my study and work, great social circle and publicity, a promising job offer, and a stable relationship. It would have been relatively easy for me to stay on what I had achieved and start building my life in China. But there was some calling in my heart telling me that what I should build up is not only my personal life but also society as a whole. I know this bigger dream might never become true if I don't dare to step out further. So, I left behind what I had gained and came to the US to pursue further education on international law, which is where my passion lays.

The mountain may look marvelous when you stand far away, but it can become very confusing when you are on it. The way to climb up in this strange mountain was not easy for me. During those days, I went through many difficult issues, like finances, health, education, and social life. The most challenging point was when I found that it was incredibly difficult for me to get involved in



Foundation for Law & International Affairs

STRIVE FOR THE SUMMIT WE ALL DREAM OF — REFLECTIONS ON FLIA'S TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

SHAOMING ZHU
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

global scholarship due to the knowledge gap, language barriers, and limited access. That realization began a process through which I moved from "I don't know what I don't know," to "I know that I don't know." I noticed that I was not the single case; it was also the situation for many other passionate and knowledgeable scholars and students. How could this situation ever be beneficial to the development of so many talented professionals who have such great passion for studying and working abroad, and whose contributions are deeply relevant to global governance and international business?

So, in July 2015, I founded the Foundation for Law and International Affairs to promote international communication, education, and cooperation at the intersection of law and international affairs. In the past two years, we have made a lot of progress. We organized many international conferences, including one at the UN. We built multiple global research teams and completed many global research projects. We published two books and won an award from the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs. We have cooperated with institutions and enterprises across the globe. And most importantly, we have built the best team. To work with these volunteers from all over the world, whose work as professors, students, lawyers, governmental officials, and NGO leaders, is the one of the greatest things I can ever imagine in my professional life. I am very glad and grateful that we all share the same vision. We want to be the experts at the intersection of law and international affairs. We want to be ambassadors for global awareness and global collaboration. We want to be architects of an informed and peaceful world.

It has been almost four years since I came to the US and started to climb this new mountain. Although what I have gained in this journey is not really what I expected at the beginning, it turns out to be much more precious than what I had initially wanted. FLIA has brought significant new viewpoints to my life. It has also been a guiding light for me, providing me direction, faith, and strength. I would say it is FLIA that has been leading me, rather than I have been leading FLIA.

For me, FLIA is unlimited. Some days, FLIA is local; some days, FLIA is international. But whatever the day, FLIA is always accessible.

I hope FLIA will be accessible to more and more people. FLIA has now become an island where professionals at the intersection of law and international affairs can get acclimated to global scholarship and the global community. If you are climbing this mountain as well, please know that you are not alone. We are here with you and for you. We welcome you to join us in the various programs and research projects, or simply stop by. Perhaps we can get equipped together and support each other as we strive for the summit we all dream of.

This is our mission and courage.

Contact Us
contact@flia.org
flia.org

