

CIEE Study Center
East China Normal University
Fall semester, Spring semester

Resident Director Report Shanghai semester Spring 2002

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Program Objectives

The mission of CIEE Study Center at East China Normal University in Shanghai is to provide students with a high-quality program for vigorous training in the Chinese language and in-depth study of Chinese international relations, economics, and history and culture. These objectives are achieved through classroom instruction, training in cross-cultural communication, site visits, field trips, and internships with both multinational companies and non-profit organizations in and around China's most dynamic city of Shanghai.

Academic Program

We began this semester with the implementation of a new Chinese language program, which features a Chinese Language Coordinator, Chinese Language Clinic, and teacher-training workshop prior to students' arrival. Mr. Chen Jianfeng, an independent, experienced language teacher, was hired to serve as the mentor of the new teachers and as the coordinator of the Chinese language program. He was responsible for designing the language curriculum, selecting, training, and evaluating Chinese language teachers, adopting textbooks, and monitoring teaching quality through class visits, weekly teacher meetings, and individual consultation with teachers and students throughout the semester. Through the creation of the Chinese Language Coordinator position, the Chinese language program is under the strict control of CIEE. We are now in a good position to improve the program by designing an innovative curriculum that meets the learning needs of our students.

The Chinese language clinic is an individualized class where a student meets one-one-one with the CIEE Chinese Language Coordinator at certain scheduled hours of the week. The student usually brings to the clinic his or her unique problems (pronunciation, tones, grammar, etc) and the clinic "doctor" offers professional treatment and advice. Students this semester responded favorably to the new Language Clinic and found the opportunity for one-on-one tutorials with Chen Laoshi particularly valuable.

During the first teacher-training workshop held in January, we not only gave our new language teachers an introduction of CIEE's academic programs in Shanghai, but also trained them on OPI, the interactive teaching methodology.

and other pedagogies deemed necessary and beneficial to CIEE students arriving in the spring semester. The spring program students were the first beneficiaries of the latest changes, and many of them spoken highly of the classes and their teachers. We are beginning to see a positive turn-around and improvement in our Chinese language program.

Students

A record number of twenty-seven students were enrolled in the spring semester. This was the best enrollment in the history of the Shanghai semester program since it began in 1998. Most participants majored in the expected disciplines of government and international relations, economics and business management, and Asian Studies. There were also three science students in Biology, Chemical Engineering, and Biochemistry. The participation of these science students in the program is noteworthy as we used to only attract students in the social sciences and humanities.

Participants came from a healthy mix of Ivy League schools, flagship state universities, and selective liberal arts colleges. This was a highly unified group: they enjoyed socializing together and helping one another. This was also a group that loved travel in Shanghai and throughout China. It is hard to find a place that they did not travel to: from Tibet and Chengdu to Hainan Island and Beijing. Everyone took full advantage of the two weeklong study break and traveled in small groups or independently.

Non-Academic Features:

Internships

Internships have become a regular feature of the Shanghai program. We published a monthly newsletter publicizing jobs, internships, and volunteer work in Shanghai. We also keep the latest Directory of the Shanghai American Chamber of Commerce in the office. Even though all internships are not for credit, students are very enthusiastic about working in China. They used information provided by the on-site office and relied on personal connections in China to search for working opportunities. A surprising number of students were successful in finding jobs and internships in Shanghai. As we offered a full-schedule program, students only had a few hours a week to do internships during the semester. The single most popular (and easiest to find) internship was teaching English. During the week-long Chinese Labor Day holiday, a couple of students even traveled to a remote village in Jiangxi Province, one of the poorest areas of China today, and volunteered to teach English for a week. They described their experience as invaluable and urged more CIEE students to go in the future.

When the program ended on June 1, only four students (out of twenty-seven)

departed immediately for the U.S. The rest were split between traveling and doing internships in China. This summer these students will intern at a variety of places, including a public relations firm assisting the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, an accounting firm in Pudong, an investment bank in Shanghai, an English summer camp, and an upscale Western restaurant.

Housing

Three housing options were offered to all students: on-campus dorms, off-campus apartments, and homestays with Chinese families. Of the 27 students, four chose to live with Chinese families and the rest opted to live off-campus apartments. None stayed in the dorms. Having their own private rooms, students continued to rave about the modern conveniences of the apartments. As we offered a bike to every student, none complained about the short, 10-minute bike ride to the afternoon Chinese language classes on the ECNU campus. The four students living with Chinese families also enjoyed their experiences. They became good friends with the children as well as the parents of the Chinese families. Because they had more opportunity to practice Chinese, their Chinese proficiency improved considerably.