Letter From the Editors

“It's a dangerous business... going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to.” JRR Tolkein

Congratulations on being awarded the Light Fellowship! An amazing adventure awaits you in your East Asian country of choice. Whether you are off to China or Taiwan, you are sure to learn and experience more than you could ever imagine. From standing triumphantly atop the great wall to having your first conversation with a real local friend, each experience will be new and exciting in its own way.

As you prepare for your summer abroad, we hope that the tips provided in the guidebook below will help you on your journey. China is a large and foreign country, and any reading you can do beforehand will only help you to get the most out of your experience. In this book we have compiled the advice and experiences of many different light fellows over the past years—their recommendations are sure to be of value to your experience.

So go forward with an open mind and a willingness to take in all that awaits you. And read carefully! Many tips below that may seem trivial now will be life-savers when you are really living and spending time in China.

Best wishes for your travels,

Editors: Alex Herkert, Samuel Kim, and Wayne Baylor

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## SECTION I: PLANNING YOUR TRIP .................................................................5

A. PACKING ........................................................................................................5
   Packing Checklist ................................................................................................5

B. HEALTH AND SAFETY .............................................................................7
   Pre-departure Medical Issues .......................................................................7
   Going to Hospitals in China .......................................................................8
   Emergency Contacts ..................................................................................8

## SECTION II: LIVING IN CHINA ...................................................................9

A. GENERAL INFORMATION ..........................................................................9
   Money ..........................................................................................................9
   Daily Needs ................................................................................................10
   Food and Drink ..........................................................................................12

B. MINDSET ....................................................................................................13
   General Advice ..........................................................................................13

## SECTION III: BEIJING ...............................................................................14

A. TRANSPORTATION ...................................................................................14
   Getting In ....................................................................................................14
   Getting Around ..........................................................................................14

B. PLACES TO GO ........................................................................................16
   Parks and Scenery ......................................................................................17
   Cultural and Historic Sites ........................................................................17
   Alcohol and Safety ....................................................................................19

## SECTION IV: PROGRAM INFORMATION ...............................................19

A. HARVARD-BEIJING ACADEMY ..............................................................19
   Getting to the Program .............................................................................19
   Living Situation at HBA ..........................................................................20
   Eating, Shopping, Exercising ...................................................................20
   Academics ..................................................................................................22

B. PRINCETON IN BEIJING ...........................................................................22
   Getting to the Program .............................................................................22
   Living Situation at PIB .............................................................................23
   Eating, Shopping, Exercising ...................................................................23
   Academics ..................................................................................................25

C. DUKE STUDY IN CHINA ..........................................................................25
   Getting to the Program .............................................................................25
   Living Situation at DSIC ..........................................................................25
   Eating, Shopping, Exercising ...................................................................25
   Extra Curricular Activity and Travel .........................................................28

D. INTER-UNIVERSITY PROGRAM ..............................................................29
   Living Situation at IUP .............................................................................29
   Academics ..................................................................................................30
SECTION I:  
PLANNING YOUR TRIP

A. Packing and Flying

Packing Checklist

**Essentials**
- □ Passport
- □ Cash (Renminbi)
- □ Debit card to pull cash out
- □ Laptop
- □ USB flash-drive
- □ Computer charger
- □ iPod touch or electronic dictionary
- □ 1 pencil, 1 pen (buy the rest there)
- □ Backpack
- □ Smaller bag for day trips
- □ Sturdy, comfortable clothes
- □ 1 waterproof jacket
- □ Umbrella
- □ Nalgene or similar
- □ Sunscreen/bug spray
- □ Deodorant/Toothpaste/lotions
- □ Tums or equivalent
- □ Band-Aids/Neosporin
- □ Allergy medicine, cough meds, etc.
- □ Small Gifts
- □ Camera

**Supplementary**
- □ Sunglasses
- □ Gym clothes
- □ Guide book (Lonely Planet has good maps/advice)
- □ Nutritional supplements (If you’re not a meat eater)
- □ Chinese pocket dictionary (if you do not have iPod touch)
- □ Two nice sets of clothes (a tie, nice dress, etc.)
- □ Tampons (not sold in China)
**Better without**
Paper and bulky school supplies  
Towels, sheets, pillows  
Traveler’s Checks  
International ID card (Most places don’t recognize it)  
Smoke detector  
Shampoo/conditioner  
Detergent and bulky liquids  
More than one sweater / heavy clothes

**Note**
Check airline weight limits for baggage, most flights originating in US have 50lb limits, but others may vary.

If you do not have a phone on which you can download a Chinese dictionary, an iPod touch may be a worthwhile investment, as these will come in very handy in completing coursework during your time in China.

Most toiletries (save deodorant) and other necessary items can be bought at the Chinese equivalent of a superstore, but if you need a specific brand buy it in America.

You can afford to pack lightly! Below is a table of things that had to be left behind because it wouldn’t fit in the luggage.
B. Health and Safety

Pre-departure Medical Issues

Check with Yale Travel Clinic

For immunizations, you should call the travel clinic at Yale University Health Services to schedule an appointment and also determine if any specific meetings or orientations are required prior to your scheduling an appointment. Two common vaccinations given to students traveling to urban China are Hepatitis A and Yellow Fever. Be sure to indicate if you intend to travel to any remote area where additional disease risk may be a factor. Anti-malarial medication is not necessary for those staying in Beijing; however, there are parts of China that are at risk. So, if you plan on travelling outside of Beijing, you should consult with Yale Travel Clinic to see whether you might want some anti-malarial medication. Schedule an appointment as early as possible. To get an idea of what vaccinations you might need, visit www.cdc.gov.

While at the travel clinic, you will likely be given a prescription for two medications in case you suffer from traveler’s diarrhea. Ciprofloxacin (Cipro) is a powerful antibiotic that works by wiping out all of the bacteria in your intestinal tract. Loperamide is a drug that can alleviate diarrhea symptoms by decreasing rate of material flow through your bowels. Both drugs have important side effects so you should ask the nurse in the travel
clinic or a doctor if you have any questions about when, how, or whether to use these medications. Cipro, in particular, can lead to tendon issues, so this matter may be important to consider if you engage in a lot of physical activity.

**Medications**

It is prudent to procure any drugs, vitamins, or other medications you will need in advance of your trip. Dealing with the unnecessary acquisition of potential different or counterfeit drugs should be avoided. Additionally, it is far more convenient to come prepared with the necessary medication.

**Prudence**

Exercising prudence is vital to health. Proper attention to food, drink, and activities can prevent a number of accidents and illnesses. Immediate medical attention and English care may be harder to come by in many regions of China. Note too that poor footwear, bicycles, and other wheeled vehicles are particularly conducive to accidents, slips, and injury. Care should be exercised while hiking, traveling, or working out in hot weather. Needles should be avoided whenever possible. Excessive alcohol use is strongly discouraged. Illicit drug use is dangerous and could lead to far more than health related issues.

**Going to Hospitals in China**

Many people survive their time in China with only minor stomach problems, but in case something terrible strikes, you can consider one of Beijing’s hospitals. If you are ever faced with something your Light-provided medications and cough syrup cannot handle, go to one of the places listed below. The clinic on your university campus, as well as most local Chinese hospitals, will be very crowded and will have doctors and nurses who speak only Chinese. So, before you go, write down the names of the hospitals listed by the Light-provided insurance. You should have that information in addition to the information below.

If you are in dire need of treatment, it will probably be faster for you to grab a friend and hail a taxi rather than call for an ambulance. Ambulances in China generally respond much slower than ones in the United States and carry much less medical equipment. That being said, it might not be a bad idea to have these places written in both Chinese and English on a card. Please keep this information with you, in addition to your HTH and UHC Global cards, and information describing any medical allergies you may have. Also, be sure to alert the administrators of your program, since they may have more updated information on the closest medical facility with English-speaking doctors.

**Emergency Contacts**
SECTION II: LIVING IN CHINA

A. General Information

Money

*Cash* – US currency will generally not be accepted by stores (they do not like foreign bills because they have difficulty spotting counterfeits), but the Bank of China will exchange the cash for you. Although you will typically get a worse exchange rate, you should go ahead and get a few hundred Chinese RMB in the US before you leave. This way, you can get through the first day or two in China, which are always pretty stressful. Save a few of your receipts when you exchange money if you plan to exchange Chinese RMB into US dollars when you leave; the banks will refuse to do this without receipts.

*ATM card* – The easiest way to change money in Beijing is to just use an ATM machine. Bank of China ATMs accepts foreign ATM cards, and they are probably the most reliable. ATMs are convenient, but sometimes risky; they may occasionally be out of service, eat bank cards, or even reject foreign cards despite signs advertising the contrary.
If you choose to use ATMs in China, do ask around for the location of a reliable one, and if you can help it, try to use the machines only during hours when the bank itself is open (just in case the machine does choose to eat your card). After you’re done using the machine, always remember to get your card back out of the machine. Many machines have a 30 second timer, after which you will not be able to eject your card.

**Credit card** – Although China is a much more cash-based society than U.S., nowadays you can use credit cards in upscale restaurants, department stores, movie theaters, and some coffee shops. Places that *do not* accept credit cards are small shops, noodle stands, underground clothes shopping centers (服裝城), etc. Chinese Walmart and Carrefour stand in the middle of these two categories—they do accept credit card, but chances are that the clerk has never accepted payment with a foreign credit card, so she may take some time to figure out how to make the transaction. If you don’t want to waste any time, it is safer to have the cash ready.

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**Daily Needs**

**Bathrooms**

Public bathrooms in China are an experience. In some cases you have to pay a small fee in order to enter (these are typically more sanitary), so always be sure to have some loose change on you during your excursions around the city. Soap is not generally found in public bathrooms; you can bring your own, but most exchange students either carry hand sanitizer or just don’t bother. Also, most bathrooms do not provide toilet paper, so get into the habit of carrying some around. (In case of forgetfulness, asking your teachers or friends to borrow some before heading to the restroom is totally acceptable in China.) Most public bathrooms are squat toilets. They are difficult to get used to, but they make the experience more sanitary.

**Laundry**

Washing laundry in China is quite different from in the U.S. Try not to bring all your favorite outfits, especially if they are delicate or hold sentimental value. Most programs will have laundry machines inside the residential building. Laundry detergent can be readily purchased at a grocery store, but washing machines can be a more difficult
mystery to unravel. Be careful of mixing hot water cycles and red clothing; also be aware that washing machines will probably not have a delicate cycle, and will treat clothing much more harshly than you are accustomed to. When in doubt, ask someone who has used your washing machine before.

Most people in China do not use dryers. Clothes have to be removed from the washing machine and then hung out to dry. Upon arrival, try to acquire a folding laundry rack or nylon clothesline and hangers to ease this process. They can be found at Walmart or Carrefour at a cheap price. In addition, you might consider purchasing a basin and some soap for simple hand washing. Even if you have never hand-washed clothes before, you might find it necessary for some less sturdy clothing or at times when all the washing machines are being used.

**Sending / receiving packages**

If you wish to send or receive packages, ask your program leader to direct you to the nearest post office. They may ask you what is inside (documents, souvenirs, etc.), so you may want to look up how to basically describe the package. Make sure your package doesn’t contain food or liquids since they won’t ship those! Overall, sending packages back to the U.S. can be very expensive and most people don’t do it unless it is an emergency.

**Electronics**

Electric outlets in the United States supply 110V electricity, but in China they supply 220V. Remember this when packing appliances such as hair dryers, alarm clocks, whatever. Most laptops and cell phone chargers are equipped to take both voltages, but most other appliances require a transformer. A transformer is different than an adapter: a transformer will actually step down the voltage from 220V to 110V; an adapter will generally only ensure that the plug fits in the outlet. In general, it will be easiest if you avoid transformers entirely and instead purchase new any cheap electrical items that you might need while in China.

In any case, you should have an adapter and perhaps a surge protector. This is especially important for laptops, camera, and cell phone chargers. You can buy the adapter in either the United States or in China (psst, it’s cheaper over there and you can make sure you are buying the right product—but if you do wait to purchase these items in China, don’t forget about the voltage difference and ruin your electronics on your first jetlagged day). Note that outlets in China are often not grounded, though most can accommodate the third prong.
The Internet

Chinese Internet is censored. For example, you won’t have easy access to Facebook, blogging sites, Youtube, and other sites. The best way to get around the censorship is by using Yale Virtual Private Network (VPN). This can be downloaded from the Yale software download website. Do it before you get there!

Food and Drink

Useful terms

烤 kǎo – roast
(Bèijīng kǎoyā = Beijing roast duck)
炒 chǎo – fried
(chǎofàn = fried rice)
烧 shāo – steamed/baked
(shāomài = steamed dumpling)
鸡肉 jīròu – chicken
牛肉 niúròu – beef
猪肉 zhūròu – pork
羊肉 yángròu – lamb
鸡蛋 jīdàn – chicken egg
西红柿 xīhóngshì – tomato
茄子 qiézi – eggplant
白菜 báicài – bok choy
(Chinese cabbage)
青菜 qīngcài – greens
蔬菜 shūcài – vegetables*
米饭 mǐfàn – white rice
面类 miànlèi – noodles
包子 bāozi – steamed stuffed bun
饺子 jiǎozi - dumpling
串 chuàn – meat kebab
煎饼 jiānbing – stuffed pancake
汉堡包 hànbāobāo – hamburger
薯条 shūtiáo – french fries
番茄酱 fānqiéjiàng – ketchup
可乐 kělè – Coke
雪碧 xuēbì – Sprite
百事可乐 bāishìkělè - Pepsi

*If you are a vegetarian:
我是吃素的。
Wǒ shì chī sù de.
I am a vegetarian.
我不吃肉，只吃蔬菜。
Wǒ bù chī ròu, zhǐ chī shū cài.
I don’t eat meat, only vegetables.

Restaurant etiquette
Calling for a fúwùyuán – Don’t be afraid to yell out “Fuwuyuan!” or the shorter, more commonly used “Wuyuan!” to get a waiter’s or waitress’s attention. It is definitely not considered rude, and may be the only way you’ll get service in many places.

Figuring out the menu – When in doubt, ask if they have a picture menu (照片菜单 zhàopiàn càidān). Otherwise, use the terms provided earlier in the section to search out familiar characters. Sometimes, asking the waiters and waitresses for suggestions works.

Do not provide a tip – There is not a tip culture in China. Waiters will usually not accept tips unless they are working at very Western restaurants.

B. Mindset

General Advice

As a Light Fellow preparing to go abroad, you've already heard about "the curve" for adjusting to life in a new country. As Light Fellowship alumni, we'll tell you that it's true!
But even if your transition is not smooth one hundred percent of the time, there are definitely some attitudes and practices that you can adopt to make the adjustment easier.

1. Prepare to be flexible, in ways both large and small. Bad weather or traffic jams can unravel even the most well thought-out plans, and if you're stressed or homesick, something minor like not being able to find the kind of shampoo you like might unravel you more than you would think. The ability to adapt might be your most important asset for getting the most out of your time.

2. Remember that you're going to be in China for a significant amount of time—during which you'll be engaging in intensive academics—and you should pace yourself. While you may be energetic and eager to do everything when you arrive, you don't need to know Beijing like the back of your hand by the end of your first week. Take the time to get sufficient sleep and become accustomed to the Chinese time zone, so that you'll still be enthusiastic and eager to explore several weeks into your stay.

3. On the other hand, do get out! Your immediate reaction to a foreign environment might be to spend a lot of time talking with family and friends back home, or watching English language television. Try not to do these things excessively so you can minimize the time it takes you to adjust. Whether you've been to China multiple times or this is your first experience abroad, the language-learning environment that you'll be in will make your experience particularly memorable. Enjoy it!

SECTION III: BEIJING

A. Transportation

Getting In

For the directions to get to your program, please refer to “how to get to the program” under each specific program section.

Getting Around

Walking - As you’ll quickly realize, when you’re walking in Beijing, the traffic rules and laws that Americans generally abide by are pretty much entirely ignored. Be extremely careful when crossing streets, and understand that there is usually an entirely separate but equally busy and dangerous lane for bikes and three-wheeled vehicles. Always know who
and what is around you or else you could get injured by an oncoming driver. When in doubt, go with the flow and do whatever the other local Beijingers are doing.

**Bicycle** – For getting around the local area, a bicycle can be incredibly useful. It can also be very intimidating. A bicycle is best for people who want the convenience of getting around their large campus or neighborhood quickly. The price ranges according to where you buy, but you can get a decent new bike for ¥300-400; a cheap used bike will be more along the lines of ¥50-100. You will likely not need anything more than a single speed to putter around town, but make sure to get a strong U-lock to lock up your bike wherever you go, and a bell to warn people you’re about to run them down. Another option is to rent a bike at one of the Beijing City Bike stands; a two-month rental will cost around ¥100.

**Bus** – The Beijing bus system is incredibly thorough; you can literally get anywhere. The only challenge is figuring out which bus goes where. If you are unfamiliar with the area you are going to, use the official website www.bjbus.com to plan your trip, or use Google Maps. If you plan on using the bus frequently, invest in a transportation card (available at subway stations) and save ¥0.60 every trip. This card works for subways as well, and it is convenient because you don’t have to prepare 零钱 (loose change) each time for the fare.

**Subway** – After the improvements made to the Beijing subway system for the 2008 Olympics, getting around Beijing has never been cheaper or faster. For ¥2 per trip, you can go from one corner of the city to the other. The entire subway system is English-friendly, and the trains are very regular. Check www.bjsubway.com for train times; depending on where you are and what direction you are going, the subway can close any time between 10:30 and 11:30 PM. At closing, they will eject you from the train regardless of your location.

**Taxi** – Taxis are ubiquitous around Beijing, but may be hard to find on Friday and Saturday nights. Typically speaking, taxi drivers know the major destinations in Beijing, but if you need to get to a particular location it helps to have a map on hand, and you should always have the location’s address. Taxi drivers generally do not accept tips. Enjoy becoming familiar with the infamous Beijing “errrr,” and try to engage your driver in conversation. It’s great practice. Make a habit of taking the receipt before you leave the cab - you’ll want to know which cab you were in when you wake up the next morning and realize you’re missing your keys/wallet/phone/friend.

**Train** – For travelling outside of Beijing, try taking a train if you have enough time. Getting a ticket is a challenge – you have to wait until 6-10 days before your desired departure date for the office to release the tickets, and on that day you have to wait in line early in the morning at the local office to ensure you get a ticket before they all sell out. The best deal is a hard sleeper (6 per compartment), although the more roomy choice is a soft sleeper (4 per compartment). For hard sleepers, there will be a choice between the top, middle and bottom bunks. Top bunk is almost against the ceiling, so it can be very uncomfortable for taller people. Middle bunk is a good compromise. Bottom bunk is culturally accepted as the group seating area, so you will have strangers sitting at the foot
of your bed. “Soft seat” and “hard seat” are also decent options for shorter train rides (or long ones, if you’re brave), with standing tickets selling for the same price as hard seats once the latter have run out.

Also, you can tell the speed of a train by its letter designation. C and D trains are the fastest, most modern, and most comfortable. Z trains are also quite nice, and used to be the best before the C and D trains rolled around. T trains are next, and are not that fast in comparison, but will be cheap. K trains are the slowest and cheapest. High-speed rail may require a photo ID for purchase and boarding. To secure a C or D train, buy tickets in advance – preferably five days in advance, no matter the time of year, destination, or point of departure. You generally must do this at the train station you plan to leave from, although in Beijing, small kiosks scattered around the city will sell you tickets leaving from a number of stations for a small premium. For more information, including schedules and connections with foreign rail systems, visit www.seat61.com.

B. Places to Go

Wudaokou

Wudaokou is located near many universities in Haidian district, and does a pretty good job of catering to the tastes of college students. If you ever are in the mood for some “authentic” western (or Korean) food, you’ll have a lot of options here. It’s also a center of nightlife and houses a variety of bars and clubs, with prices catered to college students. On any given Friday or Saturday night you’re more than likely to run into your fellow Yalies from any of the programs here.

Sanlitun

Located in the heart of the Embassy area, Sanlitun has a very strong cosmopolitan feel. Though the restaurants are on the more expensive side as the area has more tourists, it probably has the best selection of non-Chinese food in the city. Home to a movie theatre and Apple Store, Sanlitun is known for its bar street. The more fanny packs and sock/sandle combinations you see in a given venue, the lower the quality and higher the prices everything in that venue will be. Look to the back bar street for some great kebabs and Uighur food.

Qianmen
Located on Qianmen Dajie, this place is famous for old Beijing style Zhajiangmian. What you must try here though is their 印度饼 (yìndù bǐng), a naan-like bread that was brought to China during the Tang period by Indian merchants traveling on the Silk Road. Not quite like naan, but also not quite like Chinese 面包 (miànbāo), you will be pleasantly surprised!

全聚德 (quánjùdé) – The most famous Beijing Kaoya place in Beijing. There are many locations, but the original restaurant (founded in 19th century) is on Qianmen Dajie. Nearly every famous individual visiting China also visited this place, including Fidel Castro and Kim Jeong-II. Funny story goes that a few years ago, Kim requested to rent out the original quánjùdé location for a day, only to be politely rejected by the manager. Service was particularly memorable here; in bathroom, a waitperson waits for you to finish and gives you wet towels to wipe your hands.

天福茗茶 (tiānfü míng chá) – A famous franchised tea vendor located throughout Beijing. Biggest locations are in Qiánmén Dàjiē and Wángfǔjìng. Their tea selections are huge, and quality is exceptional. Try some! Make sure you sit in the shop and act like you know what is going on, and the 服务员 will let you try sip of every single tea that you want. Get some 普洱茶 (pǔ è chá) which is produced only in Yunnan province and is good for diet (risk free)! Their 茶饼 (chá bǐng) are delicious as well.

Parks and Scenery

鼓楼和钟楼 (Drum & Bell Tower) – This hutong is scheduled to be demolished soon, but if it is still up, go as soon as you can. Tickets are available to enter the ancient towers, which stand directly north of the Forbidden City and Jingshen park along the vertical axis of Beijing.

北海公园 (Běihǎi Gōngyuán) – Arguably Beijing’s most beautiful park, Beihai features a tall island with the giant White Pagoda perched on top. One can also paddleboat around the lake or simply walk around and take in all the greenery. The north entrance is across the street from the south entrance of the Houhai area, which makes Houhai a convenient evening stop.

后海 (Hòuhǎi) – Houhai Lake, located immediately south of the Drum & Bell Tower area, is beautiful day or night. It is packed with bars, restaurants, and vendors who charge exorbitant prices for their wares. Buying souvenirs around here is discouraged, but buying food or drinks is suggested. During the day paddleboats are available, and in the evenings, all the bars light up and put couches outside for patrons to relax.

Cultural and Historic Sites
Changcheng (The Great Wall) – The major sections of the Great Wall in Beijing open to visitors are Badaling, Simatai, and Mutianyu. While Badaling is perhaps the most picturesque, it’s generally very crowded, so Simatai or Mutianyu might be a better option. It might be difficult to get to the Great Wall because it’s so far from the city, but it’s worth the trouble. Many of the study abroad programs in Beijing organize group trips to the Great Wall, so it should be easy enough to visit.

Yiheyuan (The Summer Palace) – Located in the northwest corner of the city, Yiheyuan was built in the Late Qing and therefore, is still in very good condition, despite some damage incurred during the Cultural Revolution. Old-style structures stretch around the perimeter of Kunming Lake for a variety of political and religious purposes but mostly just for leisure.

Yuanmingyuan (Old Summer Palace) – Famous for Jesuit style architecture, the palace and gardens predate the Yiheyuan by several decades. Bombed and looted during the Opium Wars, the palace now lies in ruins, and serves as a kind of memorial to the losses suffered at the hands of foreign imperialism.

Yonghegong (Lama Temple) – At the Yonghegong (雍和宫) subway stop. There are also several interesting places of historical and cultural importance. The namesake of the Yonghegong stop is Beijing’s largest lamasery, and nearby is a famous hutong alleyway—between the Chinese and Tibetan style buildings, the religious art, and general historical significance, anyone studying in Beijing should pay a visit.

The Imperial academy & Confucius temple – Nearby Yonghegong stands the Imperial Academy (国子监) and the Confucius Temple(孔庙). These two sites are connected, and you can visit both for one entrance fee. The Confucius Temple features a series of steles commemorating Qing military campaigns against various rebellions. While in the Imperial Academy, you can see where lectures were given on the Confucian classics.

The Forbidden City – Now incorporated into Palace Museum, the Forbidden City has a lot to see, including imperial gardens, the former residences of Cixi and various emperors, and the place where the highest round of the imperial examinations were carried out. But the Forbidden City also has a number of art exhibits in addition to displays ranging in topic from Qing technological developments to courtesan life in the imperial palace.

The Temple of Heaven – Traditionally, the emperor would come here annually to pray to heaven and perform rites. The temple is located in Tiantan park, yet another relaxing park in Beijing where people go to partake in activities such as taijiquan, ballroom dancing, cards, dominos, Tibetan dance, fan dancing and a host of other activities. If you’re lucky, a generous local might explain the game to you and let you have a try. Beijing also has a Temple of Earth, Temple of the Moon, and Temple of the Sun, each of which are located in a different direction from the Forbidden City, but the Temple of Heaven is by far the most important.
**Peking University and Tsinghua University** – Besides being the leading universities in China, they are also important historic places in their own right, playing a prominent role in the May Fourth Movement and in Late Qing intellectual thought. Peking University is famous for Weiming Lake (未名 means “No name” or “not yet named,” which I understand sounds more poetic in Chinese) and also contains the Boya Pagoda and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum of Art and Archaeology. Tsinghua is famous for its astronomical observatory and another lake, a lake described in prose by Zhu Ziqing in Hetang Yuese—a piece of writing that all fourth year HBA students will have to memorize.

**Prince Gong’s Mansion** – One of the most beautiful imperial residencies in Beijing. Since it’s located near Houhai, it’s fairly convenient to get there. The mansion includes many traditional gardens, siheyuan courtyard homes, and a historic Peking Opera house.

**Ming and Qing Tombs** – These are much farther away from the city and require a combination of subway and bus rides, but if you have time it makes a good Saturday or Sunday excursion. The Ming Tombs are bigger, and more frequently visited, but the Qing tombs should also be good. One should note, however, that many of the structures and tombs have been excavated, heavily restored, and nearly all of the important relics in the tombs have been cleared away and sent off to museums.

**中华民族园 (Chinese Ethnic Culture Park)** – This giant park has exhibits for all 56 of the nationally recognized minorities living in China. One can learn about the different dwellings and clothing found all over China, and even watch some traditional performances.

**Beijing Urban Planning Exhibition Hall** – Located at the southeast corner of Tiananmen Square, this hall features the development of Beijing from center of an empire to capital of a booming nation. One giant room has basically taken Google maps and placed a bird’s eye view of the entire city on the floor.

**C. Alcohol Safety**

Though Beijing is safer than most cities of its size in the world, that does not give you a right to do stupid things. It is a big city. The Yale Shuttle isn’t waiting to pick you up and take you to DUH. Common sense and moderation are critical.

Never go out alone, and never break off from your group when going out. Do not drink excessively. That 4 kuai bottle of bottom shelf baijiu may mean you can afford several, but does not mean you should drink several. At the end of the night, you still have to hail a cab home, and drivers are more likely to scam a group of inebriated foreigners who are tired and want to get home.
Be kind and sociable. Some foreigners do embody the creepy/arrogant foreigner stereotype. Try to lay that to rest.

SECTION IV: PROGRAM INFORMATION

A. Harvard-Beijing Academy

Getting to the Program

Take the program shuttle from the airport, or take a taxi to 北京语言大学 Běijīng Yǔyán Dàxué nánmén (BLCU South Gate) on the corner of 学院路和成府路 Xuéyuàn Lù hé Chéngfǔ Lù. (Xueyuan road and Chengfu road.) Upon arriving at the south gate, go straight forward until you get to the end of the road and an ATM. The 会议中心 Huiyi Zhōngxīn (BLCU Conference Center) is on the left of the ATM. Enter and check in at the front desk, where there will be program assistants there to help you.

Living Situation at HBA

BLCU Conference Center provides single, air-conditioned bedrooms furnished with a low bed, a desk, a chair, a dresser, a TV, an electric kettle, and a closet. Bed sheets are changed a couple times a week by the maids. It also provides one washcloth, one hand towel and one bath towel that are exchanged every day by the maids. There are two laundry rooms in the building, which require you to buy a refundable laundry card at the front desk.

Eating, Shopping, Exercising

Groceries

For groceries, school supplies, soaps, cosmetics, and other supplies, your best bet is the perpetually crowded Chaoshifa, a supermarket at the intersection of Xueyuan Lu and Chengfu Lu. To get there you can go out the east gate and take a right, or go out the south gate and take a left. While you’ll be able to get the best prices there for snacks, baked goods, drinks and dairy, if you want fruit you ought to look elsewhere. Litchi, peaches, apples, cherries, waxberries, watermelon and other seasonal produce can be bought off of carts on the street (safe, generally, to eat once washed; however, be sure to buy a peeler at Chaoshifa for those apples and kiwis); another good place to look might be the BCLU 水
果店 located by the north gate of campus. In a pinch, cold drinks, snacks, and other small sundry items can be had in the 会议中心 lobby, as well as various stalls throughout campus. If you are looking for a larger selection, do go into Wudaokou to the Hualian shopping complex where there is a larger grocery store.

Dining on-campus

For breakfast food, there are a few options on campus. If you walk from the Conference Center toward the south gate, you should see a small stall on the left right after the intersection. In the mornings, they put out a table where they sell some baked goods, sandwiches, bananas, coffee, and soymilk. If you want an option closer to the classrooms, turn left at the intersection mentioned before and you will see a similar stall on your left. This one, however, will have a small selection. Also, for breakfast, the Conference Center restaurant serves a buffet breakfast with steamed buns for 10 kuai per day. The cafeteria on campus also provides traditional, low cost Chinese breakfast. For lunches and dinners, there are a number of good options on or immediately adjacent to campus. The BCLU cafeterias proper are OK; you’ll need to purchase a card from your year’s head instructor in order to pay, though. If you don’t want to get the card, you can always go to the second floor of the south gate cafeteria. You can eat pretty well and for very, very cheap in the cafeteria. Housed in the same building are a number of slightly pricier, more upscale sit-down restaurants. While the better Korean food can be had elsewhere nearby campus, the udon noodles at the Japanese restaurant are quite good, the chuan’r and nang at the Muslim restaurant are delicious, and the Western “Hope” restaurant has great smoothies (their sandwiches are fine but definitely leave something to desire). If you’re in a hurry, Lange’r in the Conference Center is always OK. The Japanese restaurant in the Conference Center is fairly new, just added in the last few weeks of the 2010 HBA session. Always be actively aware of what you’re eating. Also, if you are out late at night or you just want a midnight snack, there is usually some kebabs being grilled right outside the south gate or directly outside the conference center.

Dining off-campus

Just out the east gate, if you take a right you’ll find another block of restaurants. There’s a generic, cheap, noodle place, a small bakery, as well as the aptly-named “Beijing Beef Noodle.” Upstairs there’s a Japanese place with some fairly good lunch specials, as well as KFC. But if you continue on past this row down to Chaoshifa you’ll find 杭州小吃 – Hangzhou Xiaochi – the definitive hole in the wall lunch / dinner spot for HBA students. For a mere four yuan you’ll get a big plate of steamed xiaolong bao, jiaozi, or a huge portion of fried rice or noodles. If you’ve got a bit more time to spare, go out south gate, and cross Chengfu lu to the Geological Sciences University. My year, the teachers liked to take us to a nice restaurant here for Chinese table. If you want to go on your own, however, after a bit of searching you can find a truly excellent jiaoziguan (dumpling place) – it has about thirty different types of jiaozi, so go as much as you can to try them all. The youyishangdian (friendship store) and surrounding restaurants also provide some meals and snacks at relatively low prices.
Wudaokou

If none of this is particularly appealing, walk out south gate to Wudaokou – plenty of good Chinese, Western (Lush, Pyro’s Pizza), Korean, and other fare. As well as having an excellent food court with a top notch Korean place on the 5th floor, the Hualian shopping complex should be able to satisfy most of your material needs. But you should just do whatever exploring you can in not only Wudaokou, but in Beijing. After all, you are in Beijing to explore the city as well, not just to learn Chinese in the classroom setting. Go down alleyways, buy street food, and do your best to see what you can of “real” China.

Exercising

The gym on campus is called Fusion and the usual summer fee is about 1,000 yuan. However, like most prices in China, that can be dramatically reduced if you are skilled in bargaining. Last year, the teachers and students were able to bargain for 500 yuan a person for two months, which is relatively inexpensive. Within Fusion there are a range of cardiovascular options (elliptical machines, treadmills, bikes, a couple of ergs for rowing) as well as a weight room and dance studio in the basement. There are classes that are free with membership throughout the week such as cycling and dance. Some people even signed up for a personal trainer, which was a great way for them to interact with a local on a regular, one-on-one basis.

If you would rather be outside, the BCLU campus also has a track and tennis and basketball courts. The field inside the track is sometimes occupied by student groups playing soccer or whatnot but it is also a great place for HBA students to start a game of soccer themselves or ultimate Frisbee, which can be easily organized by email a few hours before. The best times to be exercising outside are in the early morning or late evening after the sun has set. This is when the levels of different types of air pollution, especially ozone, are the lowest. This is also when the locals and other foreign students are playing sports or practicing tai chi so it is the perfect time to strike up a conversation with them if you are so inclined. If you would like to venture outside of BCLU and get a real Chinese experience, rent a bike for about 10 yuan an hour. You can get your exercise in as you take in the sights. There should be some bikes you can rent at the front of the South gate as well as locations throughout the city.

Academics

Social Study Project

There is one unique aspect of the HBA experience worth mentioning – the 5th week 社会调查 or Social Study Project. Somewhere between legitimate work (you do have to write a paper of varying length, depending on your year based on your “research”) and a glorified vacation, the week of study gives you the opportunity to travel to Inner Mongolia, Shanghai, Qingdao, the Yellow Mountain or a few other locations to study some aspect of the region’s culture or history. Alternatively you can opt to remain in
Beijing and study art, education, economics, or other similar fields. In every instance HBA sets up a schedule of interviews, outings, and other activities: these can range from an utter waste of your time to a genuinely interesting experience. Ultimately the best solution is to do your best to read through the itineraries before committing to anything; it’s a great opportunity to bond with a select group of your classmates and teachers.

B. Princeton in Beijing

Getting to the Program

PIB program is conducted at Beijing Normal University campus (北京师范大学 also called 北师大), which is located in the Northwestern corner of Beijing. It is a key school in training teachers in China, and the school has in recent years expanded its research fields into other fields of academia as well. As one of the most prestigious institutions in the country, the campus is very famous, well-known nationwide, so if you get lost, you just have to say “北京师范大学” and you should be set.

Free PIB shuttle

If you are going to arrive in China on normal date as specified by PIB, make sure you sign up for the free airport shuttle that runs from the airport to the campus. Otherwise, the easiest way is to take taxi. From the airport to the campus, the fare should be 80-120 RMB. Ask the driver to drop you off at 北京师范大学 东门 (East Gate of Beijing Normal University).

Subway

If you are a brave soul, you may also consider taking subway to get to the campus. Take the airport express train, and transfer to Line 2 at 东直门 (dōngzhímén), take the train in 雍和宫 direction, and get off at 积水潭 (jīshuǐtán). From here, you just have to walk up north for about 15 minutes on 新街大口街 (xīnjījiēdàkǒujī), and you will arrive at the East Gate. You may also take a cab from 积水潭 station, and it should not cost more than 10 RMB.

Living Situation at PIB

PIB students are placed in the fanciest dorm that the university has to offer: 新松公寓 (xīnsōnggōngyù). Most students will have a roommate, who is most likely going to be from Princeton. Rooms are fully air-conditioned, have color TV, and equipped with
western toilet and shower facilities. Every day, 服务员 comes and cleans your room and changes your towel. Students have expressed mixed opinions and feelings about the service, but generally, they are very nice.

A note about Ethernet

Before paying for Internet as directed by PIB handbook, try connecting the Ethernet cable first; it is likely that the Internet will work without having you spend hundreds of RMB for the connection.

Eating, Shopping, Exercising

Eating

There is a whole range of options out there. Of course, if you want to save money, the best option might be to explore cafeterias or food carts at 北京师范大学 campus. Although these places may not offer the tastiest meals, they will provide opportunities for you to get to know other students.

If you are willing to spend ~10 RMB for each meal, you may also explore 太平饺子馆，包子店 and 成都小吃 near the East Gate. In fact, there are multiple 成都小吃 in the close vicinity, so it would be an exciting project to go to all of them, eat all of their dishes, and compare their style and taste. Right next to 太平饺子馆 is an extremely tasty 陝西菜 restaurant, and right by is also a great 桂林面 place.

If you are feeling exquisite, you may also consider fancier options. Many of these, you will be naturally exposed to, via weekly meals with teachers (paid by PIB!).

Really famous spot for PIB students was a small “饼” place under the bridge right next to the East Gate. They have some of the best Chinese street snacks we have ever tried, so make sure you try it with 辣椒!

MAKE SURE you explore hole-in-the-wall restaurants, as they are often the most well kept secrets of Beijing. Near the campus, try these restaurants on the small street right next to North Gate. Their 麻辣烫，麻辣火锅，and 朝鲜菜 were fantastic. The small Chinese style bakery on this street has the BEST egg-vegetable bread EVER.

Shopping

The easiest way to change money in Beijing is to just use an ATM machine. Bank of America has a special deal with Chinese Construction Bank so you don’t have to pay additional ATM fees. Conveniently, there is a Chinese Construction Bank ATM near the East Gate. Just cross the bridge and walk toward your left until you see the Chinese Construction Bank ATM sign.
You can buy water and food at various 超市 that you can find inside and outside of the dormitory. The farther the market is, the cheaper the goods may be. But this is not a definite rule, so investigate, and bargain your way out the busy Beijing markets.

**Exercising**

**Beijing Shifan Daxue’s Gym** – Somewhat expensive and unconventional. There are no treadmills or weight machines; rather, they have basketball courts, volleyball courts, and a swimming pool. The gym also offers classes such as Tae Kwon Do, Ping Pong, Taiji, etc.

**Pulsation Fitness Club** – It is an alternative to Beijing Shifan Daxue’s Gym, but a little far away. Leave the East Gate and cross the bridge then turn left until you run into a large four way street. Cross the street and there is a building complex called 城建大厦. The gym is located inside the building. When you go inside you can sign up for a couple month’s membership. HOWEVER! Before buying at the set price try bargaining, you can usually reduce the price. Especially if you buy in groups.

**Exercising outdoors** – In addition to their lovely gym, Beijing Shifan Daxue has an outside track, outside basketball court, outside soccer field (it’s not grass), outside volleyball court, outside tennis courts, and outside weight machines. Although the New York Times reported that living one day in Beijing is equivalent to smoking a pack of cigarettes, it’s not so bad. Your body is an amazing thing. You will adjust quite quickly. Also, by playing outdoors you will meet many Beijing Shifan Daxue students. Play basketball with them! Practice your Chinese!

**Academics**

PIB academics may seem tough. Yes, it is true that PIB attempts to be the most difficult summer language program in Beijing. In some ways, this may be true with daily 听写, weekly 考试, 口头报告, and 作文. Some teachers often sleep 3-4 hours a night to prepare for classes, and they stay on campus until late hours holding office hours. Princeton also has the famous grade-deflation policy, which could create an ambience in which students get stressed and get obsessed with grades.

HOWEVER, remember that we are Yalies, fully funded by the wonderful Light Fellowship Foundation, and our grades do not count! This means that Yale PIB students get both the intense education and liberty to explore as they please. For example, while some of our intense peers were spending 5-10 hours each night to prepare for each class, we, the brave and intelligent Yale students, were free from such stress. That is not to say, our performance lacked brilliance; in fact, many teachers and administrators liked our adventurous approach to staying in Beijing.
TIP: Your teachers at PIB are not much older than you! Be sure to take full advantage of this fact and spend time with them outside of the classroom. Eat meals together! Go karaoke together! They are not only smart, but also friendly and energetic.

So PIB students, do NOT succumb to the horrible peer pressure of stress and self-denunciation, feel free to enjoy learning and exploring. After all, you are in China, not in 新松公寓。

C. Duke Study in China

Getting to the Program

DSIC offers group shuttles from the airport. If you will be arriving at a time when the DSIC shuttles are not running, best way would be to get a taxi from the airport to 对外经济贸易大学 (duìwài jìnguī tài mào dà xué).

Living Situation at DSIC

At UIBE, you will be living in the International Students Dorm. The DSIC students are spread out across three floors and buildings but there will always be other DSIC rooms on your floor. You will have one roommate in a room with two twin beds. DSIC attempts to assign you to a student from a different school and is either one language level above or one language level below you. So for example, if you are going to be in third year Chinese, DSIC will likely assign either a second year or a fourth year to be your roommate. They feel that this is a good way for more advanced students to help the lower level student without the skill discrepancy being large enough to hinder communication too much.

The dorms themselves are pretty nice, more or less equivalent to a three or four-star hotel room here. Every week, the cleaning ladies come change your sheets and clean up the room. There is air conditioning, which you will be very thankful for. UIBE does require you to buy electricity to discourage wasteful spending. The hot water is usually working reasonably well.

Eating, Shopping, Exercising

There is an excellent variety of food options around campus, including some American style restaurants for those missing American food, and the weekly food allowance can easily cover meal costs. Food places are primarily situated around each of the four school gates (Xi Men, Dong Men, Nan Men, and Bei Men). All these food places are easily found on the map of the DSIC Orientation Guide.
Xi Men

Outside of Xi Men, which is the closest gate to the DSIC dorm, there are Chinese fast food places, food carts, and restaurants. Restaurants outside of Xi Men are generally cleaner than most other food places, and so if you are worried about your stomach the first few weeks, the fast food places and restaurants here are a safer bet. Highly recommended is Hui Xian Canting, which offers home-style Sichuan food; Dui Wai Jing Mao students really like this place because the food tastes home-cooked, it is very inexpensive, and it is a great place to take a large group of people. Other highlights include Shou’er, a Korean barbeque place; Qinlong, a great noodle place; and Sculpting in Time Cafe, which offers western food like pasta, salads, and sandwiches.

There are also three Chinese fast food restaurants outside of Xi Men— Yong He Da Wang, NZBM, and Niu Da Wan - which are pretty tasty and are all good for a quick meal. In addition, NZBM and Niu Da Wan are both open 24-hours, so if you need to do some late night studying or want a midnight snack, these are great choices. Also recommended is the variety of food carts to the right of Xi Men which offer baozi and danbing, a fried egg biscuit.

Dong Men

Dong Men has lots of xiao chi places and small restaurants - most Dui Wai Jing Mao students eat here when they eat off campus. Dong Men places are probably less clean than Xi Men places, but the food is much better and cheaper than the fast food places by Xi Men. Almost all the outdoor xiao chi places are worth trying out, and I especially recommend Huang Jin Zhou Jiao Zi Wu for their jiao zi, which are awesome and cheap. If you miss American food, the Cat’s Eye offers pizza and fries.

Bei Men

Bei Men also has some high end and more expensive food options – weekly Chinese Table will take you to most of these places, but if you are willing to spend more, there are some good options, such as Yourenju, a hot pot place, and Bazhen, which offers jiaozi. Across the street from Bei Men there is a fruit and vegetable market. Mangos, lychees, grapes, cherries, peaches, and others are widely available for cheap, though definitely look around the entire market first because some sellers have fresher fruit than others.

On campus

There are a few food options, including a few food carts and student cafeterias, all of which are very cheap and convenient, but not as good as food off campus. DSIC students can buy a ‘cafeteria food card,’ but it is not worth it as students will prefer to eat off campus for many meals. This is because once students leave campus for the summer, the options at the canting become quite limited. That being said, there is a Halal canting on campus, which was a good option for students with dietary restrictions.
Grab a meal with your language partner

The most important advice on food is to invite your language partner out for a meal and have them pick out a restaurant and order - Dui Wai Jing Mao students have the best hold on good food.

Shopping

On campus, there are several small markets to buy basic home goods, snacks, and toiletries. The convenience store located outside the international students dorm has food, water, toiletries, school supplies etc. There is also a café inside the main building that has food and drinks. For snacks, outside of Xi Men, there is also a 24-hour Seven Eleven, which offers everything one can expect in a convenient store, and the prices are slightly better.

Exercise

There is a gym in the basement of the international students dorm; go to the basement to buy a 2 Yuan ticket for one hour of exercising (though they are not particularly stringent about kicking people out on time). The gym offers weights, benches, and cardio equipment.

In the middle of campus, there is a large field and outdoor gymnasium, with basketball courts, soccer pitches, and outdoor gymnasium, which are all free for students. There is a park across the street from Bei Men, which is great for running and other outdoor activities.

In addition, there is a more high-tech gym a few blocks off campus – accessible either from Xi Men or Bei Men. Membership cost can usually be bargained down from the initial cost. It has more machines than the school gym and offers exercise classes in the afternoon and evening. It is also air conditioned.

Extra Curricular Activity & Travel

The Duke program offered several extracurricular classes on Friday afternoons after Chinese table, which is the lunch with students in your level and the teachers. They were all taught by teachers who had a special interest or training in the subject. A well-attended class was Chinese calligraphy, which covered basic principles like the different brush strokes. Other classes included Chinese knotting and Chinese painting (国画), and the Chinese singing and dancing classes. Some students exhibited their new skills at China Night, the talent show at the end of the program. The program director asked for suggestions/feedback throughout the course, so if there is something you would like to see, definitely bring it up. These courses are a good way to learn more about Chinese art in general.
The organized travel consisted of a day trip every Saturday, and a midterm trip to either Datong or Xian. Destinations for the day trips were places outside the city because the program assumed (correctly) that students would utilize free afternoons to see important sites within the city. The trips were generally fun, but not well organized. We had giant coach buses that shuttled us around, but unanticipated traffic often made the day more stressful than it should have been. Do some research on the destination before you go. Walking shoes are also highly recommended, as there is often hiking involved on the trips.

The midterm trips both got good reviews from the students. Highlights in Xi’an included biking along the city, seeing the terracotta warriors and attending a traditional musical performance. The Shanghai trip was less well reviewed by students. The trip this year focused mainly on visiting the new campus Duke was building in Shanghai, and did not afford much time for students to walk around and see the city.

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D. Inter-University Program (IUP)

Living Situation at IUP

Students at IUP have three options: host family, dorms or off-campus housing. The pros and cons of each are listed below. Some students who are staying in Beijing for an academic year choose to spend half of their time with a host family, and half in off-campus housing.

Host Family

Pros
-Host families live on Tsinghua grounds within walking distance to the IUP building
-A healthier environment to exercise and practice Chinese
-Cost ranges from 1500 to 3000 RMB per month
-Hosts are often retired professors of universities in the local area (Qinghua, Beida, Beiyu, Dizhida, etc.)

Cons
-There may be curfews and other restraints
-You might be forced to wake up early in the morning to the sounds of the television or a crying baby, or the scents of breakfast dumplings

**Dormitory**

**Pros**
- Singles and doubles available
- Daily rate about 80 RMB for a double, 160 RMB for a single
- Five minutes bike ride away from IUP
- Many school cafeterias nearby
- Easy to find Chinese / international friends to play basketball, speak Chinese or learn about different cultures

**Cons**
- The bed mattress is about three inches thick and hard as a rock
- Although getting maintenance and repair on various little objects in your room won’t be difficult, the quality is questionable
- Far from subway / nearest coffee shop
- In a noisy area of Qinghua campus, with trains and cars constantly passing by

**Off-campus housing**

**Pros**
- The apartments close to Tsinghua (ex. Huaqing Jiayuan) come with basic furniture as well as those left by former residents
- Generally, apartment quality decreases as you get farther from Tsinghua, but no stark differences
- The neighboring universities, like the Forestry University and the Language and Culture University, also have decent furnished apartments for reasonable prices
- You have the experience of learning to rent an apartment in China. This could come in useful in the future!
- For prolonged stays in Beijing, it can be important to have a clean, tranquil space of your room.

**Cons**
- You are on your own: apartment maintenance, utilities, rent, food, etc. (IUP provides a handy guide that will help you negotiate your lease with the landlord)
- Your bargaining skills will be tested
- If you decide to get an apartment-mate, you’ll have to deal with their needs
- Also, leases for shorter time periods (like two months) generally have higher monthly rent rates
**Recommendation:**

If you’re looking for independence and want to get as close to having a “real” experience abroad, live off campus. Don’t be daunted by the tasks of finding an apartment, negotiating rent and registering with the local police. If you need help, have your teacher help you. You’ll save money by living off campus, learning to cook fried rice and scrambled tomatoes and eggs, and inviting people over for small get-togethers and parties. Before the beginning of every semester, departing IUP students are looking to pass on their apartments to incoming IUP students! This makes the process extremely smooth – there are some apartments that have been passed down by IUP students for years.

**Academics**

IUP’s strength is in its low teacher-student ratio. For group classes, the ratio is set at one teacher per three students. As far as individual classes go, you’ll have at least one hour of independent tutorial each day. You can use this time to practice your grammar, experiment with vocabulary and joke using Chinese idioms without worrying. Each semester, you will have a maximum of an hour of one on one classes, and three hours of three on one classes. As you become more advanced, you will tend to cut down on the three on one classes, and have more one on one classes. Typically, once a student reaches a higher Chinese language ability, they will have two hours of one on one classes per day.

IUP has a set of 5 core reading classes. If you have finished two semesters of level 5 Chinese at Yale, you will typically be placed into the 1st or 2nd level of these core classes. Once you have completed the 4th or 5th level of core classes, you will be as literate as a well educated Chinese. There are 4 core listening/speaking classes, of which you will typically be placed in the 1st or 2nd level.

In addition to core classes, there are electives in various topics. These include, but are not limited to Classical Chinese, Idioms, Newspaper Chinese, Business Chinese, Modern Chinese History, and Ancient Chinese History.

Finally, once your Chinese is strong, you will be able to take “材料课”. In these classes you will work with a teacher and design your own curriculum. This may involve reading through a book, working with selected essays or articles, or reviewing previously learnt Chinese. As an example, one of my 材料课 was about the history of quantum mechanics. Every day I read around 15 pages, created vocabulary lists, explained key physics experiments, and discussed various concepts with my teacher.

Outside of IUP, you also have the option of enrolling in, or auditing Qinghua courses. This can be a great way of improving your Chinese, meeting Chinese students, and understanding more about the Chinese education system. For myself, it even provided an opportunity to conduct physics research in one of Qinghua’s physics laboratories. Qinghua is the leading university in China (along with Beijing University), and it can be a very enriching place academically.
IUP also has a very extensive alumni network. The average age of its students is 25. As a 19 year old, I was the youngest student in the program. However, hanging out and talking with classmates who already had crazy life experiences was amazing. IUPers range from PhD students thinking about being historians to NGO leaders, consultants, investment bankers, public health researchers, musicians and professors. You’ll be in good company.

Misc

Cafeterias at Qinghua – Qinghua is renowned for its affordable and excellent cafeterias. For as little as 5-10 RMB, you can get yourself a relatively nutritious, tasty, and filling meal. It can however, be challenging for those with dietary restrictions, such as gluten free, or vegetarianism.

Teachers – The teachers at IUP tend to be very open minded and willing to spend time with students outside of classes. This can be a great way to improve your Chinese and learn more about Beijing.

E. Associated Colleges in China (ACC)

Getting to the Program

To get to Minzu University, you can take a taxi from the airport to 民族大学 东门 (Minzu Daxue Dongmen). If the driver doesn’t know where the East Gate is, say that it is at 中关村南大街 (Zhongguancun nandajie). It's a 45 minute 120 yuan ride, but it's pretty convenient. The location of the actual dorm is right next to the East Gate--literally the first building to your right when you enter. Don’t get off at the West Gate, because the dorm is very far from there.

The other option is to take the subway to Guojiatushuguan (国家图书馆, Line 4), take Exit A, and walk straight (north) about 400 meters; the university is on the left.

Living Situation at ACC

The set up is a 4-star double twin bed hotel room setting. The rooms are equipped with a bathroom, TV, telephone, heating / A.C., outlets, and safes. Sheets and towels are changed weekly by the 服务员. Laundry facilities are available for free on every level.

WiFi is available but extremely slow, especially with VPN.
The Neighborhood

The Central University for Ethnicities (中央民族大学: zhōngyāng mínzú dàxué) is located in the sprawling Haidian (海淀) district of Beijing. Among other things, Haidian is known for its universities - Minzu, or “MinDa” (民大) is within easy walking distance of the Beijing Studies University and the Beijing Dance Academy; People’s University of China and Peking University are both just up the road, a few subway stops away. 民大 is also just a few stops away from some key Beijing destinations: Zhongguancun (中关村, Beijing’s tech Mecca), the National Library, the Beijing Zoo, Yuanmingyuan (圆明园, sometimes known as the “Old Summer Palace”), and Yiheyuan (颐和园, the Summer Palace).

Most of student life at MinDa seems to revolve around 西门 (Ximen), not merely “the west gate” but also a road that boasts an incredibly varied array of edibles from all parts of China. The street food - barbecue in all its glorious forms - is especially popular in the evening, and makes for a good, cheap outing with friends. Ximen and its offshoots also boast grocery stores (I recommend 超市发 - Chaoshifa, located on an E-W street that branches off of Ximen), “everything” stores (tiny retail outfits marketing every imaginable daily necessity), multiple fruit stands, Kodak, a sandwich shop, smoothies, tea, porridge/congee (粥; zhou), board games, used books, one-room copy shops, and everything in between.

Money and Shopping

China Construction Bank has a branch just north of campus, which is right across from KFC and can be reached by exiting the “little east gate” 小西门 on the northeast end of campus and walking about 200 meters north. There is a Bank of China branch across the main road, just south of the university’s east gate; branches of ICBC and China Merchants Bank are only a short walk to the north of the east gate.

Most daily shopping can be done at the nearby supermarkets (see above), or in the university’s on-campus supermarket. Larger, higher-quality, or more unusual items can be found in the much larger Carrefour (家乐福/Jialefu in China) supermarket across, which is near the Beijing Zoo and is arrived at most easily by bus (白石桥/Baishiqiao station).

Dining and Entertainment

Coffee shops
Cindy’s Café – located right across Minzu Daxue Dongmen. With your ACC student ID card you will get a 15% discount off the bill. The only downside to Cindy's Cafe is that
their free WiFi is slow and the cafe is pretty noisy at times because of all the fuwuyuan chattering.

**Let’s Coffee** – Our dorms have slow internet and when you use VPN, it's even slower. If you need fast internet, fast enough to download videos, etc., I would recommend Let's Coffee Cafe. Let's Coffee is about a block away from Cindy's Cafe and it's close to Weigongcun Ditiezhan. Let's Coffee is a great place to go to study because of the quiet atmosphere. Also, their internet is awesome! They have a password secured network whereas Cindy's Cafe has slow unsecured WiFi.

**Old Bike Café** – There is a coffee shop called Old Bike Cafe near Minzu Daxue Ximen. You have to walk at least 6 minutes though. It's owned by a British guy and there are ‘buy 1 get 1 free’ deals (like burgers, etc.) for students every weekday night starting at 6pm. Remember to take your ACC student ID with you! Old Bike Café’s internet is slower than Cindy's Cafe’s, though.

**Restaurants**

There is also a restaurant at Ximen called Chengdu and it tastes great and is very cheap! Near Ximen there are lots of Muslim restaurants. My favorite is the second restaurant down perpendicular from Ximen. They have great customer service, whereas the bigger Muslim restaurant next to it fails to match up in service and taste.

There is a restaurant serving Korean food on Minzu University campus but their prices are on the expensive side. I would go to the restaurant across Old Bike Cafe or the one next to the Japanese restaurant (there is only one Japanese restaurant near Ximen). Or for the best Korean food, Wudaokou would be a good place to start. Wangjing, which is the Koreatown of Beijing, has the best Korean food.

The Japanese restaurant near Ximen is pretty delicious. You have to walk past the Zhou restaurant on Ximen and make a left at an alley. You can ask anyone where the Japanese restaurant is because there is only one near Ximen.

No 5 Café on campus, which is open during the school year, is a cheap, convenient, and delicious place to stop for breakfast. There are also two bakeries across from Dongmen. Bakeries (面包店) are great for desserts as well as snacks and breakfast food items.

Another restaurant worth mentioning is the Tube Station, which is about an 8-minute walk north of the East Gate. In addition to having some of the best pizza in Beijing, they have all you can drink 15 RMB Beer/Soda specials on Tuesday from 5-8.

**Zhongguancun**

If you want to go somewhere but don't feel like taking a trip too far, I would go to Zhongguancun. You can actually walk there by walking straight toward Weigongcun. Or you can take the subway and its only three subway stops away. Zhongguancun is known
as the electronics center of Beijing, but it also has lots of malls and restaurants and is more lively than Minzu University's surroundings.

Near Zhongguancun is a movie theater called UMe. There is also a big supermarket close to the McDonalds that has lots of various products.

If you want to go to Carrefour, all you need to do is take the Bus 205 and exit two stops down near the Beijing Zoo.

The National Library

Three minutes walk from the dormitory. While you need a library card to study there, use the WiFi, etc., you don't need a card to enter the library and check out their very impressive looking reading rooms!

Academics

Associated Colleges in China is one of the most intense study abroad experiences that you can choose while on a Light Fellowship to China. ACC remains steadfast in its belief that the only way to genuinely learn Chinese is by bombarding its students with the language. If you choose this program, expect to have some activity going on every moment that you are there. This certainly is fun and gives you a great opportunity to learn a lot about Chinese culture, but it can also be very exhausting. Compared to other programs, ACC gives off more of a Chinese middle school atmosphere. The teachers are very passionate about your language learning and think the best way to do that is by making every moment of your time there into a language learning experience.

Language Pledge

Just like other programs, ACC has the “language pledge,” which is applicable at all times and places until the program ends. This may not seem intimidating for students in higher levels, but it can be a nightmare for some second years. While the language pledge is very helpful, I would strongly advise students to learn as much as they possibly can at ACC and then get out into Beijing and only speak with Chinese people. You will often find that at higher levels the language pledge isn’t all that helpful and can even be a negative influence because other students speak with mistakes or use incorrect words. I would also strongly caution those who believe they can sneak by with speaking English in their rooms. ACC’s teachers do sometimes walk through the halls of the dorms listening for stray English words.

Language Practicum and Table

Every Friday, after your exams, you will be expected to participate in a class outing to a place in Beijing that deals with the topics you are discussing in class. This is a mandatory activity and sometimes is accompanied with an essay assignment. After your outing, you
will eat with your teachers and other students at a restaurant of ACC’s choosing. ACC also provides everyone with lunch on these days.

Extra Curricular Activity & Travel

Class Trips

ACC’s semester includes one or two breaks. During these times, ACC organizes class trips to various parts of China. While these trips are optional, they can be very rewarding and you should definitely go on some of them. The trip fees are also included in the tuition and usually include breakfast and dinner. While these trips are rewarding, they can be very exhausting at the same time. You will be constantly on the move and will be taking many long train rides on your way there. In some cases, you may choose to rest up on your break instead of participating in a trip.

Chinese Host Families

While ACC doesn’t offer a live-in option for its students, it does provide them with a network of host families. The host families usually invite students every other weekend for dinner at their homes. They are extremely friendly and hospitable. Be sure to bring them gifts when you come as a nice gesture. Also, don’t be upset if your host mother tells you that you have gotten fat since the last time she saw you. This is considered a nice gesture.

Chinese Carnival

This was probably one of my favorite activities at ACC. They do it once per semester and it spans the whole length of morning classes. Students are divided up into teams that include every year. You then participate in a large competition with multiple mini-games that test your knowledge of China and Chinese. The winners get a prize.

Tip: choose any Chinese pop song you like and memorize the lyrics beforehand, and you will have a chance to sing and earn a few points for your team!

China Night

At the end of every semester, ACC puts on a variety of acts that students are required to participate in. They invite the host families to watch. Afterwards, they will usually take people out to dinner.

F. CET Harbin

Getting to the Program
Students first assemble in Beijing, stay one night in a hotel arranged by CET, and take a 10-hour train to Harbin the following night. For detailed information, refer to the program orientation booklet. In Beijing, after a brief orientation you have free time for practically 1.5 days. It may help to think about places you want to go in advance. For the night train, prepare water, snacks, flashlight (really useful throughout your stay in China), and baijiu if you want (drinking on public transportation is not illegal).

**Living Situation at CET Harbin**

**Room configuration**

You share a double with your Chinese roommate from Harbin Institute of Technology. There are bed sheets but they are not changed daily as in other programs, and towels and toilet paper are not provided. The room is furnished with two beds, two desks with attached book shelves, two stands, a fan, and a TV. Two rooms are connected to one bathroom, and these two rooms are called a ‘suite’. The corridors are cleaned by the fuwuyuan, but you must clean the room and bathroom yourself.

**Laundry**

There are two laundry machines, on the 1st and 3rd floors. Buy a special coin (3 yuan) from the front desk to operate the machine. Before doing the first laundry, however, buy a clothesline and plastic pincers. When I was there the supermarket on campus did not have these, but on the first or second day of your arrival in Harbin CET takes you to Carrefour, and you can find the items there. The easiest way to set up the clothesline is tying the ends to the curtain pole in your room.

**Multi-purpose room**

There is a multipurpose room on the third floor, which was always filled with students studying or holding small events. The study breaks are held here as well. This room is also not cleaned by the service, so if you frequent the room then use it neatly and clean it voluntarily once in a while. (You will understand what I mean after two weeks or so pass without anyone stepping up to clean the room.)

**Eating, Shopping, Exercising**

**学生食堂**

The school cafeterias are cheap and convenient, with a good variety of food. 学院楼 and 学士楼 are the buildings right across from the classroom building (留学生会议中心), and inside there are the two large cafeterias. Nearer to the dormitory is the 方便食堂 (Convenient Cafeteria), which is good for breakfast. Also, there is a place named 黑市
(Black market) on campus, which is an arcade of food stands very similar to the cafeteria, but they accept cash. There are also a greater variety of snacks available here.

**Restaurants and cafes**

There are numerous Korean restaurants around campus, first due to the large number of ethnic Korean minorities in the Dongbei area, and second due to the Korean students coming to Harbin to study Chinese. Go straight left from the dormitory building, exiting the campus through the small East Gate. Keep on walking until you hit the railroad and turn right—there is a row of Korean restaurants. The first one on the street, named 热风, is run by a Korean immigrant and has the best food. There are also two coffee shops down the road (one of which, named Provence, is run by a French couple) that are worth exploring. But these two places don’t have WiFi (they didn’t until the summer of 2010), so to study it’s best to go to Corner Coffee, right outside the small East Gate.

There are also great Hong Kong, Muslim, hot pot, and other restaurants near campus. For the specific direction to these places, please refer to the orientation booklet distributed at the beginning of the program.

**Exercising**

There is a big gym on campus (with a swimming pool), which you can use by creating a membership and paying a small fee. But I recommend joining the group jogging often informally arranged by the RA and the students in the program every night. Near our campus there is a separate campus for graduate students in Sciences, called 科学院. The place used to be a zoo, so it has beautiful scenery with trees and lakes, and is far less crowded. Many students come here to run, play badminton, practice taijiquan, etc.

**Academics**

**Independent Research (1:1)**

The independent research is a unique strength of CET Harbin. The program finds a professor from the field of your research topic to be your adviser, so your research can go deeper and more specific. You meet twice a week with your adviser for two hours each. Think in advance on how to format your research, as professors often respect students’ opinion in designing the course. Without your specific requests, however, some professors may just find arbitrary articles related to your topic on the web and make you study it. If you are a beginner or an intermediate in Chinese and want to focus on the language aspect, this format will be a good exercise in terms of reading and vocabulary. But if you are confident about your Chinese and want to be more content-focused, make specific suggestions and work toward building your own project from the beginning. For example, ask your professor to cut down on vocabulary quiz, spend more class time on discussion, and propose finding articles yourself. The more initiative you take, the more academically stimulating the class will become.
G. UVA Shanghai

Getting to the Program

The program is located on the East China Normal University (ECNU) campus, near the Jinshajiang Road station on the Metro. It's a pretty long ride from the airport, so catching a cab is highly recommended, especially since you'll have quite a bit of luggage. It costs about 400 kuai. Once you reach campus, ask the cab driver to bring you past the gate. You have to cross two rivers then head left after the second bridge to reach the International Exchange Service Center (our dorm). It's hard to find the first time, but it is one of the tallest buildings on campus. The closest subway station to campus is Jinshajiang Rd. Nanjing Xi Lu will get you to good restaurants and shopping.

Living Situation at UVA Shanghai

Room configuration

Students will live in an international student residence hall or a guest house at ECNU. These facilities are typical college residential buildings and the rooms include: bed (with bed sheets), desk, chair, lamp, closet, TV, phone, and air conditioning.

The program cost is based on double occupancy room rate. However, single room occupancy is available upon request and additional cost per day will be charged upon arrival at ECNU. Also, if students choose to have an ECNU student language partner share their room, they will need to pay an additional cost per day room differential upon arrival. Request for single room or language partner occupancy must be indicated in the application form. Most everyone lives on the same floor of the building, and it is pretty social. Classes are in an international student classroom right by the dorm. It'll take less than 5 minutes to walk between the dorm and the classroom building.

There is one optional homestay that typically all students go on. It's only one day (not overnight) and will give you a good look into the lives of China's upper-middle class. You will almost definitely never see your host family again, so don't feel obligated to eat everything they feed you.

Laundry

There is a laundry service on the fifth floor of the dorm. Students have to buy laundry tickets in the lobby and supply their own detergent, but if they bring it to the maids on the fifth floor, they will wash it for you and possibly deliver it to your room, though normally students have to pick it up. Students can buy detergent at the Changfeng Gongyuan
Tesco, the Zhongshan Gongyuan Carrefour, or maybe one of the stores on campus. Make sure to do laundry early before trips because sometimes they get backed up.

**Eating, Shopping, Exercising**

The neighborhood immediately surrounding campus is pretty working class. There are many inexpensive Chinese and Korean restaurants catering to students, but if students are looking for other food or shopping, they will need to head over to Zhongshan Gongyuan or Changfeng Gongyuan. Both are walking distance of the campus and have large malls.

Shanghai is expensive. Students can live very cheaply on campus by eating in the dining halls and not going out, but that's pretty unrealistic with the UVA crowd. Clubs are where some students will be spending a lot of their time and money on the weekends, and amenities in Beijing are much cheaper. ATM’s are accessible right at the entrance to campus. The closest subway station to campus is Jinshajiang Rd. Nanjing Xi Lu will get you to good restaurants and shopping.

**Dining On Campus and 学生食堂**

Many of the dining halls on campus serve pretty much the same food. The one closest to the dorm is probably the one students most want to avoid, but there is a Korean restaurant on the top level of the dining hall cafeteria with good bulgogi. Look for “Gourmet” on the far side of campus; it's a food court in one of the dining halls with options like sushi, bubble tea, and grilled chicken, catering mostly to international students.

**Eating Options Off Campus**

The most frequently visited restaurant is Dongbei Jiaoziguan, right outside the back gate. It's cheap and serves decent dumplings. On weekends, students typically start their evenings at Ellen's, an expat bar past Dongbei and the local go-karting station. It's a great place to meet other international students, and one may even run into teachers.

Finally, if students ever grow wary of eating Chinese food, “Sherpa's” is a great option. They deliver food from several restaurants all over the city straight to your dorm. It can be expensive, but favorites like Goody's, Wagas, Urban Soup Kitchen, and Pure and Whole are all pretty reasonable. Masala Art makes some great Indian food as well.

**Exercising**

There is no useable gym on campus, so if students want to work out, they will be limited to the pull-up bars and track, or they will have to find a gym off campus. A pretty large chain, Will's, has a gym near campus and if you go with classmates, students may be able to get a discount. Be warned: the good gyms in Shanghai are expensive. In a few cases, students joined the city's Crossfit box, Iron Dragon, which was a great find because they got to meet a lot of interesting people and were free to do whatever workouts they wanted (i.e. it's not a standard Crossfit box).
Entertainment

As far as entertainment goes, KTV, clubbing, and shopping are all great options. Try to attend a soccer match if you can, too. And play basketball with other students on campus. It's not really that easy to get to bars by Subway, but cabs are cheap if you split them among friends. The Shanghai expat websites like Smart Shanghai and Time Out Shanghai will be helpful in directing you to clubs and bars.

Travel

Travel is one of the best parts of the program. It's a small program, and everyone goes on our trips together, so students get many opportunities to mix outside their Chinese year. Luoyang, Beijing, and Hangzhou are all really amazing places to visit, and you'll have a good time touring with the teachers during the day and hanging out with your classmates at night. Some teachers do a really good job giving students the freedom to explore on their own. Beijing is also a great opportunity to meet up with Yale classmates.

Academics

Language Pledge

The language pledge is one of the biggest challenges of the program, primarily because of the living arrangements. Students must be diligent and dedicated to the pledge in the dorms when there is no supervision and when you have a roommate. If students are going to stick to the pledge, they have to get their roommate on board, too.

Academics are tough but manageable. Expect a lot of homework, and if you're in the Second Year program, hard listening tests at first. UVA's teaching style is very different from Yale's. There is a much greater emphasis on character memorization in the lower levels, essentially no attention to tones, and a greater focus on expressing your own ideas rather than repeating grammatically correct phrases. Your classmates might seem more fluent than you at first, but you will quickly realize that they are just more comfortable speaking and less inhibited by concerns about pronunciation and grammar. No matter what level students are in, it's helpful to review some characters before getting to the program, because there's no time for review upon arrival.

Extracurriculars

Enrolling in 1 or 2 of the extracurricular courses that the teachers offer is highly recommended. If students do any more than that, it may feel like a burden, but if students don't do any, they will be missing out. I recommend one activity with friends and one particularly unpopular class, so that students get to know the teachers really well. Singing is a hidden gem because you learn a lot of useful vocab in a fun environment, plus students will be able to impress everyone at KTV.
H. CET Kunming

Getting to the Program

The CET Kunming program is located at Yunnan University, which is in central Kunming and right next to a beautiful lake. There is very little air pollution, especially in comparison with the larger cities like Shanghai, Beijing, etc. The city does not have a subway system, but it does have relatively easy access to buses, and trains. The airport is brand new and was just completed a few years ago; it has flights that go all over China. The airport is about 20-30 minutes away from the school by taxi (taxis are very cheap and easy depending on where students want to go, but they must barter with them and set the price before they start the journey). CET will arrange to have students picked up from the airport. I walked from the dorm to the school building every day and it was about a 15 minute walk. The campus is across the street from the student dorm.

Of course, Kunming is still a large city, with a population of 10 million (about half the size of New York City). One of the best things is that one does not have all the mess of the big cities, but there are still a lot of conveniences, like international restaurants, an international airport, and other amenities. Also, there are amazing hiking trails and outdoors parks within walking and bus-ride distances.

Living Situation at CET Kunming

Room configuration

The program has a dorm system. Students will live with a Chinese student that attends Yunnan University. They are extremely helpful and kind. Some roommates will travel with students and participate in many of the activities that CET offers. The dorms are very nice, with one foreign student and one Chinese student in each room with a private bathroom. Students are actually staying in a hotel right across from the campus entrance. The building is full of international students either from the CET program or other summer immersion experiences.

Each room has western bathrooms, were cleaned once daily (hotel staff make students’ beds!), and had two single beds. As far as the weather goes, it doesn't get better than Kunming! It is called the city of Four Spring seasons. It really is 70 degrees and sunny. There is some rain, but in the summer, the weather is perfect. Some rooms had an air conditioner, but they are not used often. Beijing and Shanghai, on the other hand, are very hot during the summer.

Laundry
There was a laundry machine in the CET Activity Room on the 6th floor of the dorm and detergent is readily available at the supermarket. The dorms are about a 10 minute walk from the classrooms. There is no dryer available, which is typical for China. Just hanging clothes will suffice (the weather is beautiful most of the time). You can buy detergent at the school store (which is about a 2 minute walk, there is also a convenience store right across from the dorm).

**Eating, Shopping, Exercising**

The neighborhood around campus is great. It is very collegiate with cafes, bookstores, and clothing stores within a block from campus. There is an international grocery store just two blocks from the dorm and plenty of Chinese supermarkets (and bubble tea shops!) closer than that. There was an ATM next to the dorm outside the pharmacy. Everything students needed was in walking distance, but if you needed something hard to find (GRE books, etc) students just took a bus to the city center, about a 10-minute bus ride away.

**Dining On Campus and 学生食堂**

There is a dining hall about 3 minutes away from campus. You can buy meals there since you will be a registered student at the college. It is the cheapest way to eat. They always serve Chinese cuisine. There are also plenty of international cuisines available (Indian, American, French, Burmese, ect.)- most of these are located on the street near the dorm. For a small fee, CET provided many of the lunches - the food was great and there are many authentic places to eat ethnic cuisine in the city, like 过桥米线 (Over the Bridge Noodles).

**Eating Options Off Campus**

There is a huge night market on weekend nights in the street a block up from campus (the same street with the book store/cafes). It is named Wenlin or Wenhua. There is an international supermarket and the number of Chinese supermarkets closeby. Fresh produce can be found in the carts of street vendors who set up at the campus gates or at the park by the lake.

Many students visited the night markets at the Bird and Flower market, but that district has since been demolished. It is recommended to ask your residential advisor, also your roommates will know of the best places to visit. Night markets tend to move around, but there used to be one right on "wenhuaxiang" the street that is incredibly close to the dorm. This street also had a ton of wonderful places to eat. Kunming is one of Chinas most populated minority regions- it also boasts the best minority food.

**Exercising**
For students, there are many opportunities to run around the campus in the morning. The weather is great for outdoor exercise, and there is no noticeable smog. The only thing students should be careful of is the altitude gain. Kunming is quite high up in the mountains, and if you’re not used to the thin air, it can be taxing on your lungs to go for extended runs. Several students from liked to play basketball with some locals that often came to play on campus. The outdoor basketball courts are also on the way to school and are impossible to miss - locals are usually very willing to play.

There is also a large park in the center of Kunming, and it is walking distance about ten minutes away from the dorm, and also away from the school. It is beautiful, they often have various dance classes and tai chi, among other martial arts programs. Tai chi often is a morning exercise that is taught by the teachers of CET and is free.

Entertainment

Life at CET in Kunming is really what you make of it. There are some people interested in hiking and went to parks on weekends. Others were interested in nightlife so they went to Kundu, which is the clubbing area in Kunming. Unfortunately, Kundu is not particularly safe; the program director will tell you not to go there. However, it is not strictly prohibited, so if you want to go, you can. Bars around Kunming (not in Kundu) are much safer and can be really fun.

CET offers classes in cooking, minority dances, Tai chi, etc., so many people made that their hobby. For some, the best part was hanging out with their Chinese roommate and friends.

Because the college is nearby, there was quite a bit of nightlife right next to the school. Many of the cafes are converted to bars at night. There are also clubs at the city center, a short taxi ride, and my roommate took me to some lesser-known bars in other parts of the city. ATMs are very easy to locate.

Travel

In terms of travel, CET Kunming takes several trips off the campus and outside of Kunming. They vary year to year. Some have gone to the Stone Forest, Yi Zu minority towns, and Dali, among other places. Many students traveled by themselves because Kunming was easy to travel from. Some have gone to Lijiang, Beijing, Shanghai, Changchun, Nanjing, Puzhehei (a tiny cluster of towns near the Vietnamese border), and Chengdu. All of these travels were during breaks and after the program. If you have time after the program, I would strongly recommend traveling around Southwest China - it’s an incredible area not as many people get to see, and it’s definitely different from the usual big cities foreigners travel to in China.

Academics

Academics
CET is famous for their Chinese language instruction. I went to China knowing only a few words of Chinese and after 2 CET programs, students’ progress to advanced proficiency. The instructors are very knowledgeable and really care about students and their learning as an individual. Class size is very small, so teachers can easily cater to student’s individual learning styles. For example, they were able to tailor lessons to heritage and non-heritage learners in the one-on-one sessions students had every day. The professors are young, so they can teach slang and other fun grammar! It is common to become very close with your teachers.

Every day is essentially the same: four hours of class in the morning, a half-hour tutorial in the afternoon with one of your teachers, and then a few hours of homework each night. By the sixth week, students usually have no trouble with the academics; it feels like second nature. That security and stability with the language and with the academics makes it really easy to go away for a weekend.

Grammar and vocabulary are the focus of the sessions in the morning. However, modern Chinese culture, politics and social phenomena are also covered. Tutorials are meant to encourage students to explore specific topics in which they are interested--anything from Chinese history to modern-day dating norms in China.

The teachers are incredibly warm. They want to sit with you at lunch and talk to you as much as possible. They are curious about you and are also open to answering any of your questions.

The language pledge is strictly enforced and it is absolutely worth it. People who broke the pledge did not improve with the rapidity of their peers, and they left the program so much the worse for it. CET is good for independent learners who can bear the difficulties of the language pledge and are willing to put in the time each night to memorizing vocabulary, but still have a sense of adventure and fun that allows them to put the books down from time to time in order to explore and enjoy the city. I was actually very impressed with how many students truly upheld the language pledge the whole summer - it made for a great Chinese environment (although obviously this will depend on the group of students each year).

**Extracurriculars**

Many extracurriculars offered from cooking, painting, taichi, etc. They depend on the teachers and the interests of the students. Several students enjoyed the cooking class and taichi class immensely. They are relatively relaxed environments and a nice break from the academic side of China.

I will say that CET doesn’t set up a lot of excursions around the city. I am sure that Kunming has a lot to offer, but it doesn’t seem that the program does a good job of sending students to the hidden gems of Kunming. However, I don’t doubt that if you
asked the director of the program, Peter Robbins (Luo Bing), he would be more than happy to help you find whatever you are looking for.

I. CET Beijing

Getting to the Program

CET Beijing is located at the Capital Normal University (Shoudu shifan daxue). After arriving to the airport, you can take a taxi by giving them the name of the school.

Living Situation at CET Beijing

Students will share a room with a local roommate on the CNU campus. The building has wi-fi, shared laundry facilities, and each room has their own bathroom and basic furniture. The University is located near subway and bus stops as well as many restaurants. Returning students often cite living with a Chinese roommate as one of the most valuable parts of their experience.

Eating, Shopping, Exercising

There is a cafeteria as well as a gym on campus. Upon admission to the program, CET will issue their own detailed guidebook that will explain in much more detail the surrounding area and campus facilities.

Extra Curricular Activity & Travel

CET offers a variety of excursions throughout the duration of the program. There are organized trips to most of the more famous destinations in Beijing- the Great Wall, the 798 Art District, etc. In addition, there will be one overnight trip during the program to a city of historical significance in China.