

“Appreciating China”
2010 Summer Short Group to China

Po Hu

China Initiative Coordinator, Rinker Center for International Programs
Tel: 765.285.5422 Email: phu@bsu.edu

China is the world’s most populous country with 1.3 billion people and a continuous fabulous culture stretching back to more than 5,000 years. The 5000-year-old China with a shining history and culture has tracked world’s focus again in the recent decades mainly because of its huge economic booming and social change. Now, there are few countries in the world today that are more complicated, more fascinating, or more important than China. Indeed, as its influence in world affairs grows by days, and as its political, social, and economic system remains in as great a state of uniqueness as it ever has, China has become a top destination for college students worldwide would choose to consider studying there. Whether it is a one-month short program, or a semester long residential study, or a full four year degree program; There is tremendous from benefits from first-hand experience of fastest growing country, learning basic Chinese language skills, exploring a most attractive tourism destination, and most importantly understanding of the culture of the country itself and the region as a whole will be drastically important in the coming years as this so-called “sleeping giant continues to awaken and influence the world of the 21st century to an ever increasing extent”.

China has shown the world an ever unprecedented course of change and development since the *Reform and Open Policy* in the late 1970s. When it marks the 30-anniversary of this historic moment; this, however, has not been the case, and the ways in which China has developed over the course of the past decade have changed the world to such an extent that it is virtually impossible to overstate. Many educators, researchers, and business leaders have argued intensive research on China. Some experts have even made the claim that “American students should be required to learn Chinese while still in the middle grades, as it is a language whose importance on the world stage will only continue to grow, and which will, indeed, be necessary in the coming years for the completion of many international business transactions”.

China has become the third largest economy in the world in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) after only U.S. and Japan; the later one is projected to be ousted by China in 2015. China is the No. 1 U.S. government treasury debt holder with a lending of total 770 billion dollars and third largest trade partner with U.S. Students are easily to find almost everything “Made in China” from the supermarket and grocery store at corner.

The country itself is a fascinating amalgam of culture and modern technology, of economic growth and controversy, of social change and problems. It is impossible to pin down China, and attempting to define it in one specific way or another is an effort in futility. It is possible to discuss China at quite more length. The most important thing to realize is that China is a country whose riches are waiting for you to discover them.

Aligning with the Ball State University Strategic Plan 2007-2012, the university is looking to have almost 1,000 students participating study abroad programs by 2012. We expect China will be one of the top destinations of our students and will be our efforts in focus for study abroad and other international initiatives. In addition to other institutional exchange programs and long-term study programs, I have proposed the 2010 Summer Short Group to China for 2-3 weeks (May – June, 2010). The group will be led by me as faculty adviser and consisted by 15-20 students who are interested in exploring China from their first-hand experience. The proposed program will include visiting to Beijing, Chengdu, Xi'an, and Shanghai which students may have an infinite number and varieties of experiences in both eastern coast urban metropolitans and western inland cultural meccas. We will also visit our Chinese partner universities in above cities and have opportunities to sit in their classrooms and visit normal Chinese families.

I have rich experience of organizing such international initiatives. The international programs at BSU will fully participate in the program. The program costs will be laid out in later of this summer and we will start recruiting students soon. This is an excellent opportunity for diversity initiatives and international opportunities for Ball State university students and I appreciate your support for this program.