

Week 1 (June 13-18, 2016) Report

Updated (August 7, 2016)

International Research Experience for Students (IRES): US-China Collaboration on Landslide Research and Student Training program kicks off this week of June 13, 2016. The program is hosted by the University of Houston (UH) in U.S. and the China University of Geosciences (Wuhan) in China. The program is funded by a National Science Foundation (NSF) Award (OIA:1460034) for a three-year period (September 1, 2015 — August 31, 2018). The IRES summer 2016 program is supporting 8 U.S. students (two graduates and six undergraduates) to conduct advanced landslide research in the Three Gorges area in China during the summers of 2016-2018 for a total of eight weeks.

The week of June 13th, 2016 kicked off with a group meeting on Monday where students met our out of state undergraduate participant, Katherine, for the first time. A scheduled plan for the week was laid out, pre-planning travel details were discussed, and confirmation that all students have their passports and scholarship applications completed and submitted.



IRES 2016 Student Participants: From Left to Right: Jennifer Welch, Robert Abel, Katherine Sorrows, Jacob Kratavil, Valerie Smith, Janice Navarro, Benjamin Miller, and Dr. Guoquan Wang

On Tuesday, students traveled to Freeport, TX to conduct a TLS survey on the backside dune of the Brazos river delta using LIDAR and high accuracy GPS. Students were able to get hands on experience setting up three GPS antennas, LIDAR scanner, and two reflectors. Seven scans were collected and students were able to learn about the three different coordinate systems related to LIDAR, as well as how to configure the LIDAR scanner with appropriate settings.



Ph.D Student Lin Xiong teaches students Wanda Cupa, Ben Miller, Valerie Smith and Jennifer Welch about reflectors and tie points for Lidar.



Ph.D Student Lin Xiong sets up the Lidar for one of many scans in Freeport.

On Wednesday, Dr. Wang and the students met with the Study Abroad department at UH, where the students were given a presentation on travel details such as packing, documentation to carry, and airport security and customs. Students were also warned about the potential hazards of traveling, such as pick pockets and how to avoid those incidents. The group also discussed Culture Shock and how to work through those psychological feelings with each other.

On Thursday, the group met with Dr. Youmei Liu, a professor with the University of Houston's communications department. She gave a presentation on a variety of topics including Chinese culture, foods in different provinces, and Chinese holidays. The students enjoyed a Chinese meal on the UH campus where Dr. Wang taught the students some simple Chinese language.



Left: Dr. Youmei Liu teaches students about traditional Chinese foods. **Right:** Dr. Youmei Liu teaches students about Chinese festivals and Chinese culture.

Friday is a free day for the students to finish packing and resting before the long journey; all students will leave on Saturday morning and begin the long trip to Beijing. Everyone is excited and ready to learn and travel to China.