

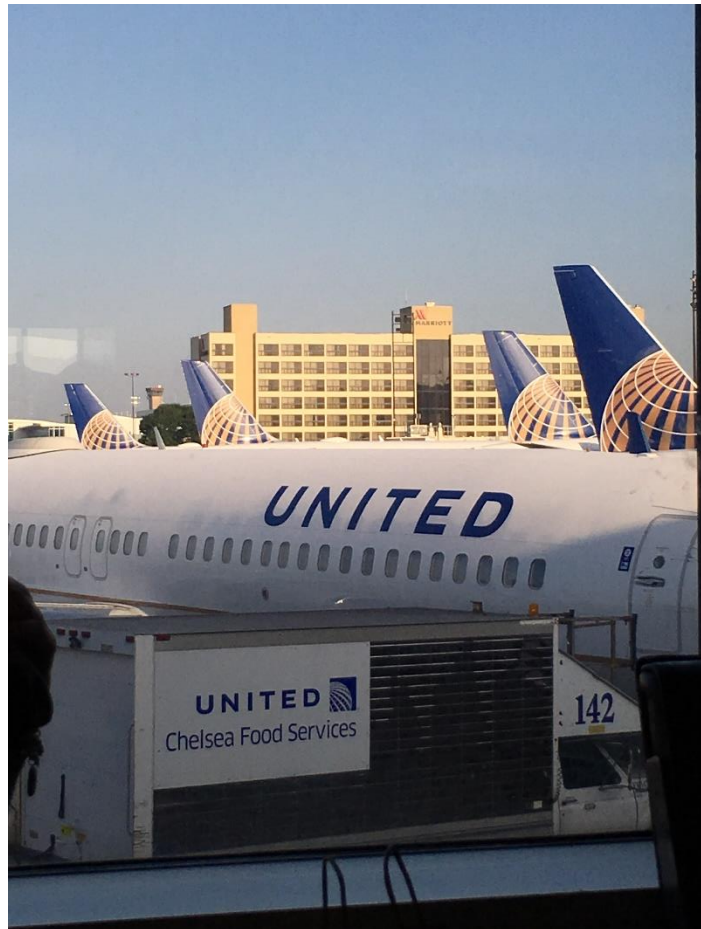
Week 2 (June 19-25, 2016) Report

Updated: August 7, 2016

Saturday June 18, 2016 kicked off the beginning of University of Houston (UH) and the China University of Geoscience (CUG) 6-week program in Wuhan, China. These first two weeks of the trip are dedicated to teaching students Chinese language and culture. CUG will be hosting the eight students in the International Students Dormitories and the Silk Road Institute during their stay in Wuhan.

On Saturday, the UH Students woke up early to depart from IAH airport in Houston. After traveling a little over 17 hours, the students arrived in Beijing, China on Sunday afternoon. Students had to clear customs and collect their luggage before meeting with their host and guide, Wen Guo, for their short time in Beijing. There was some difficulty locating Wen Guo, but everyone finally met up and purchased bus tickets in order to travel to the train station. While hoping to buy tickets for a 5-hour trip on a bullet train to Wuhan, the students arrived at the train station after the last bullet train had left and all tickets for overnight trains had already sold out. Our UH students, guided by Wen Guo, then took the subway to a location near Wen's University and reserved hotel rooms for the evening. Wen Guo was a great host and showed gracious hospitality by taking the Students out to their first Chinese meal at a nearby restaurant and promising to ensure they made it to the train station on time the next day.

Monday morning started off early at 5 AM, where students met at the subway station. Students took the subway back to the train station and boarded for a 5-hour scenic journey to Wuhan. Students were met by their CUG hosts and transported via bus to the CUG campus in Wuhan. Students were assigned rooms where they deposited their luggage and then enjoyed a western style meal at a nearby restaurant on campus. Students were then given a campus tour where they were shown the dining halls, markets, sports fields, library, and the museum locations. The students were given the rest of the evening off, with each student taking advantage of the opportunity and catching up on much needed sleep.



Students take United Airlines flights from Houston to Beijing.



Left: Students are given a tour of China University of Geoscience. **Right:** Students meet in front of the International Dorm Building. From left to right: David Wang, Dr. Guoquan Wang, Johnny, Jacob Kratavil, Robert Abel, Katherine Sorrows, Valerie Smith, Janice Navarro, Ben Miller, Wanda Cupa, and Jennifer Welch.

Tuesday morning was the start of learning Chinese language. Each student was given their Chinese name and small word combinations and phrases were taught. In the afternoon



Students enjoy a Chinese paper cutting class.

students enjoyed a Chinese paper cutting class. Students learned both the art and history behind this Chinese tradition. The students first traced designs on red paper and then cut out patterns that meant happiness, spring and other unique cut-out shapes.

Wednesday, the students had a Chinese phonetics class in this morning. Students were taught the five different tones, tone marks on letters, and in letter combinations. They continuously practiced the pronunciations as a group, and individually with the professor. The afternoon was a fun filled walk through the CUG museum, ranked as a 4A museum, with a Chinese student who volunteered to guide them. Students were able to see a variety of rocks and minerals, dinosaur bones, and a collection of Chinese jewelry. In the evening, the students were taken to an on campus rock climbing gym where they some of CUG's championship rock climbers. The champions showed students how they climb the vertical walls and overhangs, and were also shown a climbing speed test. Students were then given the opportunity to climb the walls themselves.



Left: Earth Science exhibit at CUG Museum. **Right:** Rock Climbing at the CUG gym.

On Thursday students had a Chinese history class in the morning. Students were told that the beginning of Chinese collation started at the Tomb of over 6000 years ago. The professor told students he questioned whether there was still a body and clothes on the tomb and made jokes about clothes being made from fur in the winter and tree leaves in the summer. The professor also shared other folk tale stories, as well as idioms and philosophy from Confucius. In the afternoon, students were given a lesson on Chinese calligraphy. Students were shown how to use the calligraphy supplies, apply the specific brush strokes, and write words in Chinese that mean happiness, longevity, and health. Students also learned the importance of Chinese writing structure and the different styles of Chinese writing. They were also each gifted a symbolic scroll, crafted and signed by the Calligraphy professor himself. In the evening, the students were reunited with Dr. Wang and had dinner together. CUG invited Dr. Wang and the students to an amazing concert mixed with solos and ensembles of different collaborations of music. After the concert, the students were able to mingle and communicate with the band members.



Left: Janice Navarro and Wanda Crupa learn about Chinese calligraphy. **Right:** Students enjoy a concert put on by CUG orchestra using traditional Chinese instruments.

On Friday, students had another lecture on Chinese phonetics. By this point students should be able to say sentences such as “My name is Wei Li.”, “I am not a teacher, I am a student.”, and “I am not Chinese, I am American.”. In the afternoon a lesson was given on Tai Chi. Students were shown a performance on Kung Fu and a Chinese dragon dance. Students were then taught some Tai Chi movements using swords. The evening closed with CUG inviting students to an icebreaker party. Students met with the Vice Dean of CUG and with Dr. Zhou, whom they will spend time with at CUG Field Camp in Zigui City and Huangtupo Landslide in Badong Country in a few weeks.



Left: The students at CUG performing the Dragon dance for the students. **Right:** A picture taken from the dinner that was put together for everyone to meet.

On Saturday students were given the day off from classes. Several students used this time off to try Wuhan’s well-known ‘hot dry noodles,’ a famous breakfast dish usually served with hot soybean milk. Students also explored the Plaza area to purchase souvenirs. Students also had the opportunity to purchase souvenirs at this time. Some were also taught how to play

Mahjong by the Chinese students and were able to acquaint and get to know their new friends. Other students also traveled to the CUG library and visited the CUG fossil park.



Students pose for a picture at CUG Wuhan Fossil Park. Left to right: Valerie Smith, Wanda Cupa, Janice Navarro, Robert Abel, Jacob Kratavil, D. Guoquan Wang, Katherine Sorrows, David Wang, Ben Miller, and Jennifer Welch.

Week two was very eventful and every day was packed with things to do to keep students active. Students are excited to be learning a new language and experiencing a new culture with many differences from American culture. Students are looking forward to seeing what week 3 brings!