

Week Eight Report (July 30-August 5)

July 30, 2017

Sunday was the last day the group was in China. They woke up very early and prepared luggage to go to the airport for their early morning flight. They checked out their dorm rooms and called taxis to get to the Beijing International Capitol Airport. Each taxi could carry only two people because there was too many luggage. The students had a hard time telling the taxi drivers where they wanted to go because of the language boundary. Fortunately, Eleanor, a thoughtful group leader prepared a Chinese dialogue stated where the students needed to go. Hannah and Erica did not come with the group because their flight was at 4pm.

The group arrived at the airport around 7:30 am. After a long check-in and security check, they made it to the waiting gate at 9am. Julie bought Chinese coke and sprite for her brother as a gift, however, she could not bring liquid on board. Therefore, she had to pour out the liquid and kept the empty cans.



Figure 1. Julie's Chinese coke and sprite.

Finally, the students boarded the plane. Although the students were excited to go home, they missed their amazing times in China. To not get bored on the 7000 miles' journey, they entertained themselves by playing games, watching movies, sleeping, and eating. After a 12-hour flight was also a 3-hour flight from Chicago

O'Hare International Airport to George Bush Intercontinental Airport, Houston Tx. Being away from home for a long period of time, the group satisfied their cravings with American foods. Lynn got a green tea Frappuccino from Starbucks, Colton and Vasilios had hamburgers from a formal restaurant, Eleanor and Keyin shared a bag of chocolate-coated popcorn from the souvenir store.

Once arrived in Houston, the students were happy to reunite with their family members. At the same time, Hannah and Erica also arrived in their states, Utah and Michigan. Instead of returning to North Carolina, Colton decided to stay in Houston for couple days to visit his brother. After all, the long and excited journey has officially ended and the students returned to their normal life.

July 31, 2017

Today was the first Monday since the group returned to America. They were still tired after a long trip and due to the different time zones. They tried to adjust and balance their biological time by waking up early to do some chores, laundry and unpack. However, some students decided to rest for a day by laying on their comfy beds and soft blankets to watch dramas, answer missed emails, and call their loves one and friends. Although everyone was busy with their own works, they did not forget to send birthday wishes to Erica. She celebrated her 21th birthday with her family and loves one back home in Michigan.

August 1, 2017

Tuesday was the second day back home. Students began to work on what needed to be done. Julie went to Ikea with friends to buy furniture for her new apartment. She was excited to move to her new place. Other students visited their family and caught up with friends. Hannah drove 30 minutes to visit her parent at their house and answered emails from her brother who is also studying abroad. Then, Hannah had some Mexican foods, chocolate stuffed waffles, and acai ice cream for dessert at a local restaurant. Eleanor came to her family restaurant in Chinatown in Bellaire, Houston to hang out and help when it was busy. Lynn went to HEB and local market for grocery shopping and cooked some Vietnamese dishes for dinner. However, some students had a hard time to stay awake due to jet lag.



Figure 2. Julie shopped at Ikea.



Figure 3. Hannah's acai ice cream.



Figure 4. Lynn's local market grocery shopping.

August 2, 2017

Wednesday was a rainy day. Everyone was busy working on their journals and posters for China's trip. Lynn spent many hours at the nearby Starbucks to edit journals and create an AGU format poster about IRES program. She collected quotes, activities, and pictures from the group to write weekly report. Later, Lynn and her best friend went to a popular Vietnamese restaurant in Chinatown for lunch. They ordered Vietnamese traditional pancake and sandwich called "Banh Xeo" and "Banh Mi". Banh Xeo has the color of yellow and is made from rice flour. Inside Banh Xeo are minced meat, bean sprouts, and shrimp. After lunch, they stopped at Lynn's favorite bakery in town. Finally, they ended the day with an evening tea party at a fancy tea house. Meanwhile, Keyin and her family also came to their favorite restaurant in Houston. Today, Hannah started a research job with one of her professors in Brigham Young University in Utah.



Figure 5. Vietnamese pancake.

August 3, 2017



Figure 6. Lynn and her best friend enjoyed evening tea.

On the morning of Thursday, Julie and her boyfriend moved to their new apartment in downtown Houston. Her apartment is spacious and clean. From the window, she can see the entire view of the busy city in the day and beautiful lights at night. Although moving was very tiring but she was excited to move in her new place. Her dog, Chanel was also tired from moving therefore, she was sleeping entire time. Lynn had an appointment with her academic advisor to enroll in the upcoming fall semester. Then, she met her dermatologist for her skin checkup after a long period of time she was outdoors in the sun in China.



Figure 7. Chanel (Julie's dog) was sleeping on her comfy bed in Julie's new apartment.

August 4, 2017

Friday was a beautiful day with clear blue sky and light sunshine. The group received a post China survey email from Eleanor. The content of the survey mostly described the overall of the program. Today, Hannah was on the mood for hiking by herself in nearby park. Colton returned to his hometown in North Carolina from Houston. His girlfriend, Lauren was happy to see him again after a long-awaited trip.



Figure 8. Hannah was hiking at nearby park.



Figure 9. Colton's hometown in North Carolina.



Figure 10. Colton reunited with his girlfriend.

August 5, 2017

Saturday was the last day of IRES program in the summer of 2017. This year, the program did not have the final program meeting because Dr. Wang spent a week in Japan for a meeting. Therefore, he could not hold the last meeting of the program at University of Houston as he did last summer. Students were free to do what they were pleased. Julie traveled to Florida for vacation with her family. Lynn edited her final report. Hannah attended her best friend's wedding and gave her a Chinese stamp with her name and her husband name as a wedding gift. Eleanor prepared to pack and ready for her graduate school at University of Mississippi. The last day of U.S-China Collaboration on Landslide Research and Student Training Program, many memories were recalled and reminded students that they had a wonderful time together, with their foreign friends, and their professors. They discovered beautiful places, learned new things, and traveled together. Eight students also shared bittersweet moments throughout the whole trip. Despite all up and down feelings, they learned a lot about science, geology and gained great experiences on

hand-on field works. The IRES program helps students prepare for their professional careers in the future. The team is very grateful and would like to send sincere thanks to the amazing professors, mentors, and faculty members who have supported and made this program a reality.



Figure 11. Lynn Nguyen edited her final report.