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Fall 2022, from the University of Calgary to Tsinghua University



In September 2022, I officially started the Chinese Language Program as an exchange student at Tsinghua University in Beijing, China. Back in 2020, I was fortunate to have been offered one out of a few spots to study at Tsinghua. Despite all the excitement, the global pandemic situation resulted in the cancellation of Chinese international student visa services. After 2 semesters of deferral, I became one of the first groups of Canadian students to travel to China since the Covid-19 pandemic. My exchange was funded for the most part by CLIC via the China Scholarship Council and Canadian home university. This meant I was able to receive medical insurance, a monthly stipend, free on campus accommodation, and other financial support, such as the travel award. However, there were more challenges to overcome. Not only were flight tickets sold at unaffordable prices, but flights could also be canceled at any moment if too many positive Covid-19 cases were found from the airline. Navigating complicated and novel epidemic prevention policies added additional uncertainties. Luckily, not only did the CLIC fund help me with purchasing flight tickets, but the program also supported my quarantine expenses in China through the quarantine grant. Ultimately, I arrived safely at Tsinghua. The path to this exchange was bumpier than expected, but the consequential organizational and problem-solving skills that I developed from overcoming these obstacles proved to me that traveling abroad was the right decision.

One of my favorite aspects of my exchange in China was traveling. Beijing is a city of deep roots and history, thus discovering interesting locations to visit wasn't difficult at all. Wednesdays became my "explore the city day", because I don't have classes. I usually visit a few places that are clustered together and bike from one place to the next; traveling alone is extremely efficient and therapeutic. As with most cities in China, Beijing has an extensive security and transportation system, thus traveling around was very safe and easy to navigate. By the end of my exchange, I became comfortable with

spending time with myself. Apart from this, my biggest impression of China is its high efficiency and convenience. If you ever get tired of the canteens on campus -which is impossible given there are 19 in Tsinghua-, food delivery service can come to you in under 30 minutes. When problems arise, like registration and visa matters, I could easily find the correct point of contact and immediately resolve any issues; the concept of “office hours” doesn’t seem to exist in China. Unlike most Canadian Universities, you can find almost anything you need on campus, ranging from supermarkets to banks to post offices.



The Chinese Language Program at Tsinghua was ideal for meeting my goal to improve my language skills. The program was structured to accommodate students with different levels of language abilities. Each level received tailored and personalized study plans and curriculum, which was extremely productive for improving language skills. We were also in a Chinese immersive environment both inside and outside the classrooms. During class discussions and after class hangouts, we were able to use the vocabulary and grammar points learned in class, hence consolidating what we learned. As expected, I met a diverse group of people during my exchange. They were international students from a wide array of countries in my class, and local Chinese friends I met through clubs, church and travel. Studying abroad has allowed me to be mindful of staying open to different perspectives that may initially challenge my limited views of the world, and to further recognize and acknowledge the limits of understanding others. Developing such awareness as I continue to strive to understand the world we live in, will allow me to better serve others as a future physician.



I am so thankful for every level of support I received that made this exchange trip possible. During this once in a lifetime experience, I was able to reconnect with my Chinese heritage, developed important skills, and mature as an individual. If you have been considering studying abroad in China, don't hesitate anymore, you will not regret it!