

Summary of Summer 2009 ASIANetwork Freeman Student-Faculty Fellows Program and Final Reports

Van J. Symons
Augustana College

Overview:

As ASIANetwork awaits receipt of preliminary reports from the 12 mentors who led summer 2010 ASIANetwork Freeman Student-Faculty Fellows undergraduate research endeavors throughout Asia, it is the appropriate time to provide members of the consortium with a brief summary of the achievements of the summer 2009 fellows, based on final reports received from them in mid-May 2010.

During the summer of 2009, ASIANetwork provided support for collaborative undergraduate research in East and Southeast Asia for the eleventh year. We were able to select 14 research grants for funding from a pool of 33 applicants, drawn from 30 different ASIANetwork–member colleges/universities. Of the 14 programs funded in 2009, ten were new recipients of awards through this program. This is an unusually high percentage. Out of the four remaining institutions, two mentors had previously participated in the Faculty-Student program, while two were new to the program. Four of the institutions were associate member colleges/universities: Coastal Carolina University, College of William & Mary, University of Evansville, and University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

When the summer 2009 cycle was completed, 133 grants had been given to 84 different colleges throughout North

America to support 565 fellows. Receipt of a grant has a significant impact on participants and the Asian Studies program at their colleges. Announcement of the grants and ultimately stories about the research that is undertaken are frequently included in college newspapers, alumni magazines, and local papers. Participants are often asked to discuss their experiences with the college's board of directors, and they frequently participate in college celebrations of learning and various college forums. Some of the 2009 participants presented papers at regional undergraduate research conferences or separately in undergraduate research publications or as part of a collaborative paper with their faculty mentor.

Inspired by these research experiences, fellows sometimes enter M.A. or Ph.D programs focused on Asia once they graduate. For instance, next year a student from the College of William & Mary will enter a Ph.D. program in linguistic anthropology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and another from Coastal Carolina University will enter an M.A. program at either Sophia University or International Christian University in Japan. Several who are still undergraduate students have already returned to Asia for summer or semester-long intensive language study. Others who have graduated are in Asia to teach English or to work for international corporations. For example, a student from the College of William & Mary begins work this year for Canon Inc. in Tokyo.

The basic funding for this fourth three-year round of support from the Freeman Foundation provides \$378,000 for each year's program: \$300,000 to provide 60 individuals with \$5,000 per student and faculty participant to cover travel, per diem and other expenses; \$30,000 to provide an allowance of up to \$5,000 for each research group to purchase books and other supplies for their research; and \$48,000 to provide a \$1,000 stipend for each student mentored by a faculty member.

Due to careful financial management of this program by ASIANetwork, the return of unspent monies by participants in the summer 2008 program, and authorization given to ASIANetwork by the Freeman Foundation to reduce to \$1,000

per grant the monies provided to each research group for book purchases and other supplies (which freed up of an additional \$16,000 to support additional fellows), enough surplus monies were available to enable 69 persons, rather than the 60 persons originally budgeted for support by this program, to participate this year. The total budget expenditure for summer 2009 was almost \$413,000.

Brief Review of Research Endeavors

Research conducted during summer 2009 focused on fewer countries than is normal, with six research groups working in the Japan, six in the People's Republic of China, one in South Korea, and one in Vietnam.

As is often the case, particular challenges emerge for mentors and their students as they prepare for and travel throughout Asia. Such challenges reveal to those of us in ASIANetwork that college faculty and students are incredibly resilient and creative. The most daunting challenge during 2009 related to the H1N1 virus scare. As a consequence of this outbreak, in both Japan and China, some mentors were forced to scramble as educational or social service institutions they were scheduled to work with delayed or actually canceled plans to work with them. In one case, Professor Shiwei Chen's Lake Forest College group found that a scheduled study of the Zhoujiazhuang People's Commune was canceled for fear that members of the group might carry the H1N1 virus to rural China. This was one of three major projects they had planned to pursue during their three weeks in China. Their response was to include an effective study of the PRC's response to H1N1 in Beijing as the third focus of their research.

One mentor, upon arriving in China, suffered a debilitating attack of shingles. Nonetheless, he carried on and traveled with his students from Beijing to Shanghai to Jingdezhen and even rural Guizhou Province. To top things off, while traveling, he also dropped his camcorder in a lake. Still, this summer he is back at Jingdezhen on his own preparing his ceramic art for a major art exhibit.

Members of ASIANetwork can be immensely proud of the grit and determination of our faculty mentors who, through their range of connections, careful planning beforehand, and the resiliency of their student researchers, manage to surmount most obstacles, and when necessary are able to establish alternate venues for research and even create new directions for research initiatives.

What follows is a brief summary of the research accomplishments of the summer 2009 fellows as evidenced in their final reports provided to ASIANetwork.

JAPAN

Coastal Carolina University – Three students accompanied Professor Miglena Ivanova to Japan. Yelena Ninichuk conducted research on Korean, Chinese, and Japanese gender and cultural identity evidenced in Asian literature. Victoria Poston studied the *samurai*, *wuxia*, and *hwarang* warrior ideals of Japan, China, and Korea. Mikkena Woods explored the dispersion of Confucianism across the borders of East Asia. All submitted papers on these topics in their final reports. Their research was informed by visits to key museums in Nara, Nijo, Fukuoka, Nagasaki, and Osaka. They all gained great insight from meeting with a survivor of the Nagasaki atomic bombing—a *hibakusha*—while in Japan. Upon their return, fellows gave several invited lectures and presented papers on the Coastal Carolina campus. Ms. Ninichuk presented a paper at the Big South Undergraduate Research Symposium, held in Asheville, North Carolina in April 2009, which was published in the *Proceedings* of the conference. Papers prepared by the fellows are titled: “Motherhood and Nationhood, The Korean Nation, Japanese Female Hibakusha and the Atomic Bomb,” “Defining the Warrior and the Survivor in Terms of Heroism,” and “Confucian Bridges and Divides: China, Korea, and Japan.”

College of William & Mary – Professor Tomoko Hamada Connolly led five students to Japan to work on a joint project “using participatory field research methods to investigate the Japanese world of food-related custom, taboos, myths, rituals,

and categories [in order to] analyze the changing symbolic meaning of food consumption as it relates to shifting Japanese identity, social relationships, technology, demography, and public health policy.” The project, titled “Foodways and Daily Ritual Practice in Contemporary Japan,” established each student-researcher as a designated group leader to lead research on a different subtheme related to the overall project. Working together and individually (each researcher lived with a host family while in Japan) efforts were made to address an array of issues related to food culture. Findings were presented in a number of forums at the College of William & Mary, and fellows gave a poster presentation at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting in December 2009, in Philadelphia. Papers prepared by fellows are titled: “Food & Function: A Linguistic Account of Material Politeness,” “Social Communication and Relationship Building in the Japanese Pub,” “Communication and the Digital Reality of Japanese Youth,” “Food, Drink, and Sociality in the Japanese Business Firm,” and “Attitudes and Changes of Foodways in the Japanese Household: A Study in Tokyo and Kamakura.”

Hope College – Professor Roger Nemeth mentored five students in a joint project to study “The Role of Nonprofit Organizations in Providing Elderly Care in Japan.” While in Japan they visited a total of 13 elderly care facilities (ECFs) in the city of Sapporo, the Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area, and in the cities of Kobe, Osaka, Shin-Osaka, and Himeji to study whether these nonprofit organizations are addressing the needs of Japan’s aging population, and to assess the role of volunteers in providing elderly care services. Facilities differed widely from having full-time staffs of from 1 to 155 persons, volunteers from 1 to 166, and clients from 25 to 650. Their study suggested that significant portions of demand for elderly care can be performed by volunteers in a nonprofit setting, and government policies and legislation, as evidenced in the Japanese passage in 2000 of the “Long-Term Care Insurance Act,” can effectively promote the role of nonprofit organizations in providing elderly health care. A paper prepared by this group will be

given at the Michigan Sociological Association Meeting in November 2010.

Linfield College – Students Marissa Davis and Amy Shoemaker traveled with Professor Nancy Drickey to Tokyo, Yokohama, Kyoto, and Hiroshima to observe 12 middle school mathematics classrooms; interview the teachers; and using a protocol titled “Looking Inside the Classroom: A Study of K-12 Mathematics and Science Education in the United States,” to evaluate the quality of mathematics instruction as measured by instruction style, the high quality of math content, and the use of technology. In a joint paper titled “Lessons Learned from Looking Inside the Classroom: A Study of Middle School Mathematics Education in Japan” they observe that the Japanese schools they visited fail to utilize much technology in their math classrooms. Teachers use a direct lecture style and are very well-prepared and competent. Texts tend to be concise and focused, and there is a high level of math content in the instruction. The overall quality of mathematical instruction is exceptional.

St. Olaf College – Professor Katherine Tegtmeyer Pak and four students visited 12 Japanese museums to analyze how they narrate the history of Japan’s war years. They discovered that the narrative varies from presenting Japan as a leader in the international peace and nuclear nonproliferation movements (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum); to one focused on Japan as a proud nation with a long, honorable martial history that should be celebrated (Yushukan next to the Yasukuni Shrine); to one that emphasizes that the nation’s current peace and prosperity is, in part, due to the sacrifices of those who suffered during the Asia-Pacific War (Showa Museum, Shokei Museum, Kaiten Memorial Museum, Yamato Museum, and others). It is clear that the Japanese have yet to develop a clear consensus on how the Asia-Pacific War should be remembered and what the role of war memory should be in Japanese politics, and this clearly complicates current relations between Japan and other countries.

Willamette University – Professor Miho Fujiwara and four students spent one week each at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, and either the Yushukan or the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum. Chelsea Robinson conducted research and wrote a paper on “Presentations of Emperor Hirohito in Japanese War-Related Museums.” Caitlin Godwin wrote a paper entitled “Learning Perspectives through Language: An Examination of Language as Used to Talk about the Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.” Amy Wada and Jennifer Fujita explored “Japanese Presentations of the Japanese-American Experience during World War II,” but they discovered that little is said about Japanese-American internment camps in the United States or the role of the U.S. Army’s all-Nisei 442nd Regiment in the Asia-Pacific War.

CHINA

Agnes Scott College – Dr. Li Qi and four students sought to assess the impact of economic reform policies initiated in 1978 on individual behavior through interviews and discussions with rural and urban Chinese in and around Beijing, Xi’an, and Shanghai; faculty and students at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics and Shaanxi Normal University; human resource personnel at Google China; and in China’s Ministry of Finance. Student papers addressed the following topics: Kelley Bledsoe, “Do Working Class Adults in China Save Money Differently by Gender?”; Tiye Glover, “China’s Pension Policies: Creating Disparities between Rural and Urban Household Savings Rates”; and Asalwe Edwige Tia, “The Impact of Government Policies on Household Saving Behavior in China.”

Edgewood College – Professor Jinxing Chen and his research group of five college students utilized media and publications research, interviews, surveys, and site observations to examine the effect of modernization on local identity in Suzhou through the lenses of five different disciplines: history, business, environmental studies, linguistics, and art. They studied the

impact of the incursion of English and Mandarin on the local Suzhou dialect and that of the growing tourist industry on Suzhou's business and other communities. They jointly prepared a final report titled "Local Identity and Change in 21st-Century Suzhou: A Multidisciplinary Perspective" that analyzes Suzhou's effective move toward modernization, which includes the development of environmental protection efforts by inhabitants of the city, supporting the evolution of the Suzhou-Singapore Industrial Park while at the same time protecting traditional local businesses, and maintaining Suzhou's classical-style gardens and the old quarter of the city against the assault of modernization.

Lake Forest College – While in Beijing, Xi'an, and Xiaoshan, Dr. Shiwei Chen and five students analyzed the change and continuity resulting from the collision of socialism and capitalism in China's pursuit of modernity through three separate case studies: 1) Xi'an International University, one of the top five private higher educational institutions; 2) Wanxiang Group, a leading Chinese auto parts manufacturer located in Xiaoshan, Zhejiang Province; and 3) the Chinese government response in Beijing to the outbreak of the H1N1 virus in May 2009. A jointly produced final report titled "China through Students' Eyes: Three Case Studies of China's Political, Economic, and Educational Development" carefully analyzes the successful emergence of both Xi'an International University and the Wanxiang Group as well as the response of the Chinese government (informed by the less successful response of the PRC to the 2003-04 SARS outbreak) to the 2009 H1N1 outbreak.

Macalester College – Professor Gary Erickson travelled through China with three art students to explore museums, galleries, and studio workshops. They met with university art professors and their students; contemporary artists working in different media such as ceramics, photography, and installation art; and folk artists in Guizhou Province. They explored art districts such as 798 in Beijing and 50 Morganshan Road in Shanghai, spent several days in Jingdezhen (the long-established

center of porcelain production in China), and traveled to craft studios in Guizhou province. The students incorporated their research into their Macalester College senior exhibits/papers. Pei-hsuan Wang produced a paper titled “Patterns on Forms and Forms on Patterns: A Look at Art Surfaces in China,” and Tina Park wrote her paper on “20th-Century Survey of Chinese Photography: Transition from Souvenirs to Propaganda and Ultimately Art.” Eartha Bell incorporated much of what she learned in China into the preparation of a paper on women artists in Bali which she wrote for her senior thesis (Bell studied feminist art and visual culture in Bali for four-and-a-half months before meeting Erickson’s group in Shanghai).

Swarthmore College – The individual research projects conducted by five Swarthmore students mentored by Professor Hongyu Huang fell under the general title of “Living Near the Central Power: Government Policy and the Realities of Life in Contemporary Beijing.” Each student sought to evaluate “how concrete government actions affect residents of Beijing, and how Beijingers work with, around, and through government policy.” Research papers prepared by students are titled: “The Effects of the Chinese Government in Training Contemporary Artists in Beijing,” by Miyuki Baker, who is also preparing a video documentary on the contemporary art scene in Beijing; “The Changing Nature of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment in Contemporary China,” by William Lin; “Changing Practices: Sexual Education and Women’s Rights in China,” by Amanda Morrison; “Harmonious Christendom: Perspectives from the Sidewalks and Pews of Changsha and Beijing,” by Mary Prager; and “Impact of Government Policy on Higher Education in Beijing,” by Ben Yelsey.

Warren Wilson College – Dr. Dongping Han and four students were hosted by Liaocheng University in Shandong Province. They focused their research endeavors on students attending Liaocheng University, urban schools in Liaocheng City, and three rural middle schools in Linging and Yanggu Counties, Shandong, in order to consider “The Effects of Globalization on

Rural China: Educational Disparities in Urban and Rural China.” Issues addressed in their research include accessibility of education, the quality of teachers and school curricula, the effects of key schools and streaming on educational opportunities, and the rates of acceptance of students into higher education in both urban and rural settings. One student’s paper is focused on the lack of educational opportunities for women in China, and that of another is on China’s current water crisis.

SOUTH KOREA

University of Evansville – Dr. Young-Choul Kim and three students visited nine different Korean universities and conducted interviews and surveys with more than 700 students. A questionnaire of 63 questions was given to students that covered various topics such as Korean reunification, the continued presence of U.S. troops in South Korea, U.S. foreign trade policies, American culture, study abroad in the United States, and the study of English in Korea. The American student-fellows also visited Korean classrooms to engage in conversations. All three students incorporated their findings into their senior honors projects. One student, Kelly Cyr presented her research on Korean college students’ perceptions on the global role of the United States at the Butler University undergraduate research conference in April 2010. The group jointly prepared a paper titled “The Dynamics of the Changing U.S. Image in South Korea: A Study of South Korean College Students’ Perceptions of the United States,” which suggests that Korean students are genuinely interested in American culture and that their negative attitude toward the United States is not rooted in a persistent cultural bias, but rather in disagreements they have with U.S. foreign policies.

VIETNAM

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire – Geography Professor Joseph P. Hupy and two students note that during spring 1968 in the battle of Khe Sanh, 98,721 tons of munitions were dropped over the Khe Sanh battlefield—more than all the tonnage of

explosives deployed by allied forces in the entire Pacific theater of World War II. In the summer of 2009, they traveled to Khe Sanh to study bombturbation (the impact of explosive munitions on the landscape) and measure the recovery of this area based on vegetative regrowth and soil development in the cratered area. In a paper to be published by the *Journal of Geomorphology*, Dr. Hupy and one of these students show that reforestation of the area has been limited not so much by bombturbative patterns as by extensive human land-use activities, including slash-and-burn farming, over-grazing of cattle, and the development of coffee plantations.

An Afterthought

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to serve as members of ASIANetwork's board of directors, or on its development committee, or some funded grant program that is being managed by ASIANetwork, often comment to one another about the joy we gain from helping to meet the needs of the consortium and consortium members. This past spring, the perfect example of this occurred for me as I continue to serve as the program coordinator for the ASIANetwork Freeman Student-Faculty Fellows Program.

As you know, each spring we invite the faculty mentors and student-fellows from the previous summer's Student-Faculty Fellows Program to present poster sessions at our annual conference. This is a grand occasion that gives each of us the opportunity to congratulate mentors and their young researchers on the completion of their fine research projects, to gain insight from their poster displays, and to encourage them to continue to work hard at their studies.

I always make it a point to visit each poster display, and this past spring was no exception. However, with only about ten minutes before I needed to leave the poster session for the upcoming business meeting, I found myself scrambling to meet this commitment. At that moment, I came to the display being given by three Macalester College students, all artists, who had been engaged during the summer 2009 in one of the most

intriguing projects of that cycle. I stopped and asked each where she was from. A young student of Asian descent responded, "Rochester, Minnesota." My reply was that my oldest daughter lived in Rochester and works as a doctor at the Mayo Clinics. Her reply was that her father is a cardiovascular surgeon at the Clinics. I looked again at her and asked: "Your name isn't Park by chance?" to which she replied, "Yes." I gave her a big hug and informed her that just two-and-a-half years earlier, her father had saved my life. He was the surgeon who successfully completed quadruple bypass surgery on me after I was medically evacuated from China, having suffered a major heart attack two weeks earlier in Luoyang. How nice it was to realize that I had helped her have this rich student-faculty fellows experience as a small repayment for the extension of my life that her father provided to me!