

**Andrew Heiskell Award for
Innovation in
International Education
2010 Nomination**

Heiskell Award Category: Category 2, Study Abroad
Special 2010 Category
Study Abroad at the Community College

Name of Institution: College of Lake County, Grayslake, Illinois

Name of Program: Semester-long Study Abroad Program at XAIU (Xi'an International University)

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Summary of Program (50-100 words)

The "Semester-long Study Abroad Program at Xi'an International University (XAIU)" was developed to expand and strengthen existing international education programs at the College of Lake County (CLC) located in Grayslake, Illinois, as well as to provide unique and affordable study abroad opportunities for community college students. The College has established a close partnership with XAIU to provide opportunities for students and faculty members which promotes unique and affordable educational and cultural experiences in China. CLC students experience life as Chinese university students through active campus life, sports and academic activities. CLC has created Chinese language courses and transferable, general education courses taught by highly qualified and experienced instructors.

**Strengthening Undergraduate International Studies and
Foreign Language Instruction
College of Lake County, Grayslake, Illinois**

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Accomplishments

1. **CLC has established a partnership with Xi’an International University for CLC students and faculty exchange programs:** CLC and XAIU have developed formal partnership agreement to offer a study abroad program. The College of Lake County is a comprehensive community college with over 16,000 students, and XAIU is a private university in China with over 40,000 students. It is considered one of the ten most prestigious private universities in China.
2. **CLC has conducted two short-term, focused summer study abroad programs in China:**
To prepare for this study abroad program, CLC developed and conducted two highly focused summer study abroad programs.
 - a) Program One was a six-week immersion program offered in May 2008 in Xi’an, Shaanxi, China. The program was a summer Chinese language immersion program at XAIU for CLC students. Twelve students from CLC and a faculty advisor attended the program developed by a CLC faculty member.
 - b) Program Two was a two-week Study Abroad Program offered in May-June 2009 entitled “Business and Culture in China” led by Dr. Li-hua Yu, Professor of Sociology and Professor Venkat Krishnamurthy, Professor of Business. Twenty students, four faculty members, and several local business people participated. The group visited four cities and nine international and Chinese companies, manufacturers, and businesses. Program evaluations were very positive with 100% of responses noting that the experience was life-changing experience for them.
3. **CLC established a semester-long study abroad program at XAIU for CLC students.** CLC established a semester-long study abroad pilot program in the fall of 2008. The program was lead by Michael Latza, Professor of English. Mr. Latza was competitively selected from three other applicants because of his leadership skills and experience with other travel/study programs. The study abroad curriculum was carefully designed and prepared in collaboration with XAIU. Students were required to take four courses (12.0 semester hours), with two of the four courses designated: Chinese History and Culture and Chinese Art and Literature. Both of these courses were taught by Chinese professors who met CLC faculty qualifications. For the remaining two courses, CLC students were able to select from Chinese language courses at various skill levels and from courses from eight other CLC courses offered at XIAU – all of which fulfilled general educational requirement. Courses included American Literature, Micro- or Macroeconomics, and two American History courses. All courses were also open to Chinese students to provide deeper cultural and educational experiences for both student bodies. Faculty members at XAIU adopted CLC’s course specifications and syllabi and used the textbooks recommended by the College. Most CLC students took at least one Chinese language course as well as enrolled in additional tutorial sessions for learning.

During this fall 2009 semester, twenty-one students from CLC and two other ICISP (Illinois Consortium colleges) are currently living and studying at XAIU. This second group has the advantage of the pilot group’s previous experience! Several adjustments were made for this year’s program as a result of many positive learning experiences. This year’s group is also taking courses in Chinese History and Culture and Chinese Art and Literature, but these courses are being taught by a specialized team of Chinese instructors in order to provide a broader depth of experience for the students. Gregory Gordon, Professor of History at CLC, is the lead faculty member this fall semester. He is teaching two US History courses. Professor Gordon has over 65 American and Chinese students in these two classes.

Interest in the semester-long study abroad program in China continues to grow at CLC with much of the excitement and information-sharing generated through formal and casual presentations made by last year's participating students and faculty representative. Presenters help to show that study abroad for community college students is realistic, within reach and affordable. Students who have never considered participating in a study abroad program have inquired about and now participated in a study abroad program!

What is innovative about this program?

- 1. The CLC program is the first semester-long study abroad program in Illinois that is both affordable and within reach for community college students.** An article on the front-page of the Chicago Tribune, March 24, 2008, commented, "the College of Lake County's semester study abroad program at Xi'an International University is the centerpiece of a new initiative funded by (a Federal Title VI grant) and \$275,000 matching funds pledged by the college." At a cost of \$4500.00 the CLC program is truly reasonable and affordable. This program has been specifically designed to be more accessible to lower-income students and students from diverse backgrounds, groups that are traditionally more prevalent on community college campuses. Additionally, this program is applicable to both transfer programs and career programs. Coursework is designed as general education, and both transfer and career degrees have general education requirements. Lastly, China is a growing economic power, and students will gain invaluable experience and skills that will be useful whether they transfer to a four-year college or they decide to move directly into the rapidly growing international work force.
- 2. Beginning fall of 2010, this semester-long study abroad program will become a permanent program sponsored by the Illinois Community College Consortium of International Studies and Programs (ICISP).** Beginning fall 2010, this study abroad program will become a permanently sponsored ICISP program, thus making this study abroad experience accessible to any student who attends any one of the 38 community colleges who are members of the ICISP organization. With the support of the ICISP organization, this program will be able to maintain the consistently high enrollment necessary to continue to provide Illinois community college students this uniquely affordable and accessible opportunity.
- 3. An innovative and long-term partnership has been forged with XAIU.** This program has engaged the CLC community in a larger effort to infuse international education into all aspects of college life. There has been a great focus on internationalizing the curriculum at all levels, as well as providing opportunities for faculty development in international education training and development. After the signing of the formal agreement with XAIU in October, 2007, Mr. Huang Teng, President of XAIU, visited CLC to further promote this burgeoning partnership and bring additional enthusiasm, thoughtful proposals and ideas to CLC. The following May, 2009, CLC's Interim President James Rock and Interim Vice President for Educational Affairs Dr. Richard Haney visited XAIU to further promote the partnership and prepare for the first semester study abroad experience in China. This October 2009 CLC's new president, Dr. Jerry Weber, will be visiting XAIU to visit the students from the second study abroad trip and meet with president Mr. Huang Teng.
- 4. CLC's course specifications and syllabi have been shared and adopted in China.** Xi'an International University faculty have adopted our course specifications and syllabi for courses offered to CLC students. The courses are taught by Chinese faculty who have the same qualifications as faculty teaching the courses at CLC. This ensures that CLC is meeting state-required standards. The College also requires that CLC students take two courses as a part of their participation in the program. Both of these courses (History of Chinese Culture and Society and Chinese Art and Literature) meet general education requirements towards a degree at CLC and are transferable to four year colleges. These course subjects were selected to ensure that students learn about Chinese culture and history from academic perspectives as well as from daily life and interaction with new Chinese friends and faculty members.
- 5. CLC students take coursework in class with XAIU students.** Courses that are offered at Xi'an International University for CLC students are also offered to Chinese students; therefore, both American and Chinese students learn and study together. This is a rare and unique cross-cultural learning experience for both groups of students. Students create bonds that are beneficial for their academic lives, as well as for their personal lives. During the fall of 2008, the literature course that Professor Michael Latza taught had twenty Chinese students in each class along with several CLC students. Additionally, CLC students had multiple opportunities to mingle

with foreign students from Europe, Japan, Korea, and Eastern European countries in their other classes. CLC students are paired with Chinese student partners for additional language and cultural experiences. Through this partnering, both Chinese and American students have the opportunity to improve their respective English and Chinese speaking skills. This partnership experience also helps CLC students deal with everyday living activities, such as buying groceries at the market, while at the same time and building friendships with their Chinese mentors.

6. **Financial assistance is available.** This program receives campus-wide support and interest. In the first year, the CLC Foundation provided \$25,000 in scholarship funds for students during both the pilot and current terms. This second year, the Foundation matched their funds and provided another \$25,000. These scholarships are based on individual financial need and have been awarded to 25 of the 34 eligible students during these two semesters. One of the scholarship requirements includes student assistance with publicizing and marketing the study abroad program during the spring semester after they return from China. Students must also create and present individual projects. Some student projects included DVD presentations with music backgrounds, coffee table books with pictorial journeys through their China experience, public presentations at various local high schools and public organizations, and campus and media interviews. In addition to the Foundation scholarships, some students received \$500 each from the Study Abroad Scholarship of CLC International Education Programs.
7. **The East Asia curriculum at CLC has been enhanced and expanded:**
CLC has produced new and revised courses that have improved the scope and depth of CLC's current offerings on East Asia. Curriculum development mini-grants have supported faculty members' development of three new courses: Politics in East Asia PSC 299, Doing Business in China BUS 299, and Food Business in China FSM 114. Seventeen courses within the existing college curriculum have added East Asian content: Introduction to Criminal Justice devoted three weeks outlining the Chinese criminal justice system and compared/contrasted different ideas and principles of justice systems; Introduction to Sociology studied the centralized sports system in China and the successes of Chinese sport teams at the Olympic games of 2008; a math instructor created a math problems, data and information utilizing East Asian examples to supplement the MTH textbooks; Principles of Management concentrated on the last twenty years of China's economic success and business management strengths, opportunities, and challenges; Social Problems used China to illustrate the global political economy, global poverty, global environmental degradation, and transnational migration; and Diversity in Schools developed a list of East Asian resources for students to use in an assignment that examined perceptions of learning, learning activities, and parents' involvements in children's learning amongst East Asian cultures.