INTERNATIONAL PANTHER
SUMMER 2016
from the director

CAROLINA CORONADO-PARK

Dear Readers,

Every summer, things slow down on campus, and we look forward to working on new ventures, whether developing customized courses for CIEP Immersion Programs or projects for program improvements. This year, we have been fortunate to do more than the ordinary thanks to our collaboration with other UNI departments, international partners and sponsors and local organizations. We are pursuing these efforts not only to overcome a challenging time in the English as a Second Language and international education in the United States, but mainly because we believe that innovation and effectiveness come with the concerted effort of expertise, experience, support and various points of view.

During the past two months, not only have we been busy welcoming students to the regular program and CIEP Immersion programs but also assisting some CIEP staff members travel overseas to promote the program, present at a conference in Costa Rica and teach at partner institutions in China. Similarly, we have welcomed the Commission on English Accreditation (CEA) reviewers for a site visit as part of our reaccreditation process. Also, we have been reaching out to local organizations that have international connections and as a result, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the Iowa Sister States.

In just these past two months, we have enrolled students from eleven countries in our regular program. We also were honored to host our second group of Proyecta 100MIL students. Twenty Mexican students were sponsored by the 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiatives to participate in a four-week program in the CIEP. They were integrated into our regular English courses, attended a customized course on U.S. American culture, and participated in various cultural and social activities. Per our initiative, the Proyecta students enrolled at UNI and Iowa State University (ISU) were able to travel together to Omaha, Neb. The UNI Office of International Programs, ISU, and Mexican Consulate in Omaha sponsored the excursion, and the students had an enjoyable experience exploring and learning about collaboration between the United States and Mexico as well as learning about the Midwest. Read more about the Proyecta Program and how our Mexican students had a blast at UNI.

Our Mission

The overall mission of the Culture and Intensive English Program (CIEP) is to provide International Students with quality intensive academic English language instruction and a cultural orientation to the United States in preparation for study at the University of Northern Iowa or other institution of higher learning.
In July, the CIEP also offered a Business English course to a group of students from Shanghai Dianji University. Twenty-three Chinese students participated in the Annual Global Trade Program of the College of Business that is organized by Chris Schrage, UNIBusiness Global Opportunities Coordinator. It was the third year that CIEP took part in this initiative. In this issue, you will be able to read about our collaborations with this fantastic program and our working experience with business students from China.

As part of our collaboration efforts with the UNI College of Business, two CIEP faculty, Petra Maier and Jaime Lyon, were invited to teach an exposition and report writing class for three weeks to business students at Shanghai Dianji University. This initiative is part of the 2+2 exchange program between UNIBusiness and Dianji’s business departments. It has been a successful experience for all of the parties involved, especially for our instructors who had a great professional development opportunity to broaden their understanding regarding the Chinese educational system and culture: essential skills while serving Chinese students on our campus. In the next pages, you can read more about this story.

For our UNI campus feature, we selected our sister unit: Study Abroad Center. We are, primarily, connected to the Office of International Programs but during the past two years, we have been working closely to find creative ways to offer opportunities on campus and overseas that will benefit all UNI students, domestic and international. For instance, this July, CIEP Instructor Jeannie Kleinmann led a study abroad summer camp in DongGuan, China, for students from University of Northern Iowa and the University of Newcastle in Australia. She delivered a four-week TESOL course that focuses on teaching training. This particular initiative is essential for the CIEP because we will be offering short-term in-service teaching training as part of CIEP Immersion programs and our collaboration efforts with the TESOL department. Read more about our association with the UNI Study Abroad Center in the UNI Connections section.

This June, the CIEP and Iowa Sister State organization signed an agreement of mutual collaboration. CIEP and the Iowa Sister States will seek opportunities to cooperate in a variety of academic research areas and educational venues for language training and promotion of Iowa and American culture within the nine sister states located in Ukraine, Kosovo, Russia, Taiwan, Malaysia, Italy, China, Japan and Mexico. A CIEP staff member visited the Hebei Region in China and was able to connect with high schools and colleges during the past weeks. We are excited about this new partnership and looking forward to expanding our working relationship with the Iowa states.

The CIEP is currently going through a re-accreditation process under the Commission of English Accreditation (CEA), and during the month of July we hosted two CEA reviewers, Daryl Bish and Robert Griffin, and a CEA Representative, Julia Cayuso. The team met with many UNI and CIEP administrators, staff and faculty. Their visit and accreditation process have been a very positive experience even though it is rigorous. Thank you to all of the UNI administrators and staff who met with the team. We are still waiting for the CEA official report, so stay tuned for future updates!

During the fall semester, we will continue reaching out to UNI departments, international partners and sponsors and local institutions to seek collaborative opportunities to promote international education and English training for academic purpose. If you are reading this newsletter and believe there is potential for any collaboration with our program, please contact us. As David Brooks points out in one of his New York Times’ columns: “Successful collaborative groups resist tepid compromises; instead, they combine things that were once seen as mutually exclusive”.

From all of us at CIEP, happy fall semester!

Carolina Coronado-Park,
CIEP Director
Collaborating to Create More Study Abroad Opportunities

BY: CRISTY STEFFEN, CIEP ADMISSIONS AND PROMOTIONS SPECIALIST

With more than 100 partner agreements in more than 60 countries, the world seems a little smaller at the UNI Study Abroad Center. This sub-unit of the Office of International Programs works each day to provide a variety of international experiences to UNI students, focusing on program quality, academic rigor and cultural immersion.

The Study Abroad Center, directed by Paula Van Zee, is available to all UNI students, including international students on campus. The center works with more than 100 institutions to provide a variety of exchange agreements, partnerships and agreements with the Regent institutions of Iowa to create opportunities for international experiences. Every program offered through the Study Abroad Center is comprised of only credit-based courses, allowing students to expand academic and cultural knowledge simultaneously.

To many UNI students, studying abroad may seem like a daunting experience at first. However, the staff at the Study Abroad Center focus on helping students to find overseas institutions that align with the student’s major, educational interests and budget. Whether students choose to participate in a short-term, semester, or academic year program, their experiences always result in learning.

Director Van Zee comments on the success and satisfaction of many study abroad alumni. “I love when students come back to visit us and say, ‘Wow! This was an amazing experience.’ They tell us how they view the world differently by having these experiences. It’s good to see how much we’re changing students, and how much they are able to grow!”

In order to facilitate these types of opportunities through exchange agreements, the Study Abroad Center also welcomes incoming international students. The Study Abroad staff work closely with partner universities to promote UNI, but another way the staff promote study abroad opportunities is through the CIEP.

Together, the Study Abroad Center and the Culture & Intensive English Program have developed an exchange program to help bring international students who do not meet the English language requirements of UNI, but who want to experience life as a UNI Panther. In return, every student who attends UNI CIEP through this exchange program will open another opportunity for a UNI student to spend a semester abroad, while still paying UNI tuition. This program opens many doors for international and domestic students.

Van Zee comments on the partnership with CIEP. “I’m very happy to be working together with CIEP to bring more students to campus. It’s something we should have done a long time ago. The classes CIEP offers are so valuable... It’s great for CIEP, it’s great for us, and it’s great for UNI. Everybody wins!”

Currently, the program has been formally offered to Kansai Gaidai University in Japan, but Van Zee and CIEP Director Carolina Coronado-Park are working together to expand the program to other universities as well.

Van Zee explained, “There are so many universities that we can do this for, so many more partner universities. We are just in the beginning.”

The Study Abroad Center is continually growing to add additional programs and opportunities for students. In the future, this center hopes to work more closely with academic departments to offer study abroad bundles that allow students to attend overseas universities while focusing on courses that will be most beneficial to their degree programs.

The CIEP is pleased to collaborate with Study Abroad to create more opportunities for UNI students on campus and for international students abroad. By focusing on academic rigor and cultural immersion, both units strive to promote diversity and multicultural experiences. It is work that is meaningful, joyful and close to the hearts of the staff.

Van Zee explains, “It’s always rewarding working with a student who has had international experience, whether it is a UNI student abroad or international student on campus. They have different experiences and different views, so it’s always rewarding in just talking to them.”

Study Abroad Center Staff
Confidence when speaking in front of others was one of the most memorable skills Safa Alrabie gained during her time in the CIEP program. Safa’s favorite teacher, Marina Durinova, gave her continuous encouragement in listening and speaking classes.

“She gave me the feeling that I could speak without people judging,” Safa remembered.

The skill of sharing one’s opinion has great value for succeeding in academic classes in the United States. CIEP’s mission statement emphasizes this purpose – to give English instruction “in preparation for study at the University of Northern Iowa or other institution of higher learning.”

Marina pointed to this purpose throughout her course as well. “You can speak. This is your chance to speak. Otherwise, you won’t feel like you can speak in academic classes,” Safa said, recalling the advice she received.

CIEP activities, such as the Conversation Partner Program and class exchanges, also gave her a lot of practice with this skill. Class exchanges are an activity during which CIEP students visit a UNI academic class for conversation with UNI students.

“I always attended a class exchange even if it’s not a request from my teachers,” she said.

Safa’s conversation partner, Joanna, was very committed to spending time with Safa. The two spent a lot of time together, chatting and doing activities, too. They visited a farm, attended church services, and even took a trip together to Florida.

After completing CIEP, she remembered taking Principles of Marketing with other international classmates and found that the professor awarded 40 points for participation in class. Having experience with this teaching style, Safa could confidently participate and achieve these points.

Ms. Alrabie graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in management information systems during the spring 2016 commencement ceremony.

Throughout her studies at UNI, Safa sometimes referred to writing advice and grammar resources given to her by her instructors as well as the cultural knowledge she gained for interaction with U.S. professors.

“Think in English and then write,” she said. “Don’t think in Arabic and then translate to English.”

Safa was active in CIEP activities and missed them after finishing CIEP. However, Safa found other ways to be involved at UNI, including joining student organizations. She participated in a management information systems student organization and served as vice president of the Saudi Student Association. Through the MIS club, she joined a trip to Minneapolis, Minn., to tour Federated Insurance Company with other students from her major. For the Saudi Student Association, Safa’s roles included coordinating events for the Saudi Independence Day and Eid al-Adha celebrations. She distributed tasks among other female members, managed the Facebook page, and designed invitation cards as well.

Currently, she is looking for an internship opportunity in MIS through Optional Practical Training—an Immigration and Customs Enforcement work authorization that allows undergraduate international students to stay on their student visa and gain professional experience after graduation. The MIS program is not common among women in Saudi Arabia, but in the future, Safa hopes to lead other women by gaining a position in her country where she could use this degree. For example, she hopes to develop her own business as a consultant.

Throughout her time in the United States, Safa has served as a role model for Saudi women in leadership. In fact, Safa’s suggestion led to the creation of an annual CIEP Girls Night. The activity began as a karaoke and dancing night and has evolved to include other activities such as swimming, Zumba, and rock-climbing at the Wellness and Recreation Center. The activity is one way that the CIEP and International Students and Scholars Office has worked to accommodate for the needs of Muslim students and international women.

In this way, Safa left a lasting impact on the CIEP program, which left a lasting impact on her. One of Safa’s best memories was acting as Cinderella’s stepmother in a listening and speaking class role play.

“I liked the activities in class,” she said, commenting about the U.S. class style, which emphasizes a variety of exercises in the classroom. “It’s a different way.”
Pura Vida – Welcome to Costa Rica!

BY: MIKE WILLIAMS, CIEP ACADEMIC SUPPORT COORDINATOR

In May 2016, Mike Williams had the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica, to present at an education conference and to meet with CIEP partner institutions.

Pura Vida. These two Spanish words, literally translated as “pure life,” have evolved with a much richer meaning as an attitude or way of life for Costa Ricans that visitors really have to spend some time there to grasp. I know very few words or sentences in Spanish, having opted for Latin in high school (instead of Spanish) and studied Mandarin Chinese years later. However, my “cultural informants” and friends, who just happened to be CIEP-UNI alumni in Costa Rica, Marlon Perez Perez, Hilda Betancort and Andrés Morera-Rivera, assured me that if I could use these two words timely and appropriately during my visit in their country, I would have an ideal experience.

Upon my arrival at the airport in San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica, Andres gave me a brief tour of the city including the universities I would be visiting the next day. UNI has an exchange relationship with Universidad Veritas which goes back for some years. After a brief meeting with Alejandra Barahona, the director for the Center for International Programs, Hilda and a Veritas staff member introduced various parts of the campus to me. International students attending Universidad Veritas are not only made aware of culture shock and cultural adjustment cycles, but also extracurricular activities available, safety, plagiarism, and attendance polices for language courses.

Universidad Veritas reflects the country’s focus on environmental conservation, education and the economy. For example, Professor Sebastian Hernandez, biomolecular laboratory coordinator and faculty member in the Center for International Programs, informed us of the work his students perform cleaning up debris tossed by humans into the oceans bordering the country and investigating the overconsumption of shark meat and the international illegal trade in shark fins.

In another area of Veritas, we met with design students in the Veritas FABLAB who, with their professor, use laser technology to construct a variety of projects from clothing to bookshelves. Some of these are students’ projects for courses and others are to fulfill requests from the public outside of the university.

After a delicious lunch, Hilda and I traveled to Universidad Latina where Andrés is international relations director. Universidad Latina de Costa Rica is the largest private university in the country with seven departments of academic focus in the health sciences, engineering, architecture and design, information and communication technologies, business, social science, hospitality and graduate studies. Andrés served as my guide here.

One of the many impressive facilities that we toured was last on our agenda: the Health Sciences Electives taught in English. These courses ranged from tropical medicine to dentistry pharmacology and fundamentals of nursing with simulated practice.

After our tour and a brief rest, Andrés, Hilda and I met for a dinner of local delicious cuisine at a restaurant near my hotel. We discussed setting up possible CIEP Immersion Programs for students from the universities I visited this day including Universidad Latina Americana. Afterward, we said our goodbyes and the next morning I took a taxi to the airport for the next leg of my trip, San Carlos, Costa Rica.

Actually, this trip began in late 2015 with an invitation from the organizing committee to present at the II English Teaching Congress, Huetar Northern Region: “Improving My Teaching Practices,” June 16-17. The Technology Transfer Center and Continuing Education (CTEC) in the Costa Rica Institute of Technology, San Carlos hosted the
Meet Omar AlAbayechi, one of CIEPs newest students! He is originally from Baghdad, Iraq. Omar is the youngest of four boys, making him a part of a family of six growing up. In 2008, he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in computer engineering and computer networks. It seems the love of computers runs in the family, as two of Omar’s brothers also graduated with this degree. Since graduating, Omar has worked for a variety of companies like Northern Region Cement (NRC) and General Electric (GE).

While working at these companies, Omar learned about UNI CIEP through a friend. The program enticed him and he decided he wanted to be a part of it, as well. Even though it seemed that Cedar Falls would be very different than Omar’s life in Baghdad, he decided to come to Cedar Falls to further his studies in English at the UNI CIEP.

To Omar, learning English is very important. He holds the belief that English is the language that unites everyone together – an international language so to speak. Not only that, but English is also the main language in science, which is Omar’s passion. AlAbayechi decided to leave behind his home, for a time, because he believed it was worth it to gain a better understanding of the English language in the United States. It was this decision that ultimately led Omar to fly across an ocean to have a new adventure with us, here at the CIEP.

Ever since arriving to Cedar Falls, Omar has loved his experience. Not only is he learning about English, but Omar is also gaining new cultural experiences as well as making many new friends. Within the classroom, he has been learning a tremendous amount of information about the English language, but he believes he’s made the biggest strides of improvement in writing and grammar, specifically. The tools that Omar has learned about grammar have been very beneficial and will help him throughout his lifetime. Outside of the classroom, he has enjoyed being a part of the various activities the CIEP offers each week. AlAbayechi has become a student the staff can count on to be at each activity, improving the event with his presence and kindness and by offering a helping hand. The CIEP is proud to have students like Omar in the program and we look forward to seeing where the future leads Omar!
CIEP Summer Activities at a Glance

BY: JACLYN ENGELMAN, CIEP ACTIVITIES ASSISTANT

During an Iowa summer, the days tend to get a little longer and the weather gets a little warmer – alright, the weather gets really hot and humid. But here at the CIEP, we make up for that extra time and warm weather by offering an array of activities! We offer both social activities that provide opportunities for fun, while making many new friends in the process, and also getting a true taste of American culture.

There’s a variety of activities from playing sports like soccer or volleyball on the UNI campus to traveling away from campus to the Schrage Farm. We at the CIEP try to have activities that not only are entertaining, but also have a cultural aspect to them. Therefore, some of these activities involve playing “America’s favorite pastime” of baseball or taking a trip to the historic downtown of Cedar Falls. Regardless of different interests or athletic ability, it’s easy to see that there are activities for all students to enjoy.

For many students enrolled in CIEP, getting the opportunity to meet new people and hanging out with their classroom peers is a highlight of the summer. As the activities unfold, it’s truly beautiful seeing the students intermix between different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. No one looks at the student next to them in a begrudging way because of who they are or where they come from. They’re all eager to meet and become friends because they understand everyone is just as human as the next person.

One exciting new addition to the summer session has been the Proyecta 100,000 Strong Immersion Program. This program has brought 20 new students from Mexico City to the University of Northern Iowa. Students and staff would agree, it’s been wonderful to have this group of students here. The Proyecta students have brought lots of energy to the program, and their excitement has become contagious for everyone in the CIEP.

Overall, this summer provided opportunities for endless conversation, dancing, art, athletics and culture activities. Its been a great summer, and we look forward to the next activities in the Fall 2016 semester!
The CIEP was once again pleased to welcome students from the Proyecta 100,000 Strong initiatives this summer. Twenty Mexican students joined our summer program for four weeks in July and brought amazing energy and friendship to the classes and students. The Proyecta students integrated into Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing classes, learning the curriculum alongside the regular program students.

They also participated in an additional culture class, meeting twice a week in the afternoons. The students were divided into two groups, and over two weeks explored topics of American culture through discussion and presentations. The first week was an introduction to Cedar Falls, Iowa. We started with a short presentation, and then we took the bus to downtown Cedar Falls to explore the downtown, see the river, do some shopping and grab a snack. It was a beautiful day to go downtown! Over the next weeks, we learned about U.S. culture and history, and contrasted U.S. with Mexican culture. Between these classes, students went to Conversation Hour every Wednesday at College Hill Lutheran Church to meet with volunteers to ask questions about these American values. The students expressed surprise at learning about American values of self-reliance and individualism.

The next topic was racial and ethnic diversity in the United States. The students read about the history of immigration and the diverse groups that make up this country. We discussed the victories and struggles of many groups of people, and brought in the current events of Black Lives Matter, among others. The students described racial and ethnic groups in Mexico, and we compared diversity in both countries.

In the last unit, intermediate level students were assigned an article based on a current event. The assignment was to read the article and present to a small group. They had to share important words and ideas. Some of the topics were healthcare, schools, gun violence and politics. This lead to some intense discussions! In the advanced course, students explored the topic of gun violence and the second amendment. Students were asked to propose and argue for a solution to reducing gun violence in the United States.

At the ends of these units, students turned in a speaking log, reflecting on what they learned and what they thought about it. On the last day of classes, students gave a short presentation on a chosen topic: what theme or value had intrigued them the most. Many presented on individualism, while others chose competition or hard work.

Outside of class, Proyecta students were actively engaged in a variety of activities offered by CIEP, including barbecues, group sports and volunteering. On Friday, July 15, they visited the Mexican Consulate in Omaha, Neb., with another cohort of students attending Iowa State University. The group learned about the history of trade and collaboration between the United States and Mexico. They also enjoyed an informational tour of the city.

This summer’s Proyecta group was a pleasure. They were eager to learn and make new friends with CIEP students. Over just four weeks, we saw great improvement in students’ speaking and fluency. They provided many different insights in class and made the summer much brighter. We wish them the best as they return home!

Summer 2016 Immersion Program – Proyecta 100,000 Strong

BY: LAUREN REIN, CIEP ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT SPECIALIST & SALLY ROOS, CIEP STUDENT SERVICES COORDINATOR
Emily Luttrell-Narigon is one of CIEP’s five academic support specialists. Emily has been working at the CIEP in different capacities since 2008. However, her passion and love for difference cultures began long before her time at CIEP. At a young age, Emily was immersed in diverse cultures. She grew up in an urban community in Humble, Texas, and also spent a few years living in Taiwan, as her family moved there for her father’s business. It was in Taiwan that Emily first became a conversation partner for a local family.

After high school, Emily attended Texas A&M where she received her undergraduate degree in renewable natural resources, where she took many sociology and anthropology courses because of her interest in cultures. In addition, she also served as a conversation partner for international students. After graduating from Texas A&M, Emily accepted a position with AmeriCorps. During her time with AmeriCorps, Emily met her now husband which led her to the Cedar Valley and a position within the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Even though Emily enjoyed this environmental work, she also wanted to explore other career options that focused on the cultural diversity that Emily had grown to love. Soon after, Emily pursued her Master’s degree in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) at UNI and completed her practicum experience in Krosno, Poland. After graduating, Emily began to work for the CIEP in 2008 as an adjunct professor, and in 2011 she became full-time.

When asked about her favorite aspects of the job, Emily quickly begins to talk about her teaching experiences. Emily said, “It is very rewarding to see the progress of the students. I simply love it. They evolve into great students and people. Seeing the students receive their diplomas from UNI and knowing that you helped make that possible for them, that’s why I love teaching.”

Emily is certainly a well-regarded teacher of the CIEP. She loves to see growth in her students, and she is honored to be a part of helping them pursue their dreams of learning English. Emily contributes some of her teaching success to her children – one son and one daughter – who have taught her a great deal about teaching and have helped her to grow in patience and understanding. However, Emily’s contributions to the CIEP go far beyond the classroom.

Throughout her time at CIEP, Emily has served on several committees working on projects to improve the writing and reading curriculums. She has also been an advocate for international students and inclusion efforts within UNI. Emily readily encourages her students to participate in campus events, contribute to class exchanges with UNI students, and use resources available to them such as the CIEP section in the UNI Rod Library. It is through these types of activities that Emily hopes to be a voice of encouragement for cultural inclusion on campus and within the community.
This summer, we had the opportunity to fly to China and spend one month instructing sophomore English language learners at Shanghai Dianji University. This was in conjunction with UNI and Dianji’s business departments, which have a 2+2 program. Select Dianji students spend their first two years on Dianji’s campus and then spend the following two years at UNI where, upon completion, they can earn certificates from both universities. However, not all students have the opportunity to come study in the U.S. for two years, so UNI professors and instructors are often flown to Dianji to help students gain a more authentic cultural knowledge of the U.S. classroom.

While there, we each instructed an Exposition and Report Writing class for 3 weeks. We met with our classes for three and a half hours a day, four days a week. During this time, we were able to give the students more knowledge of the American writing structure, plagiarism, and language skills that students may need in their future business careers. For many students, this was their first interaction with an American instructor and the method in which an American classroom is conducted. Not only was this a learning opportunity for the students, but it gave us a chance to increase their cultural knowledge of Dianji students here on UNI’s campus.

The trip also gave us the opportunity to meet various departmental staff around campus. We met several business professors in and around the office and had lunch with the staff along with the business dean. In addition, we were able to meet with the dean and vice dean of the International Office to learn more about how students are instructed in the Chinese culture and how students are accepted to come to UNI. Finally, we held an informational session with a group of students who were leaving for a four-week study at UNI during July and August. During that session, they also met with the dean of the linguistics department who was eager to be a chaperone on the trip and learn more about UNI to form future connections.

Overall, it was a very successful trip and learning experience for all involved. We had a wonderful time meeting everyone and instructing the students. We look forward to working with students and staff from Shanghai Dianji in the future and continuing to nurture the relationship between the universities!
Fulfilling a Dream: Returning to China

BY: JEANNIE KLEINHANS, CIEP ACADEMIC SUPPORT ASSISTANT

China feels as far east as a westerner can go. After living and teaching in Estonia, Spain and Chile, China challenged me more than anywhere else. Trying to explain life in China to other Americans, or life in America to Chinese, has always been hard. I often wished I could just bring Americans there to see for themselves, and bring my Chinese students to America so that movies weren’t their only point of reference. This summer I worked on doing both.

I had a wonderful opportunity to teach nine UNI students and nine University of Newcastle Australia students about TESOL and Chinese culture though a Study Abroad course under the department of Literature and Language. Students spent eight weeks doing the online portion of the course, which covered topics such as classroom management, large and mixed abilities classrooms, young learners, and adapting to Chinese culture.

Then the payoff. We traveled to Beijing, where many students began to use chopsticks for the first time and experienced real Chinese food, not Chinese-American food. We saw the Great Wall, Olympic Park, Temple of Heaven, the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square. We visited a Cloisonné workshop and expressed a great interest in having some of the students’ homes.

After a whirlwind three weeks of teaching, the UNI and Newcastle students returned to their homes, while I traveled north again to Hebei province, which is sister states with Iowa. There are good reasons for this, and the most obvious one is agricultural – corn. I saw as much of it in Hebei province as I do in Iowa. Hebei also grows soy beans and wheat, like Iowa, as well as manufactures glass and iron.

In Shijiazhuang, the capital city, I was greeted and assisted in my visit by Erica and Joe, who work for the Hebei People’s Association for Friendship and Foreign Countries. Mr. Ye, the vice president of the organization, also welcomed me and expressed a great interest in having teachers from UNI come to Hebei province. Together with Beijing, Hebei will host the 2022 Winter Olympics. This means there will be a great need for English language training of Olympic volunteers to welcome international travelers. This might be a great opportunity in the future for UNI’s TESOL majors.

Because it was summer vacation, most of my meetings with local schools were with administration. My first visit was to the Shijiazhuang Foreign Language School. This is a K-12 school whose main focus is on languages, especially English. I was able to meet with one student and we talked about UNI and the admission process. In the afternoon, I visited Hebei University of Science and Technology. Their associate professor Yan and I discussed ways we can strengthen the connections between our universities. The next day I visited Hebei Normal University. According to Mr. Kang, their university and ours has had strong cooperation, especially with the college of business. Also, HNU and UNI both started out as teaching colleges, so there is a shared background. Finally I visited Xingtai University. While there, I was able to visit their beautiful ceramics museum and factory. They are interested in perhaps sending English teachers for training at UNI, and promised to pass on information about CIEP and UNI to their students.

All in all, it was a tiring but fantastic return to China. I hope my travels have helped create stronger bonds between people in our two countries. I look forward to future visits, meeting old friends and making new ones.