



# sea 2017 March Newsletter

## Erik's Experience Researching in China!

### **What made you want to do this program?**

I always wanted to travel the world. Experiencing new places and cultures, meeting new people, and learning new perspectives seems necessary in both the professional and social worlds. Dr. Mueller, heading some innovative research in the bio-inspired technology field, has a program to go to China for the summer to participate in research of bat bio-sonar. Being a field I had interest in, and considering my drive to look for new experiences, I could not say no.

### **How did you learn about this program?**

Dr. Mueller, who was teaching my bio-inspired technology graduate class, had mentioned his research and opportunities to be involved. I met with him after class and applied to the fellowship that was available which guaranteed me 75 days in Jinan, China.

### **What did you learn about your host country?**

The things I learned about China and from the Chinese people I met along my adventure, are numerous. I understood more about the politics, the way of life, the things that were prioritized, architecture, geography, cuisine; the list is endless. It was a big eye-opener due to the fact that China was a huge culture shock. Everything felt so different, even opposite, from culture back in the United States. However the people were welcoming and kind, making it easier to learn and adapt to the new lifestyle.

### **How did this experience affect your future plans?**

It made me understand more about Asian culture, increasing my urge to explore the rest of Eastern Asia with my new perspective. On the other hand, I know I would not want to live in mainland China.

## What was your favorite part about researching abroad?

Exploring the area and experiencing new things. Going to KTV (their version of karaoke where you get a private room with your friends), eating shaokao (their barbecue/street food), exploring the cities, venturing down the countryside and visiting historic and beautiful landscapes were some of the most amazing experiences I had. As a group of internationals, we were able to go to many of the famous cities and areas such as Shanghai and Beijing. I even was able to experience bat excursions where we journeyed into caves and rainforests while also seeing the famous dragon boat festival while journeying down the coast of China. I also hiked Tishan, the largest mountain in China, to see the sunrise above the clouds.

## What was your least favorite thing about researching abroad?

The adjustment to living in such a different place was difficult, stressful, and detrimental to my health. There was a decent amount of smog in the cities and combined with the inescapable heat, I felt very uncomfortable most of the time. Also, due to not knowing any Chinese, it was very difficult to communicate with locals especially when I didn't understand Chinese customs.

## If you had to do the experience all over again, what would you have done differently?

I would have prepared differently (more), and perhaps packed less. All of the choices I made there I don't regret, as I got to meet a plethora of international and Chinese people and have amazing adventures.

## Would you recommend interning/researching abroad and do you have advice for students who are looking to go abroad?

I highly recommend traveling abroad to everyone, especially people who feel like they need something to broaden their horizons. I would just pick a program you're interested in and an area you want to explore, and do it. There won't be as much time for most of us students once we become adults with regular jobs and possibly families. The best time is now. 



# Plan Your Own Experience Abroad!

It is never too early to start planning to go abroad.

## Want to see everything available?

Visit <https://www.globaleducation.vt.edu/> and use the program search feature to find what opportunity is best for you!

## Want to take coursework relevant to your major?

Visit <https://www.eng.vt.edu/international/programs-by-department> for a list of programs by department.

---

Want to hear from students who have already been abroad?

Attend the SEAC Poster Showcase!

---

# sea Poster Showcase

Engineering Study Abroad  
Panel Discussion and Poster Showcase

Tuesday, April 4th  
6:00—7:30 PM  
Surge 109

## 6:00 PM Panel Discussion

Listen to a group of students speak on their internships, study, and service abroad experiences + Q&A

## 6:30 PM Poster Showcase

Stay to check out the student study abroad posters and talk to students who have studied abroad!

**FREE SUBSTATION**

sea   
Officers

President  
Stephanie Imbriaco  
[imbriaco@vt.edu](mailto:imbriaco@vt.edu)

Vice President  
Anna Frazer  
[afrazer@vt.edu](mailto:afrazer@vt.edu)

Graduate  
GEER Assistant  
Heather Lyne  
[engabroad@vt.edu](mailto:engabroad@vt.edu)

Faculty Advisor  
Nicole Sanderlin  
[npsander@exchange.vt.edu](mailto:npsander@exchange.vt.edu)

Visit our webpage at <https://www.eng.vt.edu/seac> or like us on Facebook!