Becoming Part of the Family

After our SJTU welcome dinner with faculty, deans and students, we were invited to send representatives of the group to the official SJTU Mechanical Engineering School’s New Year’s celebration. We were very excited to be included but surprised to find out that we would be asked to contribute a performance to the evening’s program. In a week, seven representatives of the program (pictured above) choreographed and learned a dance combination to present to the faculty present at the dinner.

The dance included a well-known dance to a Chinese song, as well as snippets from American favorites like the YMCA, Electric Slide and Cotton Eye Joe. The audience, which included Madame Ma (the head of SJTU), loved the contribution and we were invited to come back to a later event in February for an encore performance. It was truly a sign that we have been accepted as a new addition to the SJTU ME family.

Pictured above from left to right: Katherine Frangos, Kristen Baldwin, John Swinford, Nitesh Bajaj, Catriona Sproul, Jessica Traver, Joe Musto

Looking Forward

Upcoming events for our Boilermakers in China:

February 9th - ETA Program Dinner

February 10th - 12th - Class trip to Suzhou and Hangzhou

February 16th - Move to Minhang campus

Chinese 101: Most useful and fun words

Wǒ tīng bù dǒng
- Meaning: I don’t understand
- Context: Useful in almost any situation in which a cab driver or vendor is trying to communicate something to you.

Ma ma hu hu
- Meaning: so-so
- Context: A fun word to say, can be used to say “My Chinese is so-so”

Bú yào
- Meaning: I don’t want
- Context: Especially useful in the market areas when people relentlessly try to sell you their product.

ETA/GEARE Group Photos

As is customary in China, our classes presented gifts to each of our three teachers from this first module in the final class of each. For this module, our gifts included a picture of the group (or half of the group for the language professors that taught one section) framed in a Purdue picture frame. The pictures turned out excellent and the teachers really loved them.
Chinese Culture Class Field Trips

As part of our Chinese Culture class, we took part in four field trips: a cooking class, a visit from the Peking Opera, the opportunity to interview Chinese students about their schooling and a visit to the Arts and Crafts Museum near campus. Two of the class favorites were the cooking class, in which we each prepared a dish from scratch and were then able to eat it with our group, and the Peking Opera visit, in which a well-known performer and his students did demonstrations and two students won the honor of having their faces painted in traditional opera styles.

A group of students pictured with Chef Mike, Sa Weiqi (our teacher) and our TA Greg.

Freshly cooked food made by our students. From top to bottom: green beans with pork, fried weever, kung pao chicken

A Peking Opera performer dressed as the Monkey King

Justin Simms (left) and Josh Flint (right) with full opera makeup.
Company Site Visits

In order to see what Mechanical Engineers can do in China, our classes went on multiple site visits to well respected companies who have branches in the Shanghai area. We were lucky enough to be invited by Eli Lilly, Eastman Chemical and American Axle to participate in plant tours and listen to presentations about the companies and their efforts in China. Pictures here are from the two trips made to American Axle by class A and B separately. The plant manager as well as multiple Purdue alumni working at the plant were very enthusiastic in showing us the plant floor and discussing the ex-pat lifestyle involved in moving for business.

Class A outside the American Axle plant

Plant Manager Jim Lopez explaining the inner workings of the American Axle products.

Matt Miller testing his strength by picking up a gear made on the plant floor. Matt will be working with American Axle for his GEARE internship this summer

Class B pictured with Plant Manager Jim Lopez (far left), Purdue alum Dean Samuels (second from the left) and Purdue alum Bradley Hartzell (second from the right).

Adventures Around China

After spending four weeks exploring the Shanghai area, students have become more and more adventurous in traveling farther out from the city. Recent trips include a group to the Harbin Ice Festival to see the ice sculptures in below-zero temperatures and Superbowl weekend trips to Nanjing, the old capital of China and location of many historic tourist sites.

The Harbin Ice Festival

Above and below: Purple Mountain in Nanjing
Exploring Shanghai

As part of our ME 497 class with Dianne, we were given a list of 20 things to do around the Shanghai area, for which we would receive credit for completing 10. We had to take a picture of ourselves at each one and write a short description. Here is a collection of pictures from this scavenger hunt.