Faculty Report (Summer 2010)

Name: Minjuan Wang
Faculty/Rank: Associate Professors
Department: Educational Technology
College: Education
Office phone: 5943878
Other phone: None
E mail address: mwang@mail.sdsu.edu
Proposal title: Developing Summer Service Learning Program at Schools in China--between SDSU and Tsinghua University (Poverty Alleviation Program Center)
Country/ies visited: P. R. China
Institution visited: Tsinghua University
Dates of travel: March 23-April 4, 2010; August 18, 2010
Number of student participants: 1

Previous IP proposals submitted and grants awarded
(list titles, countries and dates):

Establishing Internships and Joint Degree Programs
--between SDSU and Beijing Normal University (in Educational Technology), Summer 2005
Establishing Internships and Joint Degree Programs
--between SDSU, BNU, and Shanghai Jiaotong University, Summer 2006

Have all required reports been submitted? Yes.

Other funding for this activity available/applied for: President’S Leadership Fund

Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum):

The proposed project, Summer Service Learning Program at Schools in China, will bring Educational Technology students to China, to participate in an influential program sponsored by the Peter Wang Foundation. SDSU students will team up with students from Tsinghua University (Beijing), to work at a few schools in the poor regions of China. The short-term goal of this project is to provide international
work/learning experiences for Masters’ students in Educational Technology; and the long-term goal is to develop a credit-bearing service-learning program or summer internship, which can involve graduate students from other education-related disciplines.

Travel report:

I. Opening/overview of intentions/activity

In summer 2006, Dr. Bob Hoffman and I took 6 graduate students (1 with teaching credential) to a large international conference in Beijing. The EDTEC group presented an engaging workshop about our research and practice to about 60 participants. We also visited local schools and two universities for informal exchanges. Our activities were very-well received in China and also enlightened these students. Studying or working abroad is on the wish list of many other students. To participate in a service learning program seems a right approach for further developing curriculum-related international activities for our students (especially K-12 teachers).

For the past three years, the Peter Wang Foundation has been supporting a service learning program at rural schools in China, administered by Tsinghua University (Beijing). This program brings teams of American and Chinese students to schools associated with Tsinghua’s e-Learning centers, where they help teachers and students with their English. And I proposed to work with this Foundation and Tsinghua University, to open up this program to graduate students at SDSU.

A handful of SDSU students (mostly undergraduate) participated in this program in the past two years, but their work was limited to teaching conversational English. This task might be less appealing to graduate students who have special expertise to offer. Here I propose to greatly expand this service learning program to other high-needs areas, including: course design, software training, and even computer maintenance.

II. In preparation for the trip abroad

- I contacted the Poverty Alleviation Program Center at Tsinghua University, explaining this project and setting up a meeting for Spring break.

- I consulted with the program coordinator at SDSU side to get her input. This service learning program is supported by the Peter Wang Foundation and SDSU students (mostly undergraduate) have actively participated in it.

III. Upon arrival/specific activity

Following is a brief description of my activities in China.

Spring Break, 2010—Successful Visit to Tsing Hua University

(http://www.tsinhuafp.com/
http://www.tsinghua.edu.cn/eng/detail.jsp?seq=1671&boardid=149)
I visited the Poverty Alleviation Program Center at Tsinghua University. This Center has been quite active in bringing college students to the rural schools in China, to help with teaching and learning. The students include both American and Chinese students and they were teamed up to work at e-Learning Centers in the remote countryside of China.

I met with the Center Director (Ms. Huang), Associate Director (Mr. Liu), and program assistant (Mr. Liang). They showed me the program history, including a nice collection of photos and stories from the previous years. I also learned about the detailed logistics of housing, work schedule, culture, and living at the many service sites. The Center is very interested in involving graduate students in this program, so that they can help the school teachers in more expansive areas (such as curriculum development and technology use). Because I am also interested in working at the countryside, the Center Directors suggested me becoming a program volunteer, a liaison with SDSU, so as to help further develop this program.

However, the registration deadline for Summer 2010 was very close at the time of my visit. Much more advanced notice is needed to get graduate students from Educational Technology (and any other programs) involved. We therefore planned for student recruitment for Summer 2011. A student in my EDTEC 350 class, a GE course that prepares students to study abroad, however, learned about this program from me and actively participated in the Summer 2010 program.

In order to attract more graduate students, I applied for SDSU President’s Leadership Fund (Fall 2009), to help offset the travel and tuition costs for program participants. This proposal was not selected for an award in 2010. I will revise it and submit it again this Fall, hoping to get funds for summer 2011.

**Summer 2010-A short Visit**
I was in Beijing for an international conference and paid a short visit to Tsinghua University, to follow up on our plans. All sides are still interested and willing to work with me. I brought back program brochures and some multimedia documentaries, which will be used to publicize the program to SDSU graduate students.

**Beijing Normal University (BNU)**
Even though this institution is not included in the original proposal, I had a meeting with the Modern Institute of Educational Technology. The main goal of this meeting is to secure another opportunity for EDTEC students to study/work abroad. In the past two years, Beijing Normal University has been translating the *Encyclopedia of Educational Technology (EET)*, an online Encyclopedia created and maintained by SDSU’s Department of Educational Technology.

Beijing Normal University would like to make the EET bilingual in English and Chinese. They will find students to translate EET articles and publish it both in paper and online, in bilingual format. And we agreed that SDSU students should be part of this project, to help with site redevelopment, and proofreading the English versions. These activities will be easy to set up, considering that there is already an agreement between SDSU and BNU
in student exchanges (see the official MOU signed by provost Marlin). A MOU was drafted for this Encyclopedia project. BNU is currently applying funds from China’s Department of Education, to support this project.

IV. Conclusion, recommendation, and next step

I will be actively following up with all institutions involved and also seek more extramural funds from the U.S., to better support this service learning program.

SDSU’s Educational Technology Department provides opportunities for students to participate in internships, working for real clients. Students with flexible schedules will definitely be interested in these exciting work opportunities abroad. Students who don’t mind crowds will enjoy living in China.

These exchange and internship programs can expose SDSU students to the growing Chinese economy, K-12, and distance education. They will be more aware of the differences in teaching philosophy and mode of delivery in K-12 schools, higher education, and online learning. Interacting with Chinese students and the diverse population in Beijing and the remote areas could also be an enriching life experience.

In addition, SDSU’s College of Education is going to make study-abroad a requirement for most graduate programs. A large number of our students are becoming school teachers. The project I undertook, even though will involve a small number of student teachers (3-4/year), can probably serve as a model for sending pre-service teachers abroad.