

## **HONORS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM**

Complete this proposal **prior** to your project's start date and upload it in the UHP Database (<https://webapps.uc.edu/uchonorsstudent>). Create a project ("Add a new record") in the "Tracking Project" tab and then upload your proposal document as an attachment. Your submission will be reviewed during the next review cycle.

*While the quality of the proposal is most important, strong proposals are typically 3-4 pages in length (single-spaced). Please maintain the proposal format.*

### **Basic Information**

Full Name: Desiree Ann Sanchez

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College: CEAS

Major: Electrical Engineering

Title of Project: China Co-op

Thematic Area (choose only one): Leadership

Expected Project Start Date: February 2014

Expected Project End Date: May 2014

### **Project Information**

1. Provide a detailed abstract of your proposed honors experiential learning project.

The engineering department from the University of Cincinnati (UC) has recently partnered with Chongqing University in China. The partnership was established to allow students from Chongqing the opportunity to study here at UC. Chongqing University students will study four years at their home university, and complete their fifth year at UC. In order to assist the students with adapting to the American culture, Chongqing is allowing UC professors to teach a few courses at their university. UC professors will teach engineering foundation courses to the freshman of Chongqing University. The students will learn Matlab, and they will participate in experiments covering different aspects of engineering. Along with two UC professors traveling to Chongqing, there will be three teaching assistants. The spring 2014 semester will be the first semester UC is participating in Chongqing, but they hope for this to be a continuous process.

I was selected as one of the three teaching assistants to attend Chongqing University in spring 2014. We will be responsible for assisting the professors with grading, setting up the laboratories, facilitating the laboratories, and assisting students with completing their assignments. I am currently a teaching assistant here at UC, and I love helping the students. "If you have knowledge, why not share it?" – is one of my personal mottos. Sharing knowledge helps the individual whom I am sharing it with, and it also helps me become more familiar with the topic. I have always had a liking for teaching, but I decided to pursue engineering because I am passionate about math and science. As I have been exposed to a diverse group of students, I have become particularly interested in learning different cultures. Due to the fact I am not a traditional student, I have not been able to study or travel abroad. The China co-op has been the best opportunity to shed light my way. UC and Chongqing are paying for our flights and housing during our time in China. I cannot express in words how grateful I am for this opportunity.

I will spend 12 weeks in China as a teaching assistant. During the 12 weeks, I will be working 40-45 hours a week. I plan to take a lot of notes to capture my experience and feelings. I will also take plenty of pictures to help with dissemination once I return. I will use my notes to keep a journal that will help with my reflection while abroad. My

journal will also be used to encourage other students to participate in the China co-op for semesters to come. Although I will not be leaving until February, January will be used to strengthen my Matlab skills, visit the UC based courses that will be offered in China to help familiarize myself with the material, and to learn enough Chinese to help me get around China.

**Clearly and thoroughly address how each of the following elements will be exhibited in your work:**

2. Connection to Learning Outcomes within the Honors Thematic Area (identified above)

- Possess global literacy, including knowledge of geography, history, current world issues and similarities and differences among cultures

Before I heard about the China co-op, I did not know where Chongqing was located geographically. I have never been out of the country, so this experience will be a first for me in every way possible. I plan to immerse myself in the culture by trying new foods, sightseeing, interacting with the natives, and by learning as much Chinese as possible. Before I leave for China, I heard about a website (cctv.com) that teaches the Chinese language and culture.

- Interact with individuals from different cultures and express a sensitivity, appreciation and respect for the complex range of experiences of diverse peoples

While in China, I will mainly interact with engineering students from Chongqing University. About a third of these engineering students are female, and I look forward to sharing my experiences with them. Since they will be spending their last year in Cincinnati, I will share different activities they can get involved in while they are here. I also look forward to talking to them about how it is to pursue engineering in China. I want to learn about the different career opportunities and experiences available to them with an engineering degree.

During each laboratory, I will be assigned a group of students. The time spent with my group will help to distinguish the learning techniques between Chinese and American students. I know there will be a language and cultural barrier in which I will struggle to break down. I will be creative in ways I attempt to relate to the students personally and academically.

3. Connection to Goals and Academic Theories (include reference list, as appropriate)

A.

One of my personal goals is to travel and live abroad. I am interested in learning about different cultures, and I want to be taken out of my comfort zone. It is easy for me to learn in an environment with which I am comfortable or familiar, but it will be challenging for me to learn in an environment where I do not feel comfortable. I want to divide and conquer this challenge. Living abroad for three months will push me to my limits. I have had the opportunity to live and work in New York for two-and-a-half years, away from family and friends, and I was able to mature in ways I never imagined.

B.

1) I will read Culturally-linked Leadership

(<http://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/honors/docs/Leadership%20Documents/Culturally-linked%20Leadership%20Styles.pdf>) styles before I go to China. I chose this document because I will be leading a group of Chinese students while working as a teaching assistant. There will certainly be a cultural difference between the students and myself. I need to anticipate any issues that might arise.

2) I will watch the episodes on cctv.com to learn the Chinese culture and language before I leave for China and while I am in China.

#### 4. Initiative, Independence, and/or Creativity

I have a personal interest in encouraging women to pursue engineering, and I was excited to hear that a third of their engineering students are female. I will personally working with the female group and share my experience of engineering being my second degree. I want them to feel encouraged and know that women are needed in this field. If they are feeling undetermined, I will help them to get back on track.

#### 5. Reflection

During my time in China, I will keep a daily journal to help me reflect on my time experience a different culture. The following is a list of questions I will use to help my reflection process:

- Daily: What did I learned about the Chinese culture today?
- Weekly: Name an event that has helped to distinguish the Chinese culture from American culture.
- Bi-weekly: How is comfort level when interacting within the Chinese culture?
- Monthly: How has this experience changed my life so far, academically and personally? Has this experience help to shape my character? What will I do differently when I return to the U.S.?

#### 6. Dissemination

Upon return to UC, I will disseminate my experience with a presentation to CEAS faculty and students. I will share my experiences by including photos and my journal. I will reflect on my overall experience and how it has shaped my outlook on different cultures. I chose the CEAS faculty and students because UC wants to continue sending UC professors and students to Chongqing. I want to encourage students to take advantage of the opportunity to travel abroad and work with a diverse group of students and professors.

#### 7. Project Advisor (list the person's name, title, and contact information)

Allen Arthur

Associate Dean Undergraduate Affairs

513-556-4870

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\*\*Note: this will change when I find out more about the co-op position. Allen Arthur is my only contact as of right now for the co-op. He will not be joining us in China. Over the next few weeks, I will meet the professors I will be working with in China.

#### 8. Budget (if applicable)

Windows laptop - \$599

Matlab - \$99