3. Duke Study in China Program

a. Abby Wang, Summer 2019 Final Report

I had never formally learned Mandarin before taking Chinese 132 and 142 my first year at Yale. In other words, although I spoke Mandarin at home with my parents, I knew perhaps only ten or so characters before I began the heritage track here at Yale. Participating in the Light Fellowship was a means for me to work towards full written and spoken Mandarin fluency. Before I dive into the details of my summer experience, I’ll also note that I lived in China as an infant until I was five years old and that I have visited China for extended periods of times on a number of occasions, though the last time I’d gone before I did Light was spring break of my eighth-grade year. I consider my family (i.e. my parents’ parenting styles) rather traditional, and I believe that all of these factors prevented any cultural shock I might have felt. Thus, my experience is likely unrelatable to those prospective Light Fellows who have not visited China for extended periods of time or have not been exposed to Chinese cultural practices in such a personal context.

I did Duke Summer in China, or DSIC, which is based at University of International Business & Economics (UIBE). Others in my program have outlined the academic format of our class, so I’ll be brief here:

8:00 AM – 9:15 AM: “Lecture” class. Using a slideshow presentation, a teacher would go over the content of the course lesson bit by bit.
9:30 AM – 10:20 AM: Grammar drills – a teacher would write grammar points on the board and students would recite sentences with those constructions.
10:30 AM – 11:20 AM: Discussion about lesson content – this was much more informal conversational Chinese, though we were encouraged to use new vocabulary and grammar points. Then there would be one-on-one (there was a rotating schedule of who met which teacher at what time, so lunchtimes could vary).

I will definitely say that around the fourth week, this style of learning became incredibly monotonous to me. Before the fourth week, even though I was waking up early every morning, I was engaged throughout each class and never felt too sleepy. I understand that all language intensive programs that I know of follow a set daily schedule, which is why it’s so important to stay engaged outside of class, whether you’re hanging out with students in your programs/outside friends or exploring the area you’re living in. Otherwise, such a language intensive program might feel unbearably repetitive.
Duke was a particularly small program this year: 27 students and all but one came from what would be considered a “top twenty” U.S. university. I consider this program to be an elite school bubble, just as HBA or PIB are. For those considering Duke in China, keep in mind that even if you attend an overall larger program such as HBA, your class sizes will still be about the same as if you attended an overall smaller program like Duke in China. In other words, I wouldn’t say that DSIC is any less of a bubble or that its smaller overall size facilitates closer teacher-student learning than you would attain from HBA or PIB.

We lived in a newly constructed dorm building with rooms that, according to our teachers, were built along four-star hotel standards. This made me uncomfortable because I felt like we were getting preferential treatment simply because we were internationals, or 外国人. I was also uncomfortable that cleaning staff would change our bedsheets and towels for us. As somebody whose family is nowhere close to wealthy in China, i.e. the China I experienced when I visited was that of the working class, I felt extremely discomfited by this luxury treatment from UIBE.

I remember reading this bulletin board when I was deciding which program to attend, and many people cautioned against spending too much time on academics in the first half of the program, only to explore the local area in the second half. Even though I was wary of repeating this pattern going into DSIC, I did. I actually think that it is natural if you’re not well-acquainted with people in your program. You are in a totally foreign place, after all, and most of your scheduled time is devoted to class and homework. I don’t know many people who are comfortable navigating an entirely new place by yourself, especially if their language skills are not up to par.

At the same time, I want to address an important topic I haven’t heard much about when it comes to language intensive study abroad: self-care. I know Light does a workshop on culture shock, which is great and helps to destigmatize a rather common occurrence. I believe experiencing culture shock is mitigated through building connections with people in your program (and also outside!) and by practicing self-care. In fact, taking care of yourself, even if that means “sacrificing” study time, should be your main priority, not exploring the city. We all know that Light offers us an unparalleled opportunity to experience another culture, but it is impossible to enjoy this unparalleled experience if you’re just not happy. And I’m not suggesting that self-care is the antidote to being unhappy, but I do believe it is an important part. Self-care could mean spending time by yourself doing things you like to do (maybe watching a show you like!) or meditating or choosing to spend time with people who don’t exhaust your energy, etc. Specific to DSIC’s conditions: in such a small program like DSIC, I feel like my mental health would have been better served by leaving campus more often starting earlier in the program. Also, it took a while for me to get acquainted with others in the program simply because the heritage upper-level kids hung out with each other and the program did not actively facilitate connections between the classes. Expanding your circle can be a good thing when you’re in a totally new place.
My summer in Beijing was life-changing, though not for the reasons I’ve heard from other Light Fellows. If your only perceptions of China come from Western media sources, you will never know the full story. If you are non-heritage, it is even more important to recognize that you are studying abroad in a predominantly non-white country and therefore check yourself and your biases. I was definitely frustrated by the misconceptions people in my program had about the “East” and about China, and this is where interacting with locals is crucial for you to become a more informed person. If there is one main point of advice I’d give to future Light Fellows – regardless of whether or not you’re a heritage speaker or your family immigrated to the States – it is this: you do NOT know more about the culture/country you’ve been granted the privilege of briefly experiencing firsthand than the people who will remain there for long after you finish your study abroad program.

b. Chloe Shames, Summer 2019 Final Report

For me, a typical day at Duke Study in China would proceed as follows: I wake up with the sun around 6 AM and do some last minute studying and early morning review to refresh myself on the material I learned the previous day. On days with lighter workloads, I might jog around the UIBE campus for a bit to exercise and enjoy the final fleeting hours of below 90-degree weather. When I want to, I grab breakfast from the dining hall or vendors (there are many delicious and cheap street foods to choose from scattered around UIBE’s campus) on the way to class. On a normal day, I could expect 4 hours of class. The first class was lecture based, where one primary teacher taught the class the main grammar points and especially notable vocabulary from the text. It began with a short aural test or 听写 (dictation), where students were quizzed over the material learned individually the previous day (typically a short text and 30-45 new characters). The second and third classes were split into smaller groups, to allow students greater ability to familiarize themselves with the use of new grammar and vocabulary. The fourth class was a 30 minute one-on-one with a teacher. I found this class to be easily the most useful, albeit the least structured, as I was able to discuss the topic of the day’s text in more detail and slowly learn how to vocalize my own personal opinions in Chinese. The rest of the day was my own to complete homework and preview the lesson for the next day.

The only mandatory afternoon activity was an hour-long meeting with my Chinese language partner. The language partner program was, in my opinion, one of the most helpful, unique, and alluring aspects of the Duke program. While spending the day socializing with classmates may be more comfortable, I often found that within the limitations of the language pledge, it was often substantially easier to communicate with a native speaker. DSIC matches each student with a language partner prior to the program based on student completed surveys. I was very happy with DSIC’s pick for my language partner, although I could gauge the general consensus was that all the language partners were lovely and got along well with their DSIC
student. My language partner and I discussed topics such as global politics, American and Chinese cross-cultural differences, our favorite foods, our future ambitions, the American actors we think are the hottest, and how awkward we feel introducing new significant others to our families. My language partner provided me with a valuable and authentic perspective and was sweet, funny, and accommodating. The first day we met, my Chinese still barely coherent, she spent three hours taking me to different stores trying to get my especially uncooperative phone to accept a Chinese SIM card. Throughout the program, she took me to Beijing snack streets, recommended various activities, and showed me her favorite spots around campus. My favorite thing we did together was go together to eat Sichuan hotpot. She even introduced me to some of her good friends from all over China, and we discussed Beijing’s unique qualities and their varied perspectives informed by their diverse upbringings.

There are some miscellaneous things that I would be remiss not to mention in this review. First, the student body is very small. This year, under 30 students attended DSIC. While I appreciated the individualized attention this supported, I also felt at times there were too many familiar faces. I’ve also been told this year was uncharacteristically small in number compared with other years, so this might not be the most important factor. However, that aside, DSIC is still substantially smaller than a lot of other China programs, so I would keep this in mind when you’re selecting a program. Next, the language pledge is what you make of it. I think this is true of any program, but especially relevant when talking about DSIC, as I felt it wasn’t incredibly enforced by many of the second year teachers. While this certainly alleviated pressure, and while you still must speak Chinese in the presence of administrators and teachers, I’d still say the punishment for speaking English was not enough to deter the majority of the students from speaking English when convenient. As someone with an aim to stick to the language pledge, I occasionally worried that the normality of classmates primarily using English would negatively impact my ability to learn. However, there is something to be said for DSIC’s looser and more individualized structure. While learning Chinese is my primary goal, I came into the program knowing I didn’t fly all the way to China just to cram characters and grammar for 2 months. DSIC’s workload was rigorous at first, but as I began to fall into a routine, it became easier to go out and explore Beijing (daytime and nighttime, weekday and weekend). I ultimately left Beijing quite satisfied with the exposure to the city I was able to enjoy. The living accommodations are excellent (literally a hotel and international dorm in one). My “dorm” was not at all an adjustment to Chinese culture and felt more like an American hotel. The wifi was never good in the dorms, nor was my ability to use my VPN, but it was certainly bearable. There was perhaps even a benefit to feeling more disconnected from my American life, if only for a little bit. And briefly, of course, the teachers were fantastic. If you attend DSIC, you can be assured the teachers are attentive, personable, and ultimately dedicated to seeing their students succeed. Becoming a DSIC teacher is competitive, and it shows in the quality of instruction: fast paced without sacrificing clarity.
There simply aren’t enough words to thoroughly sum up my experience in Beijing except that I think it was by far the best use of my summer. I felt my linguistic proficiency sizably increased in all aspects through the program: listening, speaking, comprehension, writing, etc. My advice to incoming students would be to do the work, but don’t pass up opportunities to leave campus and explore Beijing, even if on your own. After all, when’s the next time you’re going to get a trip to China completely paid for? It’s easy to be overwhelmed by the workload and forget about all the opportunities there are in Beijing, but my best experiences in the DSIC program were not in the classroom. If I had not plucked up the courage to venture out into the city and explore, I would have certainly sacrificed far more than a couple hours of studying. I think that’s my most important piece of advice from this program. (and remember, in the worst cases, you’re pass/fail!)

Christina Tuttle, Summer 2019 Final Report

Other posts have already covered the weekly academic schedule, so I’ll defer to them for an in-depth explanation. Coming from L1/L2 at Yale, the first week is an incredibly steep learning curve. Going from learning 6 characters a night to around 40 is a huge jump, but after that initial shock the workload is very manageable. Each day, we had around 45 minutes of homework from the textbook. Otherwise, most of the work outside of class was preparing for the next day (reading the lesson and memorizing the vocab/characters).

Once I got used to the routine, I was surprised by how much free time I had. Class ends at around noon, and aside from meeting with my language partner for an hour and then spending around 3 hours to prepare for the next class, there was still a lot of time to myself. Coming from Yale (where I start to feel guilty for having free time), this is incredibly refreshing. While abroad, you have only one academic focus. This is definitely something I wish I appreciated more during the program.

Also, study abroad credits at Yale are Credit/D/Fail. This takes away a lot of the academic pressure, and I think it forces you to think about why you actually want to learn the language. However, because of this, there was a difference in how Yale and Duke students approached the program (For instance, it seemed that the Yale students were generally less stressed and more willing to explore the city).

Another important part of DSIC is the language partner program. I actually had two different language partners during the program - my first one left halfway through, so I was matched with a new one. Language partners are the best part of the program. While some days I didn’t always want to meet with my language partner, I know that this was a great opportunity to practice Mandarin and learn about Chinese teenagers. Without this structured part of the
program, I think it would be very difficult to form a similarly close relationship with a Chinese student. It definitely helped my understanding about Chinese people’s viewpoints.

This program made me realize that having an abroad experience is so important to learning a language. Being constantly surrounded by native speakers allowed me to learn which phrases are commonly used and which ones are more archaic.

Coming to China, the language pledge was one of my largest fears. I was scared of being unable to express myself with such a limited vocabulary.

During the second half of the program especially, the language pledge is not followed that closely. I have mixed feelings about the language pledge. Yale L1/L2 gives a good foundation for learning more Chinese, but I didn’t realize until coming to China how little I actually knew. As a low-level student, I definitely did not have the vocabulary to speak only in Chinese. Of course, the language pledge is useful for helping you to start thinking in Chinese, but I’m skeptical about how effective it is for lower level language students.

At the Light Pre-Departure meeting, we talked about culture shock being cyclical (sometimes you feel depressed/homesick, other times you feel completely at home). I didn’t feel culture shock as strongly as expected, but my language improvements (or maybe my perception of these improvements?) was definitely cyclical.

There were some weeks where I felt like my language skills were stagnant. Other times, after a positive conversation with my language partner or a smooth one-on-one with a teacher, I could really see my improvement. Yet, whenever I started to feel confident with my language skills, something would happen to remind me how little I really knew.

For instance, within the first couple days, I tried to order milk tea at a mall. I pointed to what I wanted on the menu, but when the cashier replied with a string of words I didn’t understand, I panicked, turned around, and left. Another time, weeks into the program, I tried to tell one of the front-desk workers my Chinese name. After repeating it at least 10 times, I had to write it down on a slip of paper before they finally understood.

Experiences like these were sobering. But, they also showed me where I needed to work harder. For example, our textbook lacked some phrases that were needed for everyday life (and included some lessons that are arguably pretty irrelevant), so these experiences were helpful to show what vocabulary I needed to learn on my own. Also, the trouble with pronouncing my own name made me realize that I needed to work harder on my tones.

My advice for anyone heading abroad (not just if you choose DSIC) is to be mindful of this. The beauty of such a long program is that you have time to go through these cyclical motions (and recognize that they are cyclical).

As for the living situation, the international dorms at UIBE are like hotels (or arguably even better). Since the restaurants around campus are inexpensive, I normally ate there for dinner rather than the cafeteria. UIBE is around a 15 minute walk from the nearest subway station, so it’s easy to get around on weekends but not as convenient for leaving the area during the school week.
The program organizes weekends trips to places outside of Beijing, like the Great Wall, temples, scenic sites, or other places that would not be feasible for us to reach with public transportation. Initially, I really enjoyed the weekend trips. However, because riding on the bus for such a long time was draining, towards the end of the program I preferred to plan my own weekends.

There is also a mid program trip to Xi’an, but this is only one weekend. It’s a fun experience, but much shorter than I expected. Students are allowed to plan their own trips on free weekends or after the program. But, If having lots of planned traveling is important to you, I would choose a different program (for instance, I know HBA and UVA both have weeklong trips around China).

Before coming on the program, I expected to be basically fluent after the summer (because I would be entering L5 classes back at Yale). Now, I realize how naive that was, and I have much farther to go before I can approach fluency. The summer made me realize how long it takes to learn a language. I would advise future Light Fellows to be practical about language goals. You will improve a lot, but you will still have a lot of room to get better (which is a good thing!).

d. Nick Padin, Summer 2019 Final Report

I remember the first day that I arrived at Beijing Capital International Airport, my head feeling fuzzy because of jet lag. As a second-year Chinese student who had never been to China before, navigating the labyrinth of Chinese signage was jarring to say the least. Also being the stubborn person that I am, I refused to be picked up at the airport by the program, so I ended up taking the metro to UIBE. Luckily, Beijing’s metro is easy to navigate, and once I reached the international dorms on campus, the Duke staff nonchalantly checked me in and told me to be ready for the placement exam in the morning. I was kind of surprised by the lack of structure upon arrival, but that experience ironically set the tone for the rest of the program.

Academics

This has been covered extensively by pretty much everyone, but I’ll cater this towards second year Chinese students with no prior exposure to China or Chinese outside of Yale. One of the most salient details of the Duke program is that it markets itself as an intensive language program. Before coming to China, I thought this program would be the most rigorous academic feat that I had ever taken on. While the 3rd year students and above undoubtedly had a ton of homework each day, I found second year Chinese to actually be very doable.

Class from 8-11:30 did take some adjusting (as someone who never attended 9 am class at Yale, waking up at 8 never got easier), but other than that the homework never took me more than an hour or hour and a half, sometimes less. Each day might have 30–40 vocabulary words,
some of which I already knew, so using quizlet I was able to accomplish this easily. Each
morning the quiz consisted of two sentences using the previous night’s material, and you have to
transcribe the read aloud sentences’ characters and their tones. While some students complained
about the workload, I soon felt that it was significantly lighter than anticipated, which left me
with considerable free time.

In addition, Duke is also known for having a strict language pledge, something that I was
afraid of before coming to China. Forgive me for being blunt but saying there’s a strict language
pledge is easily one of the most fallacious statements I could make about the program. Except for
the heritage students, most people quit the language pledge sometime during the first week, and
some never really agreed to it in the first place. Sure, there’s warnings and punishments if you
get caught, but my peers spoke English pretty liberally outside the classroom with no
repercussions. If you’re looking for a completely immersive Chinese environment, I would not
recommend Duke for this purpose.

Travel

I wanted to join a program where I would have opportunities to explore Beijing and
experience Chinese culture (trite phrases I know). While on a day to day basis the Duke
program’s structure was relaxed, the program trips had a lot of handholding. I certainly fell short
of this goal, though this was not necessarily the program’s fault. The weekend travel trips were
spent mostly on the bus to and from the location, and once there we normally had an hour or two
before we had to leave. The midterm trip was mostly spent on the train, though the soft sleeper
experience was a fun one in itself. Generally, many people (myself included) lacked the initiative
to plan a weekend trip and opted to see some of Beijing’s major tourist sites instead, which I felt
was worthwhile. However, at the Forbidden City or Summer Palace, tourists are 人山人海, and I
felt going to the hutongs was more interesting. During the week, I didn’t leave campus too much
at the beginning of the program, but once I came to terms with the fact that I was pass-fail, I
became more daring with my weekday excursions. At the very least, I felt like I had seen a
decent amount of Beijing by the time I left.

Social Dynamics

I wanted to include a little more about daily life during the program. After everyone
fumbles their way through class in the morning, the afternoons were often spent taking a long
nap and/or doing the homework, and in the evenings we exercised, met with our language
partners, played on our phones, and by the time all that was done it was nearly time for bed. It’s
crucial during the program to be methodical with your time, and to maximize your enjoyment of
the program, you need to commit yourself to doing something other than studying, whether it’s
going to dinner with friends or to a park. In the beginning of the program, everyone was cooped
up in their room or in the lobby studying, but gradually some people loosened up and by the end
of the program, were doing non-studying activities every day. The climate at Duke in China is
pretty studious (it also counts for the Duke students’ GPA), so encouraging people to get off

campus was difficult at times. Still, everyone was amicable and most were interesting, so I left

the program with a few really good friends.

Living Accommodations

Duke in China takes every precaution to shelter you from the housing woes that Chinese

students face. The setup is nearly identical to a hotel, with staff changing your towels and sheets

regularly. One point of culture shock was discovering how hard the beds were, which you’ll

eventually get used to. You can’t drink the tap water, so everyone had to constantly buy water

from the convenience store. The Wi-Fi is, quite frankly, not great. Even with a vpn, the internet

is so slow that it hinders your ability to do basic tasks such as checking your email, Instagram,

and connecting to the vpn in the first place. There’s not much you can do about this other than

appreciate the internet you have now and pray your vpn is consistent. Overall, the housing is

extremely cushy, but definitely reminded me every day of the privileged situation compared to

normal students. Duke in China really is a bubble (perhaps even more than Yale), so if you spend

all your time doing homework in the posh international building, it’s easy to miss out on China.

As I sit at home writing this review while silently suffering from jet lag, I feel that the

Duke in China program was overall a positive one. Although my review may indicate otherwise,

I felt it was my due diligence to accurately portray aspects of the program, good and bad. My

Chinese improved far more than it could’ve at Yale, and I went from being able to say almost

nothing to being able to somewhat hold a conversation, and the other second year students had

similar progress. That in itself was worth it. You still have to deal with the mundane like picking

what to eat, doing laundry, calling your parents- not too different from being at Yale.

My advice to anyone considering this program is that make sure you know what your

goals are. If you are completely determined to improve your Chinese level and nothing else, this

program will definitely work for you. If you want a more well-rounded experience, take the time

to go to a Chinese restaurant and try random dishes, walk around the city and take the metro, go

to a nightclub (they treat foreigners nicely)- dare to see China, even if it hurts your homework

grade a little. After all, you probably didn’t fly across the world to study J

Thank you so much to the Light foundation for this opportunity because it really did help

my Chinese improve more than it could’ve at Yale, and seeing my rapid progress was satisfying.

It really is a fast, intense 8 weeks, but it’s an experience that you won’t get anywhere else. If you

are looking for an academically strong program that is forgiving to those who aren’t perfect at

Chinese, then Duke in China is probably for you.
Although weeks have passed since the program’s end on July 27th, I still recall the days I spent in China with the friends I was fortunate to have made over the course of two months. Duke Summer in China provided me with countless challenges that I struggled to overcome, but it is only in retrospect that I realize the genuine value of the opportunity I was generously provided by the Light Fellowship—to completely immerse myself in a new, foreign environment, and to witness the rich linguistical and cultural heritage of China.

**Academics**

Duke Study in China is an intensive summer program. As a fourth-year student, I was posed with the daily challenge of memorizing a hundred words, writing a 300-character paragraph, and completing textbook exercises after each lesson. On top of these assignments, students are also expected to complete weekly reports, essays, as well as written and oral exams to gauge their level of understanding and apply what they have learned in the classroom. As a non-heritage learner of Chinese, I personally found the oral exams to be the most challenging. Teachers encouraged impromptu, spontaneous speaking to prevent students from developing excessive script reliance. On one hand, the high intensity of this program means that students may not necessarily have a lot of free time to autonomously explore Beijing; although weekend trips provided me with the opportunity to visit different parts of the capital city, I found free time rather limited due to the high workload of the fourth-year curriculum. On the other hand, many participants see drastic improvements in their Chinese proficiency in a short amount of time—after a few weeks, I realized that the time I spent on preparing for the oral exam shrank from a three, four hours to just a few minutes.

**Social Life**

One of the most salient features of Duke Study in China is its relatively small program size. This year, a total of 27 students joined the program from Duke, UC Berkeley, Wellesley, Yale, and Yale-NUS. The small size of the program facilitates the formation of a tightly-knit community of both students and teachers. Various activities such as weekly cultural classes, weekend trips to travel destinations in Beijing, and the culminating end-of-program performance all help promote a sense of communal spirit that is quite unique to Duke Study in China. Although students who belong to different classes may not have as many opportunities for mutual interaction, many students still find time on Fridays or weekends for outings or spontaneous trips regardless of school or class level. The concept of friendship also applies to “Language Partners,” one of the hallmarks of Duke Study in China. All participants are required to meet with their designated language partners—local college students—four times a week. I personally became great friends with my language partner, to the extent that we would eat dinners and go singing at Karaoke together on weekends. I consider the friendships I built...
through this program to be one of the most rewarding aspects of Duke Study in China, even more so than the boost in Chinese fluency I achieved over the course of two months. To this date, I still maintain close contact with the friends I met through this program, which goes to show the strength of the bond people can build through this program.

**Housing**

All participants of the program are housed in the International Building of the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE). Because the facility was constructed relatively recently, the dorm feels modern and clean, both in its interior and exterior. Although the building is technically a student dormitory, it operates more like a hotel than a dorm or a student apartment. Bedsheets, shower towels, and other miscellaneous items are replaced with new ones on a periodic basis, and the cleaning ladies kindly mop the floor once every two or three days to maintain indoor sanitation. Aside from the living quarters, the building also houses several cafés, restaurants, and ample study spaces with desks and chairs. These study spaces were regularly used by the program’s students, not only for studying after class but also to meet with their language partners. The only minor complaint I had concerned intermittent Wi-Fi connection problems (as well as VPN issues, although this is more attributable to the city of Beijing itself than UIBE). I would recommend future participants to enroll in a robust cellular plan so that 4G data is always a viable option.

**Food**

Food in Beijing is generally cheap and delicious. The price of cafeteria food ranges from around 12 to 25 yuan, which translates to approximately 2 to 4 dollars. Although different people have different dietary preferences, I personally found the cafeteria food to be quite good given its very affordable price. There is also a plethora of food options off-campus just a few steps beyond the school gate. It is difficult to provide an approximate price range for these restaurants since their quality of food and services involve wide variations, but it is still worth noting that there are both reasonably cheap and expensive options that cater to different needs. A salient feature of the Duke Study in China is the “Language Table,” a weekly event on Fridays where teachers take students out for lunch at local hole-in-the-wall restaurants. The language table not only serves to help students get closer with their teachers, but also provides a wonderful opportunity for students to learn more about Chinese cuisine and culinary culture. A rather tangential, yet important, point worth mentioning is that take-outs and deliveries are extremely common in China. The convenience of having anything—whether it be fried chicken or a bottle of Boba—delivered right to my doorsteps is something that I wish I could also enjoy at home.

All in all, Duke Study in China has left me a valuable skill that is fluency in a foreign language. Watching Chinese movies and TV programs on Aiqiyi, the Chinese equivalent of Netflix or YouTube, has become my newfound hobby. But aside from language proficiency, I see the experience of living in a foreign country with great people to be the most valuable and
endearing aspect of Duke Study in China. The two months I spent in Beijing would have felt routine and insipid had it not been for the friends I met and the interactions we had. Would I do it all over again if I could? Yes, I’d answer, in a heartbeat.