

A Chinese Experience

Every day I am more & more impressed with the opportunities that OSA gives to students from all around the world. When I received an announcement for the “First International Summer Session: Lasers and Their Applications, 2011” sponsored by OSA and the Changchun Institute of Optics, Fine Mechanics and Physics (CIOMP), in Changchun, China. Since my research topic is related to laser applications, I started to dream about the possibility of attending such an event. After interviews with my advisors I was informed that even though it was a good opportunity for my research, there was not enough money for this trip. I know that science opportunities, as many other things in this world, are limited by Mr. Cash, and it is not cheap to travel 40 hours to the opposite part of the world. After getting a bit disappointed and “drowning my sorrows”, so to speak, I decided to try to find information for the next summer session with this topic, maybe then I would be luckier with respect to the money. This is how I contacted Kristin Mirabal, Director of OSA Global Programs. She asked me about my research and encouraged me to apply for a financial support by OSA!! Wow! That really was a turning point in this process.

Trips not only offer academic and professional experiences, you are also being exposed cultural and lifetime experiences. China is a country full of adventures, no matter where you are from. It is a cumulus of culture, mysticism, architecture, history, (many, many) people, writing, and, of course, food.



It all started after I arrived to Beijing, the second most populated city in China, and suddenly found myself surrounded by thousands of people who could understand my language as much as I could understand their signs... nothing. After a very long and multifaceted performance of gestures and drawings, I was able to get my train ticket to Changchun. Due to the short time that I had for arriving on time to CIOMP, the only ticket I could find from Beijing to Changchun was a “standing ticket”. This means that I stood up during all the 10 hours of the train trip, a small sacrifice for all the help received.



I have not visited many institutes in the world, yet, I may say that I am impressed with the CIOMP. It is not only its size, but also its significant trajectory in the history of modern China. I immediately noticed the kindness of the students from this institute, always giving an enormous effort to help, guide, explain, translate and interact with foreigner students. The Conferences of the summer session were, in my opinion, very interesting and informative, something which was easily believed due to the quality of the invited speakers. During poster presentation I could learn about hot topics on optics, and I could also enrich my research with the commentaries of professors and students. And well, the sharing with other foreigner students is also something to remember. Students from more than 10 countries joined, interacted, learned, and joked together for a week, filling my mind with enjoyable memories.



Finally, after a week completely full of new experiences and friends, I returned back to my country with a huge smile in my face and a lot of work to finish in my email. Thank you very much OSA for supporting me and many other students in such academic, professional, and life events. Experiences as this one will certainly enrich our careers and life. Thank you also CIOMP, Kristin Mirabal, Professors, and Chinese and foreign friends for such good memories that you gave me.

By the way, my train trip for coming back to Beijing was much more comfortable than the one to Changchun! Since the Chinese students helped me out reserving the ticket ahead of time, this time I spent those 10 hours of travel lying on a soft sleeper-bed. Thank you very much guys!!

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