



Shiru Chen (bottom left corner) and fellow researchers on a field trip to Xichang, Tunchang County, Hainan province

Outstanding Student Nominee Shiru Chen

By Brynn Kowalski

Shiru Chen is a current senior with HAITC majoring in Public Service and Public Policy. She has participated in several research initiatives, including field-driven research in Tunchang County, Hainan. Shiru has recently applied for graduate school.

Q. What was your major in the HAITC program?

A. It is the Public Service and Public Policy.

Q. What is your favorite memory or course from the program?

A. I think that I really love the senior seminar course, which is named Senior Seminar. We discussed and analyzed controversial issues regarding the social development and government management in China and the US. In this course, for example, we discussed what effects seasonal, migratory,

aged people brought to the locals, taking Sanya, the international tourist city, as an example. And we found that there are a lot of, y'know, advantages brought by the migratory tourism. For example, it can boost the development of the pension industry, and also raise the tax revenues for the government. However, you know, aged people still have – will brew some problems. For instance, it will, you know, most people are aged people, so they may get some diseases [more] easily than the young people, so they may experience medical pressure and so forth. Also, we [associated] the case with Florida, the sunshine state in the US, and we made some connections and comparisons with these two locations. So, I guess in this course we not only learned more about China and the US but also found some differences between these two countries. I guess in the future I may want to be a civil servant or researcher in the college. I will continue to do some research in this field. Hence, I really love the course.

I really loved the teacher, Dr. Kathy. She always encouraged us to brainstorm and figure out a lot of solutions and make a lot of comparisons. It really helped me to you know, do some brain exercise I guess. [laughs]

Q. What experience do you feel impacted you the most during the program?

A. I think that I remember an experience that there is – there was a workshop, you know. We, our college, helped us to – I just uh, how do you say – we invited a professor, whose name is Haim Dotan, it's his Chinese name, I forget his English name. He designed a really awesome bridge* in China, and is really famous, and I'm really glad that I could meet him and work with him

for almost about a week. I think that's really – during that workshop, I, you know, met a lot of friends, and also, I [could learn] how the professor designed the bridge and his brilliant ideas, and you know, learn a lot from him.... That's really a cherished memory for me, yeah.

* Haim Dotan designed the Zhangjiajie Grand Canyon Glass Bridge project

Q. What skills have you learned during your time in the HAITC program?

A. I think one of the most important skills is the critical thinking skill, you know. Just as I mentioned before, during the senior seminar we discussed a lot of cases from a lot of countries, and I think during the process of analyzing and discussing those problems I developed the critical thinking ability. So, I can view a thing from a lot of perspectives such as the politics, economy and culture. I will also see the pros and cons of a thing at most cases. I think it's really helped.

Also, you know, I also learned to do the self-study, because in a lot of times, the teachers will give us the course materials ahead of time, and we need to study by ourselves first. And it's really helpful for my future internships and maybe research experience. I think that these two skills are really important, and that's what I really developed in this HAITC college, yes.

Q. Do you have a favorite real-world experience using these skills, such as during an internship, volunteer, or research opportunity?

A. Yes, absolutely. I used to take part in a rural research project in Xichang, Tunchang County in Hainan. Before [I started my] research, I searched for

information and read many materials regarding the place, which was an application of my self-studying ability. After the field trip, I used critical thinking to systematically analyze the local environment and resources and discussed it with [the] teachers and students. In the end, our research team put forward development suggestions, such as building a second classroom base for students in Hainan and submitted all suggestions to the county government.

Q. What do you plan to do after you graduate?

A. Actually, I just applied for graduate school in China. So, I will pursue the graduate studies and maybe in the future I need to re-understand myself, since I think I need to re-understand my personality, my skills, and I need to learn what kind of job will suit me, so I still have a long way to go in the future. I mean, after my graduate studies, I think I will be a little bit further than my undergraduate. [laughs]