



Xuecong Fan at Freshman Week (2021) working as assistant to the head teacher and providing orientation services

Outstanding Student Nominee Xuecong Fan

By Brynn Kowalski

A current senior with the HAITC program, Xuecong Fan holds a major in Parks and Recreation Management. She has participated in several international conferences and recently developed a research paper alongside her professor analyzing the evolution of travel following the pandemic; she has presented this research as first author at the 43rd Annual Southeast Environment and Recreation Research (SEER) Conference, and the paper is currently undergoing its second round of reviews with the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism (JORT)*.

Q. What is your major in the HAITC program?

A. I am a student from Parks and Recreation Management.

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

A. My favorite course is PRM120 and it's called Leisure and Quality of Life, which covers areas related to leisure, which is very interesting and very helpful for my later academic research. In addition, the main assignment for this class required us to conduct two interviews and analyze them based on the theory we have learned, and this is my first attempt to do some academic related tasks under the guidance of Dr. Lu; I found that I can use theories to explain some phenomena in my daily life and also some, explain some behavior, interrelated behavior in my life, which makes me have a stronger interest in my major. That made me really impressed, and this experience can be seen as inspiration for my research interests. Later I was fortunate to be selected as research assistant of Dr. Lu, and we also have conducted some research on the changes in Chinese travel behavior after the pandemic; [the] interview and qualitative data analysis taken in the PRM120 were applied, and the theory we have learned in this course was also used in our research. So, it was very interesting.

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

A. I have attended some international conferences. For example, several months before, I had attended the AAG – the American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, and I was the co-chair of one of the stations of the meeting. It was very impressive and it was my first time to be the chair of one international meeting, so... and I think it was preparing me to know such meetings and I appreciate it.

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

A. HAITC provided me with many opportunities to learn a variety of skills, including some basic skills such as how to use Office, PowerPoint, Excel and Photoshop. Also, major related skills, such as using ArcGIS*, drawing urban planning, and academic related skills, such as qualitative data collection, and the essays, English academic paper writing skills, and some skills that [I now use in] daily life. For example, I can make great slides [that are] logical, professional, and good looking. Also, I can present in English fluidly and confidently. It is from the practice of each assignment from all of my classes in HAITC, I think. Also, during my experience in the Psychology Center in HAITC, which is the student team, I think, I attended a Hainan Psychological Association psychological consultant training course; and also, I have learned how to organize competition and conferences with my team members in my daily work. So, I think I am very lucky and proud that I am able to learn so many new skills.

*ArcGIS is a software used to make maps, analyze spatial data, and collaborate across teams.

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

A. I'm glad to say that all of the skills I just mentioned have been used in my real-life experience and in my research I just mentioned; [in] the graduate thesis experiment I have used both quantitative and qualitative research methods, and also some psychological related theory, and I plan to write this

academic thesis in English.... and I think my work on this thesis with my team members is useful. And also, I have gotten some opportunities to participate in some academic competitions and international conferences and also, I have gotten top three in undergraduate research in Western Federation CHRIE in 2022 for good research and also good presentation. I have used ArcGIS and drawing skills in an opportunity to participate in the planning of Tunchang in Hainan, Haikou. So, all of this has been practiced.

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

A. Thank you for the recommendation from the excellent teachers and professors in HAITC and also my good ranking. I have obtained the qualification of post-graduate recommendation in China and got the offer from Nankai University, which ranks Top 3 in Tourism Leisure Management in China. At the same time, I wish I could be a life long learner, and discover tourism and leisure related phenomena and make some meaningful, theoretical, and major contributions.

Thank you for our program. What I have made is made by the opportunity offered by this program, so that I can, I know I can learn these skills. I learn it, I grab these opportunities, and then I can make something that is amazing, something like that, so it's just come from the opportunity that HAITC has offered me.