

UCLA-Peking University Summer Program

For students at UCLA, particularly in engineering and the sciences, two popular options for summer is participating in an undergraduate research program, or a study abroad program. A joint program between UCLA and Peking University (PKU) in China offers the best of both – advanced research at a world-class university, while being completely immersed in another culture.

The twelve-week program places UCLA students side-by-side with Chinese students, and their research projects, under the supervision of PKU professors in the UCLA/PKU Joint Research Institute in Science and Engineering. Evenings include Chinese language classes along with ample time to explore China's capital city. The program is currently accepting applications from students for summer 2012.

Brandon Lanthier, a senior civil engineering major, became interested in the 2011 program after receiving an e-mail from an academic counselor.

During the daytime, Lanthier worked in a lab, performing research on carbon dioxide sequestration – pumping greenhouse gas from the exhaust of coal power plants into the ground, to eventually be absorbed and stored by groundwater. In the early evening, he attended a Mandarin language class, and was given free time after dinner.

“This program benefited me by exposing me to a very advanced subject, carbon dioxide sequestration,” Lanthier said. “And I loved being able to go to and experience all that Beijing had to offer. Just being there and seeing this up and coming country was an amazing experience. The people, culture, and food were all fantastic. I can't think of anything else to say except that it was unbelievable.”

Electrical engineering senior Hien Huynh worked on a project related to mobile computing cloud, which involved migrating executable codes from the client side to the servers in the cloud.

“By doing so, client programs, such as mobile applications, can be run at a higher speed since all the work will be done at the server side,” he explained of his project.

And of the program, Huynh said, “it was a wonderful experience, both academically and culturally. I really enjoyed the program. It was like a challenge for me, testing me on how well I can adapt to a new programming environment as well as a different living environment.”

Behind the program is the trend in globalization. There is a desire for UCLA students to receive additional preparation for it, said Jason Cong, Chancellor's Professor of Computer Science and director of the UCLA/PKU Joint Research Institute

Many science and engineering problems, such as climate change, clean energy, and disease prevention are of global importance and solutions will require international collaboration, he said. In addition, multi-national corporations will want leaders who have a global perspective.

“I hope that our students gain valuable research and cultural experiences in international collaboration, which will better prepare them to be future leaders in the age of globalization,” Cong said.

The trans-Pacific program, which was inaugurated in June 2009, unites two universities that already had an excellent record of collaboration in the sciences and engineering, such as in the design of integrated circuits and systems; biobehavioral sciences, space sciences, astrophysics and cosmology; and epidemiology.

Besides education programs, the joint UCLA-PKU Joint Research Institute also promotes collaborative research, which includes seeking funding from government and private sources; and the facilitation of technology transfer of collaborative research.

The deadline to apply for the summer 2012 program is February 5, 2012. For more information on the program: <http://www.pku-jri.ucla.edu/education/exchange-2012-UCLA.asp>

*Deadline to apply for this year's program is Feb. 5

APPLY: <http://www.pku-jri.ucla.edu/education/exchange-2012-UCLA.asp>