

Application for Fall 2018 University Arts Endowment Committee Grants

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Submitted to

The Arts Endowment Committee
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Section 1 – Proposal Summary

- Abstract:

The goal of this project is to produce a one-hour long documentary focusing on international students' unique experience in Terre Haute, Indiana. This project is based on the PI's most recent publication "English Versus Native Language on Social Media: International Students' Cultural Adaptation in the U.S." (*Journal of International Students*, 2018, Volume 8, Issue 4, pp. 1709-1721). This article explores the significant role played by social media for international students in their cultural adaptation to the host country, and the role played by using English vs. non-English language on social media in the students' cultural adaptation to the host country. For the purpose of this research, 12 international students at Indiana State University were interviewed in the fall of 2016. After completing the research article, the PI applied for an UAEC grant in 2017 to shoot a documentary film based on her findings. In spring 2018, with a partial fund from the UAEC, the PI and three graduate students from the department of communication completed shooting the footage for this documentary. To complete this project, the PI needs further support from the UAEC for postproduction, travel, stipend, and more equipment.

- Request submitted to other departments or agencies for this work:

None.

- Describe the significance of the project:

This topic tackles many problems facing the U.S higher education in the global age. According to the interviews conducted in 2016 and statistics from the IIE (Institute of International Education), there has been a significant increase of international students in the US in the past decade. However, the trend has been slowing down since 2016. At the local level, there has been a decline in international students' enrollment at ISU. This is a new change for an institution that used to host a good number of international students. This documentary is an attempt to explore the cultural and political reasons behind this transition, in addition to recording how international students finding their paths to their destination through their education in Terre Haute.

- Describe the final product and method of dissemination:

The final product will be a one-hour long documentary. The PI has accumulated about 12 hours of footage that includes interviews and shots of various activities. In addition to international students, different parties are interviews on their views of international students. The footage is yet to be edited into a full-length documentary.

- Describe how UAEC funding will contribute to the success of this project:

The UAEC funding will be the key to the success of this project. The PI is seeking support in the following aspects of this project:

- 1) Pay for professional post-production service to work on footage organizing, video rendering, sound quality, and special effects, etc.
- 2) Purchase more equipment accessories such as storage devices, and better sound recording and lighting equipment future shooting.
- 3) Support travel to film festivals to promote this documentary and learn from my peers in the industry.
- 4) Purchase a subscription to video streaming service and royalty free music download fee from sources such as purple planet. These are valuable sources for this project.
- 5) Provide summer stipend for the PI to work on this project in summer 2019.

- Describe the qualifications which enable you to do this project:

The PI had experience in news reporting at the International Channel Shanghai from 2009 to 2011. My major accomplishments include producing feature news stories, evening news packages, and talk shows as a reporter and director. Through my experience working for the ICS, I thoroughly explored and practiced many aspects of news production, including writing for TV, interview, dubbing, editing, and postproduction.

At Indiana State University, the PI's teaching responsibilities include multimedia production I-III, among other things. She is specialized in graphic design and digital production using Adobe CC.

Section 2—Interim Report

I am submitting this interim report to support my application of the UAEC 2019 grant. I was awarded a partial UAEC grant in the amount of \$2593.67 in fall 2017. My goal was to create a documentary on international students in Terre Haute. Below is the progress I have made on this project.

1. Planning and Shooting

In spring 2018, I used my grant money to purchase necessary equipment needed for shooting. With the extra support of equipment provided by the department of communication, I was able to complete shooting the following footage:

- 1) Interview with five international students
- 2) Interview with three working staff members at the Center of Global Engagement
- 3) The interlink class on ISU campus
- 4) Footage on president inauguration, international student farewell party, Saudi Student Night.
- 5) I also interviewed domestic students on their take of international students.

A rough cut of two interviews is now available upon request. After completing the rough cut of the full movie, the PI will seek assistance on audio and visual effects from a professional media production company, mostly likely the Envisionary Media.

2. Curricular Contribution of My Project: Experiential Learning

In spring 2018, the PI offered COMM603 (Experiential Learning as a Communication Professional) to three graduate students. The class was developed around this grant project. The students actively engaged in planning, shooting, and editing of the movie. Upon completing the class, they each turned in an edited interview with their subjects.

3. Budget Use

Below is a report of how budget was used for this project:

BUDGET		HAIJING TU GRANT	UNAR82
			2508.67*
Product	PURCHASE	COST	BALANCE
Camcorder	Andorama	1999.00	509.67
Accessories**	Amazon	223.49	286.18
Accessories	Amazon	119.86	166.32
Accessories	Amazon	10.99	155.33
Accessories	Amazon	150.83	4.50

*This amount does not include \$85 dollars spent on travelling to Indy airport. Including travel, full budget amount is \$2593.67.

**accessories include batteries, memory cards, hard drive, microphone adaptor cord, XLR audio adaptor, etc.

4. Future Plan

Professional postproduction is needed to successfully complete the documentary project. I plan to hire external sources to help me work on organizing my footage and interviews and finish editing the movie. I also plan to send the completed movie to several film festivals, including the [Nantucket Film Festival in New York](#), [the Newburyport Documentary Film Festival](#) in Massachusetts, and [the Indy Film Fest](#) in Indianapolis.

Section 3—Project Narrative (double spaced, up to 8 pages)

This documentary tells the stories of international students who are living or lived in Terre Haute. The subjects include: Yupu Sun (Coaching), Tianxi Wen (Conducting), Jerry Feng (Computer Science), Polina Kaniuka (Education Leadership), and Trinadh Matcha (Global Education). In addition, the documentary recorded interviews with officers at the Center for Global Engagement, class discussions from an InterLink class and a communication class. All interviewees signed a copy of the “release form” to authorize the PI with the right to use the recording of their images for this project. Various activities, such as the Saudi Night, the International Students Farewell Party, the Chinese New Year Celebration, etc. were recorded as b roll for this documentary. The PI also followed interviewees to their work place and home to record various b rolls.

As of October 2018, rough editing of interviews with two subjects and class discussions are completed. The PI expect to complete rough editing of the whole movie and send it out for professional postproduction early next year. In addition, the author hopes to collect better visual and audio footage as b rolls for this documentary project. The primary goal of this grant proposal is to seek further funding support on this project.

During the interview, four major themes related to their lives in Terre Haute emerged as we got to know the interviewees much better: 1) Language barrier and isolation, 2) pressure from school work, 3) uncertainties about career opportunities in the U.S. , 4) personal growth gained from the life in Terre Haute.

Language Barrier and the Transition

Language proficiency contributes to the sense of being accepted in the host culture. Of all challenges they face in this entirely new environment, interviewees listed language proficiency as their top concern. “I think my main problem is language. I am limited by language.” Tianxi said during the interview. The difficulty was echoed by Yupu. The way they studied English in China was not able to support their day to day communication in the U.S. Not able to understand and be understood by other people thwart their willingness to communicate. According to them, the hardship of their life transition after coming to Terre Haute is mostly due to the language barrier.

Tianxi said, “After I graduated from my university, I was a conductor in China, and I really love it. And I loved orchestra conducting. It’s really easy to communicate with the [orchestra members].” However, the situation here is difficult: “After I came to the US, I find things have changed. It’s really hard for me to communicate with them, and to conduct them. Because you know, conductor is the leader of the whole orchestra. In my situation, language is a really big problem. How [would] you feel if a conductor [cannot] express his/her ideas very well?” (5-11-2018)

At the same time, Tianxi reported using mostly her native language on social media, and she spent about three hours using social media every day. Yupu reported being friends with mostly Chinese during her stay here. Their concern about language and their relatively isolated life both limited their cultural experience in the U.S.

Pressure from School and Work

Tianxi said, “For Americans, they feel easy to organize the research paper. For us, for example, if we need to do research and read a lot of resources, books. Especially for my

professional books, sometimes one sentence has a couple new words for me, and I need to check dictionary very often. So I got really frustrated to do that.” She said in the interview, “I spent a lot of time to do my assignment. Sometimes until 2 am or 3 am, and the next day I need to get up at around 7 o’clock” (5-11-2018).

“Before I came to the US, my life [was] really easy, really happy,” said Tianxi in the interview. Her family did not understand her choice to choose the harder way of life because she could have lived in China without any pressure she is going through here. Her answer to this question was, “I think it was not good for me to [avoid] different cultures and different art field. I need to go to different countries to learn different things. Because I chose western music, I should come to western country to learn more” (5-11-2018).

Extracurricular Development in the U.S.

Facing graduation, Yupu hoped that she could accumulate some working experience in the U.S. before she returns to China. But a few months after graduation, she returned to China to start her career in coaching and fitness. By the time she graduated, many of her friends in the U.S. have returned to their home countries. For those who did not, graduate school was the most common choice. The chance for employment was not likely due to the fact that they need to find an employer that sponsors the H1b visa, which is difficult for non-STEM students.

Still, they did have various opportunities to work on and off campus during their studying here. Polina, for example, had great experience working at the Center for Global Engagement. Trinadh is working for the counseling center at ISU. Yupu worked for the Registrar’s office, and also worked at the Terre Haute Torpedoes as a volunteer coach. Tianxi is working as a teaching assistant at ISU for 20 hours per week. Jerry volunteered at the Wabash

Valley Chinese School in 2018. All these are valuable experiences that contributed to their personal growth.

Personal Growth

According to Yupu, “[My parents] supported me financially...I didn’t think much about paying back until I had my first part time job on campus. After I talked to my co-workers I was surprised, they were very independent. They supported themselves, paid their bills, their housing, and some of them even paid for their school. I need to do something” (2-12-2018).

Yupu also discussed how attending a bible study fellowship helped her to blend into the community and overcome many difficulties in her life here at Terre Haute. The PI and graduate students followed Yupu to the fellowship and recorded her activities there in February 2018. In May 2018, Yupu departed for China. Soon after, she started a fitness gym as a coach in her hometown city.

The University

Three interviews were conducted with officers in the Center for Global Engagement. They talked about the efforts the University paid to recruit and retain international students. Hosting international students has financial impact on the university and local community. Also, international students contribute to the campus diversity as an active student body, because they organize cultural events and other activities that are essential parts of campus life. This project will also examine how the University will steer new policies on hosting international students.

In sum, international students’ language barrier and their social isolation are the major challenges to their adaptation in the U.S. A university degree from the U.S. is still considered a

valuable asset, but students are aware of the change in immigration policies that limit their opportunities to make career development in the U.S.

Section 4—Vitae (See Attachment)

Section 5—Budget

- Budget Form (**see attachment**)
- Budget Narrative

The budget needed for this project include three major categories.

1. Budget needed for postproduction. Postproduction needs professional equipment available at media production companies such as the Envisionary Media in Terre Haute. The finetuning of sound and image is key to the success of this project. Based on the price asked by the Envisionary Media, I request \$2,450 for postproduction of this project.

2. I am requesting 1,500 dollars for travelling to film festivals to be held in Indiana and other states, in case the finished movie is accepted for screening. [The Indy Film Fest](#) in Indianapolis is my primary goal, followed by other festivals accepting documentary submission.

3. I request 1,779 dollars for purchasing more equipment for this project. I still need to accumulate more b rolls and record several interviews because of the problem with sound effects in the footage shot in spring 2018.