**Applied Program: Food and Resource Economics**

In the summer of 2003, most parts of China were experiencing an almost intolerable heat. By contrast, my advisor and I spent an important part of the summer in the cold mountain areas that were also economically undeveloped—we were doing field trip in the XX Region of XX Province, whose level of economic development lags far behind the average national standard, to investigate the agricultural resources that could be exploited. For a whole month, we carried out extensive and detailed surveys in four counties and this experience of undertaking field trip has become my most memorable and fruitful portion of my undergraduate life.

XX Province, which is located in the remote west of China, is a typical poor province of the country and its agricultural production is at a very low level. In particular, the XX Region which we investigated displays some of the worst conditions of rural economy—farmers live in abject poverty, the means of farming is technologically primitive and the regions lacks diversified modes of agricultural production. However, our one-month survey indicates that that the regions abound in special local products. The essential problem for the region is that it has little access to effective capital investment. Taking those factors into consideration, we proposed to the local government that important changes should be introduced into the existing pattern of agricultural production—instead of growing the conventional cash crops that have become unprofitable, the region should concentrate on the extensive development and exploitation of its special local resources. As for the capital input, I came up with my independent suggestion that factories be set up through flexible means of financing so that the special local farm products can receive preliminary processing to increase their added value, which could further facilitate their circulation on the local and non-local markets. The agricultural department of the local government attached great importance to our propositions and gave us very positive comments.

This field trip was a shocking but stimulating experience for me as a college student who has grown up in a city.  The single-patterned agricultural production and the failure to tap the rich agricultural resources commercially are the primary source of economic depression for the local farmers. This realization has prompted me to the determination to seek an advanced education abroad where I can learn advanced concepts of agricultural development. This may enable me to contribute my efforts to the prosperous rural development of China, especially that of the western region. With this in mind, I solemnly apply for a Master’s program in Food and Resource Economics from the University of XX. Underlying this application are not only my heartfelt enthusiasm for changing the relatively undeveloped agricultural condition of China but also my implicit faith in my ability to complete my proposed program successfully, a faith based on my firm academic foundation, my demonstrated capacity to carry out independent research, and the rich practical experience I have accumulated.

I completed my undergraduate program in XX University, one of the universities with the longest history in China. I majored in International Economics and Trade at the School of Economics. In my 4-year undergraduate career, I received systematic education in international economics and trade and commanded the basic methods to perform research and analysis in economics. In my extracurricular hours, I made full use of our university’s newly-established E-library to consult a large amount of technical literature, both domestic and international, concerning the latest theories of economics and rural economy. My diligent efforts at coursework and effective study strategies led to my distinguished academic performance in my major courses and in mathematics, with an overall GPA of 83/100 (ranking among the top 5 of my class) and winning several scholarships for outstanding academic performance.

The ability to carry out independent research is another important aspect that distinguishes me from my classmates. My thesis, entitled A Tentative Study of the Problems Faced by China’s Rural Economy in Attracting Foreign Investment and Their Countermeasures, focuses on the most serious problems that have happened to China’s rural economy in exploiting foreign investment—limited volume in overall foreign investment and even smaller percentage of hi-tech investment. This gave exposure to two important issues in China’s rural development –the problematic nature of agriculture as public entity and the insufficient attention to rural insurance. By applying the mathematical input-output model in microeconomics, I verified my research results and investigated the necessity to increase the public input in the rural sector. Rated as “Excellent”, my thesis has been published in the country’s Level-II journal XX Agricultural Studies (Issue 8, 2003).

An important extracurricular experience of mine is that Since July 2000 I have been working part-time at the Business Department of XX City’s XXXX Automation Engineering Information Co. Ltd where my chief responsibility is to perform market analysis and resource development. I participated in the negotiation, planning and operation of several major agricultural development projects of the company. To an undergraduate like me, all those experiences have become a rare opportunity to receive trainings beyond the academic coursework. I have prized this opportunity very much by trying my best to apply my knowledge to the solution of real-world problems. I won two awards in 2002— Outstanding Employee Award and Special Contribution Award. But the real benefit I obtained from those experiences is that I have learned about the tremendous potential of China’s market of agricultural products. But I am equally impressed by the fact that China’s present-day agricultural development is marred by the absence of a sound agency mechanism. In this age of increasing globalization, including that in the agricultural sector, I see a growing need for specialists in rural economy who are well-acquainted with Chinese situations on one hand and equipped with systematic knowledge and international trainings in rural economy on the other.

XX is universally acknowledged as a leading country in agricultural development. Its forestry, fishery, animal husbandry are well-developed. In particular, in the exploitation of agricultural resources, the agency system of agricultural products and agricultural insurance, XX has set up a model for the rest of the world. In this great country is born the unparalleled program in Food and Resource Economics at the University of XX, arguably the best of its kind in North America and in the world. At the same time, I greatly admire the spirit of originality and creativity advocated by this great university, the congenial student-student relationship and student-teacher relationship. In addition, the program lays special emphasis on the fusion of theory and application. It is my conviction that to be engaged in this program will enable me to learn the most advanced theories in rural policy, resource economics, and rural trade Those factors are the very motivation behind my present application.

“If you ever need a helping hand, it’s at the end of your arm, as you get older you should remember that you have another hand .One is to help yourself and the second is to help others.”Through a more advanced degree program in Food and Resource Economics, I can receive necessary academic input with which I can facilitate, in a more professional manner, the modernization campaign of China’s rural economy. In this way I may help a greater number of farmers currently living in poverty improve their material well-being. This is my ideal and the most important motivation underlying my academic efforts past, present and future.