



AUC Netherlands Asia Honours Summer School 2018: Blog Posts

Femke Jansen

26 June 2018

About the preparation phase

The application process for the NAHSS was not effortless, as two essays and a video pitch were required, next to a CV and a transcript. The first round of applications was the AUC selection, where multiple AUC students were selected. After this, the shortlist was passed on to the NAHSS Program Board, who made the final selection together with their partner companies. When I was called and I heard I made the final selection in February, I was thrilled! But still I was quite unsure what was waiting for me during the summer...

In March, we submitted our preferences for a city and a company. The NAHSS goes to four completely different cities: Hong Kong, Beijing, Taipei and Chengdu. Fourteen partner companies are linked to the NAHSS, for which the students complete a consultancy project, and I chose Orange Sports Forum. Orange Sports Forum (OSF) is a platform for Dutch companies with international ambitions, and my project group will get to research the growing football market in West-China, as we will be in Chengdu for 6 weeks this summer. From the moment you know this, the NAHSS really starts. I met my project group, our project coach, our partner company and all other NAHSS-students during the kick-off weekend in March. This weekend was a great opportunity to get to know the participants and the project.

After the kick-off, we started shaping and working on our project for OSF, and our project group had regular Skype meetings. But the group is more than just business, as every time that we got together for the NAHSS, we combined it with dinner or going out, to really get to know each other better. We even visited the zoo in Emmen to see the two pandas that were a gift from the Chengdu panda centre. The project groups are formed to be a diverse combination of students. We all have different backgrounds but we bring something different to the table, which is interesting to experience! In May, we visited our company and presented our progress to them.

The social get-togethers are not just organised by the project groups among themselves, but also by the NAHSS Program Board and Committee. In May, we had the chance to visit family De Heus and admire their extensive Chinese art collection, and a week later the annual NAHSS gala took place, where I met a lot of the 2018 participants and alumni. I already knew many students from the weekly language classes. Learning some Chinese is necessary when travelling to Chengdu, and I really enjoyed the classes that were topped off with a certificate.

I am looking forward to experience Chengdu and a week in Shanghai, and spending time with my fellow NAHSS-ers! The programme is quite full, with a lot of classes in Chinese language and politics and many company visits, but I am sure that the summer will seem like the blink of an eye when I come back.

Peter-Jan Derks

12 July 2018

First two weeks of NAHSS

Together with 23 other students, I arrived in Hong Kong two weeks ago. I chose to travel to Hong Kong to experience a city with contrast; a mix of western and Asian culture, and a busy metropolis surrounded by nature. Until now Hong Kong has definitely not disappointed. In this blog I will try to give you an idea of what I have been up to.



On the day we arrived, Charel from the program board was waiting for us together with Danny, Nicky and Nathalie, three local students. They helped us buy SIM cards and an octopus card, which is a useful card you can use to pay for almost everything. Then we took a bus from the airport to our dorms at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK).

The CUHK campus is unlike any other university campus I have visited. It is very green and built on a steep hill. All international summer school students are housed in Lee Woo Sing college. The facilities at the college are great; there is a gym, canteen and a lounge. Close to the college is a big library, swimming pool and other sports facilities.

Our programme here in Hong Kong includes company visits on Mondays and Fridays, and lectures on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The company visits take two to three hours and the companies tell us what they do in Hong Kong. Until now we have visited Friesland Campina, ING, Randstad, OMA and Rabobank, and we are going to visit Huawei and ABN Amro. I have learnt a lot about industries I previously did not know much about, including banking, consultancy and marketing.



On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday we have lectures for the two courses we are taking. I am taking Introduction to International Business and Engineering Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The morning lecture is from 9.15 till 12.15 and the afternoon lecture from 14.30 till 17.30. Compared to the courses I took at AUC, the courses here are not as intense. The lectures consist of a lot of group work and different types of activities.

In the evening, we almost always go into the city for dinner. Some evenings we eat at a local place, with round tables, plastic chairs and we share Chinese dishes. Other nights we will go to more fancy restaurants. After dinner, we sometimes go for drinks at local bars with cheap beers or to fancy Skybars. Hong Kong is an exciting city in terms of night life and Long Kwai Fong is a big party district.

During the weekends, we have had the chance to travel around. My favourite day trip we have done was an island hopping trip. We took the ferry from CUHK to an island only an hour away and we had a beautiful private beach.



The city is giving me a lot of energy and every day is different here. I can not wait to see what the next weeks bring us!

Leon Lan

26 July 2018

Second, third and fourth week

Life in Chengdu is laid-back, humid and most importantly: very spicy. In the past four weeks, I have immersed myself in Sichuan culture with weekly banquets and tea houses. The food in Chengdu is really what's hot: handmade noodles, local dumplings and fiery hotpots have created unforgettable experiences of the Sichuan cuisine. I chose Chengdu as my NAHSS destination to learn more about the local culture and it is also located in the heart of Sichuan, which makes travelling very convenient!

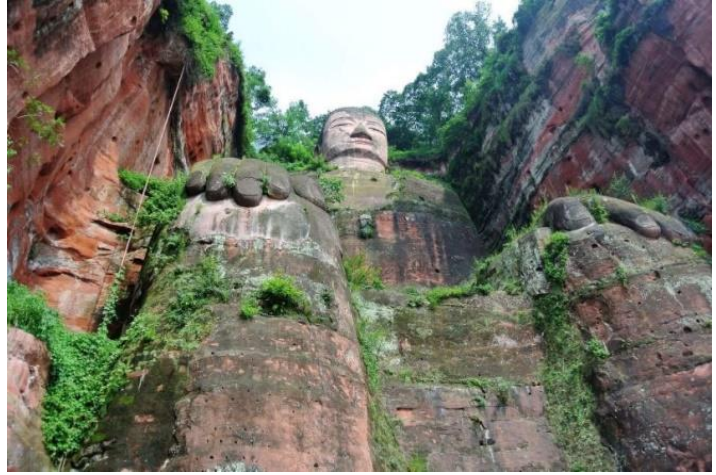


Wuliangye, Leshan and Emeishan

Two weeks in, we went to the second biggest liquor company in China, Wuliangye. This state-owned company produces the famous Chinese spirit *baijiu*, which has a taste that is incomparable to any other Western beverage. The company also sponsored a trip to the two most famous mountains in Sichuan, Leshan and Emeishan. It was a very intense weekend with loads of hiking, but the giant Leshan Buddha and view from the top of Emeishan were definitely worth it!

Qingchengshan and Dujiang irrigation system

In the third week, we travelled to the Dujiangyan irrigation system, which is a 2200 year old irrigation system. Near Dujiangyan, we hiked on the Qingcheng mountain, which is one of the birth places of the Tao religion. Halfway through the hike, it started to rain heavily, but we were determined to see the top of the mountain. It took us more than four hours to climb all the way up, but when we arrived, the skies cleared up!



Tibet and Siguniangshan

In our last weekend before going to Shanghai, we opted for a three-day hike in the Autonomous Region of Tibet. After a bus ride of 5 hours, we arrived in a small town called Rilong, which is located next to the Siguniangshan, or in English: the Four Maidens' Mountains. It consists of four adjacent mountain peaks and Tibetan legend described these peaks as the embodiment of four pretty girls, hence the unusual name. A local tour guide took us to the Haizi Valley for an 11-hour hike, showcasing the beautiful landscapes and mountains.





What's next?

With all these mountain visits, I actually forgot to eat in Chengdu! Even after four weeks, I still have a list of delicacies' that I want to try out, but I'm almost running out of time. In the last week I'm planning to go on a food tour, take a cooking class and visit local snack streets to enjoy the food while I still can. And after next week, we'll go to Shanghai!

Jetske Ong

10 August 2018

End of the programme: Business and Culture week in Shanghai



After spending about six weeks in Hong Kong, I flew to Shanghai, where all of the participants of the NAHSS 2018 gathered for the closing week. It was great to talk to students that had attended summer schools in other cities and doing so made me realise how diverse everyone's experiences had been, depending on the city. This closing week was a unique experience and was the perfect ending of an amazing summer with the NAHSS.

During this week, I explored the city, had company visits, saw the nightlife and bonded with the other participants even more. The week started with a panel day, during which every project group had to present the results of their project. It was really nice to hear the outcomes of all of the other projects that we had been hearing about for such a long time already. Additionally, this day was an opportunity for my project group to tell the other students about the great



experiences we had whilst interviewing treasurers of multinationals for our ING project.



Immediately after the panel day, we had an event where we met Dutch expats who were based in Shanghai. These expats told us about their experiences in Shanghai and these stories really increased my interest in working in Asia.

During the rest of the week we had a Crazy 88, during which we explored the city. We also had a Hutong school day, that involved playing mahjong, doing some tai chi and calligraphy and learning the basics of Chinese medicine. It was very interesting to engage with these typical Chinese activities and after this day I even bought some mahjong sets to take home! Another activity was the Philips day, which was very interactive, as we had to work on a case and present our results to Philips. Besides that, we had the opportunity to choose from company visits at Boskalis, NTS, Rabobank, Randstad and Dutchese group. I chose Boskalis, which is a leading global dredging and offshore contractor, as well as a maritime services provider. During this company visit, I learned more about their work and was able to see some of their working culture by attending the monthly birthday party they arrange for their employees.

The highlight of the week was probably the Huawei day. This was a fully arranged day by Huawei that started at the Huawei headquarters. Via a presentation and a tour through their tech-showcase we learned more about Huawei's activities. I was very impressed by Huawei and never realised how big they were when I was still located in the Netherlands. After learning more about Huawei itself, we had a lunch in the canteen where the thousands of employees of Huawei were also eating. It was amazing to witness the size of the company and to be able to be part of the company for a moment. After lunch, Huawei took us to the Shanghai tower, the second highest tower in the world, where we enjoyed the view of Shanghai. Then, we went onto a boat and sailed over the Huangpu river, which is located in the middle of the city. While sailing, we were able to enjoy the view of the pretty skyline Shanghai has. When we thought that our day could not get any better, we were brought to a restaurant where Huawei had arranged a dinner for us. During one of our last days, this enabled us to enjoy good Chinese food one more time.



My week in Shanghai was amazing and will be well-remembered. After having been in Hong Kong, it was great to be in China and to see the differences between these countries. Even though I am heading home soon, the NAHSS will not yet end for me. The great experiences I had and the unique opportunities the NAHSS brings have motivated me to become part of the programme board of the NAHSS 2019. This means that I will be working fulltime on the organisation of the next NAHSS edition and I look forward to seeing several AUC students there!