

ACS Mellon Foundation Faculty Renewal Grants

Final Reporting Guidelines

Mellon Foundation Faculty Renewal Final reports are due within 30 days of the end of the project period. The due date is in your award email from ACS. Your report should be e- mailed to mwhite@colleges.org for the ACS Faculty Renewal Initiative, 1975 Century Blvd., Suite 10, Atlanta, GA 30345. Fax: 404-636-9558.

Please address the following points in your *separate* ‘detailed narrative’ report with evaluation and dissemination information. **(Do not simply answer the questions by filling in the answers below.)**

Name of Person Submitting Report: Vivian Shen
E-mail: vishen@davidson.edu Phone: 704-894-2026
Institution: Davidson College

Name of project/event: Shanghai Modernity

Date(s) of Project: June 16 -- August 4, 2009

Amount Awarded: \$5,000

The main goal of this project was for me to develop a new interdisciplinary class about Shanghai modernity so that I can be a more diversified and effective teacher at Davidson College. To accomplish this goal, I visited Shanghai for six weeks in summer 2009 and worked as a visiting scholar at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

Shanghai has been the economic, cultural and political center of China during the past 100 years. My interest in Shanghai began when I was writing my first book *The Origins of Left-wing Cinema in China, 1932-37* (published by Routledge in 2005). But I have never taken any classes on Shanghai modernity. Most English books on Shanghai modernity tend to focus on Shanghai’s exotic past. I feel I need to come up with my

version.

The Institute of History at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences carries on the key disciplines of Study of Shanghai Urban History and the Study of Modern Chinese Society. At present it has research offices including Shanghai History, Social History, Intellectual and Cultural History. On the basis of its publications such as *The General History of Shanghai Series*, *History of Social Life in the City of Shanghai* and the large-scale reference book *Shanghai Encyclopedia*, the Institute's key discipline, namely, the Study of Shanghai Urban history, will make its theoretical summing up and elevation from the perspective of "Shanghai Studies", so as to bring about a study of urbanology, or city studies, pregnant with Chinese characteristics, Chinese style and Shanghai traits. The objective of the Institute of History at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences is to give priority to the study of the city of Shanghai, traditional China and modern society, create a good academic ambience of free development of different ideas, and expand constantly academic exchanges at home and abroad.

My goal remained consistent throughout this project, which contains two parts. The first part took place at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences where I was awarded a visiting scholar this summer. Ms. Li Li, a senior officer of foreign affairs, arranged the detail of my visit, from my library card to meetings with members of the academy.

I first met with Prof. Xiong Yuezhi, Vice-president of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and Director of Institute of History of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. One of the Professor Xiong's research specialties was Shanghai urban life under the influence of different cultures of the early 20th century. We exchanged books and talked about many issues of Shanghai modernity including foreigners in the 1930s and Shanghai mafia boss Du Yuesheng and a few other influential historic figures. I also met with Prof. Ye Xin, Director of the Institute of Literature at Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Professor Ye is a native of Shanghai and a prolific writer winning many awards. We discussed

creative writing in China and Chinese literary market. We also discussed Chinese and American literary trends. I also spoke with Prof. Ma Xuqiang, chairman of Institute of History of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, several times. We discussed issues of Shanghai modernity. He offered me valuable source information.

In my view, to be able to consult with these experts and exchange research ideas is the best part of visiting Shanghai Academy.

I used the libraries of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences both at its main office on Huaihai Zhonglu and Changle Lu in Luwan District. However, because the history library was in the process of moving into a new building, many books in their Changlelu branch were packed. Fortunately I was able to use the Shanghai Municipal Library.

The second part of my project was to study the development of Shanghai modernity in real life. I paid particular attention to Nanjing Road, Huaihai Road (formerly, Avenue Joffre), the Bund and the People's Park (formerly the Race Court). Additionally, I have visited Peace Hotel (formerly Palace Hotel and Cathay Hotel), Guoji Fandian (formerly Park Hotel), Shanghai Dasha (Broadway Mansions), Pujiang Fangdian (Astor House Hotel), Jinjiang Fandian, Huyuan Fandian (The French Club), Jinmen Dajiudian (the Pacific Hotel) and Hengshan Binguan--the eight, old, famous hotels in Shanghai.

These are well-known historical landmarks; each has its own long history and stories. Today they attract historians and tourists alike because these landmarks are evidence of a vibrant culture that emerged a long time ago. During Mao's Ear, Shanghai tried to cover up their colonial past because they thought it was shameful. Beginning in the early 1990s, however, Shanghai has been eager to reveal its colonial past to the outside because of cultural nostalgia and commercial attractions. After all, that was a big part of what made Shanghai, one of the most fascinating cities in the world.

Shanghai never fails to reinvent itself. Before the cheers of Beijing Olympic Games subsided, the Shanghainese began to push for Shanghai World Expo 2010. Now the whole city has been working hard to welcome the arrival of May 1, 2010, the first day of the expo, which lasts until the end of October 2010. Their enthusiasm affected my project in a few places (Peace Hotel and the Bund were under reconstruction when I visited there); however, it adds new meanings to Shanghai modernity, which seems to be an on-going project.

This is no evaluation or assessment of my project; however, as part of my goal for taking on this project, I'm designing a class called "Shanghai Modernity: History, Literature and Popular Culture." It will be offered at Davidson College in 2010 or 2011 when I return from my sabbatical.

I consider my project very successful and if I were to redesign it, I wouldn't change anything. Inspired by my project, my colleague Dr. Ping Shao has just applied for an ACS Mellon Foundation Faculty Renewal Grant in order to study Beijing modernity. We would like to jointly offer a team-taught, two-semester class called: Tale of Two Cities—Shanghai and Beijing, where we examine Chinese history, politics, literature and culture represented by the two most important cities in China.

My Shanghai modernity project will impact my institution as a whole now that the Chinese Department will have more classes, which will enable me to propose a Chinese major soon.

Although students were not directly involved in the project, I am sure they would love to see more new classes from the Chinese department, which is the result of this project.

I have shared some of my research result with a colleague from Washington and Lee University. If our "Tale of Two Cities—Shanghai and Beijing" is successful, we would like to share it with all other ACS members at ACS annual Chinese studies meeting.

I am creating the new class: Chinese 308: Shanghai modernity—History, Literature and Popular Culture. I have discussed my project with the registrar of Davidson College and gained his input. I will submit my new class to Davidson Education Policy Committee and to teach the class when I return from my sabbatical in fall 2010 or spring 2011.

In Sum, I am grateful to ACS Mellon Faculty Renewal Grants Committee for this grant. It made possible for me to visit Shanghai for six weeks during the summer of 2009. It also made possible for me to work as a visiting scholar at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. The best part of the visit is that I was able to discuss issues of Shanghai modernity with members of the academy. With the information I have gathered from my Shanghai trip, I am designing a new class called “Chinese 308: Shanghai Modernity: History, Literature and Popular Culture” which will be offered at Davidson in 2010 or 2011 when I return from my sabbatical. Inspired by my project, one of my colleagues has just submitted a proposal for a similar project in Beijing. If successful, the Chinese Department at Davidson will soon have a class called “Tale of Two Cities—Beijing and Shanghai.” These new classes, together with a few other classes we are designing, will allow the Chinese Department to offer a Chinese major at Davidson soon. Thank you.

(A detailed financial state is attached in a separate document.)

Email your report to mwhite@colleges.org
Mellon Faculty Renewal Initiative
Associated Colleges of the South
1975 Century Blvd., Suite 10
Atlanta, GA 30345
Fax: 404-636-9558