

## **Teach and Study FAQ**

*Answers by current Sias Student from America, Nicholas Waln (nicholas.e.waln@biola.edu)*

### **What are the advantages of the two-year teach and study program?**

I think the advantages of the program would be first of all the mix of work while also being able to focus on the language, being able to live at Peter Hall is a good advantage over the dorms although the international student dorms are very good. Likewise being a student I think is great as in some ways I find it very easy to make a lot of Chinese friends as a student as you're more just one of them.

### **What are the challenges?**

I think some of the challenges would have to be sitting back and forth might throw some of your relationships with Chinese students into confusion as they're used to relating one way then another however I think maybe being a bit distant from the international student life might be a drawback.

### **How do you financially support yourself during the semesters when you are not teaching?**

Since cost of living is so low here in Xinzheng and Zhengzhou I budget for around \$150 a month and live conformably with a phone data plan and eating all my meals out, since I can eat for about \$3-6 a day. I have money left over from collage and prior work I use to pay for it and my parents help a bit since it's education.

### **What advice would you give someone who is considering the two-year program?**

I'd say it sounds like a good idea I already relate quite a bit too both the foreign teachers and the Chinese and other international students. Having a mix of being a teacher and also being able to be a student I think is valuable.

### **Is it difficult to connect with either the foreign faculty or international students?**

As I've alluded to I straddle both groups all the time as it is without much problem just without the responsibility of teaching. I don't think you'd have much of a problem.

### **It seems that each semester can be an interruption to the other (teacher one semester, student the next)? How do you keep involved in these two worlds to fully experience the benefits of each?**

I just try to budget my time with different friend groups they all can contribute valuable and different things, though I of course get Chinese practice with my Chinese friends...

### **Who is this program best suited for?**

I think this kind of program is best suited for someone who wants to not only be able to add job skills and teaching to their resume, but also actually wants to learn Chinese. Many teachers here have been here for quite some time (such as 10 years), and my Chinese after half a year is vastly better than theirs... Being a teacher by itself unless you focus on diligently going to the international students classes like Anna does is NOT going to help you learn. The teachers here who really can speak Chinese are those who were formally a student or were serious about going to classes like Anna as I said. The others have very little ability in general in my experience despite time in country.