

Students Explore Chinese Health System

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"Studying urban and rural health systems in China" is the answer eight Tulane students can give to the perennial question: "How did you spend your summer vacation?"



Lizheng Shi, assistant professor of health systems management (center), and Tulane students outside a Shanghai restaurant celebrate their coursework in China. (Photo by Shelby F. Wynne)

The students participated in the third China Public Health Summer Program. Lizheng Shi, assistant professor of [health systems management](#) at Tulane, built a partnership with Fudan University, Shandong University and Shanghai Jiaotong University to introduce students to the health system challenges faced by China.

In recent years the Chinese public health system has gained worldwide attention from how it has dealt with the SARS epidemic, the HIV pandemic and the avian flu, Shi says.

"As China, the world's most populous nation, rapidly develops, there is an emerging

concern for how its already-burdened healthcare system will be able to provide health services for over one billion individuals, " he says. "Our program will expand students' perspective on issues of global health systems and give them a point of comparison as they analyze infrastructures."

During the month-long summer program students from other institutions ? the University of Regina in Canada, St. James School in Baltimore and Chinese institutions ? joined the Tulane group.

Students spent the majority of their time in Shanghai and Jinan, China, learning about the country's health system reform, the development of the rural Collaborative Medical System, disease control and prevention systems, and maternal and child healthcare systems.

"In addition to a focus on China's health system, we have a well-designed course which introduces students to the major health systems in the world and provides students with a comparative analysis of the pros and cons of different health systems," says Shi.

But the program is not all work â?" students were able to enjoy touring in Beijing, visiting the Great Wall, Forbidden City, Heavenly Temple, Peking Opera Night and Summer Palace.

Madeline Vann is a freelance writer who holds a master of public health degree from Tulane.