In the International Engineering Program, we are creating an exceptional integrated learning environment – one that is dedicated to academics, research, experiential learning opportunities on campus and abroad, and innovation in order to prepare engineers for our ever-evolving world. The fall Global Update 2018 provides insights into how the students, alumni, faculty, staff, board members, and academic and corporate partners of the IEP have created very special bonds over the last 30 years with promising opportunities in the near future. Our faculty research continues to cement the IEP's national expertise in engineering, robotics or one of the languages offered at URI (Chinese, French, Italian and Spanish).

As the first half of the visit, participants learned about the basics of the IEP, while the second half allowed for a deeper look at what the IEP experience looks like. This year, students attended workshops on topics such as language-based and/or discipline-related tasks and others providing participants with a cultural context for work, study and life in a particular country while challenging common cultural assumptions. A huge thank you to Melissa Schenck for organizing this event and also to IEP Director Lars Erickson and others providing participants with a cultural context for work, study and life in a particular country while challenging common cultural assumptions.

Right here, ZF North America. Likewise, a session was dedicated to including and funding more minority students in engineering as well as study abroad. Many of the panelists featured leaders from diverse backgrounds and with demonstrated success in engineering and international education.

This year’s Colloquium also forged partnerships and relationships between groups that typically work independently, bringing them together to create a powerful win-win for all. This year, high school students at New England Tech, who are currently building pathways to IEPs, and their students came to the Colloquium through the Goethe Institute’s Annual Career Booster Day. Even event, as well as the DAAD-sponsored Professional Development Workshop for German teachers, was hosted concurrently with the second day of the Colloquium. These events would get a boost from the IEP’s company and alumni contacts in attendance. Participants in both events learned how combining STEM curriculum with foreign language study can provide a more purposeful context for classroom learning and create unique career opportunities for those who follow this interdisciplinary path. As a result of this initiative, participation of URI from all three events came together at the end of the second day to hear from alumni of International Engineering Program alumni and with network with URI IEP students and a variety of study abroad program providers, all with the hopes of inspiring current and future generations to “think big” regarding global education.

This year’s DAAD/Goethe Institute/AACTG collaboration was meant to spark interest in and provide a bridge to language from other countries and languages to explore similarities at future annual meetings.
I Ngọc and Taja after the ceremony.

Question 2: How did you manage to juggle intent to become fluent...[so] it could become that I could truly learn Mandarin with the major opportunity that the IEP and [Chinese] minor, but when I learned about the double-major I had originally thought to pursue it as a much about Asia, and so [I] chose Mandarin. I wanted to learn a language that would be great of value to employers... Lastly, I wanted to study a language where I could learn the Eastern world, such as their culture, history, society... Growing up in the Western world, I had not previously learned much about Asia, and so [I] chose Mandarin. I originally thought to pursue it as a minor, but when I learned about the double-major opportunity that the IEP and Chinese Language Flagship Program offered, I found that I could truly learn Mandarin with the intent to become fluent...[so] it could become an essential part of my future career.

Question 3: Do you see any similarities between engineering and Chinese? I do see many similarities between engineering and Chinese. In other words, I think there is a logic to Mandarin that is much like the logic of engineering. For example, the Chinese word for “computer” is dian (dian niao). Interestingly, these two Chinese characters by themselves mean “electricity” and “brain”, respectively. Hence these two characters together can be literally interpreted as “electric brain”, which seems very similar to the functionality of a computer. There are many more words with this kind of logic in Mandarin, which is an engineering student is greatly appreciated... In this way, Mandarin was somewhat easier to learn and understood than I had originally thought.

Question 4: What do you believe are the benefits of having a local internship with the same company as you interned abroad? It was truly a blessing to be able to intern with Teknor Apex in Pawtucket. RI for consecutive summers before interning abroad. At their Suzhou facility, and once again I thank Dr. Berka and Teknor Apex’s CEO's Domenico Berka for arranging this internship. The largest benefit of interning with them before going to China was the fact that I had already made several connections within the organization and had built a greater knowledge base within the company, which made the transition to interning in Suzhou much easier.

Question 5: What was the biggest challenge you faced while studying/interning/living in China? What was the biggest reward for you? The biggest challenge for me was learning to build a new network of friends while being away from home. While in Nanjing, I made many awesome connections with my classmates, teachers, and of course my roommate. In Suzhou, I truly enjoyed connecting with my coworkers, and I found a great church community that was truly a blessing to me during that season of my life. In this way, my greatest challenge was the biggest reward—by making more connections, I was able to nurture many great relationships.

Question 6: Where are you now and what are your responsibilities? How do you use Chinese in your job now? I am currently working full-time at Teknor Apex in Pawtucket, RI as a vinyl process engineer. I report to their department of research and development, but also am responsible for production as it pertains to optimizing quality, efficiency and consistency of their manufacturing process. As a corporate process engineer, I also have the responsibility of standardizing optimal vinyl manufacturing across all of our domestic and international plants of Teknor Apex. While working in Rhode Island, I use my Chinese by learning about supplied manufacturing projects in Suzhou, and by speaking as much Chinese as possible with my coworkers who are from China.

On November 24, 2018, Daniel Danckert ('12, GIEP/CHE/’18, M.S., CHE) married Maria Greek Orthodox Church next to the King Church. The wedding mass was just promoted to be as thorough as I had originally thought.

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