Alison's Major: Chinese

Program: UW Intensive Chinese Language, Summer

Academic Life: On a typical school day, my UW classmates and I would begin with a large group lecture and then separate into small groups for a discussion section with a teacher from Nankai University. Although our lessons covered a lot of material, we finished class by noon and had the afternoon to study and go around the city. We also had daily meetings with private tutors, who were extremely willing to help us improve our Chinese conversational ability, study for tests, or even help with day-to-day errands and adjusting to life in China.

Cultural Differences: Although strangers may not appear friendly on the outside, there are a lot of people willing to bend over backwards to help you. Once, my roommate and I were struggling with our luggage and asked a businessman nearby for some help; he insisted on carrying our luggage until we were safely in our seats, even though he knew he would not be able to make it to his train car and had to stand in the back.

Advice for Someone Considering this Program: The UW Intensive Chinese Language program is an amazing way to be immersed in Chinese culture, improve in the language as much as you possibly can, but still have a wonderful Madison “bubble” to come back to at the end of the day.

“Lacking the tourist attractions and crowding of Beijing, Tianjin was a city that was pleasantly relaxed but also had everything at your fingertips.”