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Two Vanier students win scholarships to study in China for a year

Montreal, May 28, 2014. When school starts again in August, it will have a whole meaning for two Vanier students. Indeed, Modern Languages students, Rachel Lebrun and Aleksandra Vutova, have each been awarded a 2014-2015 Chinese scholarship to study in China for a year. They will leave at the end of August and return in June 2015.



This is the third year that Vanier students receive scholarships from Qufu Normal University, Vanier's partner in China. The scholarships cover a year to study Mandarin at the university. Students' tuition fees, registration fee and student dormitory fees are paid and they also receive a monthly stipend. Five Vanier students benefited from such scholarships to study in Qufu in 2012 - 2013 and four students in 2013 - 2014.

"This project allows Vanier students to learn Mandarin and Chinese culture at a very low financial cost, and to share their experience with other Vanier students who do not have a chance to go," says Shirley Zhu who teaches Mandarin at Vanier College. The experience has been very highly rated by all the students who have spent a year of study in China. "In the past two years, a discussion between students in China or back from China and Vanier Mandarin II students was held each year," says Shirley. "By sharing their experience, other Vanier students improved their understanding of different cultures in the world and their appreciation of Canadian values."

Vanier student, Sandra Sandoval, who was in China last year, has this to say, "It's been an extraordinary experience. I studied Chinese every day and I taught English part-time to Middle School students. I've made friends from all over China and from other countries like Korea. I'm surprised at how independent I've become. Rizhao, the city where Qufu University is located, is a very large city and I'm amazed at how easily I get around and don't get lost." Sandra has been so successful in her Chinese studies that she has obtained a second scholarship and is returning next year to study at a more advanced level.

The Chinese trips have offered many benefits. Above all they have inspired other students to improve their proficiency in Mandarin and this year, Modern Languages student Rachel Lebrun and Science student Andrew Liberio, participated in the Quebec secondary school and Cegep students Chinese speech competition where Andrew placed 4th and Rachel 5th. As well, both students won the 3rd prize in the annual provincial Mandarin speech contest, which is supported by the Consulate General of the P.R. China in Montreal and organized by Shirley Zhu and colleagues.