

## **Internship Report**

This summer I worked at China Youth Climate Action Network (CYCAN). CYCAN is short for China Youth Climate Action Network. It is the first non-profit organization for youth aimed at the field of climate change in China. The organization was jointly established by seven outstanding youth organizations in August 2007. Our activities focused on raising public awareness on climate change and energy awareness of the revolution through joint action by the Chinese and international youth. Our main projects include COP Chinese Youth League, carbon accounting in college and the annual summit- International Youth Summit on Energy and Climate Change. Since the summit happened in July, I spent the majority of my time at CYCAN helping to organize the summit.

My responsibilities had a wide range, which included fundraising, inviting speakers, advertising and marketing, contacting media, planning events, and so on.

My first task at CYCAN was to invite foreign speakers from the field of environmental policy/law/finance to our panels. I realized that I didn't know anybody from this field in China. As a college student who studies in the U.S., I had no connections in China. I realized that the first step for me would be to build my network in Beijing. The chance came up when my supervisor was going to have a dinner with a woman from Germany who was working in an environmental NGO in Beijing at that point. I suggested to my supervisor that this woman could be a potential speaker to our summit, so my supervisor decided to take me to the dinner. The dinner went very well and I successfully made progress at the dinner. She agreed to attend our summit as a speaker. I

realized that my strong English-speaking skills were a big strength during our communication, thanks to my study in the U.S. Then my supervisor suggested that once I connected to one person, I could use this connection to develop more connections until a comprehensive network was formed. Through this woman, I got to know more foreign people working in environmental NGOs, renewable energy companies, and others. I also attended a lot of conferences and events with environmental theme, at which I met a lot of experts and professionals in the field. Many of them became our speakers later.

My second task was to help with promotion and marketing of the summit. I learned the major platforms that organizations in China used for campaign promotion and how to manage them. For me, it was a definitely a new field to learn. Managing Renren (like Facebook) and Sina Weibo (like Twitter) weren't as easy as I thought, and actually required a lot of commitment and skills. The appropriate language you use on online platform, and the frequency at which you release promotions and collaborating with professional promotion websites were all within what I learned. These skills would also be useful at college when we manage student organizations or clubs.

All the preparation was for the big moment, when the summit finally began on July 15<sup>th</sup>. The three-day duration of the summit comprehensively challenged my all-round working ability, from accommodating foreign speakers to hosting a panel discussion. I had to be ready for any situation or emergency, which tested my ability to make decisions. This was always my weakness. I tended to ask for command from my supervisor at the beginning when I encountered any problem, but he taught me to make decision on my

own. For example, at the opening ceremony, without any notion ahead, a German speaker (but spoke English) required us to translate his speech into Chinese simultaneously when he gave the speech. This was a sudden requirement and I had no time to ask my supervisor whether that was allowed. At this situation, I realized that I had to make a decision on my own. I would love to translate for him since he insisted that he wanted the message to be conveyed to the Chinese students without any understanding difficulty, but on the other hand the addition of translation would interrupt the original schedule that was specific to the minute. I explained the situation to the speaker and proposed that we could curtail the speech a little bit and then add the translation. He agreed cheerily. Another problem then popped up – nobody was willing to do the translation since none of us expected this. Because I spoke the best English among all, I had no option but to do it myself. I was extremely nervous. Hundreds of governors, media reporters, participants and guests were present, so ruining the translation would not only embarrass myself but also damage the reputation of CYCAN. Fortunately, my strong English ability once again saved the situation and won myself unexpected compliments from many people, including my supervisor. Situations like this taught me that decision-making takes wisdom, confidence and determination.

Beijing is the center of China. This was the first time I lived and worked there for long term. The chance allowed me to see the rich resources at the capital where the most famous and the biggest companies, NGOs and organizations aggregate. Thus, I was able to meet the leaders from various industries. One of the high points was meeting with Sewanee alumni Mr. Ning Tang in Beijing. I didn't know that he was a famous entrepreneur in China until

I heard his name on the radio. It was exciting to learn that somebody from Sewanee was doing such great business in my country. I invited him to our summit, though he couldn't make it due to a schedule conflict.

One of the high points at the summit was the media coverage of CCTV (like CNN in U.S.), which is the biggest TV station in China, because of my efforts. It was very difficult for us to get CCTV to cover our summit at first. Most news events they covered were like China's satellite launching, compared with which, our summit was very insignificant. But, indeed chances were everywhere, which only needed incisive eyes to see them. Once, I met a CCTV reporter at a conference and she gave me her name card. I thought it would be a good opportunity to invite her to our summit. She expressed that she might be too busy to come to our summit at the beginning, but I didn't give up. I kept sending her e-mails with our flyers and highlights of the summit at an appropriate frequency. One day before our summit, she called me to tell me that she would come to our summit and make a live coverage of our opening ceremony, which was amazing news for us. I knew I could change the situation because of my persistence.

This internship gave me a good sense of how NGOs function. It required me to own many kinds of abilities. It was also the most rewarding job I have ever done. After the internship, I am sure that I want to pursue a career in environmental management. I felt accomplished and satisfied everyday because I knew every little thing I did was for environment's good. Also, working in China made me see a lot of weaknesses of the industry in China. Environmental management is just a rising industry, which is in very slow progress. The industry requires professional people with advanced knowledge

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and skills. Therefore, I came into understanding how important it is to empower myself with what the industry needs. I don't study just for a degree anymore, but study for the benefit of my country's environment.