

## **Junior Research Plan**

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**Major(s)/Concentration:** Educational Studies

**Last Update:** 04/07/2020

### **1) What is your proposed research question, and how is it significant to educational studies, broadly defined?**

Research Topic: My primary research question is: What are the social and academic challenges faced by Chinese international students at Trinity College?

Some secondary questions I also will try to answer are:

- What social and academic supports are provided by the institution?
- Are these supports effective in meeting the needs of Chinese international students?
- Why does Trinity College decide to recruit more Chinese students?

Significance:

1. With more and more Chinese international students start to choose liberal arts colleges, this research can help students and parents better understand what type of students liberal arts colleges especially Trinity is looking for
2. Despite Trinity being a small liberal arts college, its action of accepting more Chinese students is a reflection of US liberal arts colleges. Thus this research can help educators gain an understanding of the changing in the makeup of college student body
3. This research can help Chinese students on campus to express their thoughts and feelings so Trinity and other liberal arts colleges can acknowledge the needs from Chinese students and to create a better campus environment

### **2) What courses, experiences, and/or readings inspired you to choose this question?**

The reason I'm interested in this research topic is inspired by Paul Tough's article "What College Admissions Offices Really Want" and conversations we had in the class Sociology of Education and Race Class and Social Policy.

After reading Paul Tough's article "What College Admissions Offices Really Want", I started to question what kind of students I was to Trinity? Did Trinity accept me only because I could pay full tuition? From 2005 to 2017, Trinity has accepted from 13 international students to 70 international students (Trinity Public Fact book, 2018). This makes me wonder what is the reason for Trinity Admission office to accept more Chinese international students to this predominantly white college? But no matter what kind of reason Trinity decided to accept more Chinese students, Trinity failed to understand Chinese students' position on campus.

In "The Learning Experience of Chinese Students in American Universities: A Cross-Cultural Perspective", author Wan examined some difficulties Chinese students faced after coming to the US and studying at US colleges. Chinese students had to face not only language barriers but also cultural barriers. Wan argued US colleges needed to help Chinese students adjust. But according to my experience and also many other Chinese students' experiences on Trinity campus, many of

Chinese students felt isolated. Trinity brings more Chinese students on campus, but without helping them to adjust to the new environment. Thus I want to use this research to send Chinese students concerns and needs to Trinity College.

Paul Tough, “What College Admissions Offices Really Want,” *The New York Times*, September 10, 2019, sec. Magazine, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/10/magazine/college-admissions-paul-tough.html>.

Guo fang. “The Learning Experience of Chinese Students in American Universities: A Cross-Cultural Perspective.” ERIC, 30 Nov. 1998,  
[eric.ed.gov/?id=ED439653](https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED439653)

Trinity College, “Trinity College Public Handbook-- All Traditional Undergraduates: Selected Demographic Characteristics,” September 10, 2018

<https://www.trincoll.edu/AboutTrinity/offices/InstitutionalResearchPlanning/Documents/Demographics.pdf>

**3) What prior methods training do you have, and what primary sources and methods will you use to answer this question?**

I have taken ANTH 301: Ethnographic Method and Writing. This class helped me to understand how to conduct ethnographic work and prepared me to write thick ethnographic descriptions. I have also taken ANTH 300: Junior Seminar, where I learned how to conduct interviews properly and encouraged me to conduct research projects.

For this research, I will conduct qualitative research. I will conduct interviews with Chinese students on campus. By interviewing them, I want to know their assumptions about college life and their actual experience on campus; what are some challenges they faced. For the interviewees, I will use this sampling procedure: [describe steps here] I will choose around 2-3 people each class year and compare and contrast their experience to examine whether the institution has been providing support to Chinese students.

I would also like to interview the international students advisor to understand their opinions on how they think Chinese students are doing, and what are some improvements. Lastly, I want to interview the admission office to understand the reason/motivation that Trinity decides to recruit more Chinese students. Besides the interview, I will also look at the number of International Student advisors or programs and observe activities that international student office hold to see if they are providing the kind support Chinese students need.

**4) Will your research require Trinity IRB full application and approval?**

I will require Trinity IRB full application and approval. Because I will have to conduct interviews with people with identifiable information.

**5) Does your research plan require access to a school or organization?**

No

**6) Do you have any scheduling conflicts or strong preferences?**

Educ 400 section 1 in Fall 2020 on Mondays 1:15-3:55pm

Since I have another thesis for anthropology that happens in the spring semester in 2021, so it would be much easier for me to finish my education thesis during the fall semester.

**7) Potential interview questions with Chinese students**

- Why do you choose to come to Trinity?
- What is your experience at Trinity now?
- What are some difficulties you faced after arriving at Trinity both socially and academically? How do you solve these problems?
- Did Trinity help you to adjust to college life? If so, how? If not, how do you think Trinity could improve?

**8) Potential interview questions with international student advisor**

- What do you think international students are doing on campus? What are some main difficulties for international students on campus? What are some solutions Trinity makes?
- What are some resources and programs that help international students adjust?
- What are some things you think Trinity could do better to help students to adjust?
- What are some difficulties working with international students?

**9) Potential interview questions with admission office**

- What is the percentage of International students on campus?
- Why would Trinity College accept more international students? Who made this decision?
- What are some qualifications Trinity is looking for from international students? What are some common qualifications among the international students that Trinity accept?
- Does Trinity accept more international students because international students can pay full tuition?
- How does the admission office think of international students on campus? Do you know some difficulties international students might struggle after coming to Trinity?