An Interview with Dr. Jing Hu,
A Visiting Scholar at Huamin Research Center, Rutgers University

Pei Fei, Huamin Research Center

Dr. Jing Hu was a Visiting Scholar at the Huamin Research Center in the School of Social Work at Rutgers University from January 2014 to January 2015. Dr. Hu is an Associate Professor of Department of Economics at the Hubei University of Economics. She received her doctorate degree from School of Economics at Zhongnan University of Economics and Law. She was a postdoc at the Center for Social Security Studies at Wuhan University.

The following is an interview of Dr. Jing Hu to reflect her time as a Visiting Scholar at Huamin Research Center.

1. Why you chose Rutgers University as your hosting institution?
   Dr. Hongwei Hu introduced Dr. Chien-Chung Huang to me, and then I began to know the Huamin Research center and Rutgers University. I am interested in the research of Huamin Research Center and Dr. Huang’s research fields. That is why I want to come to Rutgers as a visiting scholar. Dr. Huang’s research fields are children welfare and NGO, and Huamin Research Center emphasizes on the application of social welfare and social policy research. This makes Huamin Center a perfect combination of social practice and social theories. I met with Dr. Huang at Beijing, and the research ideas of Dr. Huang and his devotion to work left a deep impression on me. His personality is another factor for me to come to the Huamin Center. I hoped to build a long-term cooperation with him. Look back, I have made a lot of progress, that proved I made a correct choice.

2. How was your research before you came to Rutgers?
   During my doctorate period, my research area is on anti-poverty area, and my dissertation was funded by the Ministry of Education. During this project, I took part in a lot of field studies. From these field studies, I found that China’s Poverty Alleviation and Development Strategy has achieved a remarkable accomplishment since 1980s. However, so far, the diminishing marginal utility of these poverty policies have been more and more obvious. A specific group of people always lives around the poverty line, or cannot get out of poverty. This group of people was called marginalized population. The elderly occupies the most vulnerable part of marginalized population, especially in rural areas. Moreover, poor elderly are likely to accompany with disease. Due to the lacking of health assistance system, the health problem of the elderly is inevitable. All of these findings stimulate my interests in health of the elderly and the health care system. In recent years, my research field has turned to health of the elderly, medical system and
supports to the elderly. Both America and China have rapid aging population, the reforms of health care system for elderly is constantly occurred. Therefore, I want to learn the operations and effects of American health care system for elderly. It may help solve the problems of medical service in China, which is the country with the largest population in the world. That is one of main purposes of my visiting in the US. At the same time, I hope to cooperate and study with American professors, who might help me to break through my research bottleneck.

3. How is your research progress and study at Rutgers?

The research that I work with Dr. Chien-Chung Huang goes smoothly. Although we met some difficulties, the research moves forward through twists and turns. During this process, I got a lot of improvements, from data analysis and reading speed to how to plan and finish a formal, international and academic research. I lived an enriched life here and I also found my own interests and set up the future research goal.

4. Please describe your experience at the Huamin Research Center.

I think that my greatest gain from the Huamin Research Center is that I have learnt to take the initiative to seize every opportunity. In my view, the Huamin Research Center is not only an academic research agency, but also a center for cultural exchange with international vision and spirit of humanity. The agency hosts various academic conferences, Sino-America cultural exchange projects and research projects every year, which require the abilities of doing scientific research, management, and cooperation. All the projects offer each staff many opportunities to display their talents and make improvements. It is this environment that encourages people who can take initiatives and execute efficiently to make big improvements in their lives. Dr. Huang has made a class schedule for me and I have gained a lot of knowledge from those classes. In class, professors encourage students to raise questions and get involved in the discussion. Students are encouraged to debate with peers or even with professors. By doing so, students can gain a better understanding of the curriculum and get their personal views presented and refined by professors via debates. I find that those fearless and chance-taking students are usually the top students. This affect me substantially. I see myself as diligent person, but not active enough. I often become hesitant and hold back, even when there are some great opportunities available, because I am afraid of failure. But after my one-year staying at Rutgers, I have learned to take every possible chance I can, so that my efforts pay off.

5. Could you please comment on how the experience at the Huamin research center has affected you?

I have been inspired by Americans’ thoroughness, patience, and concentration on their studies. Most of them have great passion for academic research and are fully dedicated to it. Americans serve as role models in the research field because they have a frontier approach, sharp observation, and rigorous attitude to their studies. Every day is new and rich for me because I have so much new knowledge to learn. Besides that, I also have learned a lot from their standardization of research methods, critical thinking, and passion for academic research. I am greatly impressed and influenced by this experience. All of these aspects will have a great impact
on the academic road I will continue to pursue. My experience at the Huamin Research Center is really rewarding and it is impossible to summarize it in just a few paragraphs. The center has not only given me a chance to deeply understand social science research in the US, but also offered me a broad platform for China’s academic exchange, as it holds many academic exchanges with Chinese universities. I have met many renowned scholars from China and been given opportunities to cooperate with them. All of the above provides me with a great platform to do academic research after I return to China.

6. What is your plan after your visit at Rutgers?
During this year, I review my academic path and have new plan for my research. My current research focus is aging and related issues, as China facing rapid aging. Huamin Research Center’s research about nonprofit organization (NPO) enlightened me on the importance of NPO on the aging problems. Research on combining NPO with aging issues may provide an innovative model of caring for the elderly. Therefore, after the visit, I want to continue my cooperation with Huamin Research Center to do some research about effects of NPO on the aging problems. I hope we can find a more effective model in China to provide care for the elderly and complete some high quality academic researches at the same time. Moreover, during my visiting time, I audited several courses including poverty problems, analysis of social policy, and statistics. The teaching methods in American university are different from China. It enlightens me a lot and I hope to start one to two international-style courses in my university after I go back to China.

7. What is your expectation for the Huamin Research Center?
I hope the center could become better and better and gain more and more academic achievements and social influences. Led by Dr. Huang, Huamin Research Center has got a great achievement on Sino-American cultural exchanges and I hope it will play a more important role in the future. Huamin Research Center provides a lot of opportunities to Chinese visiting scholars. During this time, through this platform, we learned a lot of frontier knowledge and cooperate with American professors. It is a rare opportunity for China’s researchers to improve our research ability and build high-quality cooperation with them. Therefore, I hope Huamin Research Center could continue to offer visiting opportunities to China’s young scholars, particularly for visiting scholars with same research interests of the Center. It will be a win-win cooperation for the visiting scholars and the Center.
Dr. Jing Hu at Huamin Research Center, Rutgers University
Dr. Jing Hu at Rutgers' Queen’s Campus
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Director Chien-Chung Huang, Huamin Research Center (right one), Dr. Jing Hu, and Director Jeff Wang, Rutgers’ China Office.
Dr. Jing Hu and Staff at Huamin Research Center.
Dr. Jing Hu and colleagues at Huamin Research Center.