

Former Spofford Interns Continue to Work on Chinese Environmental Issues

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RFF established the Walter O. Spofford, Jr., Memorial Internship in 1997, in honor of Dr. Spofford's legacy. During his long career at RFF, his name became synonymous with RFF's work in China. He helped launch RFF's China Program in 1989, mentored Chinese researchers and policymakers, and helped establish the Beijing Environment and Development Institute (BEDI), an NGO loosely modeled on RFF and headed by Ma Zhong, now a well recognized Chinese environmental economist.

Dr. Spofford exemplified RFF's goal to engage in the environmental policy debates of our times. In his memory, every spring we review dozens of impressive applications to select one person with a special interest in Chinese environmental issues to join RFF for the summer. His name has become a noun: we have now hosted nine "Spoffords."

We recently contacted the Spoffords to find out what they are doing and how their summer at RFF may have affected their thinking about the environment and their future professional plans.

Several have earned their graduate degrees and are working on Chinese environmental problems. When she returned home to China from her summer with RFF, our first Spofford intern, Shuqin Liu, finished a Ph.D. at Peking University in environmental

law, while actively supporting various multilateral development banks and foreign consulting firms developing projects such as sulfur dioxide emissions trading in China. She currently lives with her husband in Nairobi, where she has been freelancing with the UN Environmental Programme and other organizations since 2003. Liu says that her time at RFF gave her welcome exposure to American people and culture and a chance to learn how a U.S. NGO operates.

Jiang Ru, our 2003 Spofford, holds a Ph.D. from Stanford and is living in the Washington, DC, area, where he consults to the World Bank as an environmental specialist. He focuses on projects to help China phase out its production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances, manage and dispose of persistent organic pollutants, and reduce its nutrient discharge into the East Asia seas.

In February 2005, he testified before the U.S. Congressional Executive Commission on environmental NGOs in China.

Many former Spoffords are still in graduate school. Following her 2002 internship, Chunxiang Li is currently studying for a Ph.D. in resource economics at the University of Massachusetts. She says her experience at RFF helped her with the application process and gave her an idea of how people from diverse fields contribute

to resource conservation. After graduation, she hopes to continue studying agricultural markets and conducting high-quality research, "just like what the RFF scholars are doing."

Xuehua Zhang, who stayed at RFF for a year after her 2000 Spofford ended to work on sulfur dioxide emissions trading in Taiyuan, is conducting field research in China for her Stanford Ph.D. There, she is interviewing judges, plaintiffs, and defendants in several Hubei cities to explore the efficacy of environmental legal redress.

Our 2005 Spofford, Hui He, returned to the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, Austin, after her summer at RFF and will graduate later this year. Her work at RFF on local emissions-control initiatives in various Chinese cities and provinces led her to believe in the great potential of "providing multiple incentives to producers and involving more public participation." She will explore this further in her professional report for her master's degree.

Dr. Spofford's efforts still resonate as China struggles to manage its considerable environmental challenges. One legacy is BEDI and the work of now-renowned experts who benefited from his mentorship. Another is the growing number of talented Spofford interns who will provide innovations to improve China's environment and the world's. ■