



## International Intern Brings a New Lens to Immigration Research

### Student from China joins Faculty of Social Work research team through Mitacs Globalink Research Internship

By Natalie Dawes

July 21, 2014



**Qui Zhimeng, left, and Julie Drolet attended a community advisory committee meeting in Calgary as part of the second phase of their research project.**

Less than 72 hours after arriving in Edmonton from Beijing, Qui Zhimeng was on a bus to Calgary, fighting jet lag and ready to jump into the first assignment of her 12-week Mitacs Globalink Research Internship — attending a community advisory committee meeting.

Zhimeng is a third-year undergraduate student in economics from Tsinghua University and is in Edmonton to work with Julie Drolet, associate professor in the Faculty of Social Work's central and northern region, on a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)-funded project that is looking at how immigrants can be supported in

finding employment and being successful in the Canadian labour market. The work is part of the Pathways to Prosperity project and Drolet received a Mitacs Globalink Research Award, which enabled her to host Zhimeng.

"I ranked this project as my first choice on the Mitacs application and it is a perfect fit for me," says Zhimeng. "I'm interested in exploring the relationship between immigration and economic policies, and the labour market in Canada."

For the past year, Drolet and her team have conducted a literature review, aimed at summarizing existing research and policy in order to better understand and identify specific labour market needs, challenges and employer best practices. Zhimeng will be involved in analyzing those results, as well as working on the project's second phase, which will engage community service

agencies, all levels of government and employers to see how collaboration might be enhanced to improve immigrants' labour market experiences.

Drolet is particularly excited about the international perspective that Zhimeng brings. "She'll be able to look at things without some of the assumptions that we [Canadians] might normally have. Zhimeng can question what Canadian culture is like, why immigration policies are the way they are, and just the perceptions of immigration," explains Drolet. "We've already had some discussions about whether or not immigrants are being welcome and invited to Canada. Zhimeng brings a new lens, which is a wonderful asset to the project."

After finishing her undergrad, Zhimeng plans to work toward a master's degree and would love to study in Canada if the opportunity arose. Attracting exceptional students to return to Canada for graduate studies is part of the internship program's goal.

For now, Zhimeng is thrilled to be in Canada, a place she's always longed to visit, and is looking forward to experiencing all Alberta has to offer — at work and at play.

**Source URL:** [http://www.ucalgary.ca/utoday/issue/2014-07-21/international-intern-brings-new-lens-immigration-research?utm\\_source=UToday&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=July-21-2014&utm\\_term=International%20intern%20brings%20a%20new%20lens%20to%20immigration%20research](http://www.ucalgary.ca/utoday/issue/2014-07-21/international-intern-brings-new-lens-immigration-research?utm_source=UToday&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=July-21-2014&utm_term=International%20intern%20brings%20a%20new%20lens%20to%20immigration%20research)