

2023 GEC Summer Camp Report

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Overview

In the summer of 2023, GEC has successfully hosted three domestic camps in Shanghai, Wuhan, and Shenzhen, all populous cities in China, two international camps at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the UK, and one camp at Columbia University in the US, among which the Shanghai and Columbia camps both had three rounds of programs. Please refer to Table 1. and Table 2. below for more details on each camp site.

Regarding the participants, over 100 instructors, professors and teaching fellows included, 2000 students and 150 onsite staff joined together for the biggest branding campaign of GEC in 2023, a year when the world has started to take a new lease of life after the pandemic. Chart 1. and Chart 2. indicate the detailed breakdown for each campsite regarding the number of faculty and students participated in each camp, while Chart 3. reflects the student rating for each role in the camp. All roles reached 9 points out of 0-10 which shows the general satisfaction from students thanks to everyone's hardworking and commitment.

Domestic Camps		
10 professor sessions & 7 teaching fellow sessions		
Locations	Duration	Structure
Shanghai	#1: July 8 - Aug 4 #2: July 15 - Aug 11 #3: July 22 - Aug 18	Professor: 2 online + 8 onsite Teaching Fellow: 2 online + 5 onsite
Shenzhen	July 1 - July 21	
Wuhan	July 8 - Aug 4	

Table 1. Overview of Domestic Camps

Overseas Camps		
18 professor sessions & 7 teaching fellow sessions		
Locations	Duration	Structure
Oxford	July 1 - July 28	Professor: 2 online + 16 onsite Teaching Fellow: 2 online + 5 onsite
Cambridge	July 8 - Aug 4	
Columbia	#1: July 1 - July 26 #2: July 8 - Aug 4 #3: July 15 - Aug 10	

Table 2. Overview of Overseas Camps

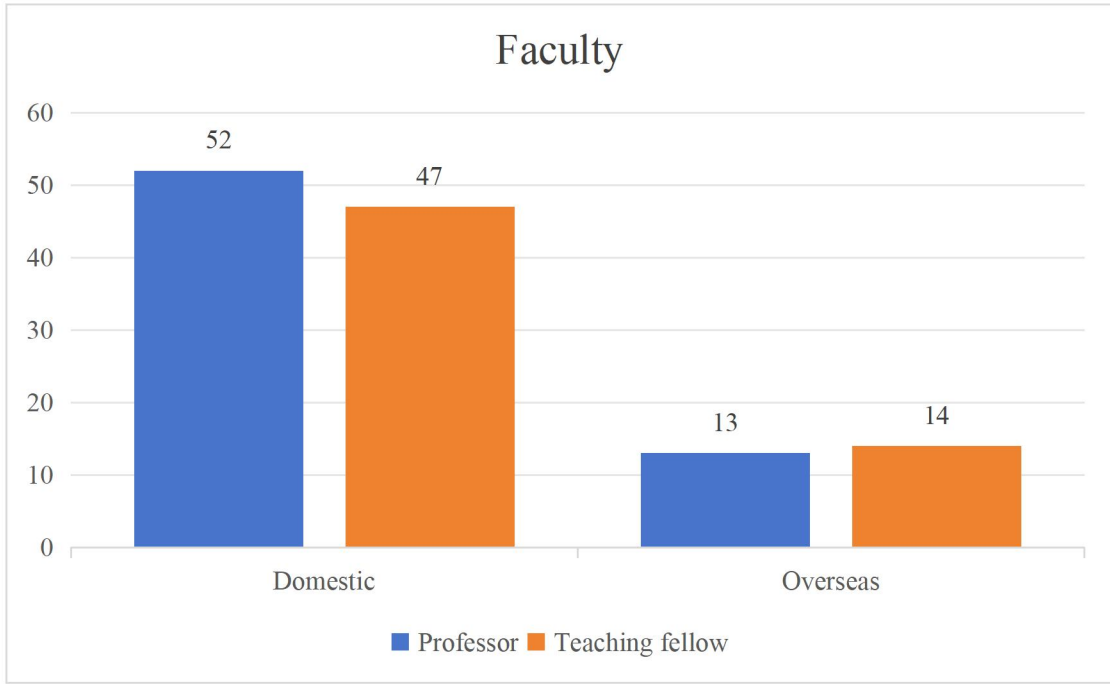


Chart 1. Number of Faculty Breakdown

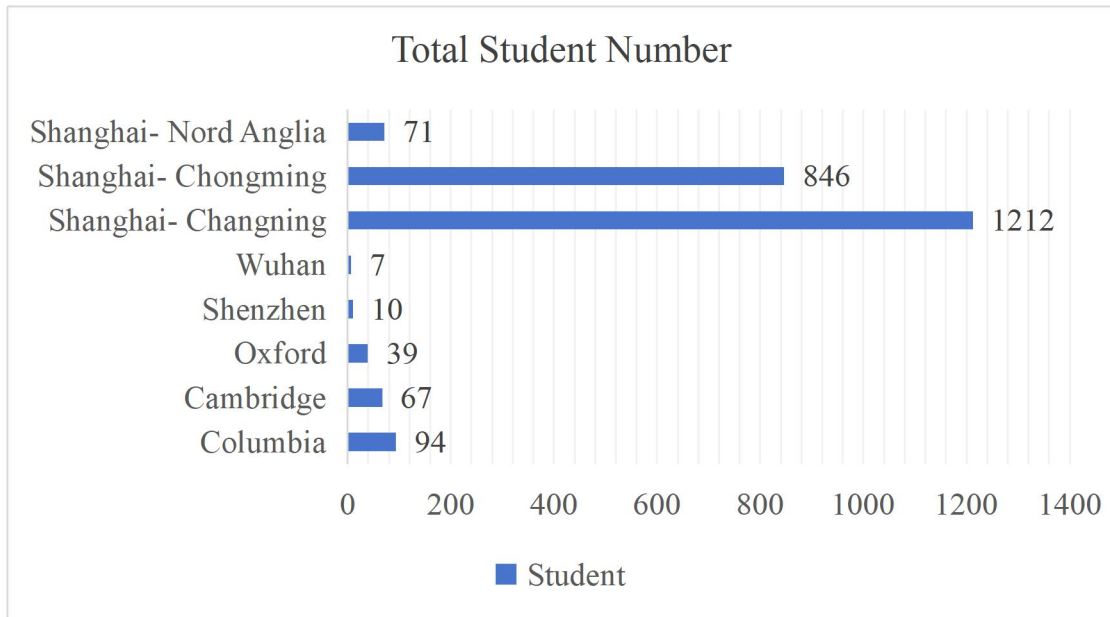


Chart 2. Number of Student for Each Camp

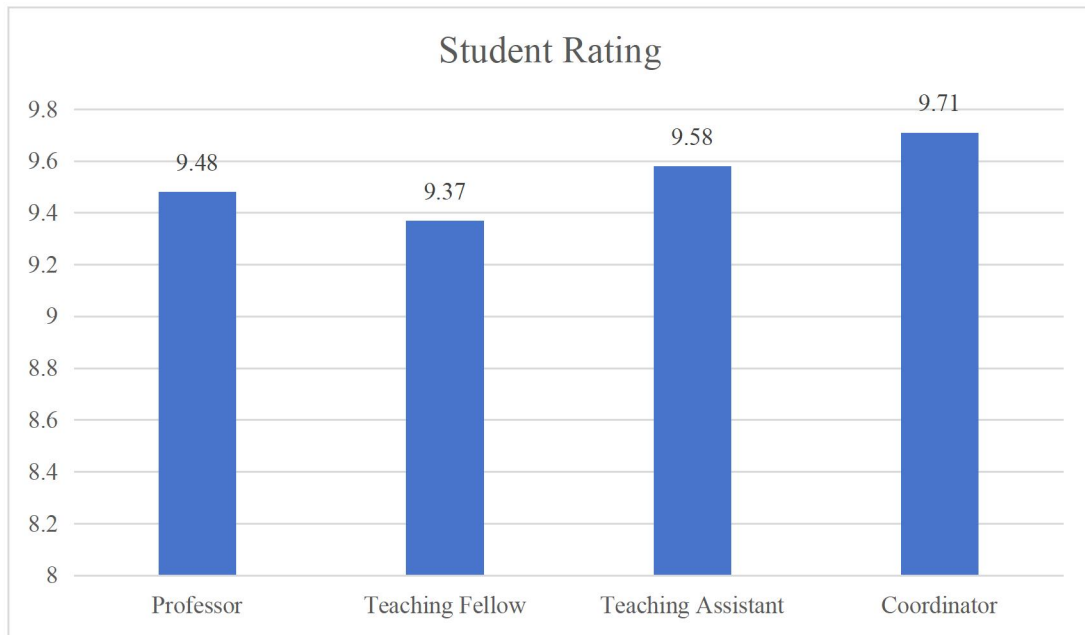


Chart 3. Student Rating for Each Role in Camp

On top of the cold statistics, we have collected direct feedback from all participants. Here are some of the warm words to share.

Instructors - Professors

“What I’ve enjoyed the most in how the students have developed so far is, that they’re sort of connecting together all of these perhaps quite disparate disciplines and bringing them into conversation with each other.”

– **O.G., Faculty of Philosophy, University of Cambridge**

“More students are raising their hands to ask questions and to contribute. More and more are becoming braver. I think that’s why I think the most growth is occurring in student self-confidence.”

– **D.J., Professor, University of Oxford**

“This program causes students to think about what they want. The program also brings out a lot of the best of their curiosity, a lot of the best of their ambition, and some of their dreams.”

– **G.K., Associate Teaching Professor, Carnegie Mellon University**

“The students are experts in Chinese, so they can talk me through how poetic images work. And I can talk from an English point of view. It was a really great atmosphere in the classroom because there was a sense that I was learning.”

– **M.B., Professor of English Literature, University of Oxford**

Instructors - Teaching Fellows

“We established an open and respectful environment that encouraged active participation. The students demonstrated a genuine eagerness to learn and were receptive to feedback, which greatly facilitated their growth.”

– **C.S., Program: Digital Marketing Strategy**

“In the future, students will find themselves faced with more non-prescriptive essay assignments, and I believe this course can provide them with valuable assistance in this regard.”

– **Z.L., Program: Valuation for Financial Engineering**

Students

“When encountering difficulties, I took the initiative to seek help from the professor, and the professor generously and thoroughly addressed my questions, providing me with substantial assistance.”

– **L, University of Toronto, Junior**

“I’ve come to appreciate the significance of probability theory within the realm of mathematics. This experience has broadened my understanding of various mathematical domains and reshaped my perspective on future academic exploration.”

– **A, Xi’an Jiao Tong University, Freshman**

Learn more about the students’ feedback from the interview with the link given:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/16G_hSXpgBFz3HNQDdodgjk1-PGa9xx3M/view?usp=sharing

Staff

“This is a fantastic opportunity that allows students and professors to engage in face-to-face communication. We are delighted to witness the progress of students and sincerely hope that they will continue to explore and achieve success in their preferred fields in the future.”

– **P.X., Program Coordinator**

“Observing students from different backgrounds collaborate to delve into a subject has been truly inspiring. These students are diligent and hardworking, frequently engaging in discussions, sharing their achievements, and addressing the challenges they encounter.”

– **E.J., Program Coordinator**

Reflections

After this summer camp, we have conducted a comprehensive reflection and summary, and the following points highlight some common issues encountered across various camps.

❖ **Camp Site & Location**

When initially selecting and scheduling camps, our primary consideration was the number of programs and students. We aimed to arrange students and instructors at the same venue to maximize the summer camp experience. At the same time, we also took into account the size and quantity of classrooms and dormitories to optimize the utilization of these resources. To achieve this, we have chosen multiple venues. However, due to the insufficient availability of large venues in the city center, we had to opt for more remote locations. This has resulted in the camps being situated far from the city center, which was inconvenient for instructors and students who wished to explore the city and relax during their free time.

To address these issues and improve the camp experience, we will prioritize venues that are closer to the city center or have easy access to transportation options, allowing instructors and students to explore the city more conveniently during their free time. We will also provide instructors and students with information about nearby attractions, restaurants, and activities in the city, along with recommendations for things to do during their free time.

❖ **Facility & Support**

One major issue we encountered was the classroom's network and projection equipment. The instability of the network posed a significant challenge, primarily affecting the online students' learning experience. Additionally, troubleshooting network issues consumed valuable teaching time for instructors. Furthermore, the lack of familiarity with the operation of the projection equipment also led to disruptions in the class progress.

To address these issues and improve the camp experience, we will invest in higher-quality internet connections to ensure network stability, offer our instructors comprehensive guidance on how to operate and troubleshoot projection equipment before the camp begins, and assign technical support staff who can quickly address network and projection equipment problems, allowing instructors to focus on teaching.

❖ **Program Arrangement**

(1) Program structure

The summer camp spanned a total of 4 weeks, with the professor conducting 2 online sessions in the first two weeks, followed by 8 onsite sessions in the subsequent two weeks. In addition to this, students had other classes and activities to participate in, such as teaching fellow sessions, academic writing courses, office hours, and extra-curricular events and open lectures. From the

students' perspective, the first two weeks offered ample online time, while the schedule for the in-person portion was quite tight.

(2) Program difficulty

Throughout the program and following its completion, we gathered extensive feedback from our students. One prevalent concern that emerged was the difficulty level of the program. Given the program structure mentioned above, the intensity of the onsite sessions was substantial. Alongside attending all classes and extracurricular activities on time, students were also required to complete homework and a final project after class hours. It's worth noting that this summer camp program had a substantial portion of high school students, making up 60% of the participants. Considering their academic backgrounds, the program difficulty and workload presented significant challenges in both aspects. Fortunately, the majority of students successfully completed the program and gained valuable insights.

In response to the two issues mentioned earlier, we will implement the following improvements and adjustments:

- A. Conduct a comprehensive review of the curriculum to assess the difficulty level of each program. Make sure that course content aligns with the student's academic backgrounds and is appropriately challenging without being overwhelming.
- B. Provide preparatory materials or reading lists to assist students from diverse academic backgrounds in better preparing for the program.
- C. Clearly communicate course expectations and workload at the beginning of the program to help students plan their time effectively.
- D. Reevaluate the program schedule to achieve a more balanced distribution of online and onsite sessions, reducing the intensity of the onsite sessions. Assigning homework before the onsite phase and reducing the number of homework during that phase will allow students to focus on their final projects. Also, assigning the final project during or after the first two online session period will give students more time to prepare.

These improvements aim to enhance the program's educational quality, provide better support for students, and create a more manageable and accommodating learning experience.

(3) The live-streaming sessions

In this summer camp, the onsite sessions of some programs were simultaneously live-streamed so as to accommodate the remote students who did not make it to attend in person. We encountered

several challenges such as unstable internet connections and limited remote student interaction. These issues significantly impacted the instructors' teaching pace and the overall classroom experience for both onsite and remote students.

To prevent such problems from recurring, we have decided that future onsite programs will no longer include remote participants. This adjustment aims to streamline the learning experience for all participants and ensure a more stable and engaging educational environment.

❖ **Internal Collaboration**

The summer camp program has provided more opportunities for interaction between teachers and students, including professors, teaching fellows, and teaching assistants. Additionally, it has increased communication between instructors and course coordinators. However, given the large scale of this program and the number of students involved, it is evident that there is still room for improvement in various aspects of interaction, communication, and information exchange among all parties.

In the context of a large-scale onsite program, providing more opportunities for interaction, communication, and information sharing among students, professors, teaching fellows, teaching assistants, and course coordinators is essential.

To achieve this, the following measures can be taken:

- A. Schedule regular meetings, including interactions between professors, teaching fellows, class coordinators, and other relevant parties. These meetings provide opportunities to closely monitor the progress of the program and address student needs;
- B. Organize regular social events, such as seminars, workshops, or even dinner, to facilitate interaction and networking among the teaching team and students.

These measures aim to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange among participants in a large-scale onsite program, improving the overall learning and teaching experience.

Future Plans

After the great success of the in-person camp in the summer of 2023, we have decided to integrate the in-person camp project into the overall product lines of GEC, providing students with opportunities for in-person learning and interaction with professors during both the winter and summer vacations each year. Due to its uniqueness, the winter camp, which varies with the Chinese New Year holiday, will have a relatively smaller scale and a more compact schedule. In

contrast, the summer camp will have a much larger scale in terms of the number of students, projects, and teachers. Especially during the summer, we will organize camps abroad.

In the upcoming winter of 2024, we are planning to host camps in both Shenzhen and Beijing. As for summer 2024, our plan is to arrange camps both domestically and abroad. In domestic cities, we have selected Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Hong Kong. For international camps, we have chosen Oxford, Cambridge, and New York City. The plan for domestic camps is to have two rounds of camps in each city, each lasting for two weeks. The specific dates are 7/14-7/27 and 7/28-8/10. For the international camps, we plan to have one camp in each location, also lasting two weeks, with the specific dates being 7/21-8/3. We sincerely welcome you to join our camps again based on your availability and preference. You can let us know your preference in the survey below.

Survey

To gather feedback and suggestions to improve our future onsite programs, please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your feedback and suggestion are valuable to us!

Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FDLFRVZ>

Appendix: Memories

Instructors played an integral role in shaping the students' experience during their time together. Their dedicated mentorship and expertise were instrumental in guiding the students toward academic and personal growth. The instructors' passion for teaching and their commitment to teaching their students' development were truly remarkable. Through their valuable insights and instruction, they enriched the students' research knowledge and inspired their desire to learn.

As we fondly recall the exceptional moments of the summer camp, it is clear that instructors' contributions were at the heart of this special experience, making it an unforgettable and enlightening journey for all.



Professor Sadegh is actively engaged in reviewing and critiquing the students' presentations. His dedication and sense of responsibility shone through in his thoughtful and constructive feedback, which significantly enriches the learning experience for the students. His insightful comments serve as a valuable resource for their improvement, helping them refine their presentation skills and gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter.



Professor Koch enthusiastically applauds the students' performance, her face beaming with joy at the remarkable progress they have made. Her genuine happiness is a testament to their hard work and dedication, underscoring the significant strides they've taken. This heartfelt show of support from their professor is a motivating force, inspiring them to continue their academic journey with renewed enthusiasm.



Professor Urpelainen offers a detailed critique of the student's final presentation, which prompts the students to engage in ongoing reflection about how they can improve their performance in the future. Professor Urpelainen's insightful feedback serves as a catalyst for their growth, sparking a continuous learning process. It not only highlights their areas of strength but also offers constructive guidance, inspiring them to strive for even greater excellence in their future presentations.



Professor Bevis offers valuable feedback to the students, which serves as a pivotal element in their learning process. His insightful comments go beyond mere evaluation; they act as a guiding light, helping students recognize their strengths and areas for improvement.



Teaching Fellow Chang is actively addressing students' inquiries. This engagement signifies a supportive learning environment where students can seek clarification, guidance, and mentorship. The willingness of Chang to assist the students underscores the dedication and commitment to their educational journey, fostering a positive and collaborative atmosphere within the learning community.



Final presentation in progress, with classmates skillfully combining the use of images and text to augment the clarity and comprehensibility of their content for the audience. This strategic approach not only engages the viewers but also simplifies complex ideas, ensuring that the information is easily digestible and more readily absorbed by those in attendance.



Professor Shimko proudly presents certificates to the students, marking their accomplishments.



Professor Bhargave graciously awards certificates to the students and commemorates the moment with a group photograph. Professor Bhargave’s dynamic and engaging teaching style has garnered unanimous acclaim from the student body, cementing his reputation as an outstanding educator who has left a lasting impact on his students.



Professor Bickerton awards certificates and takes a group photo with the students.



After the class, students engage in extensive discussions and exchanges with the professor. These post-class interactions provide a valuable opportunity for students to seek clarification, share their insights, and deepen their understanding of the subject matter. The open and fruitful dialogue enhances the overall learning experience and fosters a sense of collaboration and academic engagement within the classroom.

Thanks for creating these great memories together with us this summer and we hope to see you again in the next camp!