The overall goals of the Powell Scholars Program include encouraging academic excellence, international education and understanding, original research and creative activity, and community service. Taking initiative is central to the Scholars’ development (see go.pacific.edu/powellscholars). Since fall, 2009, students in the program have discussed the possibility of designing and implementing an educational program overseas, which would draw from their various academic talents and interests. Providing an original curriculum for teaching basic English skills, as well as rudimentary computer skills, in the village of Dimen, China is an initial vehicle by which the Powell Scholars Program’s goals can be accomplished. The emergence of an expanded set of initiatives in the future can be envisioned given the multiple academic majors and talents of the Scholars.

We travelled in early July 2012 to Dimen to: (1) evaluate whether or not the Powell Scholars should develop an English course for the village; and (2) gather information to assess their needs should we decide to design a course this coming fall/spring (Figure 1). We spent several days in Dimen interviewing key people, and observing the village. We not only achieved these objectives, but exceeded them. We are confident that this initial project is well suited to goals of the Powell Scholars Program, and that we will be able to design and implement a course that serves the educational needs of students in Dimen by leveraging the varied interests and talents of the Powell Scholars. We recommend that we develop an original curriculum based on the Dong culture and Dimen the village. This approach will both celebrate the unique Dong culture and village lifestyle, while broadening the villagers’ view of the world as well as our own. We propose implementing a pilot project in summer 2013 focused on teaching 4th through 6th graders and adults. Our main partners in Dimen will be the primary school and the Eco-museum. The course will be implemented from May 7 through May 29, 2013. If this pilot project is judged to be effective on the basis of an assessing of skills gained, we will continue to implement the project for two more summers, 2014 and 2015. In summer 2015, we will revisit the goals and effectiveness of the project.

Below are the major phases of the project, including the feasibility study, designing the curriculum and implementation in May 2013. These phases will be undertaken with a wider group of Powell Scholars.