The WUSTL/HKPU trip is a fantastic experience that will surely impact you as much as you impact others through the trip. Each year, the details (such as location in China, project type, etc.) may change, so please realize that the answers given below may not pertain 100% to your trip. Still, this should give you a better idea of what the trip is like.

Questions before applying:

What work will I be doing?
Washington University and UPenn students will partner with students in the Prosthetics and Orthotics (P&O) program in the BME Dept. at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Specifically you will be a part of the P&O service learning trip that HKPU organizes during the summer. Typically students spend one to two days learning how to make orthotics at HKPU. You will then work in teams of students from all 3 schools to apply your newfound skills at a clinic in mainland China to assess, measure and fit pediatric patients suffering from cerebral palsy.

The amount of hands-on work you will get to do varies within each group, from project to project and within steps of a project. There are definitely a lot of opportunities to help with fitting, casting, and shaping orthotics but certain steps require technical experience, so be prepared to take more of an observational role at those points.

Will I visit any tourist sites?
There is plenty of time to experience the culture and to visit some of the local tourist sites. Usually there is one day set aside for arranged sightseeing. For example in 2014 these activities included mountain hiking, touring a medical center to learn about traditional Chinese medicine, souvenir shopping, and a visit to a historical pagoda. You will also have free time most evenings in Hong Kong to do some exploring on your own and to engage with the nightlife (visiting a karaoke club is a must).

How much of my own money will I spend?
The BME department will cover up to about $1500 of your total airfare, visa fees, and food and lodging expenses. Hotel and food prices (especially in China) are inexpensive compared to what you would find in America, so you will probably end up spending about $600 to $900 in total, exclusive of sightseeing and souvenirs.

How flexible are the dates?
The dates of the project are fixed and you are expected to adhere to them since there is a lot of organization and logistics that has to be done to accommodate the large group. However, if you have other pressing summer commitments that may cause you to cut a day or two at the beginning or end of the trip, let Prof. Yin know as early as you know so he can let the organizers know -- there is some room, but not a lot, for flexibility. Do not apply if the stated dates will not fit into your summer schedule. It is not fair to other students for you to take a slot and then not be able to commit to attending.

Will I earn academic credit?
Two-credits of elective credit will be given at the end of the fall semester for those who desire it. To get the credit, in addition to participating in the trip, you will have to fulfill some additional but minimal requirements that Prof. Yin will tell you about to earn the credits.

If you have any other questions, feel free to contact Prof. Yin or the students from past trips. They are happy to tell you about their experience and give advice!
Questions once accepted:

How do I apply for a Visa?
For American citizens, a Visa is required to visit China. Although you will most likely be flying into Hong Kong (which doesn’t require a Visa for Americans), you will be traveling into China and will need one at the border. During some trips it was necessary to travel back and forth between China and Hong Kong, so a multi-entry visa is necessary. You will get more information about this at the informational meeting prior to the trip.

Do I need to obtain a vaccine?
Vaccines for Hepatitis A and Typhoid fever are recommended. CDC recommends the Hep A vaccine because you can get this disease through contaminated food or water in China, regardless of where you are eating or staying. CDC recommends the typhoid vaccine for most travelers visiting smaller cities or rural areas, or if you are an adventurous eater.

Where will I be staying?
You should stay in a hotel in Kowloon near HKPU. The hotel rooms generally accommodate two students (if you need to triple up, a cot can usually be provided by the front desk at an extra cost) but inquire beforehand.

One hotel of choice in past years is the BP International hotel (http://www.bpih.com.hk). Rooms can be booked directly through its own website, or through third party websites such as booking.com. There are other hotels in Kowloon, such as the Best Western. More info will be given you during the information session.

Hotel rooms near the health clinic in China will be arranged for you.

How do I get from the HK airport to the hotel?
There are a few ways to get to the hotel from the airport: (1) The airport express train is fast and reliable to Kowloon or Hong Kong. You may purchase tickets beforehand online or in the airport at the Airport Express transportation kiosk. Once to get to Kowloon there are free shuttles to the major hotels, including BP. You can also get on the MTR (metro system) and get off at Jordan station (closest to BP). (2) You could take a taxi. Cost will be about $30 U.S. but they will usually only take HK dollars or maybe a credit card. The trip from the airport to the hotel will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour, so the most painless and economic method given your jetlag and luggage is probably the airport express train.

All the hotels in China provide breakfast, air conditioning, and most of the basic amenities that you would expect a hotel to provide (soap, towels, etc.) Internet and wifi are not guaranteed. However on the 2014 trip a hotel actually bought extra internet routers to provide wifi to the floor.

How much Mandarin/Cantonese should I learn?
In Hong Kong, you can easily get around with English alone since it is a very global city. In mainland China, very little English is spoken in most places so it might be nice to learn a few basic phrases. However, since much of the logistics are set up through the HKPU program as far as lodging, transportation, and meals are concerned, it is not necessary to pick up the language.

What if I’m vegetarian/have other dietary restrictions?
If you have dietary restrictions or allergies, don’t worry you won’t starve! In the past, students with allergies showed restaurants a translated note that specified their restriction. Although some restaurants may not have many alternative meal choices for vegetarians, they usually try to be as accommodating as possible.