Illinois State's Wenting Zhang traveled a long way from her hometown of Shenzhen, China, to be a Redbird diver, but her decision to do so has paid off.

In her first semester with the 'Birds she was named the 2012 Missouri Valley Conference Diver of the Year, she received MVC First Team All-Conference honors and she broke the MVC and ISU three-meter board records. Just three meets into the 2012-13 season she has already broken the self-set ISU one-meter dive record with a score of 302.47 and was named the MVC Diver of the Week on Oct. 17.

When did you move to America, and why did you choose to come to ISU?
I moved here in January. One of my Chinese coaches teaches at Miami University, and he introduced me to Phil [Hoffmann], so I sent my diving tapes to him.

Is it hard being so far away from your family?
It's not that hard because I left home when I was young. I lived in Beijing for 10 years so I lived without them. I am used to living with my teammates and my coaches so it wasn't hard to get used to being away. We practiced together, went to school together and studied together.

What is your daily life like?
I usually have an 8 o'clock class every day except for Tuesday. My classes finish at 11 or 12. I usually practice at 12 or 12:30, and my practice finishes at 2, sometimes after practice I talk with my adviser and she helps me with my homework. We will have a weight workout on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. We have cardio twice a week, and usually the afternoons are for studying at the study center.

Is it hard to manage school and diving?
Yes, I feel a lot of pressure with studying but diving is okay.

What do you like to do for fun?
Sometimes I go to the mall with my friends or I just hang out with my teammates.

What is your favorite food?
I usually get Watterson's Chinese food, but sometimes I will eat Linkin's grilled cheese. I like

that there are a lot of choices.

What is your favorite TV show?
I usually watch “Vampire Diaries” and I love “Friends”.