Bryant University Zhuhai Initiative

2012 was a breakthrough year for Bryant’s China initiative. In March, Bryant signed a preliminary agreement to establish a joint venture program with the Beijing Institute of Technology Zhuhai (BITZH).

Building on Bryant’s extensive efforts to engage in Chinese higher education, the new agreement will promote academic collaboration and create exciting new educational opportunities for students in China and Southeast Asia.

The program, to be called Bryant University Zhuhai, will be located in the Guangdong Province near Hong Kong and Macau. The joint venture application is currently under review by both the provincial authorities and the national Ministry of Education of China.

Bryant will offer its expertise in providing quality education while BITZH will contribute the land, facilities, and other capital investments. Bryant President Ronald K. Machtley signed the agreement with BITZH chairman of the board of trustees, Mr. T.G. Wang, Ph.D., and board members Mr. Wen He and Mr. Steve Peng.

The project is expected to benefit Bryant in the following ways:
- Extend Bryant’s global presence by establishing a permanent base in China;
- Help recruit talented international students;
- Enhance teaching and research collaborations between Bryant faculty and Chinese academia;
- Provide customized study abroad and internship opportunities in China for Bryant students.

Bryant leadership and students have already established a connection with the future partners in Zhuhai.

In the fall of 2011, a senior leadership team comprising President Machtley, Vice President for Student Affairs J. Thomas Eakin, Vice President for Business Affairs Barry Morrison, and Vice President for International Affairs Hong Yang, Ph.D., Charles J. Smiley Chair Professor and director of the U.S.-China Institute and the Confucius Institute, went to the city to discuss the project.

Bryant students and faculty, through the Sophomore International Experience (SIE) China program, visited the BITZH campus in January 2012 and engaged in lively discussions with their Chinese peers; the SIE program returned to the campus again in January 2013.

Additionally, two Bryant faculty members plan to travel to Zhuhai to give a series of lectures and mini courses this spring.

Left to right: Bryant trustee David Weinstein, BITZH trustee Wen He, Bryant First Lady Kati Machtley, Bryant trustee Jim Skeffington, Bryant trustee Cheryl Snead, Bryant President Ronald K. Machtley, and Bryant Vice President for International Affairs Hong Yang, Ph.D.
Dear readers,

Ni Hao!

The U.S.-China Institute and the Confucius Institute continue to serve as bridges between the two countries by providing high-quality academic and cultural programs to the Bryant University community and beyond.

To strengthen Bryant’s presence in China, we took the first step toward establishing a joint venture school with the Beijing Institute of Technology’s campus in Zhuhai, a city close to Hong Kong.

In other news, the U.S. government selected the U.S.-China Institute to conduct the STARTALK summer Chinese language and culture programs on the Bryant campus for the sixth consecutive year. The immersion camp boasted record participation with 75 students and 35 teachers from K-12 schools throughout New England. The Confucius Institute helped fund a post-program trip to Beijing and Qinhuangdao.

This year’s Mid-Autumn Festival’s theme was the Great Wall of China; it included a presentation by a renowned Chinese archaeologist, Professor Lin Yang of the National Museum of China, and an exhibit by award-winning photographer Mr. Wanping Zhou which attracted an audience of more than 500 people.

An exciting new initiative took place this year; a group of undergraduate students and faculty from the China University of Geosciences (Wuhan) visited the Bryant campus before heading off to the Pacific Northwest for a weeklong trip to learn about geology and biology at several national parks.

We also welcomed two new additions to our team: Ms. Xingyu “Joy” Meng, professor of Chinese language and culture, who recently completed her Ph.D. in Chinese literature and joined Bryant as an exchange teacher, and Mr. Zhengxiang “Jason” Wang ’10 as the new academic coordinator for the U.S.-China Institute.

Please visit our website, china.bryant.edu, for updates on our spring programs.

We wish you an enjoyable semester!

Hong Yang, Ph.D.
Charles J. Smiley Chair Professor
Director of the U.S.-China Institute and the Confucius Institute
Vice President for International Affairs

A Chinese Class for Adults Opening Doors to China

In October, the U.S-China Institute and the Confucius Institute offered a beginner Chinese language class specifically for adult students. The goal of the course was to build a foundation for Chinese language study and offer a variety of cultural experiences.

Ms. Xingyu Meng, Ph.D., who provides basic training on pronunciation, tones, and character recognition and analysis, taught the class.

By the end of the course, students were able to identify more than 150 characters and engage in 50 basic dialogues such as greetings, introductions, ordering dishes, shopping, asking for help, compliments, and congratulations.

Students also experienced aspects of Chinese culture, including: calligraphy, a tea ceremony, paper cutting, and learning how to tie a Chinese knot.

The 12-week Chinese for Adults class is offered during the school semester. For more information, visit china.bryant.edu.

“I have wanted to study Chinese for many years and this course has provided me with the opportunity to fulfill this goal. Joy Meng is an excellent teacher and was very patient with me. She presented the material in a clear and lively manner. She is very knowledgeable, not only about Chinese from a linguistic standpoint, but also about Chinese culture, both traditional and contemporary. In every class, she included a section about some aspect of Chinese culture. I have benefited greatly from this class and have enjoyed it very much.”

– Ted McNamee
(Engineer, e-learning services provider Skillsoft)

“Our Chinese class was informative, fun, and a lot of hard work, but it left me eager to learn more on my own. Joy Meng was a fantastic teacher. She taught us not only language but also customs, culture, and travel skills. As a Bryant employee, I appreciate the opportunity I had to take this class.”

– Lorraine Letellier
(Support Services, Bryant University)
Bryant University advocates students putting their classroom knowledge to work in the real world from the get-go and, as part of a management course, students are tasked with helping local nonprofits positively impact the community.

This fall, a student group volunteered to assist the Confucius Institute at Bryant, with the goal of spreading awareness of the Institute and increasing participation in the local community.

The group consisted of five members: Justin Beaucage ’14, Antonio Carrion ’14, Chad Connor ’15, Kuan Lu ’14, and Yijia Yang ’14. The team hosted many events at local elementary and high schools promoting Chinese language and culture to students. As a result, they were voted one of the top management groups for the fall 2012 semester.

The first two events were held at Northern Lincoln Elementary School, teaching 50 fourth and fifth grade students how to write Chinese calligraphy characters. Since many of the students in the management group had extensive international backgrounds, they added substantial value in teaching the Chinese characters and helping individual students master the calligraphy strokes. Additionally, the group hosted photo exhibits at Northern Lincoln Elementary School and Smithfield High School.

The final event was held at LaPerche Elementary School in Smithfield. Some 250 students from kindergarten to fifth grade watched a presentation on the history and background of the Dragon Dance. Following the presentation, the team let the children touch the dragon; they were all very excited to be a part of the event.

“We will always remember the Confucius Institute and all the lessons we learned. We are extremely grateful not only to learn lessons for ourselves, but also to help the Institute increase awareness and participation in its programs. We hope that this project helped make a difference for the Institute.” – Justin Beaucage ’14, Antonio Carrion ’14, Chad Connor ’15, Kuan Lu ’14, and Yijia Yang ’14
Tai Chi Class

This fall, the Confucius Institute offered a one-hour tai chi class to Bryant faculty and staff on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with the goal of providing a supportive environment to learn the basics of this meditative exercise. Ms. Xiaochun “Sunny” Lai, visiting Chinese instructor from the China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), who was sponsored by the Confucius Institute headquarters, taught the class. Ms. Lai practices Yang style tai chi, which focuses on promoting mental, physical, and emotional development.

The class began with 15 students; eight completed all seven weeks. Bryant’s First Lady, Kati Machtley, was one of the participants, and at the end of the course, she exclaimed: “I love this class. Tai chi is just so wonderful!”

Tai chi helps relax the body, strengthen muscles, and relieve fatigue through slow, smooth continuous movements. Students also learned the Chinese word for each step. Participants said they enjoyed the health benefits and stress relief of the program, which was part of Bryant’s Good Cents Wellness Program. The class will resume in the spring semester, with a beginner and an intermediate level.

“I really enjoyed the class. The pace was slow, but we needed that. I have found it takes me longer to learn new things as I get older.”

– Paula Hogan
(Office and Budget Coordinator,
University Relations)

“Thank you, Sunny. I need to keep practicing tai chi; it makes me feel great. I really appreciated the class and the extra practice sessions we had.”

– Cheryl Richardson
(Technical Services Assistant,
Douglas and Judith Krupp Library)

The U.S.-China Institute is a New Schneider Electric Community ImpACT Partner

Beginning in January, the U.S.-China Institute and the Confucius Institute will provide two six-week courses annually for Schneider Electric employees.

Employees will be given an overview of Chinese cultural customs and business practices, as well as travel-relevant vocabulary lessons.

The classes are connected to Schneider’s Community ImpACT program, designed to advance the company’s global vision and mission by strategically selecting partners engaged in education, environment, global citizenship, innovation, and science and technology. The Institute’s focus on advancing education and global citizenship complements the Community ImpACT initiatives.

The classes are part of a two-year partnership agreement and will be taught by Ms. Xingyu Meng, Ph.D.

The U.S.-China Institute and the Confucius Institute educational programs offer a variety of language and culture classrooms specifically tailored to provide unique and authentic cultural materials to aspiring Chinese speakers. The programs are sponsored by Hanban – the colloquial abbreviation for the Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language.
CUG Trip to the West: August 2012

In August, the U.S.-China Institute at Bryant helped organize a study trip for a group of students and faculty from the China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), exploring various states on both coasts of the United States.

Starting at Bryant, the group, comprising 13 students and CUG professors: Kunguang Yang, Ph.D., Lang Pang, and Jianxiang Hou, traveled to various New England cities, including Newport and Providence in Rhode Island, and Boston, Massachusetts.

A number of Bryant faculty – Gregg Carter, Ph.D., Richard Holtzman, Ph.D., Judy Barrett Litoff, Ph.D., Brad Martin, Ph.D., and Qin Leng, Ph.D. – volunteered their time and expertise delivering lectures on U.S. politics, history, biology, and geological developments in the western United States. The lectures provided a cultural and scientific framework for the students, allowing them to delve further into various aspects of U.S. geology and culture.

Hong Yang, Ph.D., director of the U.S.-China Institute, led a geographic excursion that began in Montana’s Glacier National Park and ended in Seattle, Washington, covering nearly 1,000 miles and many geologically relevant areas.

The first leg of the trip included camping in the mountains of Glacier National Park and exploring the unique land formations that dictated the region’s climate.

Then, the group headed a few hundred miles south to Moscow, Idaho, to dig at the well-known Clarkia fossil beds. The objective was to isolate specific *Metasequoia* leaf fossils, which provide concise clues to the effects of climate change since they are unusually resistant to evolutionary change.

After a day and a night in Moscow, the group headed north through Washington, stopping at the Columbia River Gorge and Gingko National Park while learning about the Lewis and Clark Expedition – the first transcontinental expedition to the Pacific coast undertaken by the United States.

The study trip proved a success, affording the Chinese students the opportunity to participate in exciting scientific study in a foreign country. This cross-cultural focus in developing academic resources is a powerful tool for Bryant.

Future summer trips to explore geological phenomena will be developed and offered next summer, and Bryant students are encouraged to accompany CUG students and professors on this wonderful experience!

Bryant Welcomes Chinese Exchange Scholar: Ms. Xingyu Meng, Ph.D.

The U.S.-China Institute and the Confucius Institute welcome a new colleague, Ms. Xingyu “Joy” Meng, Ph.D., (蒙星宇) who will participate in Chinese language acquisition and culture programs.

Meng, who played a substantial role in Bryant’s STARTALK programs this summer, holds a Ph.D. in Chinese literature from Jinan University in Guangzhou and has an extensive background in teaching and writing. She holds a National Mandarin Proficiency Certificate, a National Professional Teaching Certificate, and a National Vocational Psychological Counselor Certificate.

Meng is the author of 19 academic papers and two books. Her books primarily relate to her interest in Chinese Internet literature in North America. She is currently working on a third book, a historic novel about U.S.-China travel in the 18th century.

Meng has a variety of hobbies she pursues in her free time. She plays the “guzheng” (古筝) – a Chinese string instrument similar to a harp. She enjoys art museums, cooking, fishing, and playing sports. She has traveled extensively throughout China and the United States, and continues to immerse herself in both cultures through her travels.

The U.S.-China Institute and the Confucius Institute are excited to welcome Ms. Xingyu Meng to our team of successful exchange researchers and teachers from China. Her diverse experience and skills add significant value to our academic programs and provide valuable resources to the Bryant community.
This summer, a group of American high school students and K-12 teachers participated in the optional STARTALK post-program two-week trip to China.

In Beijing, the travelers visited the spectacular Forbidden City, the Imperial Palaces from the Ming Dynasty to the end of the Qing Dynasty, and the Great Wall of China. The stark contrast between those historical sites and the modern architecture of the 2008 Olympic facilities, such as the Bird’s Nest and Water Cube, impressed the visitors.

The group also traveled to Qinhuangdao, a coastal city with historical significance in the Hebei province, to view exquisite glass artwork in the recently opened Qinhuangdao Glass Museum. They also visited the eastern-most segment of the Great Wall, joined a group of Chinese students at a summer camp, and visited local Chinese homes.

Since 2007, more than 120 American high school students and K-12 teachers have traveled to China through the Bryant K-12 China Study Trip, which is partially funded by the Confucius Institute headquarters in China.

Luke Thompson, a senior at Providence’s La Salle Academy, has traveled to China three times. Asked why, he said:

“All I can say is that China is so different from anything I have ever seen. I think it’s the little quirky things that are the most noticeable. I don’t visit China to see the sights or the world wonders. I come to really live life. My favorite times are walking down the street and taking in the atmosphere. I love the smell of stinky tofu, because I can’t smell it anywhere else, or just staring out the window of the bus and thinking. I love making strangers my friends, having my picture taken, and talking to people. I think I just might love China.”

Students and teachers are not just there for sightseeing. They also participate in pre-trip orientations, write journals about daily activities, and are encouraged to reflect about how U.S. and Chinese cultures compare during this educational trip.

Amanda Bartolini, a junior at La Salle Academy, was especially interested in the differences in the educational systems after a visit to a local Chinese school.

“I’ve been thinking a lot about the outcome of students from American and Chinese schools. Most surveys show that Chinese students are smarter in core subjects, like math and science. With double the hours of high school, it seems like that outcome would be expected. However, when I asked the students about their hobbies, many said ‘sports,’ but they do that during school. Of course, we only saw one school, so this is based on just a tiny snapshot of Chinese education. Overall, the two major lessons I learned are that it isn’t what you have, it’s what you accomplish with what you have, and that getting a good education can take on many different meanings.”

To learn more on the trip, visit the travelers’ online journals, “New England Stars Shine Across China,” at www.chinabryant.tumblr.com. Phyllis Humphrey, a teacher from East Greenwich, also created a blog about the trip, available at startalktriptochina.blogspot.com.
From July 16-28, 75 students from Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island chose to learn Chinese language and culture at Bryant through the federally funded STARTALK program.

The program is a two-week immersion program for K-12 students to learn Chinese and gain cultural knowledge. It is the sixth consecutive year that the U.S.-China Institute and the Confucius Institute have been selected to offer the STARTALK Student Program on the Bryant campus. Bryant also hosted 32 local K-12 teachers who participated in the rigorous STARTALK Teacher Development Program on teaching Chinese language and culture from July 9-28.

Students were divided into seven classes based on their proficiency. The experienced K-12 Chinese teachers used comprehensive instructional principals of foreign language teaching as established by national foreign language experts and research institutions.

In the classroom, students learned greetings, titles of family members, daily routines, and food etiquette with a Panda family theme, based on a STARTALK-specific textbook.

Outside the classroom, students took part in cultural activities such as Chinese calligraphy, cooking, table tennis, the popular game Mah Jong, and playing the “guzheng” – a string instrument. Hu Kai, professor of athletics at the China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), led tai chi practices every morning.

The students also explored Chinese culture in the local area by competing in a scavenger hunt at the Kim Man Market in Quincy, Massachusetts, visiting a Chinese house in the Peabody Essex Museum, in Salem, Massachusetts, and dining at an authentic Chinese restaurant.

On the last day of the program, students and teachers demonstrated their newly acquired language and cultural skills by performing – singing, dancing, martial arts, and skits – for friends and family.

STARTALK’s spirit of learning, open mindedness, friendship, dedication, and commitment will endure for its participants for years to come.

Testimonials from participants:

“Memories that happen at STARTALK cannot happen anywhere else. It is a special place, filled with special people. I cannot wait to repeat this rare and wonderful experience again next year.”

– Ava Tessotorie
(Grade 11, Hope, RI)

“In my opinion, the program was very, very good. Every day, when I enter the program, I always have a smile on my face because for me this program is life changing. I will never forget these days. I can’t wait to share the memories with my friends. I’ll be prepared and ready for next year. This program rocks.”

– Makendley Mentor
(Grade 9, Brockton, MA)

“STARTALK has made it apparent to me that I can – and I want to – learn Chinese. I attended STARTALK hoping to connect with my cultural background, and I am pleased to say that I have felt the most Chinese I ever have.”

– Sarah Baker
(Grade 10, East Greenwich, RI)

“This first year at STARTALK is one that I will never forget. The wonders of Chinese culture, new insights, progress in my speaking ability, and the friends I made there will resonate in my mind always. The program was completely wonderful.”

– Matthew Sawoski
(Grade 7, Little Compton, RI)
Academic Coordinator Zhengxiang “Jason” Wang Joins the U.S.-China Institute

The U.S.-China Institute and the Confucius Institute are happy to welcome Zhengxiang “Jason” Wang ’10 as the new Academic Coordinator. Wang joined the U.S.-China Institute in March 2012. He is a Bryant alumnus with a bachelor’s degree in Marketing and a study focus on global supply chain management.

In his role as an academic coordinator, he will work on enhancing international recruitment, particularly in China, at Bryant. He will create recruitment materials, application information, and presentations for international students. He will also travel extensively throughout China to raise Bryant’s visibility and attract new students.

Wang’s previous experience includes an internship at the U.S.-China Institute, working on the major events, while at Bryant. He also tutored students interested in the Chinese language through the Chinese Tea Table program and participated in Bryant’s radio program. He also facilitated many of the Institute’s daily functions, including researching business initiatives and assisting in the organization of events. Wang is bilingual and familiar with both American and Chinese educational systems – a strong foundation for pursuing new students on a cross-cultural level.

China Week 2012

The inaugural China Week took place at Bryant during the first week in April, engaging students, faculty, staff, and the local community in China-related academic seminars and cultural activities.

The kickoff event, Monday evening in the dining hall, offered students the chance to try an authentic Chinese meal, play a China-related trivia game, or watch films from Sophomore International Experience trips to China.

The following evening was dedicated to the “Follow Me” educational short films, each with a different theme, ranging from historic landmarks in China to unusual local street food. The films were created and presented by Jason Fortin ’12, Margaret Wong ’14, Ryan Richter ’12, and Bakhtiyar Baidaralin ’12.

The “Follow Me” films are a platform for students to practice vocabulary words and they complement the STARTALK curriculum by providing potential participants with a window into the program’s optional China study trip. The trip gives participants the opportunity to travel to various locations in China and test out their recently acquired language skills.

Two academic events were held at Bryant on Wednesday. The first showcased China-related faculty research on topics ranging from the growing influence of social networks on Chinese and American youths to the variance in species of rice in China. Following the research seminar, guest speaker Mr. Heping Jia spoke about how the Chinese media covers environmental issues.

The finale of China Week was a one-man multimedia performance “From Mao to the Met” by Mr. Hao Jiang Tian, who incorporated a stunning variety of instruments and songs throughout the autobiographical tale of how he went from working in China to singing in New York City’s Metropolitan Opera. After the performance, Mr. Tian signed copies of his DVDs and books.
Every year, Bryant’s U.S.-China Institute and the Confucius Institute host academic and thought-provoking activities during the Mid-Autumn Festival celebration on the University’s Smithfield campus. This year’s event, featuring the award-winning work of farmer and photographer Mr. Wanping Zhou, was an enormous success.

The festival, also known as the Moon Festival, is one of the most popular holidays in the Chinese lunar calendar and is inspired by Chinese mythology. It is typical for Chinese people to eat moon cakes, round or rectangular-shaped baked delicacies, under the full moon.

This year’s theme was The Great Wall of China or “Cháng Chéng.” The Great Wall, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, was constructed as a means of protection and defense. Many legends and myths exist about The Great Wall, with central themes of honor, love, family, and perseverance. The structure, which required tremendous resolve and collaboration, represents the unity of the Chinese people. It also acts as a symbol of cultural preservation.

Festival activities, held Oct. 2, included a presentation by Professor Lin Yang, chair of the Archaeology Division of the National Museum of China, on the history and preservation of The Great Wall, and a performance by Bryant’s Dragon Dance Team. Chinese food and drink – moon cakes, tea, and Great Wall red wine – were offered.

A photography exhibit by Mr. Wanping Zhou, a farmer and an inspirational self-taught photographer, was showcased in the George E. Bello Center for Information and Technology. Zhou resides at the foot of the Jinshanling portion of The Great Wall – a mountainous area to the northeast of Beijing. His work, capturing mesmerizing images of various sections of the wall throughout the seasons, has earned him numerous awards, including the second prize at the 1998 International World Heritage Photo Competition organized by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
Upcoming U.S.-China Institute Events

February 16, 2013
Chinese New Year Celebration – Welcome the Year of the Snake at Bryant University with cultural performances and authentic Chinese food. Free admission and open to the public.
Location: Main gym of the Elizabeth and Malcolm Chace Wellness Center at Bryant University

April 2013
Official groundbreaking ceremony of the Shu Fang Zhai replica on the Bryant University campus

May 12, 2013
HSK/HSKK Tests

October 2013
Mid-Autumn Festival and Silk Fashion Show
Silk Road Concert by Yo-Yo Ma – In collaboration with the National Tea Museum, this event will showcase the history and culture of silk in China through lectures, an exhibition of images, and replica of ancient outfit and production device models.

November 16, 2013
YCT Test

December 1, 2013
HSK/HSKK Tests

Monthly China Seminar Series and Chinese Movie Screenings
For more information on the seminars, movie screenings, and other events, visit our website at china.bryant.edu or find us on LinkedIn or Facebook.

The U.S.-China Institute at Bryant University forges academic, business, and cultural partnerships between Bryant University and higher learning institutions, business enterprises, and governmental offices in China.

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