International Experiences @ Bryant

Asha Atkinson ’19, Braulio Castillo ’19 and Yuwei Wang ’19 during Extravaganza, which was held on campus in March.

Yun Chen ’20 (left) and employees Xiang (Ada) Li (center), Academic Coordinator at the U.S.-China Institute and Sheila Guay, Director of Conferences and Special Events, pose with the University’s mascot during the 2018 Year of the Bulldog Lunar New Year celebration, held on campus February 17, 2018.

Assistant Professor of Legal Studies, Katayoun Alidadi, Ph.D. (far left), with a group of students in front of the iconic Bund skyline in Shanghai during the Sophomore International Experience China in January 2018.

During the summer, Ben Murphy ’19 (center) spent 8 weeks working in Qingdao, Shandong Province in eastern China, as a business development intern at BBQ Land.

TABLE OF CONTENTS
International Women’s Day .............. 3
Bryant Students at United Nations ...... 5
Major Events in Photos .................. 6–7
Two Bulldogs at the Davis Cup ..........11
Supporting international students’ transition to America, providing more international opportunities to domestic students, and bringing diverse international perspectives to the Bryant campus and beyond are just a few examples of what we do in the Division for International Affairs. In this fall issue, we highlighted several exciting internationally related programs that occurred in the last semester. We also added new sections to provide “close-ups” of Bryant international faculty and students.

One of Bryant’s international and diversity goals is to increase the number of female students and to empower female faculty and staff. This year’s program (Page 3) for International Women’s Day is an example of our continuous efforts to support a platform celebrating their achievements and discussing issues facing women today.

The Bryant International Forum continued to bring leading international scholars to campus to share their wisdom. Dr. Fernando Reimers of Harvard University delivered a powerful and passionate speech about international education focusing on South America; while a distinguished Bryant faculty panel offered a timely assessment of perspectives and consequences of the U.S.-China trade war. (Page 3).

An academic institution’s quality and reputation largely depend upon its faculty excellence. In recent years, Bryant has increased the number of international faculty who bring their diverse international perspectives, overseas teaching and research experience, and distinct cultural backgrounds to our community. In this issue, we highlight Professor Alidadi’s first year experience at Bryant (Page 4).

We all understand and appreciate how a trip overseas can have a lasting impact on our students; however, a trip within the country can provide an international experience that is just as powerful. Our students had a unique perspective on a recent trip to the United Nations in New York City (Page 5).

International students’ success is one of the ultimate goals for international higher education. Here, we present several stories to illustrate how international students have achieved excellence at Bryant in academics (Tiffany Venmahavong and Vivian Tejada on Page 10), cultural appreciation (Hongsuk Ryu, Page 9), and athletics (the Ortiz-Garcia brothers, Page 11).

As our Bryant Zhuhai campus entered its third year, we welcomed 16 transfer students to Smithfield last year as rising juniors. Although they have experienced similar curricula in Zhuhai, their cultural transition to the Smithfield campus is similar to other international students. Praised as a “Great American Experience,” the Zhuhai transfer students enjoyed a unique outdoor program made possible by a Bryant trustee during the winter break (Page 8).

On Pages 6–7, you can enjoy event photos from a variety of internationally themed programs that happened last semester, from the federally-funded summer STARTALK program to the community-based Lunar New Year celebration.

The U.S.-China Institute and Confucius Institute welcomed a new staff member, Timothy Latshaw, ’18, (Page 4) who will provide support for Bryant’s Confucius Institute, focusing on the interactions with the institute’s nine affiliated Confucius Classrooms at local K–12 schools.

Finally, President Machtley and I had an opportunity to meet with the Chinese Ambassador to the United States in Washington D.C., and I file a brief report on Page 9.

I invite you to enjoy this issue of “East-West Connection,” submit your ideas and information regarding international programs, and participate in our upcoming events in the fall.

Hong Yang, Ph.D.
Vice President for International Affairs
Charles J. Smiley Chair Professor
International Women’s Day Highlighted on Campus

International Women’s Day is celebrated around the globe each year on March 8th to mark social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. Recently the day has recognized the monumental strides towards progress for women who have stood up against the abuse of power and sexual misconduct as the #MeToo movement has reverberated across society.

Powered by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Bryant’s International Women’s Day programming was held in the Rotunda and followed the theme Press for Progress which discussed the thoughts and ideas behind the day which celebrates inspiring women.

Attendees listened to Rosedelma Seraphin, Coordinator for International Student Integration, who spoke about sex trafficking and the related horrific crimes that women and children throughout the world face. English and Cultural Studies Professor Thomas Roach, Ph.D., spoke about why he is a feminist, feminist theory, and how it fits into today’s society. Ali Page ’17 discussed her senior thesis which looked at gender bias of the media coverage of Hilary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign.

Bryant’s International Forums Continue to Expand Perspectives

The Division of International Affairs at Bryant sponsored a pair of International Forums on campus during the spring semester.

The first, Making Education Relevant to Improving the World, featured Fernando M. Reimers, Ph.D., Director of the Global Education Innovation Initiative and the International Education Policy Master’s Program at Harvard University. His research focuses on understanding how to educate children to thrive in the 21st century. An expert in global education, Reimers addressed the Bryant community about the importance of global citizenship as an approach to enhancing relevancy and the implications for higher education.

The second forum titled Eagle, Dragon, and the World Economy: A Panel Discussion on the Challenge and Impact of U.S.–China Trade Policies focused on the recently escalated trade dispute between the world’s two largest economies, which has stoked fears of negative global economic impact. The discussion featured three distinguished Bryant faculty members: Associate Professor of Management Crystal Jiang, Ph.D., Professor of Economics Jongsung Kim, Ph.D., and Professor of Finance Kevin Maloney, Ph.D. shared insights on the severity of the situation, offered opinions on how they expect things to play out, and answered questions from a room full of faculty and student audience.
Katayoun Alidadi, Ph.D. joined Bryant University in 2017 as an Assistant Professor of Legal Studies specializing in comparative law, human rights, and the intersections of law and religion.

Her first year at Bryant, Alidadi said, “was nothing less than a transformational year for me. I really enjoy getting to know Bryant students, faculty, and staff. This place is made out of individuals who each brings with them a set of unique backgrounds, skills, passions, and stories.”

Originally from Tehran, Iran, her family fled the country after the 1979 revolution and settled in Belgium. Alidadi studied law at the KU Leuven in Belgium and received an LL.M. in International Legal Studies from Harvard Law School.

“I have colleagues from every part of the world – from China to Turkey, from Brazil to Kenya – who want to pursue international careers,” she said. “This is quite a unique environment to work in. I always feel one should go out and explore the world with an open, but not an empty mind and at Bryant I’ve met many likeminded individuals.”

Prior to entering academia, she practiced law with the international law firm Clifford Chance LLP in Brussels and later with Public Counsel Law Center in Los Angeles. She has won a number of research and writing awards, including the 2013 Ius Commune Prize for her research on reasonable accommodation for religion and belief and the Addison Brown Prize at Harvard Law School for her paper on the recognition of Islamic talaq (divorce) in Western jurisdictions.

Before joining Bryant University, she taught conflict of laws at the University of Houston Law Center and was a post-doctoral fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle/Saale, Germany.

“I’m a firm believer that knowledge of content, concepts, and theories remains important to frame issues appropriately, but the importance of skills like framing relevant questions, analyzing cases or data, and critical thinking cannot be overestimated,” Alidadi said. “I try to design my classes so students can develop both. Effective communication, orally and in writing, is really key in any law and policy-related profession, so students should expect to practice and improve their argumentative and writing skills in my classes.”

Bryant’s International Faculty – Global Perspectives on Campus

The Confucius Institute named Bryant alumnus Timothy Latshaw ’18, as its new program assistant in May. He majored in International Business with a concentration in Global Supply Chain Management and a minor in Chinese.

Latshaw traveled to China twice during his time at Bryant, first through the Sophomore International Experience and then, as a junior, when he spent a full semester abroad during his junior year studying at Bryant Zhuhai, the joint program between Bryant University and the Beijing Institute of Technology in Zhuhai (BITZH). While in Zhuhai he also interned at YoWa Sourcing, a Chinese logistics company.

At Bryant, Latshaw also worked at the U.S.-China Institute, where he supported a variety of Institute projects including assisting in the implementation of the Lunar New Year celebration and event marketing through multiple social media platforms.

Latshaw has proven himself to be a talented and reliable contributor with a passion for business and Chinese language and culture. In his new role, he will support Kun Xie, Assistant Director of the Confucius Institute, with the Institute’s daily operations, events, and program planning. He will also serve as the liaison for Bryant’s affiliated Confucius Classrooms in local K–12 schools.

Bryant Alumnus Joins Confucius Institute

Tim Latshaw ’18 is excited to join the Confucius Institute where he can put his Chinese language and cultural skills into daily practice.
Four Global Studies majors recently experienced where the Bryant faculty’s highly regarded expertise and mentoring could take them: to the United Nations in New York City.

Professor of Legal Studies Andrea Boggio, J.S.D. participated in a panel discussion at the United Nations on state-of-the-art developments in science and their link to human rights. In addition, as one of the panel’s organizers, he made sure the special session included an invitation to his students — the only college students invited to attend to listen as the conversation unfolded.

Exclusive front-row seats to U.N. dialogue

Boggio is an expert on science governance, particularly as it pertains to the human right to science — or the right of all to benefit from scientific advancement. His research informs his work as a board member of the Luca Coscioni Association, an advocacy group based in Italy. Boggio and his colleagues called for a special session to continue a dialogue on developing a comprehensive interpretation of the right to science, which is currently being drafted by the U.N. for approval in 2019.

The four Global Studies students from Bryant listened as history unfolded. The panel’s dialogue pushed the U.N. toward useful developments in exploring the right to science. Boggio spoke about establishing an index to document how nations use their laws meant to protect the right.

Then, after the session and as part of their two-day trip, the students visited the offices of the research and advocacy NGO Human Rights Watch as well as the law firm Reed Smith. The meeting at the law firm touched upon the integration of social impact with private and public equity funds. Two Bryant professors — Professor Alex Perullo, Ph.D., and Assistant Professor Katayoun Alidadi, Ph.D. — accompanied Boggio and the students throughout the trip, debriefing the students on the experiences as they went.

A transformational – and vital – experience

The students felt that the trip made a lasting impact. Claire Gracia ’18, said, “I was an observer of an important discussion and I would not have had this opportunity without Global Studies at Bryant.” She continued, “I learned about the organizations in class but it was completely different to see it in real life. I want to work in international development and could see myself working in an organization like Human Rights Watch.”

MiaLynne Park ’18 added, “It was impressive to see the collaboration of individuals to develop and advocate for the right to science. Overall, the two-day trip was the type of opportunity that I think is vital to every student’s academic experience. The department offered us students unforgettable experiences and I’m excited to see where my Global Studies major will take me.”
Major Events in Pictures

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Bryant’s Provost and Chief Academic Officer Glenn Sulmasy greets the crowd at the Lunar New Year celebration held on campus February 17, 2018.

Students, from left to right, Kathleen Gonzalez ’18, Mariola Czerwonka ’19 and Manuela Duque ’19 at the International Student Organization’s Annual Gala.

Marissa Andreozzi ’20 and Luke Feng ’18 host this year’s Lunar New Year celebration dubbed “Year of the Bulldog” at Bryant.

BRYANT ZHUHAI SIE

Bryant Zhuhai student, Hanyang Zhang, stands outside the WMJF studio in the Koffler Center and Communications Complex on Bryant Smithfield campus.

Bryant Zhuhai students gather around the Archway on a tour of the Smithfield campus during their SIE program in August.

Inside the Academic Innovation Center, Baochun Wu speaks to faculty, staff, and classmates about her expectations and hopes for her SIE experience in the United States.
Students have a hands-on experience in the dumpling making workshop offered by lead teacher Ren Li during the STARTALK Summer Program.

STARTALK provides an opportunity for Bryant students to gain valuable leadership experience and is a unique learning environment for both students and teachers.

A camper gets help trying on a lion dance costume during the STARTALK Summer program, held on Bryant campus in July 2018.

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

The U.S.–China Institute staff and Bryant faculty members celebrate with a group of graduating students in May 2018.

A leadership delegation from Hexi University in Zhangye, Gansu Province in western China visits Bryant in March. They are pictured here with staff from the U.S.–China Institute.

Twelve students from Bryant Zhuhai came to Smithfield and took Finance 201 and Money & Banking 201 during the 2018 summer session. They spent six weeks living and learning on campus as well as exploring significant cultural sites around New England.

Colleen Balk ’17 (far left), Program Assistant, and Sarah Herman (center), Housing Coordinator, led a group of students to Arizona in March for the Spring Break Cultural Exchange program.
Bryant Trustee Provides Unforgettable Winter Experience for Students

Louis Page ’89, P’17, founder and president of Window to Wall Street Inc., and his friends opened their home in New Hampshire to a group of transfer students from Bryant Zhuhai in January. The unique program provided a winter experience for the students who primarily live in the warm climates of southern China.

Transfer students from Bryant Zhuhai, along with staff from the U.S.-China Institute, spent a weekend with Bryant trustee Louis Page and his friends at their cabin in New Hampshire.

Several students reflect on the trip:

“As a child who never experienced a snow trip, this New Hampshire trip was definitely a brand new experience for me. I will always remember the fish we caught and driving the ATVs and snowmobiles. The night sky of New Hampshire was full of shining stars while we bonded playing different card games. This trip brought all of us closer and closer.”

YING WANG ’20

“At night, some students and Mr. Page’s family cooked the fish that we caught during the day. After dinner, everyone sat around the fire and listened to Mr. Page sharing his business experiences. He emphasized to us his personal view of struggle. I’m impressed that he says he is always at the edge of the comfort zone and that he always lets himself feel some pressure. As an international student, it made me realize the importance of getting out of my comfort zone.”

JIEMIN FENG ’20

“As a student from the southern part of China where snow is a luxury for all young kids, this was an incredible gift from the Pages. I could feel the breadth of wildness in the woods and I walked on a seemingly endless ice lake.”

WEILI LIN ’20

“This was my best winter experience ever. It revitalized my feelings toward winter. It is not just cold; it is filled with joy and cheer. This trip will remain a life-long memory vivid in my mind forever.”

YUELAN ZHAI ’20
Chinese Ambassador Cui Tiankai hosts Bryant Delegation

Bryant University President Ronald K. Machtley and Vice President for International Affairs Hong Yang, Ph.D., were honored guests at the Chinese Embassy in Washington D.C. in March. The Bryant delegation was hosted by the Honorable Cui Tiankai, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to the United States.

Ambassador Cui noted the University’s creative China initiatives, including programs of the U.S.-China Institute and the Confucius Institute, the Sophomore International Experience to China, the China Speaker Series, and the establishment of the Bryant Zhuhai campus in Guangdong province.

President Machtley briefed the ambassador about Bryant’s strategic plan to engage with China as well as the University’s innovative Shu Fang Zhai Project. Machtley also thanked the ambassador for his guidance in navigating the Chinese education system and for his continuing support of Bryant’s efforts to internationalize its campus.

Hongsuk Ryu ’19 – South Korea

Hongsuk Ryu ’19 has an infectious positive energy drawn from his passions for new experiences and analytics.

From South Korea, Hongsuk Ryu ’19 is an International Business major with a dual concentration in Information Systems and Analytics and Entrepreneurship. He has enjoyed his programming classes the most because of the opportunities for real-world experience in information systems and analytics. The Academic Center for Excellence, where he works as a peer tutor for international students, has allowed Ryu to make strong connections that have provided him opportunities in both his personal and professional life. These include working for the not-for-profit Dunvegan Farm in Wrentham, MA, which has a mission of educating the community about farming, food production, and common farm animals.

He has also taken advantage of the wide range of study abroad programs and the academic resources Bryant provides students. One of his most memorable moments at Bryant was his Sophomore International Experience (SIE) to South Africa. Ryu says the program “helped me to better appreciate South African culture and prepared me for my own adventure of traveling across the African continent from South Africa to Egypt.”

Ryu aspires to work in programming after he graduates and eventually use his skills and knowledge through his entrepreneurship concentration to start a business.
The Bryant Scholars program fosters academic excellence in talented, high-achieving Bryant students who pursue prestigious scholarships including the Fulbright Scholars Program. Such distinguished scholarships provide key opportunities for students to put the skills they learn at Bryant to good use and to develop into global citizens.

Vivian Tejada ’17 was recently awarded a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to teach in Brazil. Her award comes a year after her classmate Tiffany Venmahavong ’17 was recognized with a Fulbright award.

“Our faculty have dedicated hours of their time and talent to support our students,” notes Provost and Chief Academic Officer Glenn M. Sulmasy, J.D., LL.M. “The success of the Bryant Scholars program since its inception two and a half years ago is another example of the Bryant faculty’s dedication toward academic greatness and the success of our students.”

“Students develop as independent thinkers ... and develop close relationships with

Diversity Workshop Highlights Professional Development Day

One of the highlights of Bryant’s annual personal development day last February, was a workshop led by Assistant Vice President of Student Engagement Mailee Kue, Ph.D., titled “How to Talk About Diversity Without Offending Everyone and What to Do When You Do Offend.” She talked about the awareness one needs to engage in genuine conversations about diversity.

“In any community, talking about the various needs of all members is always a great way to build a strong sense of community and ensure that members are feeling fulfilled.”

MAILEE KUE, Ph.D.

Major takeaways from the session were:
• Be honest when you do make a mistake
• Be open to having difficult and uncomfortable conversations
• Be aware that each of us has our own lens in which we view the world

Participants left with a better understanding of what is essential to carrying out advocacy work. The session gave new employees as well as experienced staffers a solid foundation on how to advocate for marginalized groups and challenged thinking about some approaches.

This session was part of INSPIRE, a full day learning opportunity focused on whole person development organized by Bryant’s human resources team. The day consisted of informative learning sessions focusing on topics including retirement, mental health and investment tools.

Bryant Scholars Program Fosters Fulbrights

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“Our faculty have dedicated hours of their time and talent to support our students,” explains Associate Professor of English and Cultural Studies Jeffrey Arellano Cabusao, Ph.D., director of Bryant Scholars, a program that mentors students through the grueling application processes.

Tejada made the world her classroom, participating in marches advocating for women’s rights, health care, and immigration reform. She was the first Bryant student to study abroad in Havana, Cuba, where she advanced her studies of international politics.

Venmahavong, the daughter of Laotian immigrants and the first member of her family to attend college, received a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Scholarship and is now teaching children in her parents’ home country of Laos.
Two Bulldogs Represent Puerto Rico in Davis Cup

Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Bjorn Borg, John McEnroe – the world’s top male tennis players all have competed in the Davis Cup, the premiere international team event in men’s tennis. Now a pair of Bryant student-athletes can add their names to that illustrious list.

Jorge Ortiz-Garcia ’18 and Jorge Isaias Ortiz-Garcia ’20 represented their home of Puerto Rico in competition against Bolivia in a qualifying round of the Davis Cup in April. The brothers put up a strong effort in two matches, but ultimately were bested by the Bolivians. Nonetheless, both Bulldogs describe the experience as unforgettable.

“We were really thankful that the University gave us the opportunity to go.”

“It’s always been our dream to represent our home in the sport we play,” said Jorge Ortiz-Garcia. But before they could go, the brothers had to get permission from Bryant tennis coach Ron Gendron to leave the team mid-season to play in the tournament.

“He was really understanding,” said Jorge Isaias Ortiz-Garcia.

The Davis Cup atmosphere was one they had never experienced: Fans sought their autographs, and they took part in post-match press conferences.

On top of that was complete support from their home. “Knowing that you have all of Puerto Rico rooting for you is an unbelievable feeling,” Jorge Isaias Ortiz-Garcia said.

FROM PUERTO RICO TO SMITHFIELD

The brothers never would have enrolled at Bryant if it weren’t for a summer tennis camp at Brown, where they caught Gendron’s eye. It was a goal of theirs to become the first in the family to attend college in the continental United States, and Bryant ended up being the perfect fit.

“I love the campus, and there is a really strong community of Spanish-speaking students,” said Jorge Ortiz-Garcia, adding that Bryant’s international student body is “beneficial for everyone.”

Jorge quickly committed to Bryant. His younger brother kept in touch with Gendron and enrolled two years later. Together, they were part of this year’s men’s tennis team that won Bryant’s fifth consecutive Northeast Conference championship.

Both students are Management majors. Jorge Ortiz-Garcia plans to obtain his MBA before going into health care management. The younger Jorge hopes to do something with cars.

“In every aspect of leadership and becoming independent, Bryant has prepared us for the real world ... providing all the tools that we need to succeed in life,” says Jorge Ortiz-Garcia.
Upcoming Bryant International Events

Cultural Celebrations
Mid-Autumn Festival & Lunar New Year
Each year at Bryant, the U.S.-China Institute and Confucius Institute organize on-campus events for the community around these two cultural celebrations held in September and February, respectively. Every year the celebrations focus around different traditions aimed at enriching the campus community through multiculturalism and diversity. Both events are free and open to all.

International Education Week
International Education Week in November promotes and celebrates international education and multiculturalism. Highlights during this week include keynote speakers, panel discussions, and programs geared toward increasing awareness and facilitating dialogue. The goal of IEW at Bryant is to heighten campus awareness of social and global issues and to promote mutual understanding and international cooperation.

Spring Break Cultural Exchange
Submit an application to take part in the annual Spring Break trip to the western U.S. in March, sponsored by the Division of International Affairs. Visit some of America’s most beautiful national parks and meet new friends. Space is limited so apply early. For questions, please contact Colleen Balk at cbalk@bryant.edu.

Every Monday and Thursday
Chinese Tea Table
The Chinese Tea Table provides an excellent opportunity for students who are interested in Chinese to practice the language and obtain tutoring assistance from native speakers. It is open to anyone interested in Chinese language and culture. Just show up. The Chinese Tea Table takes place in the Confucius Institute Library located on the bottom level of the Chafee Center for International Business every Monday and Thursday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. throughout the semester.

Global Community Hour
This Bryant signature educational activity to help build cultural awareness will take you to new countries around the globe each semester. Hosted by international students and scholars, Global Community Hour includes a presentation about the focus country’s culture and is followed by a small sampling of local cuisine. Seats are limited. For more information, contact the Office of International Students and Scholars at oiss@bryant.edu.

HSK Test
HSK is a six-level, international standardized Chinese proficiency test designed to examine students’ ability in the application of the Chinese language in their studies and personal lives.

YCT Test
YCT is a four-level, international standardized test of Chinese language proficiency, designed to help young students evaluate their Chinese language skills.

Registration Deadline
10 Days prior to the exam date
For more information, please contact Ms. Ping Wang at pwang2@bryant.edu or visit china.bryant.edu and click on “Test Services” through the Confucius Institute tab.

Stay tuned to the Bryant events calendar for further details on all Division of International Affairs events.