



E A S T W E S T

CONNECTION

DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AT BRYANT UNIVERSITY

FALL 2020

International Experiences @ Bryant



Bryant University President Ross Gittell, Ph.D., walks with former president Ronald K. Machtley.



Students and staff at the Grand Canyon during the International Affairs-sponsored cultural exchange program.



Bryant University President Ross Gittell, Ph.D., meets Tupper II inside the library at the Bello Center for Information and Technology.



President Ross Gittell (right) meets with students during move-in weekend in August.

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Bryant University

DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Message from the President

Welcome from President Gittell

To the Bryant University International Community,



During these extraordinary times, it is important that we at Bryant reaffirm our commitment to international education and support for our international students who contribute so much to our community. The Bryant community is as strong as its people, and a diverse community enhances the Bryant experience for all.

Bryant understands the unprecedented challenges that our international students are facing. Due to the pandemic, reduced staffing at United States consulates and travel restrictions have created substantial challenges for many students who wish to come to our Rhode Island campus. We have taken significant measures to support international students who may need to begin their Bryant education remotely to start on time, or to

continue that education uninterrupted, including the option to take the entire semester online if they are unable to return to campus for the fall 2020 semester.

At the same time, our dedicated staff are working diligently to provide a safe and healthy environment for all students returning to campus. Robust, community-wide testing procedures are in place to control the spread of COVID-19 in the community and provide the scientific data for effective contact tracing and mitigation. We will continue to support our international students in as many ways as possible. The Office of International Students and Scholars serves as an excellent resource to provide updated information and advice for international students and their families to navigate the rapidly evolving situations under the unprecedented world pandemic.

Under the challenges of this pandemic and unsettling global politics, Bryant University's international exchanges will continue and Bryant will remain a leader in international education. As we just graduated the second cohort in our Bryant Zhuhai campus, we are steadfast in our commitment to provide the unparalleled Bryant experience in the areas of

academic excellence, community integration, career development, and social networking for all students in both Smithfield and Zhuhai campuses.

As an international university distinguished by the global mindset of our students, faculty, and staff, Bryant welcomes students from around the world. We support an international experience for members of our community and encourage international research collaboration for faculty, even though travel restrictions will force us to be creative.

Our international students are a vital part of our community and make significant cultural and intellectual contributions to campus diversity and inclusion. Our continued commitment to international education will ensure that we continue advancing Bryant University's mission to provide our graduates with unlimited global opportunities.

Go Books, Go Bulldogs, Go Bryant!

President Ross Gittell

Incoming Board Chair David Beirne '85 announces Rita Williams-Bogar '76 will lead Trustee Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Bryant University Board of Trustees has established a new Trustee Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This Trustee

Committee will be chaired by Trustee and National Alumni Council President Rita Williams-Bogar '76 and is strongly supported by incoming Board Chair David M. Beirne '85.

Signaling its commitment to continue building on the strength of the Bryant community in the Vision 2030 strategic plans, the Committee will assess and provide recommendations regarding programs, policies, and initiatives designed to foster and strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion on campus, on the Bryant Board, and within the larger Bryant community network.

Incoming Chair David M. Beirne '85, noted, "Bryant University's Board of Trustees is deeply committed to ensuring that Bryant University is a place where all individuals are deeply valued, respected and supported. With this new Board of Trustee Committee in place and under the leadership of one of Bryant's most highly accomplished alumnae and the Board Chair, we are well positioned for Bryant to take a leadership role and serve as a model for other institutions, particularly as an institution focused on education that integrates business with the arts and sciences."

Committee Chair Rita Williams-Bogar added, "I am pleased to lead this important Trustee Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In establishing the new standing Committee, the Board has recognized diversity and inclusion as a crucial area of focus that is essential for success. The Bryant University

Trustee Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will ensure that these issues are engaged at the highest level of the organization."

The new Board of Trustee Committee will consider policies, including those representing all aspects of diversity through the recruiting, enrolling, retaining and graduating of students and the recruiting, retaining, and ongoing training of employees. The Committee aims to enhance diversity and support equity and inclusion across race, ethnicity gender identity, and sexual orientation, and for different viewpoints and perspectives at all levels.



Rita Williams-Bogar '76

Bill Conaty '67, current Board Chair, said, "I appreciate David's leadership and vision here and we are extremely fortunate to have the leadership of Chair Rita Williams-Bogar in this important work."

Williams-Bogar, who was president of the black student organization and one of the student protesters back in the 1970s, has a longstanding history of dedicated service to

Bryant. She is President & CEO of Personal Development Solutions, LLC., and is a dynamic speaker and expert facilitator. She provides consultative services to businesses and individuals in the areas of leadership development, emotional intelligence, ethics, diversity, and insurance education.

Williams-Bogar has been recognized by NJBIZ as one of New Jersey's 2011 Best 50 Women in Business and by the U.S. SBA as the 2011 Region II Minority Small Business Champion of the Year. She is a contributing author to the 2012 book "Big Bold Business Advice." The Alumni Association awarded Williams-Bogar its Gulski Service Award in 2015. She has also been a frequent contributor to the Alumni webinar series on topics related to communications, business ethics, and leading high performing teams.

Letter from the Vice President

Dear Friends,



The year 2020 will be remembered as a unique period in our lifetime when the uncertainty of a world pandemic, a national movement for racial justice, and challenges of international tensions in an election year converged. The emergence of these forces created a “perfect storm” for higher education in America with a profound impact on international programs.

In July, Bryant welcomed its 9th president, Dr. Ross Gittell, who succeeds Ronald K. Machtley who served as Bryant president for the past 24 years as one of the nation's longest serving university presidents. The presidential transition celebrated President and Mrs. Machtley's nearly a quarter-century commitment and contribution to Bryant, and significant impact on international education (P5) while welcoming President Gittell to campus. With a rich experience in higher education and impressive academic credentials, President Gittell leads the institution at this critical time, and on Page 2 he expresses his support for international students and his commitment to international education.

The pandemic has changed many things internationally, but what remains unaltered is the friendship and kindness built upon many years of collaboration that transcends national and political boundaries, and the letters between Bryant and the China University of Geosciences at Wuhan, hit by the pandemic at different times, illustrated such a strong bond of the two partner schools (P10).

When school activities moved online, the International Affairs Division maintained their busy schedule and activities over the Internet. Regular programs such as Global Community Hour and graduations were held on Zoom, and a new initiative to engage international students, “Bryant One World,” was launched shortly after the campus closing (P11).

With campus reopening in the fall and health and safety as a priority, the Division of International Affairs focuses its effort to engage with international students, to advise their visa and travels, and support their logistics regarding their return to campus or continuation of online education.

Bryant was one of the first universities in the nation to switch to online delivery after the spring break in March. International students who remained on campus faced a challenging living and learning lifestyle. On Page 7 Brittany Gouws '22, a student athlete from South Africa reflects on her experience during the pandemic.

Bryant's diverse international faculty plays a key role in the university's internationalization and ultimately provides global perspectives in the classroom. Page 10 features one of the excellent examples: Professor Gao Niu, whose global background and experience broadens his teaching and research. Bryant constantly welcomes new international visiting scholars into our community as Page 13 introduces one of this semester's visiting scholars to our campus.

As COVID-19 continually disrupts university campus life in the fall of 2020, Bryant will meet the challenges by enhancing services to our international community, innovating campus internationalization, and creating opportunities and programs for international

education both on and off campus. I invite you to enjoy this issue of “East-West Connection,” submit your ideas and information regarding international programs, and participate in the upcoming international related events, either online or in person, that are designed to build a stronger Bryant international community.

Hong Yang, Ph.D.

A handwritten signature of Hong Yang, Ph.D.

Vice President for International Affairs
Charles J. Smiley Chair Professor

Bryant Welcomes Dr. Ross Gittell As Ninth President



Bryant University President Ross Gittell, Ph.D. is the ninth president in the school's 157-year history.

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President Gittell joins the Bryant community after nearly a decade as Chancellor of the Community College System of New Hampshire, a seven-college system with 26,000 students. He previously served as James R. Carter Professor and Department Chair for the Department of Management, Peter T. Paul College (Whittemore School of Business and Economics), University of New Hampshire. He has also served as Adjunct Lecturer on Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, and Visiting Scholar at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston New England Public Policy Center.

A distinguished economist and economic development expert, Gittell is Vice President, Board Member, and Forecast Chair at the New England Economic Partnership. He succeeds Ronald K. Machtley, who retired on June 30 after 24 years of transformative accomplishments.

President Gittell comes to Bryant University with extensive academic and professional credentials – but it's his experiences outside

As President of Bryant, he's most looking forward to interacting with the University's students, getting to know them, helping them, and learning from them. “I have a passion for lifelong learning and learning from other people...I think that's why I've always stayed in the academy, because you could help people learn at the same time you're constantly learning through your interaction with others.”

“I am excited to be working with the University's dedicated faculty and staff on plans that build on our commitment to academic excellence and culture of innovation,” said President Gittell. “We are addressing historic challenges by working together and drawing on our institution's strengths, including our focus on students and our strongly committed faculty and staff. The Bryant community's response to the pandemic will further differentiate Bryant, and we will come out better for it.”

President Gittell holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy from Harvard University, Dively Fellow; a Master's in Business Administration from the University of California, Berkeley, Beta Gamma Sigma; and a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Chicago, Phi Beta Kappa.



Machtleys Retire After 24 Years, Leaving Behind an Unparalleled Legacy

Longtime Bryant University President **Ronald K. Machtley**, a visionary leader and champion for international education, retired on June 30, after nearly a quarter of a century at the helm of the school he helped transform from a regional business college to a top-ranked national university. One of the nation's longest serving college presidents and among only a handful to come to the job from public service in the U.S. Congress, the Honorable Ronald K. Machtley became President of Bryant College in 1996. Under his leadership Bryant has experienced unprecedented growth in all areas including international education.

"Ron Machtley has been a catalyst. In each of his 24 years of service, Ron established and then met key goals including building new facilities, creating new academic programs, going to Division I in athletics, and establishing a global mindset across campus," said Bryant University Board of Trustees Chair William J. Conaty '67. "Ron and his wife, Kati, made a tremendous commitment to our community. Bryant University's Board of Trustees is extremely grateful for all that they accomplished in making Bryant the world-class institution we are proud of today."



Former Bryant University president Ronald K. Machtley together with Women's Summit director, Mrs. Kati Machtley.

Machtley made global perspective an integral part of a Bryant education. Under his leadership, Bryant emerged as a nationally recognized university positioned on a dynamic trajectory of continued future success. His demonstrated commitment to internationalization includes:

- **Growing the international student population on campus from 5 percent representing 38 different countries in 1996 to 9 percent representing 48 countries in 2018.**
- **Creating the Sophomore International Experience, a three-credit course introducing culture, history, language, and art of a destination country, capped by two-weeks of travel to the region during winter or summer break, in 2007.**
- **Establishing Bryant University Zhuhai in 2015 as a strategic international gateway based in China's Guangdong Province. In partnership with the Beijing Institute of Technology Zhuhai, Bryant University Zhuhai houses the only U.S.-China joint four-year undergraduate business degree program in Guangdong Province. The academic program for Chinese as well as U.S. students mirrors the vigor and quality of Bryant's nationally recognized curriculum.**

Mrs. Kati C. Machtley '17H, Founder and Director of the Women's Summit at Bryant University, leaves a lasting legacy as well. Established in 1997 as a forum to inspire, empower, and advance women, the Women's Summit at Bryant has been one of the most highly sought-after programs of its kind for 23 years. Together, President and Mrs. Machtley have been an integral part of

the Bryant community, a dedicated and supportive presence at student events, and an exceptionally successful husband and wife partnership.

"It has been an honor to serve as the president of Bryant University. Bryant has made historic progress, from new academic programs to a transformed campus and life-changing residential experience. We are financially very strong. Most importantly, Bryant is equal to any institution in graduating outstanding students who are prepared for leadership roles around the world," Machtley said. "Kati and I love this institution, its faculty, staff, and students. There may be many university presidents more accomplished, but I can't imagine there are any who have cherished more the opportunity I was given to strengthen a learning community and help improve the lives of students."

Bryant Continues to Move Forward as Campus Reopens

The COVID-19 global pandemic forced the University to transform and implement new approaches to create a climate of responsibility on campus. Here is what Bryant is doing to provide a safe learning, working, and residential environment. Starting in May, a university-wide Return to Normalcy Committee designed the school's reopening plan, which was approved by the Rhode Island Department of Health in July. The plan included a robust testing regimen, requiring facemasks and social distancing, adjustments to the academic calendar, an enhanced cleaning and disinfecting schedule, and expanding classroom technological capabilities. Furthermore, students pledged to abide by an updated code of conduct, all university travel is paused, and fall 2020 study abroad programs are postponed. All of these measures are in line with preventing the spread of COVID-19.

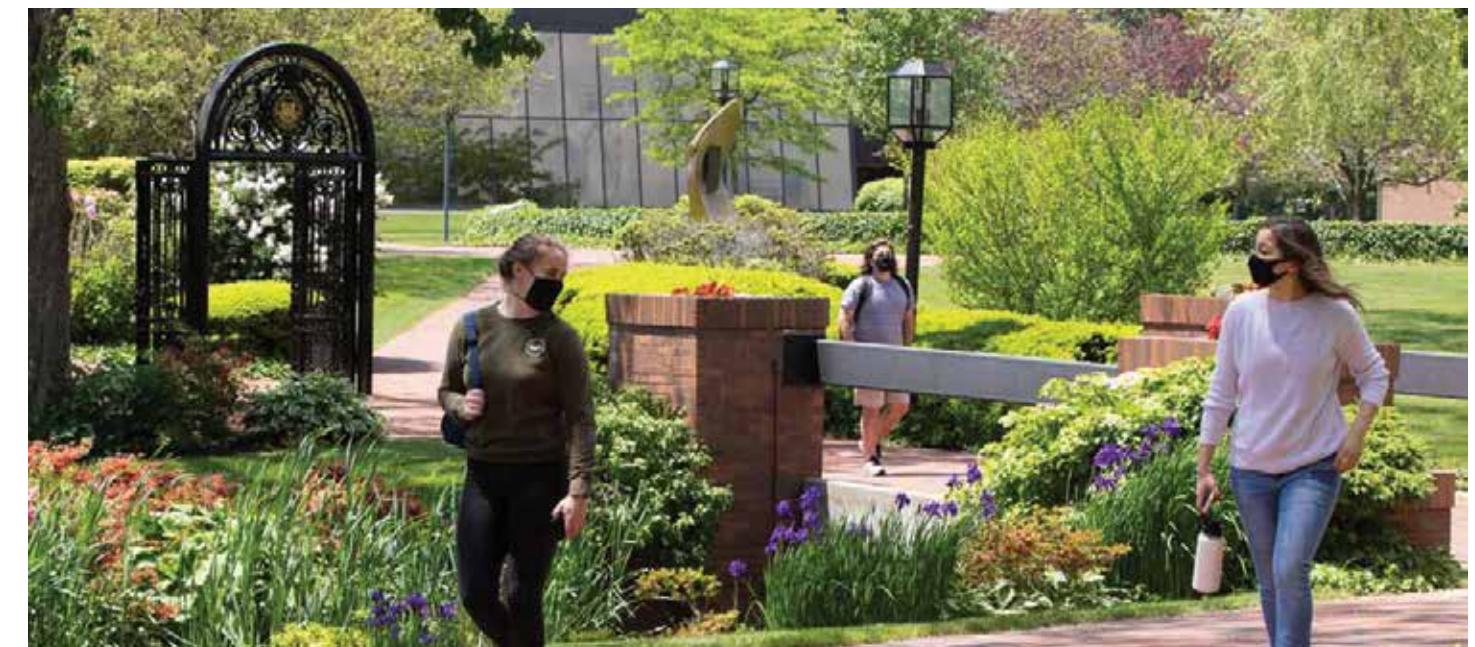
Swift action early on during the pandemic and a vigorous testing program has

ensured that the Bryant community remains safe. The impact on the international community was significant. Twenty-four international students could not return home during the summer and have remained on campus since the initial outbreak; the University continued to provide services including meals and safe living environments throughout the summer.

The Division of International Affairs launched the "Bryant One World" program. It was designed to engage with international students, gather and communicate information about COVID-19, and to learn best practices from each country to improve their Bryant experience.

Concurrently, the Office of International Students and Scholars led by Assistant Director Kaoru Paganelli, hosted online informational meetings twice each week ensuring that staff members made themselves available to all of Bryant's international students, no matter where in the world they were located.

"We began the weekly Zoom calls to make sure students felt fully supported during a time of much uncertainty," said Emily Collins-Garcia, Coordinator for International Student Integration. "We acknowledged that many students, rightfully so, would have many questions and would benefit from some guidance and personal connection as everything around them was changing. We felt that offering a consistent space in students' weeks to check-in was the best way to show our support."



Masks and social distancing have become ubiquitous on campus and are necessary to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Major Highlights in Pictures



In 2015, we opened our doors in Zhuhai, China, for the first class of a joint degree program collaboratively run with the Beijing Institute of Technology Zhuhai.



Former Bryant University President Ronald K. Machtley accompanied by Kati Machtley at his inauguration in 1996.



Until construction of the Academic Innovation Center, the George E. Bello Center for Information and Technology was the most ambitious facility built on campus in more than 30 years. The Machtleys are pictured here at the grand opening in 2002.



In 2004, Bryant College became Bryant University composed of two colleges: the College of Business and the new College of Arts and Sciences, advancing us as an institution providing students with the best integration of a business and a liberal arts education.



Bryant University Trustee Louis Page '89, P'17 hosted a group of Bryant international students at his New Hampshire home in February for another unforgettable winter experience.



The Machtleys were often present at athletic events. Bryant Athletic Director, Bill Smith (center-right) and Deputy Director of Athletics, John Ruppert (right) presented them with their own jersey in gratitude of their many years of support.



Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Bryant, William J. Conaty '67 with former President Ronald K. Machtley and his wife, Kati Machtley.



Grace, Ross, Jody and Rose Gittell during their first day at the Callahan House.

Bryant holds Town Hall discussion to explore diversity and inclusion

With the participation of Bryant University President Ross Gittell, Ph.D., during his first weeks as president, Bryant hosted a virtual Town Hall and panel discussion on July 22 to explore issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity. More than 250 students, alumni, faculty and staff contributed to a candid discussion with the new president.

Co-sponsored by several student organizations and organized by Aaron Bonsu '20, Emily Nunez '20, and Russell York '20, the forum included questions that touched on many areas of the Bryant experience, including academics and course curricula; recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff; awareness of systemic racism; and the bias incident response process.

"I am confident that working together we can achieve significant progress" on "critical matters of diversity, inclusion, and equity."

- In addition to President Gittell, the panelists were:
- Stephen Bannon, Executive Director of Public Safety;
- Michelle Cloutier MBA '05, Vice President for Enrollment Management;
- Mailee Kue, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President for Student Engagement;
- Tim Paige, Vice President for Human Resources;
- Glenn Sulmasy, J.D., LL.M., Provost and Chief Academic Officer.
- Diya Das, Ph.D., Chair and Professor of Management, served as moderator.



Diya Das, Ph.D. (center), Associate Dean of the College of Business, served as moderator of the virtual Town Hall and panel discussion to explore issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity. More than 250 students, alumni, faculty and staff contributed to a candid discussion with President Gittell on July 22, 2020.

The panelists shared some of the recent progress relevant to these issues. These include:

- **Incoming class diversity increased to 20 percent, the highest in Bryant history and up from 14–16 percent in years previous, with additional Office of Admission staff dedicated to diversity and increased off-campus relationships.**
- **Increasing the diversity of the Student Affairs staff, including its public safety officers.** Since 2019, 46 percent of new hires into Student Affairs have been people of color.
- **The Provost 2020 Diversity initiative,** in progress, which includes changes to the Gateway curriculum starting with the class of 2024; diversification of faculty and staff; program initiatives on systemic racism; community programming about diversity, equity and inclusion; a summer reading initiative, and training for faculty and staff.

President Gittell and the panelists acknowledged the need for increased efforts in a number of areas, including retention of diverse employees as well as expanding staff capacity to work on diversity and inclusion; educating current Bryant students on inclusive topics such as systemic racism, and accountability for racial microaggressions and prejudices that are destructive and hurtful; and updates in the curriculum to reflect diversity. They reaffirmed their commitment to continued dialogue and ongoing focus to assure equity, data/measurement, and accountability.

Seeing members of the Bryant community "come forward with requests and solutions is a real demonstration of the value of a Bryant education," said President Gittell, referring to a list of specific, measurable action items submitted by Be Better Bryant. The University will challenge itself to achieve 70 percent of the requests in three years.

Additional forums for continued discussion will be held to advance the difficult yet important work, Gittell said. "I'm committed to making progress on the critical matters of diversity, inclusion and equity, and I am confident that working together we can achieve significant progress."

International Student Perspectives: Brittany Gouws '22



Brittany Gouws '22

A s the coronavirus pandemic caused campus shut down, many students were quarantined in the comfort of their own homes with loved ones. A much different scenario played out for international students across the country. Travel restrictions, limited flights, visa regulations, and the uncertain spread of the virus made returning home impossible for many of them. Twenty-four Bryant international students remained on campus during the shutdown and through the summer months. Brittany Gouws '22, a Data Science major from South Africa with a double concentration in Business Administration and Psychology, shares her experience with coronavirus and living on campus this summer.

During winter break, I was home in Cape Town, South Africa, when I began hearing about the coronavirus. I wasn't sure what to think, but it did not seem threatening at the time. I felt safe and untouched in South Africa, and thought that perhaps the world was overreacting. When I returned to campus in January, I still felt secure and believed that the virus would fade away after a few weeks.

Field hockey training was going well leading up to spring break and the team was excited to continue making progress. We maintained a positive outlook, still hoping to return and finish the spring semester. After

we received notice of the cancellation of on-campus courses, the team was gutted. We worked hard over the past two years to build and create a bond, only for our progress to be halted at such an essential time. By the end of March, we were sending workout photos to a team Google Drive to maintain accountability. Weekly team meetings and Friday Zoom Yoga kept us in touch with our coaches as well as each other, but more bad news came. A second teammate decided to leave the team after another one left in February.

Being on campus during the shutdown was challenging. I was in the weight room on that Tuesday, when the announcement came that everything was closing. Upset with the sudden lack of exercise resources, the coaches loaned me some equipment to use in my room. Even though there were about 80 students on campus at that time, I was not close with them and started to feel lonely. The staff in Salmanson dining hall became my saving grace. Each day, I would walk in and talk with every individual working in the dining hall. We would joke around and I even started learning Spanish. The staff still makes me smile, offering everything from shopping advice to just good conversation. Those few months were difficult, but I enjoyed the quiet summer days on campus.

When I heard the virus had reached South Africa, panic set in and I began to feel more vulnerable. I feared for my parents and grandparents. The South African government shut off transport very quickly once the virus reached the country and went into full lockdown after reaching 500 confirmed cases. I have watched as the number of cases in South Africa continued to increase despite strict protocols.

The South African government has made some less-than-ideal decisions, including releasing 20,000 prisoners and prohibiting

the selling of alcohol and tobacco. The price of a pack of cigarettes has increased tenfold which has led to a huge black market. The government is losing millions of tax dollars from the prohibition of alcohol and tobacco. Many countries have withdrawn investments from South Africa, and the currency has weakened by nearly 35 percent.

The poorer communities are suffering tremendously. When the country shut down, nearly a million people immediately lost their jobs, such as domestic workers and gardeners. Many recent college graduates in South Africa are struggling to find employment.

The extreme nature of the lockdown in South Africa seemed unnecessary, which is why I chose to stay in the U.S. The manner in which Bryant has prepared for the reopening has left me confident that we can maintain a happy and healthy environment if students decide to be responsible. I have full confidence in the Bryant community and I urge everyone to continue to do what is necessary to beat this virus.

AIEA Annual Conference Focuses On Comprehensive Internationalization

Hong Yang, Ph.D., Vice President for International Affairs and Director of Bryant's U.S.-China Institute and Confucius Institute, presented two workshops during the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) annual conference in Washington D.C. The theme of this year's conference, held in February, was "Rethinking Comprehensive Internationalization for a Global Generation."

More than 100 sessions and roundtable discussions provided opportunities for international education leaders to engage in peer-learning on relevant and key issues for the field, including those led by Yang:

Reinventing Engagement with China – Under the challenging times of constrained U.S.-China relations, Yang shared his experience and perspectives about how to engage with institutions and scholars from China, helped attendees explore potential best practices to address national security concerns while also maintaining an open and collaborative academic and research environment. Yang also introduced the Bryant Zhuhai campus to the attendees.

Senior Advisers Program (SAP) Roundtable: Mentorship and Leadership – As a co-chair for the AIEA Senior Advisers Program, Yang introduced the program, shared his experi-

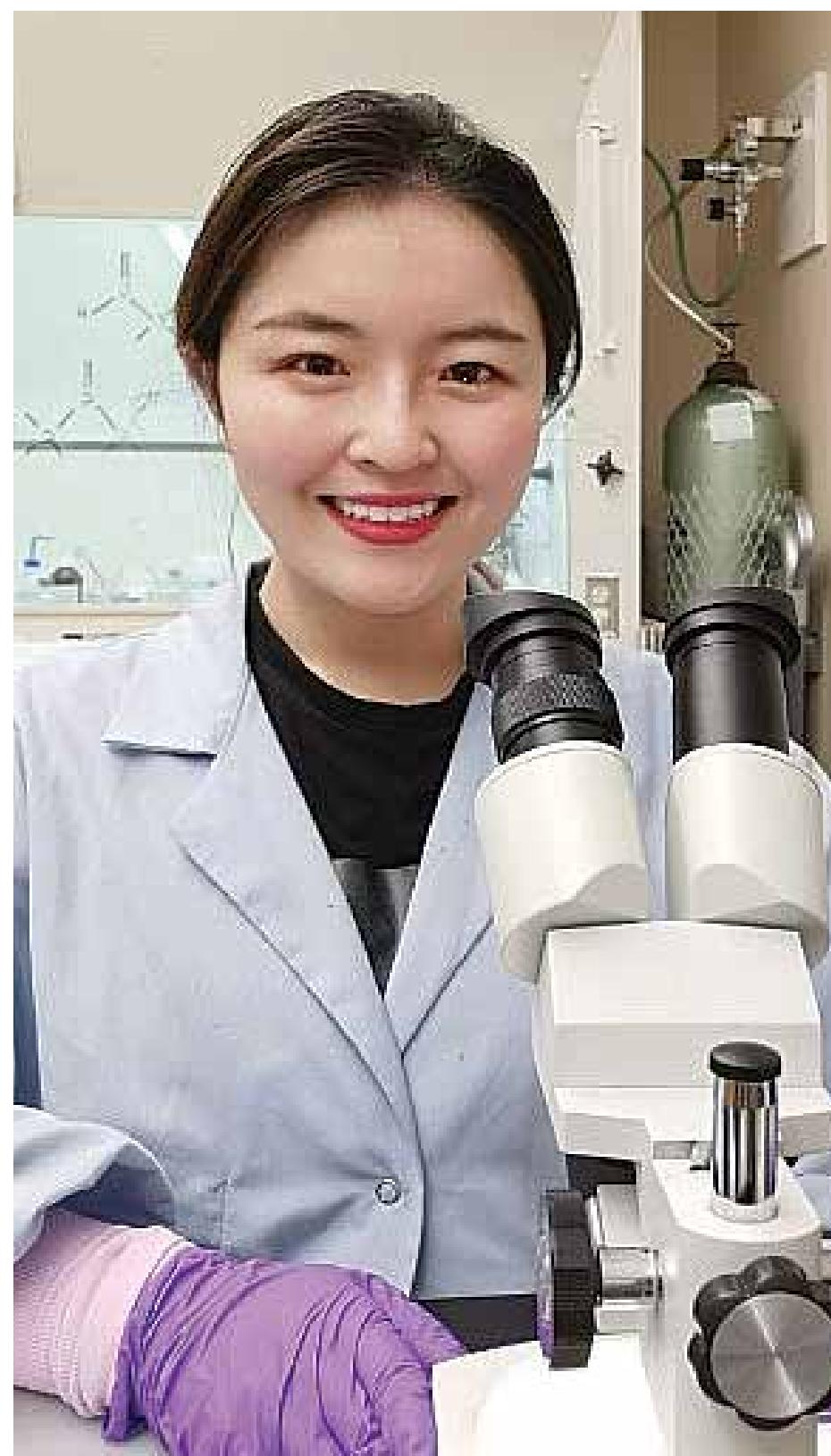
ences, and discussed opportunities for future participation.

As an AIEA Presidential Fellow, Yang currently serves as a member of AIEA Professional Development and Engagement Committee, where he helped establish the worldwide Standards of Professorial Practice for International Educators. He also co-chairs the AIEA Senior Advisers Program that provides mentorship opportunities by creating cohorts of new international administrators and experienced senior advisors.



Vice President for International Affairs Hong Yang, Ph.D. (far left), presented certificates to honor senior advisor program participants at the Association for International Education Administrator's annual conference in February.

Visiting Scholar – Jiaqi Liang



Jiaqi Liang

Jiaqi "Jackie" Liang is a visiting scholar from Chang'an University in Xi'an, China. She is working with Dr. Qin Leng and Dr. Hong Yang, professors of Biology and Environmental Sciences at Bryant University, in the Laboratory for Terrestrial Environments. The research is part of a National Science Foundation-funded project to study historical changes in carbon dioxide concentrations and their impact on the terrestrial environments. Through the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS), Bryant welcomes visiting scholars and exchange students from many countries who bring cultural diversity and enrich our academic experience for the entire community.

International Partners Extend Support During Challenging Times

As the COVID-19 pandemic made its way through China and the United States this winter, then-Bryant University President Ronald K. Machtley and China University of Geosciences (CUG) at Wuhan, President Yanxin Wang each extended their support to their partner university.



Retired Bryant University President Ronald K. Machtley with the President of China University of Geosciences Yanxin Wang in Wuhan 2010.

In a February letter addressed to Wang, Machtley expressed “unwavering support to our friends and colleagues at CUG in fighting the virus.” CUG in Wuhan is a place, Machtley wrote, that he feels closely connected to through “many collaborations and personal friendships” developed during his many visits to the campus during his tenure as president, which concluded June 30, 2020.

Machtley reiterated the “importance of

international collaboration, sharing of ideas and information, as well as physical and emotional support of one another,” and that he has “no doubt that the pandemic will change the world, in particular higher education ... but humanity will come out stronger” on the other side.

In March, Wang responded in kind, extending support to the Bryant community in fighting the virus. He called the pandemic “a common challenge for humanity” and imparted that through collaborative efforts “the ultimate victory belongs to humanity.”

The Bryant University and the China University of Geosciences strategic partnership formed in 2006 has created nearly 15 years of student and scholarly exchanges between the two universities. The pandemic has changed the world, but this exchange between these two university presidents illustrates the power of human connections that can transcend geographic and political barriers during challenging times.

International Faculty Profile: Dr. Gao Niu

Assistant Professor Gao Niu, Ph.D., is the coordinator of the Actuarial Mathematics program at Bryant University. Niu received his Ph.D. in Actuarial Science from the University of Connecticut. He serves as an advisor at the Goldenson Actuarial Research Center. He is an Associate in the Casualty Actuarial Society and member of the American Academy of Actuaries. Niu is also co-author of *Open Source Software for Statistical Analysis of Big Data: Emerging Research and Opportunities*.

Regional companies hold Bryant University's actuarial expertise, quality of students, and alumni network in high regard, and Niu is confident that demand for students with actuarial training will continue to rise. He encourages students to think clearly about the intense exam process for licensure, which requires more than 12 exams, depending on

track such as Pension, Property & Casualty, Life Insurance, Health Insurance, Risk Management etc. The exam cycle, which generally requires five to ten years to complete, grants the title of Fellow of the Society of Actuaries and is comparable to a Ph.D. in other disciplines.

Niu emphasizes the importance of strong communication skills with his students, noting that once in the workforce, students will not only need to do complex calculations, but also effectively explain the nature and conclusions of the calculations to non-actuarial colleagues. He encourages international students to get comfortable having academic discussions on campus and integrate that skill into their daily lives.

When considering whether to join the Bryant faculty in 2017, Niu was impressed by the support structures Bryant has in place

for students, saying, “Bryant not only attaches importance to teaching quality, but also encourages professors to establish close relationships with students and create value for students' career development.”



Gao Niu, Ph.D., ACAS, MAAA

Programs & Events Go Virtual



President and Mrs. Machtley hosted their last Bryant Senior Advisory Council (BSAC) online with student leaders on April 22, 2020.

As the coronavirus compelled the university to suspend in-person classes and cancel all scheduled in-person events last spring, hundreds of faculty and staff at Bryant confronted a dilemma. How to continue to carry out the University's mission remotely? Faculty and students quickly transitioned to an online learning environment while staff worked tirelessly to keep current and perspective students engaged.

Global Community Hour moved to an online format, exploring both South Korea and England for coffee and scones, respectively. In South Korea, guests were introduced to Dalgona coffee, which has become known as the “quarantine drink” as many videos of people making the drink at home have gone viral online. In England, guests learned more about the English Lake District. Located in the northwest of the country, it is a popular vacation destination and was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2017. Attendees were introduced to the popular English scone eaten with cream and jam.

The U.S.-China Institute moved from an in-person graduation dinner banquet to hosting two online events for students and parents. Students, family, and other members of the

Bryant community in both the United States and China joined the events which featured a student-produced graduation video, games, and prizes. Many parents took the opportunity to express their thanks to Bryant for giving their students a world-class global education.

The Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) held regular drop-in Zoom meetings for students either who had specific questions regarding reopening and travel or who just wanted to stay connected while at home. Meetings were held on Tuesdays and Thursday at 9:00 am and 2:00 pm respectively, to accommodate all students, no matter where in the world they were located. Staff in the OISS made it their priority to make sure that students felt fully supported during a time of increased uncertainty.

The Division of International Affairs launched the “Bryant One World” initiative to engage with international students, gather and communicate COVID-19 data and information, and to learn and recommend best practices from each country to improve your Bryant experience. Staff members in International Affairs divided the task by county to reach out and connect with international

students currently enrolled at Bryant to update them on Bryant's preparation for reopening our campus, to listen to students and their parents' concerns, and collect feedback and suggestions. Staff members also supported students' travel preparations.

4MILE, Bryant's signature Multicultural and International Leadership Experience orientation program designed specifically for incoming multicultural and international students, went virtual this year. From August 9 – 15, incoming students not only had an opportunity to meet supporting staff but also participated in daily conversations with classmates and peer counselors, cultural and social workshops, and presentations and activities that helped jumpstart their success at Bryant.

Stay tuned to the Bryant Events Calendar for more upcoming virtual events this semester.



Bryant University

DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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Upcoming Events

Global Scholar Stories

Members of the Bryant community are invited to share their global experiences. Community members interested in sharing should contact Kongli Liu at kliu1@bryant.edu. Check the Bryant Events Calendar for the upcoming schedule of Global Scholar Stories.

Global Community Hour

One of Bryant's signature educational activities helps build cultural competency by taking the audience 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

International Education Week

For one week in November, International Education Week 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 to promote mutual understanding and international cooperation.

The Division of International Affairs supports the University mission to meet its global strategies. The division provides support to international students and scholars for their cultural immersion, academic success, social networking, and career preparation throughout their educational experience at Bryant.

Division of International Affairs

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