

MSU-China International Study Tour
Sponsored through
The US-China Center for Research on Educational Excellence
&
The Office of K-12 Outreach, College of Education
Michigan State University

May 8-22, 2007
Beijing – Xi’an – Chongqing – Kunming - Shanghai, China

In November 2005 Michigan State University's (MSU) College of Education began sponsoring a series of international study tours for Michigan's educational leaders. Leadership for the MSU-China International Study Tours is provided by University Distinguished Professor and Director of the US-China Center for Research on Educational Excellence Yong Zhao, and Assistant Dean for K-12 Outreach Barbara Markle. The goals of the international study tours are to:

- Inform and broaden the perspectives of Michigan education leaders of education reforms from pre-school through higher education in an international context;
- Position education leaders to anticipate and plan for change in a global context rather than to react to education changes in other countries;
- Provide policy leaders with an international perspective as they shape and influence Michigan education.

Participants in the 2005 and 2006 international study tours held key leadership roles in the state's major educational organizations and in state government. These leaders were provided the opportunity to meet with their professional counterparts in China to discuss China's national, provincial and municipal educational systems and the pressing educational reform issues that mirror many of the challenges facing Michigan and U.S. educators. The delegation members were also able to visit several model pre-K, elementary, middle/junior and secondary schools and their affiliated university programs. Participants also met with some of China's premier educational research and professional development institutions and technology corporations.

Members of the May 2007 delegation and guests:

- Carole Ames, Dean, College of Education MSU
- Ann Austin, Professor, Department of Educational Administration, MSU
- Cass Book, Associate Dean, College of Education, MSU
- Julie Hirschler, Senior Research & Development Associate, Education Development Center, Newton, MA and Member, National Advisory Board, MSU College of Education
- Barbara Markle, Assistant Dean, Office of K-12 Outreach, College of Education, MSU
- Jim Markle, Field Instructor, MSU
- Karen Mayes, Retired School Counselor

- William Mayes, Executive Director, Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA) and Member, MSU College of Education Alumni Association Board of Directors
- Susan Printy, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Administration, MSU
- Wei Qiu, Instructor, School of Information and Software, Yunnan University (PRC) and College of Education Doctoral Student, MSU (Translator)
- Dan Schultz, Senior Policy Advisor, Michigan Virtual University and Consultant, MSU
- Sharif Shakrani, Co-Director, Education Policy Center and Professor, Measurement & Quantitative Methods, MSU
- Michael Shibler, Superintendent, Rockford Public Schools, and Past President, MSU College of Education Alumni Association
- BetsAnn Smith, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Administration, MSU
- Sybil White, Elementary Teacher, Fowler Public Schools
- Tom White, Executive Director, Michigan School Business Officials (MSBO) and Consultant, Confucius Institute at MSU
- Yong Zhao, MSU University Distinguished Professor, Director, US-China Center for Research on Educational Excellence and Director, Confucius Institute at MSU

Activities of the Delegation:

Prior to the tour's departure, delegation members were provided briefing materials on the itinerary, locations and types of schools, universities and organizations to be visited, scholarly articles concerning globalization and its impact on education, and historical and cultural information about the cities and regions to be visited. Most delegation members participated either in-person or via telephone conference call in one of two pre-trip orientation sessions held at MSU to discuss what to expect when visiting the People's Republic of China. These orientation sessions included remarks by the study tour leaders and observations from participants in the July 2006 study tour.

During the March 14, 2007 briefing MSU Dean Carole Ames discussed her expectations for the study tour and its importance to the College of Education:

- The need to recognize the importance of globalization in our work;
- China is a major force in relation to the state of Michigan;
- The need to explore various opportunities for linkages;
- The priority to internationalize the College of Education's curriculum, which may include a globalization strand in undergraduate education, and the master's program for inservice teachers and educational leaders across the K-16 levels;
- Infuse a global perspective in preparing graduate students, including doctoral students;
- MSU is not interested in setting up shop in China but looks forward to creating mutually beneficial relationships; and
- China has a broad range of educational practices and they are a model for development in Southeast Asia and Africa.

All participants were encouraged to read Thomas Friedman's *The World Is Flat*, Ted Fishman's *China, Inc.* and Peter Hessler's *The Oracle Bones: A Journey Between China's Past and Present* and *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze*. Participants were provided a copy of *Customs and Etiquette of China* by Caroline Mason and Geoffrey Murray. Periodic e-mail updates were prepared by the Office of K-12 Outreach as the departure date approached and as the meeting schedules in Beijing, Xi'an, Chongqing, Kunming and Shanghai were confirmed.

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Delegation members began their journey to Beijing from Lansing, Grand Rapids, Detroit and Boston with pre-flight check-in, security clearance and domestic airline connections.

Wednesday, May 9, 2007

Airborne flight times, baggage collection, customs and immigration processing and bus transfer to the hotel made for nearly 24 hours of travel time. Upon arrival in Beijing the group was met by Wei Qiu, an Instructor in the School of Information and Software at Yunnan University in Kunming (PRC), and a MSU College of Education doctoral student, who joined the delegation as its translator. The group also met the Beijing guide and traveled by bus to the Beijing Capital Hotel.

MSU Professors Yong Zhao, Sharif Shakrani and William Schmidt had previously arrived in Beijing to participate in a conference on large-scale assessment hosted by Beijing Normal University.

Thursday, May 10, 2007

In the morning the delegation visited an innovative bi-cultural pre-school for children ages 3-5 called the 3e International Kindergarten (Explore, Experiment and Express). The group was met by Ms. Rowena Yang, the school's Director of School Affairs. Founded in 2005, the school was designed by MSU Professor Yong Zhao and supported by the Sunwah Foundation of Hong Kong. Students in this experimental pre-school spend one half day learning in English in a Western-style environment and the other half learning in Chinese in an Eastern-style environment. The teachers at the school include recent MSU graduates and native Chinese educators trained at Beijing Normal University. The delegation members met teachers Angie Barry, Katie Bonne, Betty Westcott and artist-in-residence Ted Prawat and talked about their teaching experiences and the challenges of living and working abroad. The delegation toured the unique three-story facility that includes several exhibits acquired from The Exploratorium, a hands-on science and art museum in San Francisco.

The group received a briefing by Sunwah Education Laboratories, Inc. Chief Executive Officer Gilbert Choy on the work of the Sunwah Foundation and its interest and history in philanthropy. The school represents an investment by the Foundation of approximately \$3.5 million. He discussed the 3e International Kindergarten's accomplishments to date and its plans for the future. The school currently serves 70 students representing 18 different countries and there are plans to add a first grade class in 2008. The school is

licensed to serve the expatriate community and it is prohibited from enrolling a student whose nationality is Chinese. The school is permitted to hire qualified Chinese staff members. The school has hosted a large number of international visitors, including U.S. Department of Education officials, who are interested in the dual pedagogy concept. The 3e International Kindergarten does not advertise to recruit students but has benefited from word of mouth support and community building among parents.

The group met with Dr. Anne Soderman, a MSU Professor of Family and Child Ecology who is conducting research on language acquisition and is studying the 3e International Kindergarten's unique approach to early childhood education. She discussed some of the differences between Eastern and Western approaches to preschool and early childhood education and observed that the U.S. and Chinese early childhood programs appear to be moving in the same direction. Professor Soderman also leads a weekly series of teacher training activities for the school's staff.

The discussions on the school's dual pedagogy approach continued over a luncheon hosted by the Sunwah Foundation at the unique Pure Lotus Vegetarian Restaurant. A Buddhist monk started this restaurant and the menu featured some of the most unusual and beautifully presented dishes the delegates encountered on the trip. Herbert Ng, a Senior System Engineer with the Sunwah Education Laboratories, Inc. joined the group to discuss some of the Foundation's plans to conduct research in conjunction with a major university in the U.S.

Friday, May 11, 2007

Several of the delegation members attended a briefing held at the Ministry of Education (MOE) for the Peoples Republic of China (PRC). Dr. Dinghua Wang, Deputy Director General of the Basic Education Department in the MOE, was joined by colleagues, Dr. Lu Haihong, Associate Researcher in the Comparative Education Division of the National Center for Education Development Research and Ms. Zhang Jing, Program Officer in the Division of American and Oceanian Affairs, in the MOE's Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges.

Dr. Wang provided a briefing and a PowerPoint presentation on "Progress and Innovation: K-12 Education in China." This comprehensive overview presented in English, provided demographic information on China and its people, and an overview of several recent education reform policies. He began with a discussion about China's population, currently 1.3 billion people, which is approximately one fifth of the world's total. There are currently 367 million people below the age of 18 in China, and among them there are 230 million K-12 students. The K-12 system in China is divided among six years of primary school, three years of middle school and three years of high school. Dr. Wang generously provided a copy of his PowerPoint slides from which the following information is excerpted.

In order to convert the population pressure into huge human resources, the Chinese government has adopted the strategy of reinvigorating the country through science and education. The government has put forward a scientific development outlook of "putting

people in the first place” and “promoting harmonious development of economy and society” and the idea of “building a socialist harmonious society.” Some of China’s achievements in education reform include:

- More than 96% of the population areas have realized the nine-year compulsory education goal, the primary and middle school period.
- Both the central and local governments each exercise responsibilities to guarantee and promote the development of K-12 education.
- Private school education consists of about 5% of total primary, middle and high schools and students.
- Most of the nation’s 10 million teachers are well motivated to teach.

Dr. Wang next listed four challenges being addressed by the MOE:

Challenge #1 - Equality

Although K-12 education in China has made significant advances, the overall development has been quite uneven and imbalanced between urban and rural areas, and between the east and west. Obvious gaps exist between schools and many can neither respond well to the needs of rapid socio-economic development, nor satisfy the aspiration of the masses for balanced basic education.

Challenge #2 - Quality

Quality is a lifeline for education. High quality education not only refers to advanced infrastructure, but also to a qualified teaching contingent, improved teaching processes, better management, and the proper philosophy of running schools. The demand is increasing from the public for a high quality education. Currently the quality of some schools fails to meet the demands of parents, especially in the one family/one child era. The quality of teachers needs to be improved. Currently there are 240,000 teachers with lower academic degrees and 450,000 non-registered teachers.

Challenge #3 - Relevance

The curriculum must be more oriented and relevant to students in the country-side. Approximately 81% of primary and middle schools and 162 million primary and middle school students are found in the countryside

Challenge #4 - Examination

Currently officials judge school excellence solely according to the school’s enrollment rate of students into key high schools and key universities. Consequently schools tend to place great emphasis on examination-related subjects. Teachers tend to pay greater attention to academically talented students, neglecting many others. Students face heavy study burdens, suffer from stress and are in poor physical condition.

Dr. Wang next listed Five Campaigns for K-12 Education adopted by the MOE:

Campaign #1 - Compulsory Education

The goal of providing universal nine year compulsory education throughout the entire country has great bearing on China’s modernization effort. It is both a grave challenge and a task that must be carried out by government decree. The Compulsory Education

Law was revised in 2006 to establish free education in rural areas as a strategy to promote balanced development, and to provide stipends for poor and minority students to ensure greater gender parity in access to education.

Campaign #2 - Curriculum Reform

This is the sixth comprehensive curriculum reform since 1949, and the most ambitious effort to date. Prior to adopting this reform, a review of the education policies of 31 other nations was undertaken. Chinese education leaders were invited to attend the July 2005 meeting of the U.S. National Governors Association in Des Moines Iowa, which focused on high school redesign. In addition to conducting a comprehensive reform of the existing curriculum and textbooks used in the basic education program, strategies are being promoted to leverage the excellent cultural and educational traditions of China as well as advanced curricula, textbooks and teaching methods of other countries.

The objectives for new curriculum in China include the following six components:

1. To understand China's history and her current status and prepare students to become ready to assume responsibilities for their personal and national development, to respect other nations and their cultures, and to be ready to participate in international development and communication.
2. To master the fundamental skills for reading, writing and arithmetic operation, basic knowledge for culture and science, and the necessary skills to express themselves and communicate with others. Students must develop the capacity to process information and to acquire basic skills so that they can adapt effectively to the learning society.
3. To develop through observation and experience, a scientific understanding of the environment, sustainable development and ecological ethics, and to be able to identify, analyze and solve problems in their daily life.
4. To understand and care for society, to form appropriate moral values and behavioral habits and be ready to serve the people and the community.
5. To develop sound self-consciousness and an independent personality in order to take good care of life, and to learn to rationally plan for and assess one's own development and to cope with frustrations in social life. Students should be encouraged to engage in regular physical exercise (one hour per day) and proper living habits.
6. To develop a healthy interest and an esthetic appreciation of the beauty of nature, society, science and art and to be inclined to join in different performing or cultural activities.

Dr. Wang observed that one of the realities of shifting from a planned economy to a market economy is the stress that is created among students. Schools are now being encouraged to offer psychological counseling for students. He described a recent

national debate in China over the “right to commit suicide.” It was ultimately determined that suicide is not a right in Chinese society.

Campaign #3 Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

Dr. Wang noted that “China doesn’t need more teachers; it needs better teachers, particularly in the rural areas.” To attract more talented people to join the teaching profession, policies now exist to provide free education for teacher candidates at six of China’s normal universities. The government has also implemented a new Gardeners Project where “teachers are the gardeners and students are the flowers.” Another strategy to reward excellent teachers has been to adopt September 10 as National Teacher’s Day. In conjunction with this strategy, some grocery stores give teachers discounts on various food products. Other strategies to improve the quality of teachers include creating codes of conduct of teachers, promotion incentives or housing stipends. It is an ongoing challenge to attract teachers to the western provinces of China.

Campaign #4 - Teaching and Learning Innovations

New innovations are designed to impact the learning process, and include active learning, interactive learning, hands-on experiences and teaching students “how to fish instead of giving fish.”

Campaign #5 - Information Technology

Throughout the entire country, information communications technology (ICT) is being implemented. In the rural areas, through the introduction of ICT, quality educational resources are now reaching all schools including those in the extremely remote areas. Three model strategies are being employed.

Model 1: Install a DVD player at each teaching point

Model 2: Install a satellite receiving station in each rural primary school

Model 3: Create a computer classroom in each rural middle school

Dr. Wang also described a series of reforms in the area of mathematics that address four objectives: mathematical thinking, sensibility and attitude, knowledge and skill, and problem solving. These objectives are designed to:

- Account for the age and recognition abilities of students to enable them to realize the actual context and application value of mathematics;
- Help students understand mathematics concepts and conclusions;
- Appreciate the cultural value of mathematics and its relationship to scientific and technological progress and social development;
- Give attention to individual differences;
- Advocate diversified learning modes;
- Encourage independent research, cooperation and exchange for students as well as original teaching environments for teachers; and
- Support the application of information technology to the teaching of mathematics.

Following a period of questions and discussion, Dean Ames presented Dr. Wang with a Certificate of Appreciation from the MSU College of Education. This document reads

“With deep appreciation for your friendship and hospitality and in anticipation of future collaboration between our respective scholars, institutions and countries, the members of the Michigan State University China Study Tour hereby extend their warm regards and friendship to you.” Delegation members presented gifts and a group photo was taken.

As the delegates traveled by bus to the Beijing Normal University (BNU) campus for the afternoon briefings and for lunch, Yong Zhao offered the following observations:

- China has 53 recognized minority groups, each with their own language and culture. Many of these minority groups live in the remote regions of the country and educating students in these areas has become a national priority.
- The use of distance learning technologies is rapidly growing and at least 10 educational satellite channels are delivering content to schools. Significant funding has also been invested in DVD technology and content. Providing high quality satellite or DVD delivered lessons in rural areas is “much better than nothing.”
- The Ministry of Education is beginning to provide approximately 60 hours of technology training for teachers, starting in the poor and rural areas.
- After 9th grade, students who do not qualify to go on to a college or university seek employment in construction jobs, in retail or on farms.
- China is moving from a Soviet model of higher education to the more specialized U.S. model.
- School choice is an emerging hot issue in China.
- The driving force in the education system continues to be the very competitive exam system.
- Shifting from a centralized education system to a decentralized system is a challenge. It is very hard to relax the existing system.
- Under a school-based governance model, the principal is becoming a more powerful figure.

Members of the delegation were highly complimentary of both the language and message used by the MOE in its education reform policy statements. The participants found these statements inspiring and described the officials the group met with as outward looking. China is a more open society than people expected to find, and more open than some other countries where delegation members have worked.

During the morning some of the participants visited and toured the recently restored Temple of Heaven complex of buildings and gardens. The Temple of Heaven is considered a masterpiece of 15th Century architecture and is one of traditional China’s most striking monuments.

In the afternoon the delegation members visited Number 3 Affiliated Middle School, a school formally attached to BNU. The group was welcomed by Principal Chun. The delegation observed eighth grade English and math classes to learn how the school is structured, how classes operate and how instruction is provided. In a general briefing that followed the classes, the participants learned that the school serves grades 7-12 and has 2,000 students. The school has 170 teachers and staff members and offers 40 classes,

scheduled from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The focus of the school is on moral development and preparing well-rounded students, and includes programs that provide artistic and extracurricular activities. One area of emphasis of the school is its orchestra program which has received national recognition. The school also participates in the international Odyssey of the Mind Program and the school's specialty sport is cross-country orienteering. The participants talked with the Principal and instructional staff members about their teaching load, how teachers work together in groups, how lesson plans are developed, how professional development is provided and how teachers participate in research studies partially funded by the government. Principal Chun described the types of administrative and executive affairs that she is responsible for and how she evaluates the school's teachers. Following a period of questions and discussion, Dr. Barbara Markle presented Principal Chun with the Certificate of Appreciation prepared by the MSU College of Education (previously quoted). Delegation members presented gifts and a group photo was taken.

During the afternoon, some of the delegation members attended a meeting at the Magnetic Resonance Institute (MRI) for Brain Studies at BNU. The meeting was hosted by BNU Vice President Professor Dong, who was joined by the BNU Vice President for External Relations and the Deputy Director of Institute. The MSU participants included Dean Ames, Associate Dean Book, Professor Shakrani, Professor Schmidt and Professor Zhao. Professor Dong and his staff provided background information about BNU and the MRI Brain Studies Center. He stated that BNU is the premier teacher preparation institution in China and that the student population is about 20,000 fulltime students divided evenly between undergraduate and graduate students. Graduate students conduct educational research as part of their masters degree programs. Dr. Dong explained that the MRI conducts research studies on brain waves associated with cognitive activities by children and adults.

Dr. Ames was asked to provide a summary of the MSU College of Education. She discussed the structure of the College and the various departments, centers and institutes located within the College. Professor Dong indicated a strong desire for closer collaboration between the MSU College of Education and BNU. He suggested that exchanges of scholars, students and specialists will be beneficial to both institutions. He specifically suggested the establishment of closer working relations in the area of testing, assessment and school improvement activities. It is in these areas that BNU staff members are in need of assistance and support. Dr. Ames invited Professor Dong and his staff to visit MSU's College of Education for further discussion and interaction on possible future collaboration on educational studies. The MSU staff then visited the MRI Brain Studies Center and noted the advanced research studies being carried out to analyze how the human brain functions during the thinking process of children and adults.

Saturday, May 12, 2007

In the morning the delegation members traveled by bus to visit the Badaling section of the Great Wall of China, about one and a half hours north of Beijing in Yanqing County. The participants reached the Great Wall via cable cars to begin their trek. In the afternoon the delegation returned to Beijing to tour the Imperial Summer Palace and the many

buildings and gardens that are part of this extensive development, designated in 1998 by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. With the expertise and assistance of the local guide and the interpreter, these experiences provided opportunities for the participants to develop a greater understanding of Chinese history, culture, architecture and landscaping. Following an afternoon of sightseeing and shopping, the delegation enjoyed a traditional Peking Duck Dinner at an area restaurant.

Sunday, May 13, 2007

Prior to a late afternoon flight to the next destination on the study tour, members of the delegation visited Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City in central Beijing. A group photo was taken at Tiananmen Square. On the way to the airport the group had an opportunity to visit the Yi Xin Cha Yi Tea House and the members received an informative briefing on traditional Chinese tea ceremonies, the method of tea making, the proper way to serve tea and the effects of various teas on health and well being. A variety of teas were prepared for the group to taste.

Transportation to the airport, baggage collection, check-in, and flight-time to Xi'an and arrival procedures required approximately six hours. Xi'an is located in Shaanxi Province in central China. The group was met by the local guide and traveled by bus to the Aurum Hotel in central Xi'an.

Monday, May 14, 2007

The delegation members traveled by bus to visit the Museum of the Terra-Cotta Warriors and Horses, the largest on-site museum in China, located approximately one hour from central Xi'an. This museum, considered by the Chinese to be the "Eighth Wonder of the World" is a research facility that continues to investigate the cultural relics attributed to Emperor Qin Shihuang, the first emperor in Chinese history. Opened to the public in 1979, the exhibits display thousands of restored pottery warrior figures and bronze chariots and horses. The delegation viewed a 360-degree movie that recreates the construction and subsequent destruction of Emperor Qin's terra-cotta army approximately 2,200 years ago. After visiting the three buildings and viewing the exhibits, a group photo was taken. In the afternoon, following a buffet luncheon, the delegation visited the Shaanxi History Museum to view several national historic relics on display, and exhibits that reflect the region's history as the ancient capital of eleven dynasties. In the evening the group experienced a traditional steamed dumpling dinner, a regional food specialty.

Tuesday, May 15, 2007

In the morning the group traveled via China Air to Chongqing, located in Sichuan Province in southwest China. The group was met by the local guide and traveled by bus to the Harbor Plaza Hotel. A luncheon for the delegation was hosted by the Chongqing Municipal Education Commission (CMEC). Delegation members renewed friendships developed in February 2007 when Dr. Weiliang Zhao, Deputy Director General, Professor Hu Bin, Deputy Director and Ms. Jiang Yan from the International Affairs Office attended the Internationalizing Michigan Education Conference held in Lansing.

Following lunch, the group visited the CMEC offices and received a briefing on the history of the region and the role of the CMEC. In 1997 the Chinese government designated the region as the Chongqing Municipality, an autonomous region formed to organize development and resettlement of the farmers and refugees displaced by the Three Gorges Dam project. The Chongqing Municipality is one of four municipalities administered by the central Chinese government. The Yangtze River and the Jialing River converge in Chongqing, and in addition to being known as the Gateway to the Three Gorges Dam, Chongqing is considered the bridge capital of China, with more than 48 bridges, most built during the past decade.

During World War II Chongqing served as China's War Capital and a large number of industrial facilities and universities were relocated in the region. During this period, Chongqing played a strategic role in support of the Allied Forces and served as a base for the Flying Tigers. Chongqing has become a major industrial and manufacturing area and several multinational corporations, including Ford Motor Co. have made investments and built production facilities in the region. Motorcycle production and silkworm research were highlighted as two rapidly growing industries. To expand the region's industrial and manufacturing base, Chongqing needs to continually draw support from its higher education institutions. The region has established a large number of agricultural, scientific and medical research facilities and they are interested in collaborating with other countries to create partnerships with colleges and universities to establish faculty and student exchange programs.

The CMEC is responsible for managing all of the education programs in the region, from preprimary, elementary, secondary schools to adult education institutions. Providing greater equity between students in the city and rural schools is a major challenge and several strategies to improve achievement, teacher quality and the capacity of rural schools are being implemented. The central government has adopted policies that support compulsory education and the municipal government is attempting to equalize education in the municipal region. Among the actions taken include providing tuition waivers and stipends for poor families, support for children of discharged military personnel and adoption of orphans by government social services groups. In addition, the CMEC is creating partnerships between city and rural schools, transferring funds from the best schools to poorer rural schools, charging government fees to land developers and providing incentives to promote development in rural areas. Because of the mountainous terrain of the region and the distances between communities, plans are underway to build tunnels through some of the mountains to solve both transportation and education problems. The goal is to assist the rural schools to become stronger. Solving the education equity problem is very complex. While they are making progress, the CMEC officials acknowledge that they have a long way to go.

Following a period of questions and discussion, Dean Ames presented the CMEC officials with the Certificate of Appreciation prepared by the MSU College of Education (previously quoted) and expressed support for efforts to create partnerships and exchange programs. Delegation members exchanged gifts with the CMEC hosts. In the evening

the delegation enjoyed a boat cruise on the Yangtze and Jialing Rivers hosted by the CMEC.

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

The day's agenda was designed to enable several members of the delegation to visit higher education institutions, while other members visited local schools and cultural attractions.

Several participants visited Sichuan International Studies University (SISU) where the group was hosted by President Li Keyong and Professor Dan Xiuan. President Li noted that MSU Professor Yong Zhao is a distinguished alumnus of SISU. The SISU was founded in 1950 and currently has 10,000 students and faculty members. The University began as a language training institute to support the need for Russian language experts and Russian translators. At the time China had extensive collaborative efforts with Russia and translators and scholars were needed. Russian became the first language adopted for training, and shortly after English, French, German, and Japanese languages were added. For 40 years these languages were the focus of the university's work, with some emphasis on Spanish. In recent years, globalization has prompted the addition of full language study programs in Arabic, Korean, Spanish and Italian. In addition, Chinese language instruction is provided to domestic and international students. Programs of study have been added in law, journalism, tourism, and business and trade. Students at SISU specialize in one language and add a second language as they advance and learn the content knowledge in trade, business or other areas. A student's first foreign language is English and they learn a second language such as French or Spanish to help them find employment. President Li noted that "when you are here you should be proud of your university; when you leave you should be proud of yourself."

SISU and the CMEC have developed a response to globalization by adopting a new focus on teaching Chinese as a second language. In 2006 SISU established a partnership with the Confucius Institute at MSU (CI-MSU). The Confucius Institute initiative is a major outreach effort of the Chinese government to promote and support Chinese language and culture education worldwide. The partnership between SISU and the CI-MSU was launched in January 2007 with funding from Hanban, China's National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. The goals are to increase the amount and improve the quality of teaching the Chinese language abroad. The project began with the construction of a new language laboratory that will allow 100 SISU student and faculty tutors to work online and communicate simultaneously with U.S. students. The U.S. students, including middle and high school students taking online Mandarin Chinese courses through the Michigan Virtual High School will benefit through one-to-one tutoring to practice tones and pronunciation, check language usage and have conversations on cultural topics with a native Chinese speaker. The SISU tutors will benefit by becoming better trained to teach Chinese and gain greater experience working with second language learners. The delegation members had an opportunity to tour the language lab and observe several student tutors working with the Web-based appointment scheduling and communication tools.

President Li announced that two SISU faculty members have volunteered to be placed at MSU for one year to be trained to strengthen the program at SISU and to ensure that the online tutoring program is working successfully. These faculty members are expected to arrive in August 2007. President Li noted that this partnership with MSU is a good beginning but “a good beginning is only half done.” This project has been nominated as one of the most innovative projects in China and it is expected to attract new funding for research in online pedagogy. He also hopes that SISU can learn to better train educators to use technology in teaching languages.

Dean Ames commented that it is imperative that we prepare students for a global society and that this partnership provides a model of how language and culture instruction can be blended. She commended MSU Professor Zhao for his leadership in helping to create this partnership that is expected to bring mutual benefit to both institutions. She looks forward to welcoming the SISU faculty to the MSU campus and hopes to be able to send MSU graduate students and faculty to study abroad at SISU. Dean Ames invited President Li and SISU faculty members to visit MSU to hold work sessions to develop some specific partnership projects. Dean Ames presented President Li with the Certificate of Appreciation prepared by the MSU College of Education (previously quoted) and the delegation members exchanged gifts with their SISU hosts. Following a luncheon hosted by SISU at a traditional restaurant near the university, the delegation toured a historic shopping area that featured arts, crafts and foods that are unique to the Chongqing region.

In the afternoon, part of the delegation traveled by bus to visit Southwest University (SU), where they were met by Professor Li Fang, Deputy Director, Office of International Cooperation and Exchanges and Dr. Li Changxiao, Chief of International Exchange, who served as a translator. In 1984 Southwest China Normal University and Southwest Agriculture University were merged and became SU. Today SU enrolls approximately 50,000 students on three campus settings and serves another 30,000 students through its online courses. Approximately 8,000 of these students are postgraduate students. The strength of SU is in its education, psychology and agriculture programs. A Research Institute of Education Science and a Research Institute on Higher Education were established as a result of the merger to coordinate the various SU research initiatives. The Research Institute of Education Science has three Ph.D. programs, four MA programs, sponsors extensive academic exchanges with other countries, hosts international conferences and sends scholars abroad.

Dean Ames was asked to provide some background information on MSU and the College of Education. She discussed MSU’s mission and research role and the College’s programs, history of research on teaching and the recent focus on preparing students for a global society. The SU faculty had particular interests in child development and educational psychology and Dean Ames was asked to discuss her research interests in student learning in competitive environments and student motivation, especially among students age 11- high school. She commented on the important role of educational psychology in the U.S. and invited Professor Shakrani to discuss the use of assessment as

a research tool. Dean Ames noted MSU's interest in accepting professors and students as scholars or to engage in cooperative international projects.

Faculty and students from the MSU School of Music and the President of MSU are planning to visit the SU campus in August or September 2007. Dean Ames presented Professor Fang with the Certificate of Appreciation prepared by the MSU College of Education (previously quoted).

Other delegation members led by Associate Dean Barbara Markle visited Chongqing Number 1 Middle School and met with Principal Dr. Li. The group toured the campus and received a briefing on this nationally recognized school that has developed a curriculum blending ancient Chinese culture with the best of 21st Century technology. Group members also visited the General Stilwell Museum and the collection of World War II memorabilia that commemorates the courageous efforts of the Flying Tigers.

Thursday, May 17, 2007

In the morning the group traveled via China Air to Kunming, located in Yunnan Province in southern China. The group was met by the local guide and visited the Ethnic Minority Village prior to checking into the Green Lake Hotel in Kunming. In the evening the President of Yunnan University hosted a dinner for the delegation at a restaurant that formerly served as the residence of the President of Yunnan University.

Friday, May 18, 2007

In the morning the delegation visited the Yunnan University Secondary School and the group was met by Mr. Zhang, the Director of the Principal's Office. The school is formally affiliated with Yunnan University and has both junior high and senior high departments. The school was established in 1927 and is now operating in a newly constructed facility that serves 4,600 students with 300 teachers. To expand the school facility, the school borrowed ¥75 million from a bank. The school is run independently and all of the funding comes from student tuition (annually ¥7,000/\$950). The school is considered one of the top schools in Yunnan Province and preparing students for higher education is a priority. The students are typically ranked at the top in the high school entrance exams. From 1934-47, during the Anti-Japanese War, Kunming became the cultural and intellectual center of China and a large number of scholars came to the school. Mr. Zhang observed that with 1.3 billion people, finding employment in China is becoming difficult and that a better education helps a person get a better job. Traditionally the basic function of the school was to teach students to take the exam to be admitted to a university. The school is now working on a model that seeks to build physical and moral character for students and to recognize that different cultural backgrounds bring different advantages.

The school's specialty area is its English language program and the MSU group was invited to attend a 7th grade English class and observe the teaching strategies and techniques. The class of 50 students was taught in a large auditorium style classroom, with boys seated on one side and the girls seated on the other. The students are accustomed to working in pairs or groups and they made the decision to separate by

gender. At the conclusion of the class the students moved on and the English teachers remained. The teachers asked for comments and feedback on how American teachers would teach a similar lesson. The school does not offer athletic or sports programs but does offer a physical education course for students. Mr. Zhang hosted the group for a luncheon at an area restaurant where the discussion continued.

In the afternoon the group visited the Yunnan University School of Software (YUSS) and received a briefing with department chairs and professors. Dr. Jiang Yu, Dean and Professor explained that the YUSS was established in 2003 as one of 36 national pilot software universities in China. These experimental schools were created as part of a strategy to break open the traditional Chinese education system. The campus represents a ¥600 million investment and was designed to be a wireless facility. It currently has 50 full-time faculty members and 63 part-time instructors. YUSS has developed cooperative relationships with 18 universities in the U.S., Korea and Germany and has created partnerships with Microsoft, Oracle, Hewlett Packard and other corporations. The partnership effort developed with MSU has been the fastest growing project and it is designed to develop expertise in the use of educational games to support the teaching of Chinese language and culture. YUSS has selected eight students to participate in an internship program at MSU beginning in the fall of 2007 to help YUSS increase the use and application of educational software. A Game Research Center has been established within the School of Software and MSU and YUSS are developing a one-to-one student exchange program. The hope is to accelerate this innovative program so that students who return from MSU will become pioneers and leaders in this emerging area. Professor Zhao has been named an honorary Dean of the School of Software and YUSS and MSU share the belief that technology and games can help bridge cultures. The delegation members toured several facilities on the campus including some well-equipped computer hardware, software and network technology labs.

Following the campus visit, the delegation enjoyed dinner and the Jixin Banquet Dance of China that featured an elaborate floor show of traditional and contemporary ethnic singing and dance. This was one of the high points of the visit to Kunming. The delegation members expressed their appreciation to Wei Qiu for arranging the informative briefings, school visits and cultural experiences during their time in Kunming.

Saturday May 19, 2007

The delegation members next moved on to Shanghai, the final destination on the study tour. Transportation to the airport, baggage handling, check-in, flight-time and transfer to the Sofitel Hyland Hotel in Shanghai, in coastal Jiangsu Province, required approximately four hours. The hotel is located in central Shanghai on the historic and bustling Nanjing Road. In the evening, Dr. Hongliang Hu, Director and President of the Shanghai Pudong Software Park (SPSP) Corporation and Dr. Edward Zhang, Senior Advisor at SPSP hosted the delegation at Shanghai's famous Old Restaurant, located near the Yu Gardens and known for its menu of traditional Shanghai dishes.

Sunday, May 20, 2007

The group visited the Shanghai Museum of Chinese Art and Culture and toured the exhibits and galleries. Some of the group visited the Shanghai Municipal Planning Authority Exposition and viewed the scale model depiction of the city's current and future development. In the afternoon the group toured the Yu Gardens and the surrounding shopping areas.

Monday May 21, 2007

Dr. Zhang welcomed the delegation members to the Shanghai Pudong Software Park (SPSP) and provided a short walking tour of the central campus of the facility. This was followed by a formal presentation by Dr. Hu, Director and President of the SPSP Corporation. Dr. Hu explained that Phases One and Two of the development have been completed and that currently over 12,000 software engineers and technicians are employed in the Park. Over 200 companies are currently located within the SPSP; one-third of these companies are foreign based companies including Sony, SAP, Citi, Infosys, TATA, Bearing Point, and Sun Microsystems. The SPSP supports an extensive array of services including: Software Testing, Software Training, Components and Middleware Services, Integrated Circuit Engineering and Design, Software Exchange, Information Security, Embedded Technology Development, Multimedia and Animation, and Communication Information and Data-sharing. These services are provided to support and benefit the work of the companies that locate in the SPSP. Phase Three of the development is expected to be completed in 2009 and the expanded facilities will bring an additional 20,000 software engineers and technicians to the SPSP. This development is a significant economic investment for the Shanghai region. In 2010 Shanghai will host the World Technology Exposition and 70 million visitors are expected to attend and view the various international exhibits. Dr. Hu noted that the SPSP Corporation is currently exploring becoming a public company in order to raise funds to begin additional phases of the Software Park model in locations other than Shanghai. This is in response to a request from the government to expand the national industry base for software development.

The over 200 software companies in the SPSP need ongoing IT training and professional development. Recruitment of engineers is an ongoing process and there is concern that the university system and software industry in China have developed too quickly and that some students are not being adequately prepared. One of Dr. Hu's special projects is to bring students to the SPDP for intensive residential training and eventual placement and employment in the IT industry. Dr. Hu indicated that the SPSP has established 12 partnership programs with universities in China, Canada and the U.S. He looks forward to developing additional partnership opportunities with MSU, including possible exchange programs that might enable SPSP employees to conduct project research with MSU faculty and graduate students and pursue advanced degrees while they are working. Other areas of interest to explore are English language training and strategies for transferring technology from the universities to the corporate world.

Dean Ames presented President Hu with the Certificate of Appreciation prepared by the MSU College of Education (previously quoted) and gifts were exchanged. She invited

him to visit MSU later this year to continue the discussions on new partnership opportunities. After a bus tour of the Park's Phase Three development, the group joined Dr. Hu for lunch. He discussed China's new Google-type search site available at www.baidu.com and shared some advice given to him by one of his graduate school professors at Cal Tech that he has always remembered. He was told that "to be successful you need to have a mission, passion and a long-range vision." This advice continues to guide his work.

In the afternoon the delegation traveled to the National Center for High School Principals (NCHSP) based in the College of Public Administration at East China Normal University (ECNU). Dr. Zhang, the Assistant Director of the Center, Dr. Wan Heng and Miss Li provided a briefing on the Center. The NCHSP was established in 1989 and is responsible for training secondary principals from all over China. Beijing Normal University has been designated by the MOE to train China's primary school principals. The NCHSP is charged by the MOE with three missions:

- Serve as a role model for principal training
- Provide training for master trainers, and
- Provide expertise for the MOE in leadership development

To date the Center has trained 33 classes of secondary principals. Each class is composed of 40-50 principals. The classes vary in length from 60, 90 or 120 days, depending on the needs of the participants. In the past 16 years the Center has trained more than 10,000 educators, including secondary principals, educational managers and other leaders. The Center has adopted the "one body, two wings concept." Under this concept, the main body trains and educate leaders to help them reform China's education system, and the two wings refer to the educational research, consultative advice and information services that are provided to support educational leadership training. The Center has established a number of international cooperation and exchange agreements with other principal training organizations in the U.S., U.K., Canada, Finland and South Africa. The Center has also arranged for visiting scholars to travel to the U.S., U.K., France, Western Europe and Australia. The Center has adopted three modes of training:

- Theoretical research, involving influential scholars and experienced principals
- Case studies, involving in-school observations and guided discussions
- On-the-spot training and development

Dr. Zhang discussed how educators become principals in China and the changing role of the school leader. He noted that the MOE has adopted national standards for principals and that the Center's training content is determined by the needs of the principals, by directives from the MOE, and from feedback provided by previous training classes.

After returning to the hotel, Yong Zhao facilitated a debriefing session with the delegation members who had an opportunity to share some of their observations on the Chinese system of education, the roles of teachers, principals and government leaders, how schools are supported and managed, and the challenges that today's students are facing.

Dr. Zhao discussed some of the complex challenges that China is facing including land loss, urban sprawl, family planning, environmental pollution and other global issues. With over 100 million migrants moving around the country, many relocating into the cities, public sector resources are facing enormous burdens. In the past, migrant students were not allowed to enroll in urban schools, but now by government mandate they must be enrolled. The World Bank and UNESCO have commissioned studies on the problems facing migrant children in China. He highlighted the differences between rural and urban schools and the uneven level of development within the education system. China is trying to reform its teacher education system and he suggested that MSU should look to become a greater asset to China and find ways to become more influential in the reform process. He observed that the next generation is more likely to be engaged in some type of work in China, and that this trend can already be seen in Australia and England. Unfortunately, it appears that the U.S. is becoming more isolated on the world scene. The U.S. should be more welcoming to Chinese scholars and develop academic experiences and training that will be of real benefit to these scholars when they return to China. In the U.S. foreign students are generally not valued as assets who bring different language, culture and abilities to the larger community.

Dr. Zhao also discussed some of the challenges of changing the traditional education systems in East Asia. A common problem is that there is always a “correct answer” and these education systems do not tolerate deviation. This tradition is highly incompatible with recent national policy goals to stimulate more creativity in students. In China the system values measuring progress and the more mechanical the process the better. Chinese students are only measured on a relatively small number of abilities or interests which makes the curriculum highly prescriptive. New models of education, such as the 3e International Kindergarten approach are challenging the norm and receiving a great deal of attention. By tradition, teaching in China is a collective act and a teacher’s actions reflect on his/her colleagues. This causes most teachers to want to teach the same way. In the U.S. there isn’t the same sense of loyalty to the broader community that there is in Asian countries. Several of these countries are trying to change their systems to be more like the U.S. and they are interpreting creativity as a product of the education system. Because of deep cultural differences and traditions, this aspect of the reform process will likely take the form of “controlled creativity and managed change.” Yong Zhao concluded his remarks by noting that it is his goal to bring more objective and comprehensive information to educators and policy leaders in both China and the U.S.

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

The MSU-China International Study Tour delegates departed Shanghai via Pudong International Airport and returned to the United States.

Next Steps

The US-China Center for Research on Educational Excellence and the MSU Office of K-12 Outreach have created a Web site that serves as an information resource and link for past and future international study tour participants. The Web site hosts participant lists,

tour reports, group photos and a gallery for photos taken by study tour members. See <http://china-us.us/studytours/>

In the fall of 2007 MSU looks forward to welcoming several visiting scholars, specialists and advanced graduate students and business leaders from Beijing, Chongqing, Kunming and Shanghai who will be working with the US-China Center for Research on Educational Excellence and the Confucius Institute at MSU. These executives, scholars and students will be working to develop methods and strategies to improve the teaching of Chinese abroad and in support of MSU's online instruction and tutoring programs for U.S. students studying Mandarin Chinese. In addition, MSU plans to develop new collaborative relationships with leading universities in China and expand international partnership opportunities for Michigan schools and education organizations with comparable groups and organizations in China.

Report of the May 2007
MSU-China International Study Tour
Prepared by Dan Schultz, Study Tour Co-Leader
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