

Report of China Trip – May-June 2006 – Walt Birkedah

For two weeks in May-June a delegation of eight students, two faculty members, and I traveled through China. Three spouses traveled with us at their own expense. The primary mission was for our students to learn about China and meet with counterpart schools. Xisheng Fang, Pilar Lewis, and I met with administrators at the Shanghai College of Arts and Crafts. Xisheng and I met with administrators at the Shanghai Theatre Academy and at colleges in Hangzhou and Taizhou. Thanks to Xisheng Fang's negotiating skills we were also able to visit Xian and Beijing; the students paid for that leg of the tour. The purpose of this report is to present an executive summary of the various discussions we conducted with college officials.

Shanghai Theatre Academy

Dance Exchange:

We discussed the proposed visit of Shanghai Theatre Academy dancers to Ohlone and the bay area. They will perform at the Smith Center November 16 and 17.

The dance school provided lunch and a very rewarding series of visits to rehearsal rooms. Some of the rehearsals were accompanied by live traditional Chinese instruments. A full-costumed performance gave us the chance to see the "Chinese Folk Dance" style they plan to present in the U.S. The performances were worthy of our best efforts in sponsoring them.

Shanghai Theatre Academy faculty and staff subsequently visited us in July. They were given a tour of the stage facilities and we met with Doug for planning of their trip to Ohlone in November.

Possible Musical Theatre Faculty Exchange Opportunity with the Theatre Branch of the Shanghai Dance Academy:

In the morning we visited a rehearsal of a chorus from Annie conducted by two Americans from the east coast. Our host from the theatre campus explained to me that they would like to develop their musical theatre capabilities.

Shanghai College of Arts and Crafts

A.A. Degree in Multimedia:

The college is interested in doing an A.A. degree in Multimedia with us. It would be a three year program, with the last year at Ohlone. There are two main constraints: 1. Chinese authorities limit the amount that can be charged; our tuition might be too expensive. 2. I am doubtful that we could make a commitment if we can't be assured that the students will be able to get a visa for the third year of study at Ohlone after completing the first two years in China.

Certificate in Multimedia:

We felt that a certificate program would be more feasible for us, and probably for them. We proposed a sequence of study starting in January with online classes. Pilar would go there to teach in person from the end of May through the middle of July.

The Shanghai College would rather try for the degree program first because their authorities will only approve one or the other, and they would rather have the degree program. We're keeping our options open.

Hangzhou: Zhejiang Changzheng Professional and Technical College

Ohlone English Language Center:

We talked to them about our new Ohlone English Language Center to be set up in conjunction with Mission College. It was difficult to gauge potential demand from our discussions. There is significant evidence so far that our English language center will be popular and will produce revenue for the college.

Visiting Scholar:

They would be most interested in having our faculty provide English language instruction there. They don't have faculty housing. One-bedroom apartments are planned for the near future. It might work for an adventuresome faculty member to go there. I'm not sure how we would benefit financially.

Business Studies:

We discussed several possibilities, all of which were of interest.

- i) Their students come to Ohlone for a semester to study business or other subjects.
- ii) Their students take some of our credit courses there with our faculty or online. Business law and international business law were discussed. The main advantage I believe is the use of English applied to business. They would also gain exposure to the American way of doing business, which could prove fruitful if they will be employed or engaged in doing business in the states.
- iii) Lesley Buehler put together a proposal for non-credit certificates in international business. These could be offered here or there, online, or some combination. The main advantage is that it would be short-term and possibly more affordable for them.

Semester Abroad:

They responded favorably to the idea of a semester abroad program (our students go there), but I subsequently learned that adequate housing could be a concern.

Taizhou Radio & Television University

Chancellor Pan is eager to move on to an implementation phase with Ohlone College. All of the topics discussed at Hangzhou were also presented at Taizhou. They expressed interest in all aspects and seemed to be most responsive to programs involving English instruction. Taizhou has faculty apartments. Living conditions would be a bit of a challenge in comparison with American norms.

A combination of distance education and in-person instruction by one of our faculty was discussed more fully in Taizhou. The advantage is that there is less time commitment in country.

Chancellor Pan, with faculty and staff, visited with us subsequently in August. These people are very eager to develop our relationship further.

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