

INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

A GOOD EXCHANGE

Although the exchange rate of the American dollar to the Chinese yuan constantly fluctuates, nine MPA students gained a love for China this summer that won't ever change. During summer term Romney Institute students participated in a study abroad exchange with Xiamen University in Xiamen, China—the first exchange between the two.

"It was spectacular; not only did we have a continuous partnership with the students in Xiamen, but we were also able to travel to many cities in China," says Jasen Orme, a first-year MPA student. "Although we explored many cities, we stayed in Xiamen long enough to form relationships with those we interacted with."

The goal for the inaugural trip to China was for students to gain a greater understanding of the Chinese government and its people. This was accomplished through guest speakers in the classroom, daily interaction with Xiamen University students, and historical culture visits.

A large component of the six-week study abroad was the performance management course taught by Romney Institute professor Larry Walters. Twenty-five students, including thirteen participants from Xiamen University, attended the course.

The final project for the course was to develop a performance management strategic plan for the Xiamen anti-pickpocketing volunteer group. American and Chinese students worked side-by-side, says Zeng Xiaoyan, a graduate student at Xiamen University.

"We worked hard on our projects, and I believe we did a good job," Zeng says. "It was a really good way to learn from each other how to be a good intercultural team."

Participants from both countries say they greatly valued the opportunity to daily interact with their new friends from across the globe. Xiamen University and BYU students will have the opportunity to continue fostering the relationship between the two universities as Chinese students visit BYU for their part of the exchange.

On the weekends during the exchange BYU students put their books aside and traveled to numerous historical and cul-



tural sites. By visiting historical sites in China, students were able to gain a better understanding of how China's history impacts its current public administration processes.

During their travels in China, students were able to easily view the cultural diversity of this historically rich, yet innovative country. From the modern downtown scenes of Beijing to the 2,200-year-old terracotta warriors in Xi'an, students were able to better gain an understanding of China's past and how its history is

Exchange, cont. p. 5

CONTENTS

From the Director	2
Student News:	
Student Chosen to Go and Do.....	3
An International Perspective	4

Surprise at the U.S. Embassy.....	5
Alumni News:	
Expanding Horizons	6

Dream On	7
New and Familiar Faces	8

From the Director



This past summer I joined our students on one of two Romney Institute-sponsored study abroad programs. My trip to Ghana was transformative. To have the opportunity to

interact with so many good people in Ghana and to see their genuine happiness despite their relative lack of material goods was profound.

Equally important, however, was our opportunity to help out. Our student consultants executed projects with the LDS Church's Perpetual Education Fund in Ghana as well as with International Development Enterprises, a nonprofit organization emphasizing agricultural and entrepreneurial development.

It was extremely gratifying to see our students in action. It was remarkable to see the effort and high-quality work given by our students abroad and their efforts did not go unnoticed by our partners overseas.

In addition to the study abroad in Ghana, professor Larry Walters led a group of students to Xiamen, China, for the Romney Institute's first study abroad in China. Their experiences are featured in two articles of this international issue of *Outreach*.

My experience in Ghana reinforced a very important point: we at the Romney Institute, both students and faculty, are in a unique position to have a global impact.

STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

Our students and alumni reflect an increasingly diverse and global population. As you will notice, much of this newsletter is devoted to our students and alumni who are making a difference around the world. We believe this trend will only continue to grow as our students and alumni move throughout the world to improve conditions in public and nonprofit organizations.

FACULTY

Although our faculty members currently call Utah home, they

make a significant impact on public administration in almost ten countries.

In addition to leading students on the first China study abroad, Larry Walters is on an International Monetary Fund advisory team that researches and analyzes global property taxes and financial structure. His most recent trips were to Latvia and Jamaica.

Brad Agle recently set up an ethics program in the largest bank in the Czech Republic, teaching the program in Prague and São Paulo, Brazil. He also regularly speaks to international groups.

Twice a year Rex Facer gives lectures in Taiwan with the International Center for Land Policy Studies and Training and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy on local public finance and infrastructure.

As an institute we realize we have the potential to be an influence for good on a global scale. We are currently reassessing our mission to incorporate a broader perspective and reach. We have outstanding faculty, exceptional students, and excellent alumni who can play an important role in improving governance both domestically and internationally. We have a very exciting future in front of us.

Sincerely,

DAVID W. HART

David Hart

OUTREACH

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Student News

STUDENT CHOSEN FOR TWO PRESTIGIOUS PROGRAMS

Who says you can't have your cake and eat it too? One Romney Institute student is doing just that.

David Griffith, from Corvallis, Oregon, was chosen for the Boren Fellowship and the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. These two prestigious grants provide opportunities for students to increase their knowledge and experience of a foreign language and culture. To be selected for one program is an honor, but to be selected and fulfill both is extraordinary.

"As far as I understand, other people may have been selected for both the Boren Fellowship and the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, but I think it's very rare to be able to complete both," Griffith says.

This year more than 500 graduate students applied for the Boren Fellowship and ninety-nine students were selected. The Fulbright U.S. Student Program received more than 8,500 applications, with only 1,500 students chosen for the program.

Not only was it a feat to be chosen for both programs, but Griffith was faced with the challenge to fulfill both program requirements within the necessary time frame. He took action to ensure he would be able to complete both programs by proposing a revised plan to both sets of program administrators.

Griffith, his wife, and two sons traveled to Bangkok, Thailand,

in June to begin the six-month Boren Fellowship. The purpose of the fellowship is to provide graduate students interested in working with the federal government an opportunity to study language and culture in countries of interest to United States national security. Griffith began applying his \$15,500 grant toward a five-week intensive Thai language program at a local university. Upon completion of the course Griffith began working as an intern for the Yunus Center at the Asia Institute of Technology in Udon Thani, Thailand. Currently he is helping increase the effectiveness of government workers to ultimately reduce poverty.



The Griffith family will head north to Laos in late February where Griffith will begin his ten-month, \$16,500 funded research project for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. The goal of the program is to increase mutual understanding between United States citizens and people from around the world. Griffith will be researching sustainable education and poverty reduction.

Griffith believes his MPA degree, which he will resume and complete soon after his return to the United States, along with these experiences are stepping stones that will help lead to a promising career.

"It feels incredible to be extended this opportunity," Griffith says. "This is what I want to do with my life, and since many entry-level jobs require at least five years of international experience, all this combined could open a lot of doors."



Griffith working with farmers during a research trip to Laos in September. Griffith is developing an initiative in Thailand and Laos called Poverty Reduction and Agricultural Management.

Student News

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BRING EXPERIENCE, PERSPECTIVE TO THE CLASSROOM

Although few in number, international MPA students are poised to do much good. These students, around 9 percent of the program, arrive well-prepared with life experiences, offer new perspectives in classes, and leave the United States to serve their home countries upon graduation.

“Many have a rich background in both professional and church service. Having international students is a huge asset because of the perspectives and experiences they bring,” says Jeffery Thompson, Romney Institute associate professor. “We want to see them become leaders and bless their home nations.”

Dominique Andriamanantoa, a first-year student from Antananarivo, Madagascar, is one international student who was uniquely prepared for the MPA program. He earned his undergraduate degree from BYU and returned to Madagascar, serving as the country’s first stake president.

“It’s easy to say international students bring diversity, but I think it’s more than that,” Andriamanantoa says. “Sometimes in class I ask, ‘Is this an American point of view?’, and then I give my view as a foreigner. My classmates say they appreciate another perspective in the discussion.”

Thompson believes diversity is an advantage in team settings. A plethora of perspectives, he says, allows a team



Ruth Baptista helps with the United Way Day of Caring.

to see gaps in groupthink and encourages members to evaluate ideas they otherwise may not have challenged.

Despite many miles and, for some, many years away from home, international MPA students are not forgetting their native roots. After graduation most plan on returning to their home and serving their home countries. Currently the MPA program has students from Brazil, Colombia, Germany, Japan, Madagascar, Peru, Portugal, Russia, and Thailand.

Andriamanantoa, who has seen the LDS Church grow from its infancy in Madagascar, hopes to return and use his skills to further develop the church in his country.

Ruth Baptista, an Angolan refugee from Lisbon, Portugal, and a first-

year student in the MPA program, has received multiple degrees in various countries including Portugal and the United Kingdom. Baptista plans on returning to Southern Europe to work for the European Union’s disaster and refugee department of The United Nation’s High Commission for Refugees.

After graduation Kaja-lena Isakson, a first-year MPA student from Frankfurt, Germany, wants to return to Europe with her husband and baby, applying the management skills she learned while also managing a family.

“The beautiful thing about the MPA program is that the skills are so universal,” Isakson says. “The program is so practically applied that it’s impossible not to use it.”

STUDENTS MEET WITH AMBASSADOR HUNTSMAN

A handful of MPA students who participated in the China Xiamen exchange got quite the pleasant surprise on the final day of their excursion—a visit with Ambassador Jon M. Huntsman Jr.

While some of the students were returning to America, six participants were able to visit the United States Embassy in Beijing before their departing flight that afternoon. Three full-time members of the embassy staff and a BYU MBA intern spoke to the group about career opportunities, held a question-and-answer session, and discussed governmental relations between China and the United States.

After spending more than an hour with members of the staff, the group thanked them and prepared to leave. But the BYU intern had one more stop planned for them—Ambassador Huntsman's office.

"It was quite the surprise," recalls recent MPA graduate Megan Selin.

The former Utah governor showed the group photographs of the eight preceding United States ambassadors to the People's Republic of China and explained their backgrounds, what they did during their tenure, and his experiences. At the end of the thirty-minute visit Huntsman asked the students questions about their career plans.

"Visiting with Ambassador Huntsman made me very excited about the relationship between the two countries and their future," Selin says. "It was great to hear his perspective and hear him talk about how China is becoming a world power."

For Tanya Harmon, director of MPA career services at BYU, her trip to China and the visit with Ambassador Huntsman helped her gain a new perspective of China.

"Ambassador Huntsman has a unique love for the Chinese people," Harmon says. "He believes they are still getting used to being a big player on the world stage. They will be facing some tough issues in the near future, they may even have a few crises, but they're a good nation that we should continue to extend a hand of friendship to."

After spending six weeks learning about the Chinese

government and its domestic and international impact, the visit to the Embassy was the perfect capstone of the trip. Students were able to observe much of the knowledge they had gained on the trip applied by the United States Embassy staff.

"The work done at the embassy is done on such a global scale," Selin says. "It's amazing to think how many people it affects and what a big job they have to manage a relationship between two powerful countries."



Exchange, cont.

reflected in the citizens' mind-set.

"While visiting a palace we learned China has had five or six governments in the last 120 years," says Seth Melling, a 2010 MPA graduate. "No wonder they are

so concerned about stability—they have been volatile for so long."

Melling says that he now recognizes the impact China has on the world.

"You can't ignore the part China is

going to be playing, not only because of their regional influence but also as a rising global power," Melling says. "No matter what sector you are in, China will continue to be more influential."

EXPANDING HORIZONS

While many organizational structures strive to improve by looking inward, one MPA graduate is looking outward—out of the country to be specific.

Mark Gibb, executive director of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, collaborates with city, county, state, and other regional councils across the globe to share experiences to further develop the respective areas they manage. These partnerships have proven to be beneficial for all councils involved, and the number of councils teaming up with NVRC is increasing.

NVRC's international partnerships began when a regional group from Stuttgart, Germany, came to visit the greater



Gibb (right) presenting a proclamation to the mayor of Panevezys, Lithuania, in recognition of the city's 500th anniversary.

Alumni News

Washington, D.C., area a decade ago. The two councils realized that despite a language barrier and more than 4,130 miles separating them, they had many similar struggles.

"Ten years ago when we started collaborating I thought it could be an interesting endeavor," says Gibb, a 1978 MPA graduate. "But it has truly become the most rewarding experience of my career."

Gibb recently instigated NVRC's first Asian partnership with the Beijing Municipality. He also strengthened the budding partnership with China when he spoke on smart planning at the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference on Smart Cities and Intelligent Industries last May.

"This is a revelation to the regional leaders in China that we can share valuable information with each other," Gibb says. "We should share more information with each other."

Through NVRC's partnership with other regions, Gibb says they have learned many things, from how to construct better

speed bumps to implementing green roofs and better ways to recycle. But NVRC isn't the only one benefitting from the relationship. For example, Stuttgart has learned from NVRC better ways to preserve drinking water.

"So often we look at our counterparts in the United States, but what we really should be doing is looking internationally," he says.

NVRC and Gibb continue to expand their international regional relationships. In addition to the China and Germany partnerships, NVRC has also collaborated with many Euro-

pean countries, including France, Finland, Lithuania, and Latvia. These partnerships have led to trips by the NVRC leaders in to various countries to learn first-hand from their counterparts.

"It has brought our region together

in a way that can't be replicated," Gibb says. "After spending about a week with each other while visiting a partner city, our decision makers are talking and working together. They may be of different political parties, but they are working together to make our region better, and it has made a huge difference."

"Ten years ago when we started collaborating I thought it could be an interesting endeavor," Gibb says. "But it has truly become the most rewarding experience of my career."

DREAM ON



After months of stark silence from potential employers, one recent MPA grad is exclaiming, “Pinch me, I think I’m dreaming!” after landing her perfect job.

Shannon Wilde, a 2010 MPA graduate, is fulfilling her long-time goal to live and work in Europe. She is the newest employee of International Study Programs in Prague, Czech Republic.

“I am living my dream 100 percent,” Wilde says, smiling. “It just feels incredible.”

But Wilde’s job search was far from a dream. As time passed since her April graduation, her European job search was slipping into an international job struggle. Wilde began applying for jobs outside of her industry in desperation to work abroad. After applying for more than fifty jobs, Wilde says it was a blessing to be hired for a dream position.

“With this job, I don’t feel like I’m giving anything up,” Wilde says. “I feel like it’s the whole package—I am doing exactly what I want to do in the place I want to do it.”

Wilde began her job as a European program manager in September. She builds customized study abroad programs for undergraduate and graduate business groups. The programs integrate business visits with cultural and historical sites.

Wilde’s determination to work in Europe started when she lived there as a child. At the age of seven, the Wilde family left Oregon and moved to Rennes, France, where her father earned his PhD at the Institut de Recherche en Informatique et Systèmes Aléatoires. She and her family returned to the United States two years later, but that didn’t stop Wilde’s travels.

While earning her undergraduate degree at BYU in business management, she returned to Europe during a study abroad to Italy in 2005 and an internship in France the following year. After com-

pleting her internship in France, Wilde landed a student job at the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies as a French internship facilitator.

She fell in love with the job but wasn’t sure how to expand it into a career. One of her mentors introduced her to the MPA program as a step toward her goal of working abroad in international education administration.

“Originally I wanted to get an MBA, but I wasn’t motivated by the bottom line very much,” Wilde explains. “Many people within the field have MPAs, and I was more about striving for a purpose in helping the community, and that just fit right in line with the MPA program.”

For those who may be interested to follow Wilde’s dream, she encourages others to push on even if it may seem like the job search is more of a nightmare.

“Always stay determined; it’s a hard field to break in to,” Wilde says. “Always keep trying, and don’t give up on your dream.”



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REALIZE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, THEIR
FULL CAPACITY, BY THE APPLICATION
OF THEIR OWN EFFORTS."

NEW AND FAMILIAR FACES



Ray Nelson is moving up—to the seventh floor of the Tanner Building to be exact.

Nelson has joined the ranks of the Romney Institute, leaving the finance department, located just a floor below.

"The biggest benefit of the change is research compatibility," Nelson says.

"My teaching will align better with my research, and it is well-matched with what other faculty members are researching as well."

Nelson is currently researching how tax revenues react to different phases of the business cycle and how large retail stores, such as Walmart or Costco, impact the local retail sales tax base. He is also developing a simulation to test budgets for state and local governments.

While Nelson is moving up Lori Wadsworth is staying put, and she couldn't be happier.

Wadsworth, an associate professor, received continuing status after working for the Romney Institute for the last seven years.

"It's nice to feel validated for what



you do and know you are doing the right thing and going the right direction," Wadsworth says.

Wadsworth's research is focused on work-life issues, exploring what organizations can do to help their employees balance work and family.