Wisconsin China Initiative Holds Board Meeting September 23-24, 2009

The Wisconsin China Initiative holds its second board meeting Wednesday and Thursday, September 23-24, 2009, in Madison. The program takes place Wednesday evening at the Monona Terrace Hilton Hotel and Thursday at the Pyle Center on the shores of Lake Mendota.

Highlights of the board meeting include a presentation on the Wisconsin Trade Mission from Zachary Brandon and Mary Regel of the Department of Commerce, an update on Wisconsin China Initiative activities over the past year, and discussion by the board centered on fostering internship opportunities in China.

The meetings culminates on September 24 with a public panel discussion, titled “China and the Global Economic Crisis,” the panel features UW faculty members Edward Friedman (Political Science), Menzie Chinn (Economics), and Guanming Shi (Agricultural and Applied Economics), and UW-Madison alumni, Nicholas Lardy (Peterson Institute for International Economics), Yao Yang (China Center for Economic Research, Peking University), and Ed Gargan (Asia Bureau Chief, Newsday).

The 2009 Wisconsin China Initiative meetings will take place in the Pyle Center on the shores of Lake Mendota.
L&S Announces New Faculty Lines in China Studies

The College of Letters and Science has obtained several grants that increase the faculty lines available to China Studies, with a specific focus on history and archaeology.

A group of Letters and Science faculty, led by former CEAS Director Louise Young, received a $2.5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation to fund twelve new faculty positions in the departments of History and English. The History department plans to rebuild and expand their Asian, Transnational, and International history programs, while the English department plans to focus on diasporic literature. History department chair David McDonald announced the search for the new position in time to begin in fall of 2010, with the new hire joining the faculty in fall of 2011. The search is being led by current CEAS Interim Director Sarah Thal. When all positions are filled, the History department will enjoy three China specialists.

In a separate development, Archaeology Professor Mark Kenoyer of the Anthropology Department received a grant from the Luce Foundation to hire a new archaeologist specializing in East or Southeast Asia, as well as providing funding to equip a specialized laboratory and support graduate assistants. Although the grant was written with broad regional expertise in mind, the department is particularly interested in a China specialist to complement existing strengths in Indus Valley civilizations and New World archaeology.

UW Delegation Visits China, Signs Three MOUs

From June 17-22, a delegation led by the interim Dean of the School of Education, Adam Gamoran, visited alumni, government officials, and institutional partners in Taiwan. The delegation included Professors Jin-Wen Yu (Dance), Nicole Huang (East Asian Languages and Literature), and Edward Friedman (Political Science), as well as Kim Santiago, Asia Coordinator for International Studies, the Wisconsin Foundation, and the Wisconsin Alumni Association.

The visit began on the 17th with a visit to Minister Jin-Ping Wang, Leader of the Legislative Yuan, and then moved to National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU), where Dean Gamoran signed a Memorandum of Understanding approving student and faculty exchange and pledging future educational and research cooperation.

On the 18th, Dean Gamoran visited National Tsing Hua University (NTHU), with which the UW Law and Engineering Schools already have MOUs, to investigate the possibility of a general MOU for the entire university. The delegation also made courtesy visits to Cultural Affairs Minister (and UW alumna) P.T. Huang, and Minister of Education Jei-cheing Cheng.

The next day, the delegation visited National Taiwan University (NTU) and National Chengchi University (NCCU), signing general MOUs with each.

After a free Saturday for rest and sightseeing, the delegation attended a joint dance performance by the students and faculty of the UW Dance Department and the National Taiwan University of the Arts (NTUA) created by Professor Jin-Wen Yu. Guests included the Taiwanese press, government officials, alumni, family and friends, and the general public.

Following the events in Taiwan, Professor Nicole Huang continued to Shanghai and Hangzhou, where she met with leaders of East China Normal University and Zhejiang University, laying the groundwork for two more MOUs with Chinese institutions.
At the end of the Spring 2009 semester, graduating UW Madison seniors Ben Voss, Brian Busha, and junior Rachel Hui Min Zhang, after consultations with China Initiative Co-Director John Ohnesorge (Law) and Program Manager Richard Miller (Center for East Asian Studies), established an umbrella organization for China-related student groups, the Wisconsin China Initiative Student Branch. This organization aims to work with the faculty and alumni-led Wisconsin China Initiative to smooth the transition from studying China to working in China by beginning the important tasks of networking and leadership building as early as possible.

Meanwhile, in China, the growth and activity of the Wisconsin Alumni Association continues to pick up speed. Now, in addition to existing WAA chapters in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, there are two new chapters in Shanghai and Beijing.

The Shanghai chapter, formally established April 2007, has grown to one hundred active members. Led by Neville Lam (BBA-Accounting ’98) and Kelvin Ma (JD ’04), the chapter is organizing a reception for the Governor’s Trade Mission for the evening of September 21.

This year, under the leadership of senior Katrina Brown and junior Brian Richardson, the WCISB has begun a major outreach campaign, connecting with Chinese student associations such as the Chinese Undergraduate Student Association, the Chinese Students and Scholars Association, and the Student Association of Taiwan, and China-focused organizations such as the China Economic Forum, to coordinate public activities related to China.

In addition to working with other student organizations, the WCISB has been functioning as a full partner with the Wisconsin China Initiative in planning and carrying out speaker events, film series, and the fall board meetings.

The Beijing Chapter, formally established February 28, 2009, held its kick-off event August 1 at the Runqing Garden Resort north of the city proper, and already boasts more than a thousand members. This chapter, led by UW alumnus Matt Beyer (BA 2008), better known to Milwaukee Bucks fans as the public voice of Yi Jianlian during his first year with the NBA, is also assisting the Wisconsin State Department of Commerce in organizing the China leg of the Governor’s trade mission to East Asia, and preparing a series of high-profile speaker events for the coming winter.
This past spring, the Center for East Asian Studies, the Wisconsin China Initiative, and the School of Education Department of Curriculum & Instruction welcomed as Honorary Fellow Dr. Wu Zongjie of Zhejiang University and the School of Education Department of Curriculum & Instruction for a series of lectures and sessions with graduate students. In return, Professor Popkewitz invited Dr. Wu to Madison for ten days at the end of the academic year.

Dr. Wu, Professor in the School of International Studies and Deputy Director of the Institute of Discourse and Culture Studies at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, had previously hosted Professor Thomas Popkewitz of Curriculum & Instruction for a series of lectures and sessions with graduate students. In return, Professor Popkewitz invited Dr. Wu to Madison for ten days at the end of the academic year.

Dr. Wu gave talks to faculty and graduate students in the School of Education, the College of Letters and Science, and the School of Medicine, and held informal discussions with faculty and staff that will

This organization is the Wisconsin China Initiative

New Study Tour Introduces UW Students to Chinese History On Site

From mid-May to mid-June this past summer, a pioneering group of 16 UW-Madison students took part in a new study tour organized by Center for East Asian Studies Student Affairs Coordinator Drex Montgomery (MA, PhD ’10). Titled “Excursions in Chinese History,” this academic course brought students to important sites in Chinese history to learn first-hand from Chinese historians.

The program was organized with the assistance of the faculty of the Department of History, Peking University, as well as Illinois Wesleyan History Professor Thomas Lutze (MA ’89, PhD ’96), a protégé of emeritus History Professor Maurice Meisner. Students visited such storied locations as the Great Wall, the caves of Yen’an, the Bund in Shanghai, and Mao’s favorite restaurant in Changsha, Hunan. Along the way they received instruction from Chinese historians, interviewed ordinary people who had lived extraordinary lives, and earned four credits toward their undergraduate degrees.

The course was deemed a success by the students, the instructor, and International Academic Programs, and will be offered again in the summer of 2010.

About Our Organization...

Recognizing the importance of China to the economic and political future of Wisconsin and the United States, the Division of International Studies is convening an exceptional group of faculty, alumni, and leaders in business and government to bolster research and teaching about China, to create new partnerships between Chinese higher education institutions and the UW-Madison, and to develop plans for strategic engagements between China and the State of Wisconsin. This organization is the Wisconsin China Initiative.