



PUSHING FORWARD

2019 IMPACT REPORT



孔子学院美国中心
Confucius Institute U.S. Center

LOCAL INITIATIVE. GLOBAL IMPACT. LIFELONG COMMUNITY.

A Change In Perspective Can Change the World





THE CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE U.S. CENTER



The Confucius Institute U.S. Center believes that seeing the world through someone else's eyes can be a life-changing experience. As a nonprofit educational institution we advance the value of global education, Chinese language instruction, and cross-cultural understanding through people-to-people exchanges and cultural exploration.

Promoting the value of global education is our highest priority. This year we continued our work in building a unique global learning community, instilling the importance of international awareness and global citizenship, and increasing the accessibility of cultural exchange experiences for traditionally underrepresented groups both on and off university campuses.

During these challenging times we remain committed to sharing the many stories of Confucius Institute students from around the country and highlighting the impact, demand, and need for Chinese language and cultural education.



CULTIVATING A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Through our People-to-People Program, the CIUS Center is creating a diverse community of Chinese language and culture learners from across the United States.

This special learning community provides our People-to-People Award Honorees many opportunities to experience the life-changing impact of global education, expands access to learning resources, and enables them to build long-lasting relationships centered on shared interests in Chinese language and culture.

With the addition of the 2019 People-to-People Award Honorees, the CIUS Center alumni community now includes 40 unique Confucius Institute students who exemplify the impact of our core value of bridging cultural divides through experiencing other points of view.

Now more than ever, it is important for students to acquire the skills to foster relationships with diverse communities both locally and abroad. Looking ahead, the CIUS Center will continue to grow and support our People-to-People community, building bridges both near and far.

ALUMNI COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

Dennis Delehanty joined the People-to-People Alumni Community as a member of the program's first cohort in 2016. As a lifelong learner and retired Department of State official, Dennis traveled to China several times during his 40-year career. Dennis began studying at the Confucius Institute at George Mason University initially to brush up on his Chinese skills for work. His undeniable passion for Chinese language and culture continued to grow and eventually he established an advanced Chinese literature reading group as a resource for both students and teachers. An active alumnus, Dennis has joined both People-to-People China trips and has advocated for the Confucius Institute program by sharing the program's personal impact. Dennis serves as a mentor to newer members of the alumni community, and his dedication and expertise have been invaluable.



DENNIS DELEHANTY

“If the Confucius Institute were to disappear tomorrow, I think what I would miss most is the sense of community. It is key to helping build these sorts of cultural bridges.



DAVID COLE

DAVID COLE received the People-to-People Award in 2016 as a senior at the University of Kentucky. David's award-winning essay detailed his experience traveling to China for the first time through a Confucius Institute program exploring humanities, arts and culture. Discovering similarities despite our perceived differences has always been a part of David's global education journey. He credits the Confucius Institute with opportunities to discover “a true sense of the universal nature of humanity.”

Since becoming a People-to-People Program alumnus

David has maintained a strong presence in the community. He participated in last year's trip to China and offered advice on continuing Chinese language and culture education after college to the newest cohort of honorees during the 2019 Honoree Welcome Weekend.

“I think what's most important to me is the people I've interacted with. This sort of alumni family is something special. We've been able to connect in a very real way even though we're states and states apart. I really appreciate that more than anything else.

2019 NATIONAL HONORS GALA

The annual CIUS Center National Honors Gala is our opportunity to celebrate the outstanding achievements, talents, and stories of Confucius Institute students from across the country. Ten students, selected through our annual essay competition, are invited to Washington, D.C., for a weekend of celebration and community building as we welcome them as the newest members of our alumni community.

The National Honors Gala also serves as a crucial advocacy tool allowing audiences to hear firsthand the impact of the Confucius Institute program on our honorees. Calls for support from leaders in global education and international affairs, including African Union Ambassador Arikana Chihombori-Quao, were a wonderful addition to this year's program. Through her personal story of becoming a global citizen, she reminded us of the crucial role of cross-cultural exchanges in the development of our future leaders.

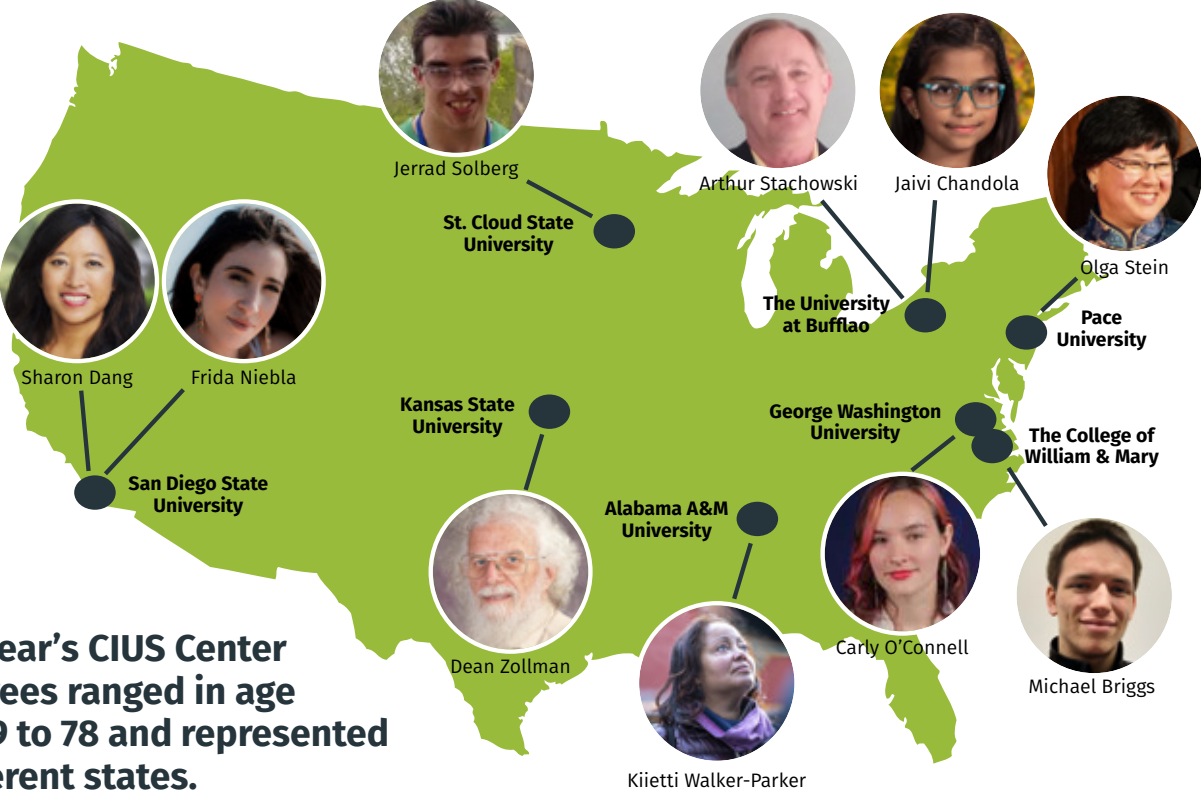


“People-to-People exchanges ... have raised a young girl from being a teenager, to being a medical doctor, to being a mother, to being a wife, and today to be an Ambassador representing 55 African countries. This is what People-to-People exchanges can do.”

- Ambassador Arikana Chihombori-Quao



2019 HONOREES



This year's CIUS Center honorees ranged in age from 9 to 78 and represented 7 different states.

HONOREE SPOTLIGHT JAIVI CHANDOLA

Jaivi Chandola is a third-grader at Maple West Elementary School in Williamsville, New York. Through the Confucius Institute at the University at Buffalo, Jaivi enjoys practicing calligraphy and was able to sing one of her favorite Chinese songs at the annual Confucius Institute Day/Lantern Festival celebration. With the help of her enthusiastic and dedicated teachers, Jaivi gained a head start in mastering one of the most critical languages of the 21st century and is the youngest People-to-People Award honoree to date. The Confucius Institute has not only provided her with a supportive community of fellow language learners, but has increased her confidence and dedication to global education at a young age.



“Without the CI, I would never have had such an amazing and supportive teacher or this learning community.”

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE: NOT YOUR AVERAGE STUDY ABROAD TRIP

The annual People-to-People Award China Trip is not a business trip or even a typical study abroad program. This alumni program uniquely brings Confucius Institute students of all ages and backgrounds together to explore Chinese language and culture while cultivating authentic one-on-one connections across cultures.

The host family experience remains a program favorite and allows participants to meet families like their own, while ‘exchanging’ parts of their own cultures. Older adults and career professionals in our program participate in the host family experience as well – an opportunity typically reserved for high school and college-age students and rarely included in work or business trips.

Through reducing barriers for program eligibility and focusing on cultivating mutual understanding, we welcome traditionally underrepresented groups into the study-abroad space and present an inclusive representation of America’s unique diversity.

OPENING A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

The world gets a little smaller when opportunities to explore are accessible.

Despite the well-known benefits of global education, opportunities are not always easily accessible for many people. Through our flagship People-to-People Program and monthly educational events, the CIUS Center strives to remove institutional, curricular, socioeconomic, and cultural barriers that prevent access to global education opportunities. Our local, national, and international programming recognizes the importance of developing diverse groups of global citizens and equips learners with the key skills needed to succeed in our competitive global environment.



BRINGING GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



While firsthand travel experiences are undoubtedly life changing, local global education experiences can be equally impactful.

Through panel discussions, gallery exhibits, and conferences, the CIUS Center engages local audiences in conversation with experts typically reserved for academic arenas and individuals with professional expertise.

An interest in Chinese language and culture can develop at any age or professional level - from local university STEM-majors seeking to supplement a rigid curriculum to mid-career professionals aiming to rekindle former interests. The CIUS Center strives to create an engaging and welcoming environment filled with a variety of perspectives.



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Educational and cultural exchange opportunities are about more than creating memorable learning experiences. They are a key component of how we develop global leaders who have the skills and desire to create a better world.

This year we continued to achieve our core mission of providing global learning opportunities that encourage students to appreciate diverse perspectives, understand the interconnectedness of our modern world, and effectively collaborate across cultures.

Today's Students Tomorrow's Leaders



Recognizing the importance of bringing diverse perspectives to conversations about global issues, we supported 17 students from 9 countries in their journey to become global change agents and peacebuilders. During the weeklong program, we exposed students to the fundamentals of peacebuilding through site visits, panels discussions, and group reflection. With advice from practitioners including representatives from The United Nations Association – National Capital Area, George Mason University's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, and the African Union Mission to the United States, students each developed peacebuilding projects that they will work to implement in their local communities.

“ I think moving forward, I'm interested in exploring an occupation that focuses on the environment and language.

– Trinity, DC International School Student

Conversations surrounding the US-China relationship and environmental sustainability have defined our decade and will likely continue long into the future. Youth today are keenly aware of these societal issues and are motivated to act. Through our second CIUS Center Youth Day we challenged 60 Washington, D.C. area high school students to consider how studying Chinese language and culture can prepare them to collaboratively address environmental issues in the future. As members of a mock US-China Environmental Task Force students presented proposals on combating e-waste, water pollution and other environmental concerns. In partnership with Washington Parks and People, students also participated in a community service project to beautify Meridian Hill Park - highlighting the importance of thinking globally and acting locally.



“ The skills I learned at the conference improved my skill set and made me a more capable and responsible citizen, equipped with new understanding of concepts that I can use to improve the quality of life in my country.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

SHANNON BENNETT, Johannesburg, South Africa

In 2019, Shannon travelled abroad for the first time to China and the United States through opportunities provided by the Confucius Institute at the University of Johannesburg. Shannon is passionate about cultural exchanges, and began studying Mandarin to gain insight into Chinese culture and to share parts of her South African culture. As an environmental scientist specializing in Botany,

Shannon is keenly aware of the impact of increased drought, floods, and plant loss due to climate change in South Africa. She believes that a shift in attitude toward climate change is needed, and through her peace forum project, Shannon aims to create a platform for exchange between university students and primary/secondary school students who share a common interest in environmental protection.

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

BEIJING DAY CULTURAL FESTIVAL

In November we joined the DC Mayor’s Office, regional Confucius Institutes and other Chinese cultural organizations to host a cultural festival in celebration of the 35th Anniversary of the DC -Beijing Sister City relationship. Hundreds of community members joined in cultural activities and demonstrations at the Ronald Reagan Building and our office provided educational programming for 100 DC Public School students who also attended. We are grateful to have worked with the District’s leadership in coordinating this successful community event.



BEIJING DAY GUQIN PERFORMANCE

During the DC -Beijing Sister City anniversary we also partnered with the Howard University Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center to host world-renowned Guqin performer and creator Wang Peng. The lecture and demonstration provided a rare opportunity for the Howard University community and the DC public to experience Chinese music through the ancient Guqin.



GALLERY EXHIBITS

Through our continued partnership with the US-China Policy Foundation, we exhibited museum-quality, traditional Chinese artwork featuring historical figures and renowned artists. We are proud to share these important representations of Chinese culture with the public.



LOOKING FORWARD

In the coming year, The CIUS Center looks to promote the educational value of inclusion and diversity, as well as expand our impact beyond the traditional borders of higher education. To do this we will double down on our efforts to bring the unique benefits of our global education programs and focus on People-to-People exchanges to traditionally underrepresented students who may not have the same opportunities or ease of access to global education experiences.

Looking forward, our 2020 programing will be geared towards the inclusion of a diverse body of students from across the country. This centuries’ global challenges can only be addressed by preparing the next generation of unique voices through providing them the opportunity to develop a global perspective and intercultural communication skills.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS MAKE US STRONGER

We pride ourselves in partnering with a diverse range of organizations, from local Washington, D.C. Public Schools to international organizations such as the U.S. China Policy Foundation. Collaborations increase our impact and help us fulfill our mission to bridge cultural divides by providing opportunities to experience the world from one another's point of view.

LOCAL



NATIONAL



INTERNATIONAL



CIUS Center Staff

Gao Qing
Executive Director

Cheyenne Boyce
Director of Program Development
cheyenne.boyce@ciuscenter.org

Richard Kamenitzer
Chief Financial Officer

Erik Eging
External Communications Associate
erik.eging@ciuscenter.org

Abbigail Hull
Program Associate
abbigail.hull@ciuscenter.org

Rick Custer
Advisor for External Communications

Doug Whipple
Counsel

2019 Intern
Serena Nangia
Programs and Operations Intern

2019 Advisory Board

Matt Salmon
Vice President for Government Affairs
Arizona State University

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Adam Deguire
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Dean, School of Global Studies and Partnerships
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Jonathan Marek
Undergraduate Student
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William McCarren
Executive Director
National Press Club

Harvey Perlman
Professor of Law, Chancellor Emeritus
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Peter Stearns
Professor of History, Provost Emeritus
George Mason University



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1776 Massachusetts Ave. N.W. Suite 410
Washington, DC 20036
202-864-6485 • www.ciuscenter.org