

# Humphreys College

## NEWSLETTER SUPPLEMENT

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### THE CHINESE STUDENT INITIATIVE AND THE HUMPHREYS COLLEGE ACADEMY OF BUSINESS, LAW AND EDUCATION

By Wilma Okamoto-Vaughn, Board Chair, and  
Matthew George, Executive Director

A few months ago a person representing multiple agencies that sponsored Chinese high school students coming to the United States to enhance their education approached the Humphreys College Academy of Business, Law and Education (HCABLE) to ask if it would be willing to accept up to 30 Chinese students into the HCABLE program. These English-speaking and high-performing students want to experience an international education. The agencies in China recommended the American school system because of our multi-cultural makeup and willingness to host people from abroad. When they approached HCABLE, we were honored to have been selected but asked why. What criteria were used to determine the schools selected in Northern California to participate?



The answer was immediate and clear. These agencies were looking for high-performing schools with a reputation for excellence and a pure college focus. HCABLE, in its short history, had already developed that reputation and came highly recommended as a school that would embrace the values and expectations of the parents. We also were the only public school that was represented. All of the others were private schools.

The sponsoring agencies were asking that the new schools' representatives that had been selected come to China and participate in several days of presentations to the prospective parents and students. The schools would be asked to travel about 1500 miles over 12 days. The first event would convene in Beijing and continue in Wuhan and Shanghai. The agency sponsoring the trip asked that the Executive Director, Matthew George, and Board Chairperson, Wilma Okamoto-Vaughn, be our representatives to impress on the agencies in China our investment in participating in the program.

So off we went on our 12-hour flight, landing in Beijing at midnight China time. China is 15 hours ahead of California, so this experience brought a new meaning for our travelers to the word "jetlag." After a half-day recovery, we entered our first meeting and met over fifty eager students who wanted to study in the United States. They and their parents crowded around our table and asked a barrage of questions about the school and our program. Each school was given an interpreter; however, many participants spoke English well enough to communicate their concerns to the team directly.



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The parents' greatest concern was the quality of our program and the care their children would receive far from home. They were impressed that two members of the HCABLE team had taken the time to come to meet them. When we inquired about this viewpoint to the agencies, we were informed that most of the other schools had decided to hire outside consultants to attend the event despite the wishes of the sponsoring agencies to have faculty members. They were very grateful to our Charter Board for allowing us to come and participate; often, the leadership of the agencies sat with our team to express their high regard for HCABLE to the prospective students and their families.

Another important part of our presentations to the parents was the relationship of HCABLE to Humphreys College. The visitors to our table would often express how impressed they were that Humphreys College had invested itself so deeply in secondary education as to create and sponsor HCABLE. They spoke of the need for such programs in China but did not see such opportunities coming for many years, hence their desire to send their children abroad. Ms. Okamoto-Vaughn was able to convey to all of our audiences the incredible history of Humphreys College and the investment the school has in all of its students to realize their dreams of a high school diploma, a four-year college degree, and the opportunities for successful careers.

The agencies also asked us to do presentations to their staff on several occasions so that they could properly convey our programs to prospective students in our absence. In conversing with the staff at each agency, we could see the high regard they began to develop for the HCABLE model including the number of courses we require, the block schedule allowing for 90 minutes of instruction, the ability for students in grades 11 and 12 to take Humphreys College classes, and the focus of the program. The clear mission to encourage our students to complete high school and attend and complete their college education was impressive to them and the focus of a great deal of conversation. These presentations were scheduled for 30 minutes but often lasted almost two hours. When we arrived for the first meeting, we came with printed materials ready for distribution. Much to our delight, many of the agencies had taken our advanced copies and translated them into Chinese for the participants. Chinese is a rich but complex language. Seeing our English PowerPoints in this wonderful language was very impressive and gave us a renewed respect for the challenges of any bilingual student coming to the United States to study.

Our hosts did allow for some time for us to see the beauty of China and its rich history. In Beijing we had the chance to see Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, and the Great Wall of China. The Great Wall is incredible to behold, stretching for 5500 miles (342 miles just in Beijing), spanning four dynasties. Many died building the wall and its history is documented for many to behold. The picture we have included shows our Executive Director tackling about 100 yards of the wall and hoping to just make it to the next step. We hear that he and his companions actually made it to four sections of the Wall, albeit slowly and methodically. The team also visited the Golden Crane Tower and the East Lake Colony in Wuhan. Both of them are cultural exhibits and were home to the rich artistic culture of China engaging artists and sculptors to practice their crafts. These visits allowed the team to share their China experiences with the families who visited the high school workshops and the team's respect for the history and beauty of their country.

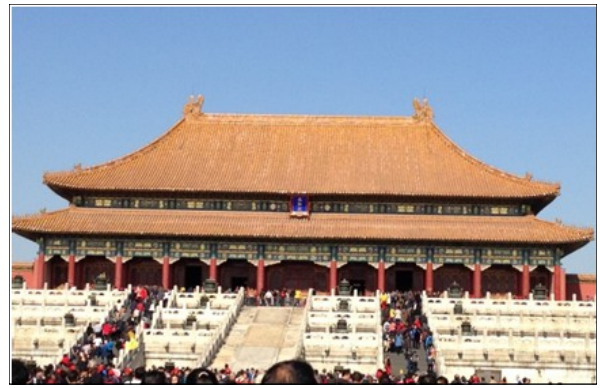


The team traveled by train to each new city. The high-speed train was often reaching over 180 miles per hour. It was a wonderful way to travel (efficient and comfortable) but did not allow us to see much of the countryside. As we traveled in the cities to our presentations, the guide would often ask us to take a train to meet deadlines for arrival (traffic in China is incredibly heavy). The trains are well kept and very efficient. In fact, they are so popular that our team can reflect and tell you exactly what a sardine feels like when in the can.

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We spent our last days in Shanghai. Shanghai and Beijing have 30 and 28 million inhabitants respectively, so there were many people who attended the events. It was interesting to hear the perspectives of native Chinese when they described Wuhan (population 8 million) as a small city. Shanghai was the city where we felt most comfortable as English speakers since a number of expatriates, business people, and citizens want to communicate in English. The presentations in Shanghai took place at the Olympic Hotel, next to one of the beautiful former Olympic track and field venues. We paused at the site—where many Olympic athletes had once stood—and looked in awe at their names and the numerous accomplishments of their time.



On our way home we had a chance to reflect on this wonderful experience and remember fondly the hundreds of students and families we came into contact with. While we may only see 30 of these students over the course of each year, we feel as if we know them all and could help any one of them realize his/her dream of a high school and college education. There will be interviews by Skype, conversations in English and Chinese, and new experiences as we welcome the students into our school and community. There will be a chance for all of these students to experience the wonderful family of colleagues who make the Humphreys College/HCABLE program the great opportunity for learning and growth that is has been for over 100 years.

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