

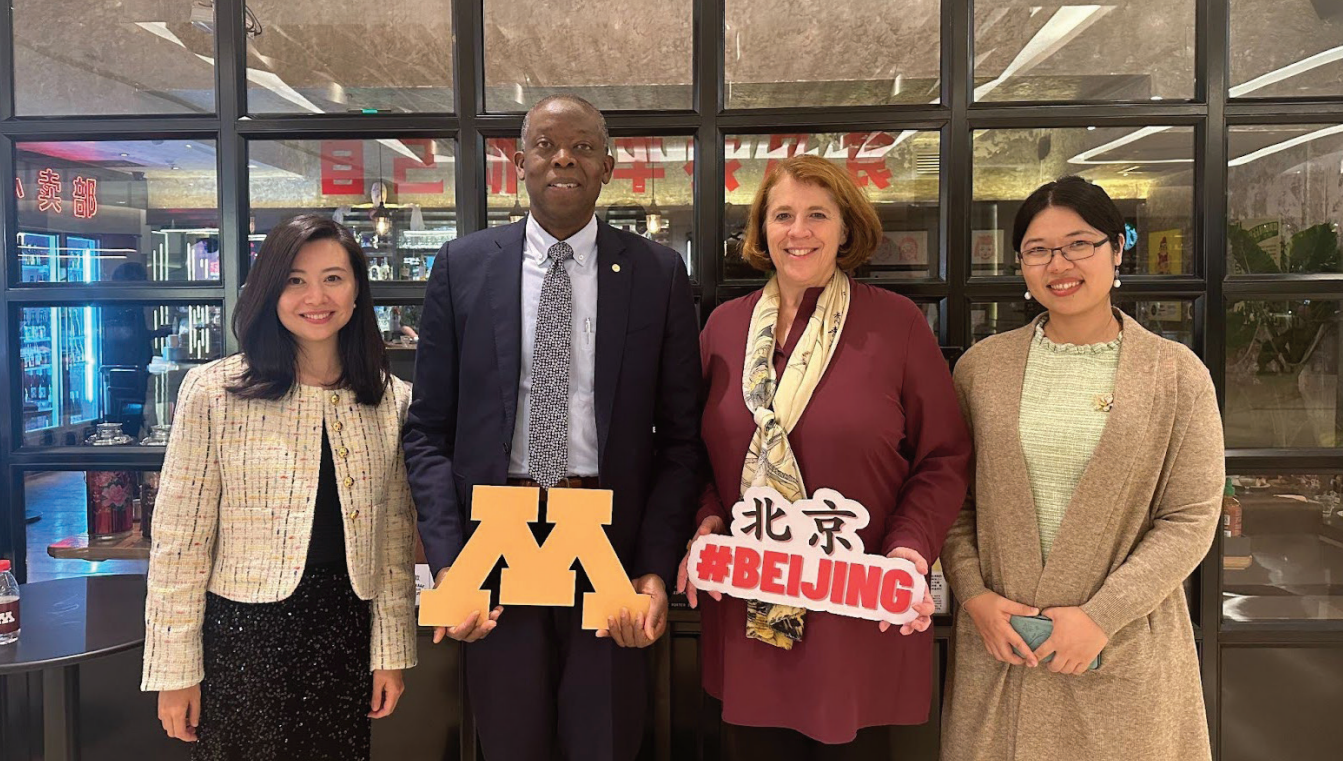
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

中國中心

CHINA CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

Building U.S.-China Bridges Since 1979



A University of Minnesota delegation visited China in October, rekindling relationships with partner universities and connecting with alumni. It was the University's first official visit to China since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. See page 11 to learn more.

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Dear Friends,

This academic year has been a year of renewal for the China Center: renewal of educational and cultural exchanges, and renewal of partnerships and collaborations.

It has been heartwarming to welcome Chinese students to campus and to once again aid University of Minnesota students traveling to China. Learn more about our scholarship support of some of these talented students on page 7.

Students inspired us with their creativity, problem-solving, and passion for cross-cultural collaboration in this year's China Bridge Challenge (see pages 2-3). The China Center partnered with the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences for this year's competition, under the theme "Strategies for an Evolving U.S.-China Relationship: Resiliency in the Face of Climate Change."

We have also built new bridges, reconnected with old friends, and forged strong collaborations. In October, the China Center supported the first visit of newly arrived Vice Provost Harvey Charles to China (see page 11). We found a very warm reception among our long-term partners and alumni, and we explored new exchanges and initiatives.

One of our new initiatives is the Scholars Academy. Under the leadership of Vice Provost Charles, the Scholars Academy invites scholars from around the world to visit the University of Minnesota for six months to a year, during which time they conduct research and contribute to the academic community on campus. We are looking forward to hosting scholars from China and other countries.

We were delighted to hold both in-person and online events this year, exploring the



many facets of the U.S.-China relationship and encouraging dialogue. In the Bob and Kim Griffin Building U.S.-China Bridges Lecture (see page 4), Brian Wong, former vice president for global initiatives at Alibaba Group, offered his insights into how Chinese management philosophy and cultural practices can enhance our understanding of the U.S.-China relationship. His Tao analysis was an insight into Chinese business practices and evidence of Alibaba's unique culture.

We are so grateful for your support of the China Center's mission. Your generous donations make it possible to offer our scholarship and exchange programs and the Considering China webinar series. And your advice, feedback, and guidance are valuable resources in these times of tension in the U.S.-China relationship. Together we can foster greater understanding and build more connections with China.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Joan Brzezinski". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Joan Brzezinski
Executive Director

The China Bridge Challenge invites student teams to explore the intricate complexities encountered by the U.S. and China through a myriad of challenges, misunderstandings, and a rapidly evolving relationship, and find a way out through innovative collaborations.

Cross-Cultural Teams Propose Solutions to Addressing Climate Change

As the largest economies in the world, the U.S. and China must work together and find solutions to world climate challenges. Undergraduates proposed their ideas as part of the China Center's fourth annual China Bridge Challenge.

Three teams, each including at least one student from Greater China and one student from the U.S., presented in the final round of the case competition. Their ideas addressed the theme of "Strategies for an Evolving U.S.-China Relationship: Resiliency in the Face of Climate Change" and included: an online course bringing together students in the U.S. and China around climate change topics, a sustainability volunteer program for students while studying abroad, and a plan to develop China's seed certification program and reduce agricultural tariffs.

The first-place team proposed an online interdisciplinary course on climate change to bring together Chinese and U.S. students, with topics presented from both countries' perspectives. In addition, students would have the opportunity to engage with local community partners and businesses working on sustainability, such as solar power or



STUDENTS FROM THE WINNING TEAM (LEFT TO RIGHT): SHUAI AN, SOPHIA SHI, BIANCA TURMAN, AND ZHOU CHEN

sustainable farms. The program aims to address several goals—increasing opportunities for communication between students in the two countries and encouraging climate action and community engaged learning.

A key component of the competition is to bring together U.S. and Chinese students on teams. Zhou Chen, a College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences student on the winning team said, “Working in depth with other individuals on a project like this was very rewarding. Even though many of the team members share the same ethnicity, the different fields of study and cultural background inspired me to pick up good communication skills and ways to empower and hold everyone accountable.”

Bianca Turman, a student in the College of Liberal Arts and the Carlson School of Management, was another member of the winning team and was participating in her second China Bridge Challenge.

“I think the China Bridge Challenge will be enormously helpful in my future academic and professional career. This case competition has truly enhanced my ability to condense research and articulate my ideas in proposal form,” she explained. “More importantly, the China Bridge Challenge has equipped me with the skills and experience to approach a topic from numerous perspectives and to understand viewpoints that differ from my own. I am confident these competencies will benefit my future academic and career pursuits.”

The College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) was the partnering college for this year’s China Bridge Challenge. CFANS students use science every day to create a world that will feed our growing population, sustain the natural resources upon which we depend, and find answers to the world’s grand challenges.

“I am highly impressed by the quality of the contestants and the professionalism demonstrated by all the team members,” said Roger Ruan, a professor of Bioproducts and Biosystems Engineering in CFANS who was a judge at the final presentations. “They have excelled in grasping the complexities of the issues at hand and devising innovative solutions. This program undoubtedly plays a crucial role in inspiring young individuals to contribute towards building bridges between the U.S. and China.”

Learn more >> z.umn.edu/chinabridge-2024

Campus & Community Engagement 校园与社区参与

The China Center fosters an understanding of Chinese culture, both on campus and among the wider community, by bringing leading experts to campus for discussions on pressing U.S.-China issues and by co-sponsoring community events.

Griffin Lecture Examines the Tao of Diplomacy

In 1999, Brian Wong became the first American to join Alibaba Group, a Chinese technology company that is now one of the most valuable corporations in the world. In the 2023 Bob and Kim Griffin Building U.S.-China Bridges Lecture, Wong offered his insights into how Chinese management philosophy and cultural practices can enhance our understanding of the U.S.-China relationship.

Wong introduced the concept of Tao and what it means for Alibaba. He explained that the idea of Tao involves harmony and interconnectedness. At Alibaba, that meant thinking of the company as an ecosystem, but also thinking about it in reference to the larger domestic market and global environment.

“We were trying to support those who are underserved, using technology as a way to help them achieve success and opportunities,” Wong said. “We thought we were the heroes helping the small businesses fight against the big guys.... That was how we defined our path in everyday terms, and it gave us our reason for being.”

Wong highlighted existential threats facing society today, from climate change and public health to wealth disparity and cybersecurity. He argued the two countries have a shared responsibility to address these issues. For example, the U.S. and China are the largest producers of carbon emissions in the world. At the same time, they are the largest investors in renewable energy.



**BRIAN WONG EXPLAINED
HOW PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE
CONNECTION CAN HELP
EASE TENSIONS BETWEEN
CHINA AND THE U.S.**

A photograph of Erhu master Zhu Changyao performing. He is wearing a dark, patterned traditional Chinese jacket and is playing an Erhu. He is holding the instrument with his left hand and the bow with his right hand. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a stage or performance area with a red curtain on the left.

ERHU MASTER ZHU CHANGYAO PERFORMS AT THE CHINESE NEW YEAR RECEPTION.

Harvey Charles, the University of Minnesota's vice provost for international affairs and senior international officer, echoed Wong's message.

"This event could not have come at a more critical time, when we are currently witnessing in real time what happens when nations and groups of people fail to create harmonious relationships," said Charles, "Higher education, and particularly the China Center, has a crucial role to play in fostering greater understanding and more harmonious relationships between and among nations."

Celebrating the Year of the Dragon

The China Center celebrated the Year of the Dragon with a Chinese New Year Reception on February 15. Guests were treated to delicious food and a beautiful musical performance by Erhu master Zhu Changyao.

It was a joyous occasion as we gathered to mark the start of the new lunar year. We were thrilled to see so many of our friends and supporters in attendance.

CHINA Town Hall Addresses U.S.-China Relationship

The 2023 CHINA Town Hall: Local Connections, National Reflections was organized by the National Committee on United States-China Relations and locally hosted by the University of Minnesota China Center and Global Minnesota.

The program featured a live webcast with Nicholas Burns, the current U.S. ambassador to China, followed by an on-site discussion with Duncan J. McCampbell, associate professor of international business and law at Metropolitan State University.

China Center Hosts Brookings Discussion on Taiwan

The China Center hosted a moderated discussion by the Foreign Policy Program at The Brookings Institution focused on U.S. policies around Taiwan. Four panelists discussed whether conflict is inescapable in the Taiwan Strait as Beijing continues to grow its military capacity. They also questioned whether the United States should revisit its longstanding policy of “strategic ambiguity” and its “One China” policy to bolster deterrence against Chinese coercion and potential use of force.

The panelists included Rorry Daniels of the Asia Society Policy Institute, Thomas Hanson of the Minnesota Committee on Foreign Relations, Ivan Kanapathy of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Michael O’Hanlon of The Brookings Institution. John Rash of the Star Tribune moderated the discussion.

Welcoming New Chinese Students

The China Center welcomed new Chinese students to campus in September with a pizza party. A panel of six current students from China shared their experiences at the University of Minnesota and offered advice to 120 incoming students. The event also featured remarks from Joan Brezezinski, executive director of the China Center; Harvey Charles, vice provost for international affairs; and Barbara Kappler, assistant vice provost and director of International Student and Scholar Services.



Program Specialist Joins China Center

Jing Wei joined the China Center as a Program Specialist in January 2024. Jing has extensive experience in cross-cultural exchanges from her 17 years as a trade specialist at the U.S.

Embassy in Beijing. Her expertise will greatly enhance the China Center’s mission of promoting enriched people-to-people exchanges between the U.S. and China. In this role, Jing will provide valuable administrative and program support for China Center initiatives.

Scholarships and Exchanges 奖学金和交流

Through the generous support of donors, the China Center provides financial support to University of Minnesota students interested in China and its culture.

China Center Scholarships/Jennie and Fred Hsiao Scholarships

The China Center provides financial support to students as they study abroad or participate in educational experiences in Greater China.

Elizabeth Nemitz, Kristen Nguyen, and Clare Murphy received a China Center Scholarship and a Hsiao Scholarship.

Min (Amy) Xu and Michael Schumann Scholarship

The Min (Amy) Xu and Michael Schumann Scholarship supports University of Minnesota students interested in China or its culture by providing financial support to help with their academic progress and to help meet the costs of obtaining a college education.

Kaixuan Yao and Kelly Fung were awarded this scholarship.

Hsiao Shaw-Lundquist Fellowship

The Hsiao Shaw-Lundquist Fellowship was established to support full-time graduate students at the University of Minnesota who have a connection to China as they further their studies in civil engineering, hydromechanics, water resources, and architecture.

Rohit Satish Patil, Ji Qin, and Honghui Du were named recipients of this fellowship.

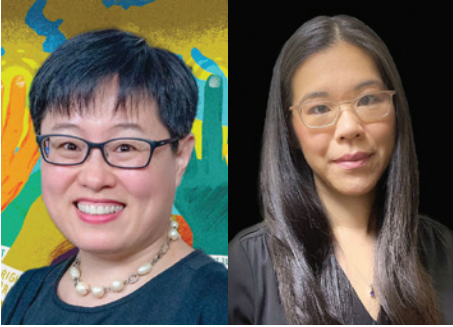
Sping Lin and Ying-Ngoh T. Lin Visiting Scholars Fellowship

The China Center awarded the 2024 Sping Lin and Ying-Ngoh T. Lin Visiting Scholars fellowship to **Dr. Juanjuan Wu**, a professor of retail merchandising in the College of Design. With the \$7,500 award, Dr. Wu will sponsor a professor from Shanghai University of Engineering Sciences for collaborative research in Chinese fashion.

Peking University Summer Program

Five students from the University of Minnesota participated in the 2024 China Deep Dive Program at Peking University. The China Center worked with campus partners the Chinese Flagship program and the Carlson School of Management to send students on this exchange. **Noah Bruce, Jazmin Garteski, Joseph Gibbs, Nicholas Ludford, and Lauren Sun** attended lectures and visited multiple cities in China in summer 2024.

The “Considering China” webinar series explores important topics related to China and encourages meaningful conversation and reflection. The series attracts audiences from the University of Minnesota, greater Minnesota, across the nation, and around the world.



The State of Chinese Americans: Data & Discussion

Qin Gao and Cindy Tsai • September 26, 2023

Qin Gao and Cindy Tsai presented the results of the “State of Chinese Americans” survey, which studied the Chinese American population. This data aims to guide policymakers in understanding and addressing the needs of Chinese Americans.



Personal Information Protection and Data Cross-Border Transfer in China

Ian Yinan Wang • December 12, 2023

China’s Personal Information Protection Law went into effect in November 2021. Ian Yinan Wang discussed the impact the law could have internationally and what it means for how parties conduct business both within and outside China.



Relations with China in 2024: Challenges and Prospects

Susan A. Thornton • January 23, 2024

Susan A. Thornton discussed the status of U.S.-China relations, noting that 2023 ended with some improvement and stabilization after President Biden met President Xi in San Francisco. But with U.S. presidential elections and many other problems on the horizon, policymakers in both capitals seem skeptical that the positive summit vibe will be enough to stabilize ties through a raucous U.S. campaign in which China ties are a prime political issue.



Qianlong, Master of Nets: Lunar New Year in the Qing Palace

Daniel Greenberg • February 29, 2023

Daniel Greenberg discussed the artwork “All Foreign Countries Bearing Tribute,” a representation of the Lunar New Year created for the Qianlong court, exploring its original context and highlighting its unique blend of Chinese classical painting and European ethnography.



Fragmented Authority: The Interplay of Domestic Politics in Shaping China’s Foreign Policy

Andrew Mertha • March 19, 2024

Andrew Mertha illuminated how the rough-and-tumble domestic politics of China have become internationalized, deeply complicating foreign policy decisions crafted in the halls of power in Beijing and playing out in aid- and investment-recipient countries.



Chinese Social Media in Times of Crises

Guobin Yang • May 2, 2024

Guobin Yang put Chinese social media in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic to explore what a global crisis might reveal about their meanings and significance. In particular, Yang discussed how ordinary users take to social media platforms to share stories of their daily lives and why such digital storytelling is important in times of crises.



454 PEOPLE

attended the live webinars



4,058 VIEWS

of the recordings

Did you miss a webinar? Want to re-watch one of this year’s discussions? Learn more about the China Center’s annual Considering China webinar series at chinacenter.umn.edu/events/considering-china.

The University of Minnesota's China Office was established in Beijing in 2009 as the institution's first office abroad. The China Office is a critical resource to further develop educational, cultural, and social collaborations among China, the University of Minnesota, and the State of Minnesota. The China Office had another successful year supporting educational exchange between China and the University of Minnesota.

Student Recruitment Support

The China Office participated in the EducationUSA 2023 online pre-departure orientation. During a live-streaming conversation with current Chinese college students in the U.S., Director Fran Liu introduced the University of Minnesota and invited the students to share their experiences of adapting to American college culture.

Liu was also invited to present at the pre-departure roadshows organized by EducationUSA China and the U.S. Embassy Foreign Commercial Section. Held in Beijing, Xi'an, and Chongqing, these events aimed to prepare Chinese students admitted to U.S. universities for their studies.

Liu participated in the 2023 TOEFL Annual Conference and International Education Expo. During the conference, she hosted a panel discussion on insights into Chinese students' application trends. At the expo, she introduced the University's top majors to prospective students and their parents.



The China Office worked to help advise prospective students and their parents about studying in the United States. Liu led an AmCham China event in Beijing that featured insights from a public engagement officer leading EducationUSA programming and a vice consul from the U.S. Embassy Beijing. The China Office also hosted a gathering attended by over 40 prospective parents. Anny Lin, senior academic advisor at the Carlson School of Management, led the session, offering invaluable guidance on navigating the academic journey abroad.

Check Out Our WeChat Account!

The China Office manages the University's social media presence in China. Follow our WeChat account for University news and events in China.



Alumni Engagement

The China Office provided support for the Alumni Winter Reception hosted by the UMAA Beijing Chapter. Led by Beijing Chapter leaders Kelly Su and Coco Li, the event welcomed 14 alumni guests. Attendees engaged in a white elephant game, fostering connections and camaraderie within the alumni community.

In July, the China Office hosted an event on intercultural competence where Dr. Hairong Feng, professor and associate communication department head at the University of Minnesota Duluth, spoke on the importance of understanding cultural differences for effective global communication and shared her research results, soon to be published in an industry journal. The audience, including future students, alumni, and former and current employees, engaged in discussions to enhance intercultural understanding.

Educational Collaboration

In October, Harvey Charles, vice provost for international affairs and senior international officer, led a delegation to China, marking the University's first official visit to the country since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the visit to Beijing, the delegation reunited with the team at the China Office and hosted an alumni gathering, engaging with 20 alumni. Additionally, the delegation visited prestigious institutions in Beijing, including Peking University, Tsinghua University, and the University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, further strengthening partnerships and exploring opportunities for collaboration.

University of Minnesota Executive Vice President and Provost Rachel Croson visited Greater China in mid-December, accompanied by a delegation to bolster the University's engagement in the region. During their visit to Shanghai, Provost Croson led the delegation in a fruitful engagement session at Shanghai Jiaotong University, culminating in the signing of an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Additionally, the group met with prestigious alumni and leaders from the UMAA Shanghai Chapter, further strengthening the University's connections and partnerships in the region.

Contributors 贊助捐贈

The University of Minnesota's China Center would not be able to offer its robust programming, support, and education without the support of generous donors and the hard work of our China Center Advisory Council. To learn more about supporting the China Center, visit chinacenter.umn.edu/give.

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This list includes gifts made between 7/1/23 and 6/30/24.

2023-24 China Center Advisory Council

The China Center Advisory Council (CCAC) advises the executive director of the China Center, builds bridges between the China Center and faculty and academic units within the University, and strengthens connections between the University and the community.

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**GUESTS AT THE CHINESE NEW
YEAR RECEPTION.**

To Our Chinese Friends 年度回顾

亲爱的朋友们，

过去的这一年，对于中国中心来说是一个万象更新的年度：无论是教育文化交流的重启，还是合作伙伴关系的重塑，为我们带来了全新的气象。

我们非常高兴能够欢迎中国学生重返校园，与此同时，我们也重启了对明大学生赴华交流的支持。有关我们的奖学金详情，请参见第7页。

在今年的“中国桥挑战赛”中，学生们用他们的创造力、解决问题的能力以及对跨文化合作的热情深深打动了我们（详见第2-3页）。今年的比赛主题是“应对气候变化挑战：中美关系的新策略”，中国中心与明大食品、农业与自然资源科学学院共同举办了这一赛事。

我们也在不断和新朋旧友拓展新的合作渠道、建立新的联系。去年10月，中国中心策划和协助了副教务长哈维·查尔斯履新后对中国的首次正式访问（详见第11页）。副校长一行在中国感受到了长期合作伙伴和明大校友们的热情，并探讨了新的交流与合作机会。

在这一年，我们新推出的项目之一是“学者学院”。在查尔斯副教务长的领导下，“学者学院”邀请来自全球的学者来明尼苏达大学访问六个月至一年，期间他们将进行学术研究并为校园学术社区做出贡献。我们期待着接待来自中国和其他国家的学者。

我们也很高兴能继续举办线上线下结合的活动，深入探讨中美关系的多样性，并促进交流。在鲍勃与金·格里芬“构建中美桥梁”讲座中（详见第4页），阿里巴巴集团全球事务前副总裁黄伟分享了他对中美关系的独特见解。他对中国管理理念和文化实践的分析，加深了我们对中美关系的理解，也展示了阿里巴巴独特的企业文化。

我们衷心感谢您对中国中心使命的支持。您的慷慨捐赠支持着我们继续提供奖学金和交流项目，以及“思考中国”系列讲座。在当前中美关系复杂的背景下，您的建议、反馈和指导尤为珍贵。我们相信，通过共同努力，我们可以增进理解，建立更紧密的中美联系。

琼·布热津斯基



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As required by Title IX, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any of its education programs or activities, including in admissions and employment. Inquiries about Title IX can be directed to the University's Title IX Coordinator and/or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. Please see the University's policies (policy.umn.edu/hr/sexharassassault) for information about: (1) how to report information about or make a complaint of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and other sex-based discrimination; and (2) the University's informal response and grievance processes.

This publication is available in alternative formats by contacting 612-624-1002 or chinactr@umn.edu.