Conference on Promoting Study and Exchange Opportunities for Americans Students in China

Summary & Recommendations

CONFERENCE BACKGROUND:
This conference was jointly hosted by the Embassy of the United States in China and the Chinese Ministry of Education on September 22, 2016 in Beijing, China. The purpose of this conference was to examine how to better promote increased American student participation in study abroad and exchange opportunities in China. Despite the recognition that the U.S.-China relationship is the most consequential, the numbers of U.S. students coming to China declined 4.5% from the year before according to the 2015 Open Doors report. The participants included education stakeholders from government, universities, enterprises, and NGO and GONGOs who shared best practices, identified challenges and potential recommendations for how to move forward.

The conference was organized by Project Pengyou on behalf of the U.S. Embassy.

SUMMARY:

Overview:

- China has become both an important sender and receiver of international students. The Chinese government has set a goal of having 500,000 foreign students by 2020, and over 800 Chinese institutions are able to accept foreign students. The United States government seeks to increase American study abroad through a new study abroad office in the U.S. Department of State.
- Government plays a role in supporting study abroad to China by providing scholarships and programs that encourage greater collaboration between students and universities, especially through efforts discussed at the annual U.S.-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange. Chinese universities currently offer 5,000 scholarships to American students for study in China. The United States government offers a number of scholarship programs, mainly to support diverse student populations who want to study abroad. The U.S.-China Fulbright program is the U.S. government’s oldest and most prestigious educational exchange program.
- The conference goal was to discuss ways to increase the numbers of American students who choose to study abroad, and at issue is how to attract those students to China. China, as a study abroad destination, may not be as competitive when compared against other "more exotic destinations" nor have the conveniences and services of more "high demand" destinations.
- China is America’s fifth most popular destination for study abroad, and students from the United States are the second largest group of international students in China. IIE’s 2016 Open Doors Report shows the number of American students in China decreased in the last two years and the expectation is that this downward trend may continue. However, it is difficult to
accurately quantify the number of American students who study in China because the statistics do not account for all those who participate in short-term, non-credit study programs or who do not travel on student visas.

- Besides language, more Americans are now choosing programs that provide transfer credit towards their degrees. The majority of Americans who study abroad participate in programs lasting one semester or less.

Challenges for Americans studying in China:

- Challenges include manpower shortages at U.S. and Chinese universities to support study abroad (faculty and administrative), language (inadequate Mandarin competency of American students and/or low English levels of Chinese teachers), inadequate living conditions and/or availability of housing on Chinese campuses, environmental concerns about poor air quality, lack of information, misalignment of cultural expectations, concerns for credit-transfer and course options to stay on track for graduation, and high costs.
- The characteristics of American students are changing. American students today are more interested in active, experiential learning, especially internship opportunities. Securing appropriate visa status is a challenge for this type of activity and no “summer work travel” option exists in China.
- Programs that attract the most American students focus on a student’s personal development, and cater to individual interests through “boutique” programs. “Millennial” students are less interested in developing comprehensive China knowledge, and more interested in developing practical skills through specialized programs for career development. They must see explicit benefits for their future to invest in studying in China.
- Although the Chinese government has made scholarships available to American students, many are left unfilled. This could be due to the fact that they are limited to use at Chinese universities, are often restricted to students in degree-seeking programs (and this group is a small percentage of the U.S. students in China), require a cumbersome process, are frequently unknown to students, or do not overcome uncertainty and concerns about studying and living in China.
- Partnerships between U.S. and Chinese universities make exchanges more successful. American students prefer quick applications, information about the program from many sources, and more flexible scholarship options. There are increasing opportunities for foreign students to find work through job fairs and in Beijing’s Zhongguancun Science Park and the Shanghai free trade zone. However, there are limitations due to the strict visa categories. If students come to China, short term programs are often the springboard to longer term programs.
RECOMMENDATIONS:

There are opportunities and challenges associated with enlarging both the overall pool of American students who study abroad and the portion who choose to study in China. The following recommendations could help:

1. **Ensure High-Level Leadership Support for Study Abroad by Government and Universities:**

   High-level leadership by government and at universities is needed to raise the profile of study abroad generally. More specifically, leadership needs to focus on the importance and benefits of studying in China. Chinese and American students need to recognize how study abroad experiences develop important career skills. Students need to feel that study in China is “do-able” and can enhance their future career and life.

   Government should expand its support and identify new innovative ways to encourage and promote China as a study abroad destination. The U.S. government could demonstrate study abroad in China is a priority by convening more events, producing statements by high-level speakers, and encouraging the private sector to provide financial support.

2. **Strengthen Marketing on U.S. campuses and Prepare Students Early:**

   Increased in-reach and marketing on U.S. campuses is necessary to increase study abroad to China. Early marketing is key to ensure larger numbers of American students study abroad in China in the future. One such effort is the One Million Strong initiative, which seeks to expand to one million the number of U.S. K-12 students learning Mandarin by 2020. The initiative will build a pipeline of future students with facility in the language.

   Beyond expanding Mandarin language skills among students, U.S. faculty and administrators need to understand opportunities in China so they can promote them more effectively on campuses. In order to motivate students, marketing efforts should more explicitly demonstrate the career and life benefits study abroad affords in general, and specifically to China. Study abroad promotion should focus on the leadership and transferable career skills that are not only tailored to China, but to global work competencies. Both the study abroad and academic advisers need to be involved in this process.

3. **Adjust Study Abroad Curricula to Match Millennial Needs:**

   Education providers should consider adjusting their curricula to accommodate the needs and desires of “millennial” students. Transfer credits should ideally be applicable to the students’ major or minor, or other degree requirements, and not just transfer as “elective credit”. This includes greater collaboration among administrators and faculty and among government and institutions aimed at developing relevant curriculum and sharing course information with U.S. students.

4. **Engage Alumni:**
Alumni of study abroad programs should be better utilized to engage potential students in recruitment efforts and for career mentoring.

5. *Broaden Scholarship Flexibility and Public-Private Engagement:*

   Scholarships, particularly Chinese government scholarships, should be more flexible and public-private partnerships that support study abroad should be encouraged.


   Further research should be conducted to develop an in-depth and focused understanding of American student perspectives on study in China, and include both U.S. and Chinese educational institutions.

   The study should determine if these institutions have structural supports or challenges, such as financial conflicts of interest against study abroad. A survey could be conducted to examine the reasons behind a student’s choice of not studying abroad in China.

7. *Develop a Comprehensive Online Resource:*

   The development of an e-based means of consolidating information on study abroad opportunities in China that serves students, American and Chinese service providers, U.S. and Chinese governments, and U.S. and Chinese educational institutions could streamline the process.
促进美国学生来华学习交流会议

摘要和建议

会议背景

会议由美国驻华使馆和中国教育部于2016年9月22日在中国北京联合举办，会议旨在探讨如何有助于提升美国学生来华学习和交流的人数。尽管认识到美中关系是最重要的关系，2015年门户开放报告显示美国来华学生较上一年下降了4.5%。参会人员包括来自政府、大学、企业、非政府组织和官办非政府组织的教育从业者，分享成功做法，点出有助于未来发展的挑战和潜在建议。

会议由“PROJECT 朋友”代表美国驻华大使馆主办。

摘要

概述:

- 中国已经成为派遣和接收国际学生的重要国家。中国政府设立了到2020年来华留学生达到500,000人的目标，超过800所中国教育机构可以接收留学生。美国政府通过美国国务院新设立的海外留学办公室寻求提高美国学生到海外留学的人数。

- 政府通过提供奖学金和鼓励学生和大学间合作的项目起到支持来华留学的作用，特别是通过每年的人文交流磋商中所讨论的做法。中国大学为美国来华留学生提供约5,000个奖学金。美国政府提供一系列奖学金项目，主要支持多元化的学生到海外留学。美中富布赖特项目是美国政府最悠久、最负盛名的教育交流项目。

- 会议的目标是提高希望到海外留学的美国学生人数，问题是如何吸引他们到中国来学习。中国可能不如同其它更具“有异域风情的”留学目的地有竞争力，也没有那些较为“抢手的留学目的地”所提供的便利与服务。

- 中国是美国学生海外留学第五大目的地，美国留学生是中国第二大来华留学的团体。2016年国际教育协会门户开放报告显示，美国来华留学生人数在过去两年中减少，且预期减少趋势会继续下去。然而，很难准确地量化美国来华留学生数，因为统计数字不包括所有参加短期项目，无学分学习项目或持非学生签证来华的学生。

- 除了学习语言，更多的美国学生现在选择那些能为自己学位增加学分的项目，大部分美国学生留学时间为一学期或更短。

美国学生来华留学的挑战:

- 挑战包括美中大学支持海外留学的人力不足（教师和行政人员）；语言（美国学生汉语水平的不足/中国教师英文水平的不足）、住宿条件的不足/校园宿舍的可及性、对空气质量
差的环境担心、信息缺乏、文化差异、对转学分的担心、对有助于顺利毕业的课程选择的担心，以及留学的高费用。

- 美国学生的特点在不断变化。如今，美国学生更感兴趣的是主动式的、体验型的学习，特别是实习机会。对于这类活动来说，获得合适的签证是一个挑战，而且中国没有“夏季工作旅行”的选择。

- 吸引大多数美国学生的项目主要侧重于学生的个人发展，以及通过精品小项目迎合个人兴趣。“千禧一代”的学生不太感兴趣拓展关于中国的综合知识，他们更感兴趣通过专门项目获得有助于事业发展的实用技能。他们必须看到投资来华留学对其未来发展的明确好处。

- 虽然中国政府为美国学生来华留学提供了奖学金，但很多奖学金并没有得到使用。原因可能是奖学金只限在中国大学使用，常常只限用于参加学位项目的学生（在来华学习的美国学生中，此类学生所占百分比较小），申请过程麻烦，常常不为学生所知，或者未能打消学生对来华留学生活的顾虑。

- 美中大学的伙伴关系使得交流更加成功。美国学生更青睐便捷的申请手续、从多方获得关于项目的信息，以及更加灵活的奖学金选择。招聘会、北京的中关村科技园和上海的自由贸易区为国际学生提供了越来越多的工作机会。然而，严格的签证类别构成了限制。如果学生来华，短期项目经常是通向更长期项目的跳板。

建议

无论在提高美国学生到海外学习的整体人数方面，还是在提高选择来华留学的人数方面，都存在着机会和挑战。以下建议可以有所帮助：

1. 确保政府和大学对海外学习的高层支持：

要提高中国学生对海外学习的关注度，需要政府的高层领导力以及大学的领导作用。具体而言，领导作用需要着重于来华留学的重要性和益处。中美学生需要认识到海外留学的经历如何提高他们的职业技能。学生需要感到来华留学是“可行的”，并且可以提升他们未来的事业和生活。

政府应该加大支持，并寻找新的创新方法来鼓励和推广中国这一海外留学目的地。美国政府可以通过举办更多活动，发表高级别演讲人声明，以及鼓励私营部门提供资金支持，来表明对赴中国留学的重视。

2. 加强在美国校园的推广和早期生源准备：

为促进美国学生来华留学，有必要增加在美国校园的联系和推广。早期推广是确保未来有更多美国学生来华学习的关键。其中一项措施是百万强计划，其目标是到 2020 年学习普通话的美国幼儿园到 12 年级的学生人数达到百万人。该计划将培养有语言便利的学生生源。
除在学生中提高普通话技能外，美国大学的教师和行政人员需要了解在中国的机会，以便更加有效地在校园进行推广。为调动学生积极性，推广工作应该更加明确地展示海外学习，特别是到中国学习，对事业和生活的总体益处。海外留学推广应该重点关注领导力和通用职业技能，不仅限于针对中国国情，而是针对全球环境下的工作能力。海外学习和学术顾问都应参与此过程。

3. 调整留学课程设置适应“千禧一代”的需要：

教育机构应该考虑调整他们的课程设置来满足“千禧一代”学生的愿望和需求。理想情况下，学分转换应该适用于学生的专业或副专业，或其它获取学位的要求，而不仅是转为“选修课学分”。这包括大学行政人员和教师间，政府和大学间的更广泛的合作，目标是开发相关课程并同美国学生分享课程信息。

4. 校友参与：

在招生和职业指导中，更好地利用参加留学项目的校友来联系潜在的学生。

5. 扩展奖学金发放的灵活性和公私部门的参与：

奖学金，特别是中国政府奖学金，发放应更加灵活，支持留学的公私部门合作关系应加以鼓励。

6. 加深就美国学生对来华学习感受的研究：

开展进一步的研究以深入和集中地理解美国学生对来华学习的看法，并且还包括对美国和中国教育机构的研究。

研究应该弄清这些机构是否有结构性支持或挑战，例如针对留学的财务利益冲突。通过调查了解学生不选择来华学习背后的原因。

7. 开发全面的在线资源：

开发用以综合在华留学机会信息的电子手段，以服务于学生、美国和中国的服务提供者、美国和中国政府以及美国和中国的教育机构，这样可以简化这个过程。
Participating organizations

Ministry of Education
U.S. Embassy in Beijing
Institute for International Education
China Scholarship Council
Beijing Language and Culture University
Beijing Normal University
China Education Association for International Exchange
The Beijing Center for Chinese Studies
CET Beijing
Duke Kunshan University
Australian Embassy
The Asia Institute
Administration Committee of Zhongguancun Haidian Science Park
CRCC Asia
Manpower Group
IBM
Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange
Americans Promoting Study Abroad
CIEE
China’s University and College Admission System
Harvard Center Shanghai
The Inter-University Program for Chinese Language Studies
NYU Shanghai
Schwarzman Scholars Program
Shanghai Jiaotong University
University of International Business and Economics
U.S.-China Strong
Yenching Academy
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