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U.S.-China Engagement: Creating a Massachusetts Model for Study in China

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, China has emerged as America's strategically most important bilateral partner and potential bilateral rival. Thus, the United States has turned its commercial, political, and security focus towards the Pacific Rim. In this environment, it has become increasingly important to produce an informed citizenry, better prepared to understand the complexities of the U.S.-China relationship. In 2010-2011, approximately 158,000 Chinese students studied in the U.S., while only 12,000 American students studied in China. The imbalance in these numbers suggests that the U.S. may be less equipped to manage its relationship with China than China will be to deal with the U.S.

The Obama administration has responded to this challenge by launching the 100,000 Strong Initiative to increase the number of Americans studying in China to 100,000 over the four year period between May, 2010 and May, 2014. The Initiative focuses on student diversity from a variety of racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds, and includes both post-secondary students as well as younger pupils from middle schools and high schools. The Initiative is a "public/private partnership," encouraged and supported by the federal government through the U.S. Department of State, and is funded primarily by private corporate giving. In Massachusetts, there is a strong history of pre-college exchange programs with China dating back more than 25 years. If this history can be leveraged to include a strong relationship between the Initiative, the City of Boston, and the Commonwealth, Massachusetts could become a model for U.S.-China educational exchange programs in other regions of the country.

Conference at Boston University in January 2012

On January 27, 2012, the Boston University Center for the Study of Asia (BUCSA) hosted a conference “Global Education Strategies: U.S. China School Exchanges,” in collaboration with the China Exchange Initiative, Primary Source, and the Brookline China Exchange Committee.¹ The conference came about as part of BUCSA’s mandate to provide resources for increasing the understanding of Asia and to expand its outreach in the community about matters relating to Asia. The success of this collaborative effort manifested itself in registration of 160 participants, many of whom were professional educators involved in, or planning to be involved in, school partnerships in China. Participants included many superintendents, principals, world language heads, and China exchange directors from Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and California.

BUCSA Director Professor Joseph Fewsmith welcomed the conference participants and Boston University School of Education Dean Hardin Coleman made opening remarks.² Following these presentations, there were three keynote speaker presentations, three panel presentations, and closing remarks.

Keynote Addresses

Keynote addresses were given by Benjamin Liebman, Professor of Law and Director of the Columbia University Center for the Study of Chinese Law; Kimberley McClure, a Pickering Fellow and Foreign Service Officer serving as Deputy Director of the 100,000 Strong Initiative; and Paul Reville, then Massachusetts Secretary of Education.

Professor Benjamin Liebman opened the conference with lively remarks about how his experience as an exchange student from Newton, MA, to the Beijing Jingshan School in 1986, subsequently led to his career as a scholar of Chinese legal practice. The semester that he spent in Beijing along with three other Newton students was the first public high school exchange to China following normalization of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China in 1979. Professor Liebman’s Beijing-acquired fluency and hutong accent later caused colleagues in Taipei to ask him to explain why “he sounded like a Beijing hooligan,” a comment he considered to be a badge of honor.



Dean Hardin Coleman

Photo Source: Cydney Scott, BU Today



Benjamin Liebman

Photo Source: David Wentworth
Columbia Law School Magazine.

His fluency also allowed him to address in Mandarin a crowd of 5,000 at the Great Hall of the People, although he later confided that 80% of those attending were in grades K-6. His stories documented both the profound impact the exchange program had on shaping his values, aspirations, and subsequent life and career choices, as well as provided a base line for looking at changes that have taken place in China since he first lived there as a high school student 25 years ago.

FSO Kimberly McClure arrived early in the Boston area, visiting the Academy of the Pacific Rim (APR) in the Hyde Park section of Boston, to familiarize herself with this diverse urban Boston charter school. APR currently sends about 30% of its students to China, and is committed to increasing this number to 90% in coming years. She also met with faculty at the Boston University School of Education; with potential corporate donors; and with the Martha Pierce, Mayor Thomas Menino's Education Advisor, and Bethany Wood, Boston Public Schools Coordinator of Global Education Initiatives.³

During Ms. McClure's lunchtime address to the conference, she described the differing nature of the partnership relationships that the 100,000 Strong Initiative currently has with four U.S. cities, including Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, and Washington, DC. She also gave an account of the push to propel American students out of the core Beijing/Shanghai/Nanjing centers of gravity, encouraging students to "Go West", and "Go South" in pursuit of their study of Chinese language and culture. She presented the various ways that the "public/private partnership" has worked to date, mentioning that most private donation funds have gone to universities to promote study in China by American undergraduate and graduate school students. Chief donors have included American corporations, as well as a substantial donation by a Chinese corporation. The Initiative set a goal to raise \$68 million over the four years ending in May 2014, and has raised \$12 million

Ms. McClure discussed the research results of the University of Georgia GLOSSARI study,⁴ which showed the positive impact of study abroad experiences upon college students. Positive correlations with study abroad included higher GPAs, quicker degree completions, and higher retention rates. She suggested that research on the impact of study abroad at the pre-college level would be equally valuable.

Massachusetts Secretary of Education Paul Reville responded to Kim McClure's remarks by expressing strong affirmation about the necessity and value of global education opportunities for Massachusetts students, citing his own 'transformative' experiences as an educator visiting China, Malaysia, and



Kimberly McClure

Photo Source: Still from video by the U.S. Department of State



Paul Reville

Photo Source: United Way of Central Massachusetts

Cambodia. He cited the need to serve diverse students not only in the City of Boston, but also those from other cities and towns in the Commonwealth. He encouraged the 100,000 Strong Initiative to become more involved in Massachusetts state partnership opportunities.

Panel Presentations

The three panels addressed the following topics: “What do U.S.-China school exchanges look like?,” “How are U.S.-China school exchanges run?,” and “What are the outcomes (benefits) of U.S.- China school exchanges”?

“What do U.S.-China school exchanges look like?” presented different models of China exchange programs. The panelists included Jenne Colassaco Grant, Principal, and Yong Li, Exchange Director, Academy of the Pacific Rim; Margaret Johnson, World Language Director, Baltimore County Public Schools; Jerrold Katz, Head of School, Park School; and Steve Lantos, China Exchange Coordinator, Brookline High School. The panel was organized and moderated by Grant Rhode, Chair of the Brookline China Exchange Committee.

“How are U.S.-China school exchanges run?” provided practical suggestions about how to design and conduct optimal China exchange programs. The panelists included Donna Fong, Director of the Newton-Jingshan School Exchange; Jason Hiruo, Assistant Principal, Newtown (CT) High School; and Robert Maguire, Superintendent, Medfield Public Schools. The panel was organized and moderated by Ryan Martinson, Deputy Director of the China Exchange Initiative.

“What are the outcomes (benefits) of U.S.-China school exchanges?” described a variety of experiences and ideas that have evolved from China exchange programs. The panelists included Peter Gilmartin, Program Director, Primary Source; Margot Landman, Director for Education Programs, National Committee on U.S.-China Relations; Yu-Lan Lin, Senior Director of World Languages, Boston Public Schools; and Shelley Tinkham, Assistant Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. The panel was organized and moderated by Charlotte Mason, Director of Program Development of the China Exchange Initiative.

The Massachusetts Case Study

Collected data below summarizes current data about China school exchanges in Massachusetts.

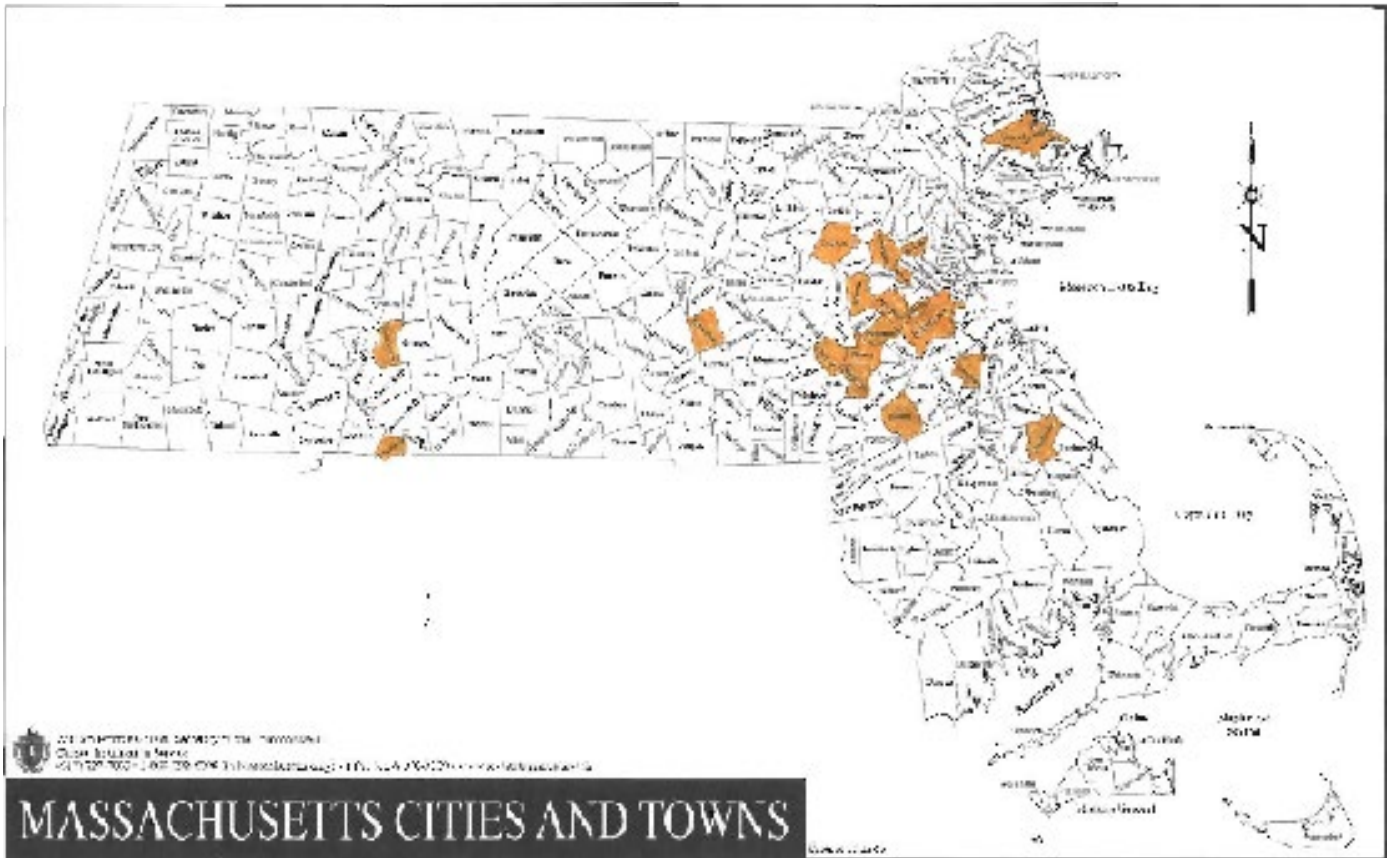
Twenty existing pre-college school to school exchange programs were identified, including both high schools and middle schools, public and private. The 20 programs include 17 public schools and 3 private schools, 17 high schools and 3 middle schools. Programs occur in cities, in suburbs, and in more isolated towns. In other words, there are a variety of school types that have developed China exchange programs. The Massachusetts schools and their Chinese partner schools are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: List of Massachusetts Pre-College Programs/School Partnerships

Massachusetts Schools	Chinese Schools
Academy of the Pacific Rim, Boston	Beijing No. 80 Middle School
Belmont High School	Suzhou No. 1 Middle School
Brookline High School	Gao Xin No. 1 High School, Xian
Concord Middle School	Sunshine Middle School, Xian
Dover-Sherborn Public Schools	Hangzhou High School
Ipswich Middle and High School	Oilfield No. Jr.Sr. Middle School, Tianjin
Lexington High School	Xue Jun High School, Hangzhou
Longmeadow High School	Yangzhou University Affiliated Middle School
Medfield	Bunghu Middle School of Anhui Province
Needham High School	Shanghai No. 2 Middle School
Newton Public Schools	Beijing Jingshan School
Park School, Brookline	Xiuning County Middle School of Anhui Province
Pembroke High School	Greentown Yuhua Qinqin School, Hangzhou
Sharon Public Schools	Beijing No. 55 High School
Shrewsbury High School	Tang Nan Middle School, Xian
South Hadley Middle School	Dongzhimen Senior Middle School, Beijing
Thayer Academy, Braintree	Heifei No. 47 Junior Middle School
Weston Public Schools	Wei Yu High School, Shanghai
Winchester High School	Luoyang No. 1 Senior High School
Winsor School	The Dandelion School, Beijing
Winsor School	Greentown Fu Hua School, Hangzhou

A look at a map of Massachusetts helps place the programs geographically:

Table 2: Map locations of Massachusetts China exchange programs



Fifteen of the Massachusetts China exchange programs are in Boston or in suburbs reasonably close by, 75% of the program total. Three program locations, Ipswich, Shrewsbury, and Thayer/Braintree form an equilateral triangle around the Boston suburban cluster. The remaining two programs, Longmeadow and South Hadley are in the Connecticut valley.

These data indicate that, to date, most China exchange programs in Massachusetts are in urban or suburban high schools. From a policy perspective, expanding programs geographically and/or vertically (i.e. in middle schools) would be avenues for increasing participation in China exchange programs in Massachusetts. Other areas for examination of these data would include analyzing the Massachusetts communities that currently host China exchange programs to understand their demographic and socio-economic characteristics. In addition, it would be valuable to assess the China partner schools to understand the demographics and geographical diversity of these communities, to better understand the attributes of Chinese host schools and communities.

Nine of the twenty Massachusetts China exchange programs submitted data profile sheets for their programs. From these

profile data sheets a more comprehensive picture is emerging about the specific histories, important players, student numbers, and alumni achievements of Massachusetts exchange programs.

Table 3 presents a tabulation of data from the nine program profiles that have been submitted. Although there is interesting historical and alumni data in the program profiles, the data here is confined to the Massachusetts school name, the year the first American students from this school went to China, the length of time students stay in China, and the average number of students who go per year. All numbers are for Americans students only, not because the Chinese students who have come to Massachusetts on exchange are not important, but because the American numbers are most relevant to the subsequent discussion of The 100,000 Strong Initiative.

Table 3: Numbers of Massachusetts pre-college students in China in school partnership programs

	School	Year Started	Length of Stay	Students per year average	
1	A. of Pacific Rim	2002	spring 2 weeks	18	
	A. of Pacific Rim	2008	fall 3 months	3	
2	Brookline	2001	spring 4 months	8	
3	Concord MS	2005	spring 3 weeks	13	
4	Needham	2009	spring 6 weeks	6	
5	Dover Sherborn	2002	8 weeks	3	
6	Newton	1986	spring 4 months	8	
7	Weston	2010	2 weeks	9	
8	Winchester	2006	2 weeks	10	
9	Winsor	2007	1 wk every other yr	5	
	Total all students			83	
	Breakout by program length	6 weeks of more		28	33%
		3 weeks		13	16%
		1-2 weeks		42	51%
		Total		83	100%

Data is tabulated from 9 submitted program profile data sheets completed by China exchange staff members in each respective school

The total number of Massachusetts students per year studying in China is 83 tabulated to date, and does not include data from the 11 programs not submitting program profile data sheets. We can realistically expect the annual Massachusetts total of pre-college exchange students in China to be higher than 83, but cannot say how much higher, since we do not

have available data. The tabulation also does not include individual students or programs that are not involved in school partnership arrangements, although these programs may be of significant duration and high quality. An example of this type of program is the Milton Academy program sending a group of students each summer for intensive Chinese training at Heilongjiang University for four weeks, followed by a one week residential stay at the Experimental Middle School at Beijing Normal University. Privately, some students may be making arrangements to spend a full year studying in China, although no specific documentation of such arrangements was discussed.

One break point in the tabulated chart is different subtotals for exchange stays by Massachusetts pre-college students that are 1-3 weeks in length, as opposed to 6-18 weeks in length. To a certain extent, time quality cannot replace time quantity. Longer stays, if program quality is good, will result in more Chinese language absorption on the part of students, and deeper exposure to cultural issues. Thus, of the 83 total Massachusetts students in China tabulated per year, 67% took part in shorter and medium term exchanges, and 33% took part in longer term exchanges.

Relationship of Massachusetts Pre-College Exchange Programs to the Goals of the 100,000 Strong Initiative

Program profile data collection showed us that 83 pre-college students went to China to study this past year based on responses from 9 out of 20 known school partnership programs. In addition to uncounted students from the 11 other Massachusetts school partnership programs, we also must factor in an estimate for non-exchange programs such as that represented by Milton, as well as private arrangements. Thus we expect the annual total number of Massachusetts pre-college students would well over 100. A fair estimate is that Massachusetts will probably send between 150 and 200 pre-college students to China in 2013. Thus, Massachusetts might project itself to be 500 Strong or 600 Strong in terms of pre-college students over a four year period.

According to national statistics compiled by the Institute of International Education, about 6-7% of American students studying in China are pre-collegiate, and 83% are undergraduate and graduate students. Conference participants tended to support the idea of increasing the pre-college numbers to 15% of the total studying in China, citing the greater flexibility for language learning for younger students, the motivational benefit of early successful engagement with a complex foreign language and culture, and the greater number of years younger students will have to use Chinese both during their formal education and during their careers.

Pre-college China exchange programs in Massachusetts are relatively strong, both in terms of numbers and program quality. However, conference attendees supported the idea of increasing the number of students and quality of programs in order to support further the national effort to work toward 100,000 Americans studying in China between 2010 and 2014.

Discussions at Boston University in February 2013

The Boston University Center for the Study of Asia (BUCSA) hosted discussions about expanding the number of American students studying in China on February 27, 2013, at the Boston University Castle. BUCSA Director Eugenio Menegon

welcomed those attending to participate in two discussion sessions. The first focused on pre-college study in China programs, and the second on university study in China programs.

The 100,000 Strong Idea

Carola McGiffert, President of the 100,000 Strong Foundation, came from Washington DC, to participate in the conversations. Before Secretary of State Hilary Clinton launched the 100,000 Strong Foundation in a ceremony at the U.S. Department of State on January 28, 2013, Ms. McGiffert directed the 100,000 Strong Initiative within the U.S. Department of State. Recognizing U.S. lack of preparedness to engage China, America’s chief strategic partner and rival, President Obama and Secretary Clinton established the 100,000 Strong Initiative to raise the number of American students studying in China to 100,000 over the four year period between 2010 and 2014. By founding an independent non-profit foundation to support the goals of the initiative through public/private partnerships, Ms. McGiffert and her team have established an on-going institutional base outside of government for pursuing the 100,000 Strong agenda.

Massachusetts

The key idea that emerged from the discussions at the Castle was to work toward a partnership between the state’s educators and the national 100,000 Strong effort. Four cities currently have partner relations with the national 100,000 Strong effort: Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Washington, DC. San Francisco is about to become the fifth partner, and Boston would be the sixth. Massachusetts is the first state to seek a state-wide partnership with 100,000 Strong to increase opportunities for students throughout the Commonwealth to study in China. The idea for such a partnership developed at a conference at Boston University during January, 2012, as an expression of interest from then Massachusetts Secretary of Education Paul Reville. The conference brought together representatives from many of the state’s twenty or so exchange programs in Massachusetts, as well as representatives from a number of other states and Deputy Director of the 100,000 Strong Initiative Kimberly McClure. The conference studied the incipient strength of Massachusetts in developing and implementing exchange programs in China at the pre-college level.

The discussions with Ms. McGiffert at Boston University were aimed at expanding and strengthening opportunities for a variety of Massachusetts students to study in China. The Boston component was one of three discussed during Ms. McGiffert’s visit. The other two components, discussed the following day at B.U., were the Gateway/Pathways to China concept for Massachusetts students in smaller cities outside of Boston, and enhancement of Boston University programs for study in China.

Boston in China

Prior to the Boston University conference in 2012, education officials in Boston Mayor Menino’s office met with 100,000 Strong deputy director Kimberley McClure to discuss study in China options for Boston public school students. Subsequently, Ms. McGiffert met with teachers and administrators in the Boston Public Schools on February 26, 2013, to provide the foundation for a Boston city partnership with the 100,000 Strong Foundation. Three key program ideas emerged from that discussion. First, an expansion of the already successful six week summer program for eight Boston high school students in Beijing was proposed. Funding for this program currently comes from U.S. business persons

working in Beijing, known as Americans Promoting Study Abroad (APSA). Second, Boston expressed the desire to begin a semester long opportunity for Boston students coming from a range of the city's high schools. Third, expanding the programs of the Snowden International School in the Back Bay was also discussed.

Gateway/Pathways to China

Governor Deval Patrick of Massachusetts has identified two dozen "Gateway Cities" in Massachusetts with smaller populations than Boston, but with below state median income levels and with diverse populations reflecting their heavily immigrant compositions. The Massachusetts Governor and Secretary of Education have targeted the Gateway Cities as places to narrow the achievement gap between socioeconomic groups. Mitchell Chester, Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, attended the February 27th meeting at Boston University and recently was part of people to people exchange consultations in China. Commissioner Chester expressed firm agreement with Ms. McGiffert's view that opportunities for Gateway students for study in China would provide for both "diversification and growing the pipeline" with high school students studying Chinese before their college years.

Todd Whitten, Chair of Social Studies at Burlington High School, discussed his successful model of sending high school students to China for 2-4 weeks through the Pathways to China program that he has developed and run successfully. The Pathways model includes detailed preparations before and follow up afterward with instructional modules completed by all students involved in the experience. A Pathways to China summer study program beginning in the summer of 2014 for 50 well-selected and well-prepared students and 10 teachers from five of the twenty-four Gateway Cities was proposed. In a preliminary way, five Gateway Cities were discussed that have already expressed an interest in China: Brockton, Springfield, and Quincy have established Chinese language programs; Lowell and Malden sent representatives to the January 2012 China Exchange Conference. A follow up meeting was held in late March to pursue further planning for the Gateway/Pathways to China (GPC) collaboration.

Boston University in China

During the second session at Boston University, Ms. McGiffert discussed the importance of study in China programs at the university level, and gave examples of 100,000 Strong cooperative programs involving Morehouse and Eureka Colleges and Northwestern, Gallaudet, Virginia State, and Western Illinois Universities. Boston University currently has an active and successful program of language study and internships for undergraduates at its Shanghai Center based at Fudan University, as well as research relationships at Renmin University in Beijing and at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. In the discussion about how to enhance and upgrade Boston University study programs in China, three specific ideas were discussed. These included enhancing teacher training programs with study in China opportunities, increasing summer study options in China with funding support, and sponsoring short term research opportunities in China for undergraduates during term time.

A range of Boston University teachers and administrators took part in these discussions, including Arts and Sciences professors Joseph Fewsmith and Eugenio Menegon, Global Programs strategic director Jill Costello, director of Language Instruction Gisela Hoecherl-Alden, Study Abroad academic director Debra Terzian, ASIABU student officers Lisa Kelley and

Lee Veitch, and BUCSA visiting researchers Charlotte Mason and Grant Rhode. Dean Coleman and Professor Ellenwood of the School of Education were unable to attend but are involved in follow up discussions.

The Way Forward

The meetings on February 27, 2013, at Boston University point the way forward to developing programs that may make it possible for Massachusetts to lead the country with a state-wide effort to increase Chinese language training and study in China at both the pre-college and at the university levels. The three components discussed here, enhancing Boston public school programs, establishing new Gateway City public school programs, and enhancing Boston University programs, would build on already significant existing pre-college and university programs in Massachusetts. These efforts would push Massachusetts toward preparing students for understanding Chinese language and culture, and participating effectively and successfully throughout their careers in the strategic U.S.-China relationship.

The key variable for implementing the program ideas generated during these discussions will be identification and cultivation of funding sources to support these programs through public/private partnerships. That is the next critical stage of development in relation to raising the number of Massachusetts students studying in China, and will permeate the next round of planning and discussions.

NOTES

1. Acknowledgements
Thanks go to members of the planning committee for the Boston University conference, who met to discuss planning agendas for a year at Primary Source in Watertown. Members included Charlotte Mason, Carolyn Henderson, Peihui Wong, and Ryan Martinson (China Exchange Initiative), Peter Gilmartin and Sinie Huang (Primary Source), Grant Rhode (Brookline China Exchange Committee), Marylee Rambaud (Boston University School of Education), and Elizabeth Amrien, Shelley Hawks, and Joe Fewsmith (Boston University Center for the Study of Asia). The experience and expertise of each of these planning committee members contributed to the depth and flavor of the conference. The conference venue was provided by Boston University, and speaker travel funds and accommodations were provided by Primary Source and CEI. Appreciation goes to Charlotte Mason for editorial comments. However, any errors or omissions are those of the author.
2. Dean Coleman pointed out the importance of the current and future role of Boston University being both a regional and international university in his remarks during the Discussion 'Future Roles of Universities Worldwide: Moving Beyond the Ivory Tower?' sponsored by the BU Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future. The process of educational exchange is best served by institutions that have both strong local and international commitments, putting Boston University in the position of being a strong player in regard to promotion of China study opportunities at the pre-college level as well as at the university level.
3. Boston Mayor Tom Menino strongly stated his support for opportunities for Boston based students in China, such as a trip for Boston school basketball players to play recently in Beijing. The Boston students volunteered at the Dandelion School in Beijing, a school for the children of migrant Chinese workers. Two of his grandchildren are enrolled in the Academy of the Pacific Rim in Hyde Park, and the Mayor is a strong supporter of this school's China study opportunities.
4. The GLOSSARI (Georgia Learning Outcomes of Students Studying Abroad Research Initiative) study concludes that study abroad experience positively correlates with student GPAs and retention at the university level.
5. Conference background papers were presented at the New England Association of Asian Studies Conference held at Wellesley College, October, 2011, and are available upon request (email gfrhode@bu.edu):

Fong, Donna. So you want to run a U.S.-China exchange program... (Don't worry; it's easy.).

Hawks, Shelley. US-China Relations: The Next 50 Years.

Mason, Charlotte S. Benefits of Successful U.S.-China International Exchange Programs at the Pre-College Level.

Rhode, Grant F. Pre-College U.S.-China exchange programs within Massachusetts and the National "100,000 Strong Initiative".



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Boston University is home to a vibrant community of scholars and students of Asia working across the university in disciplines ranging from language, literature, music, archaeology, and philosophy to geography, politics, and public health. Its Asia-related resources are among the largest and most comprehensive in the Northeastern United States.

The views expressed in this Occasional Paper in Asian Studies are those of the author and should not be assumed to represent the opinions of the BU Center for the Study of Asia or of Boston University.

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