

Get to Know Wuhan: Introduction to Wuhan and Its Columbus Connections

Minru Li (PhD)

National East Asian Languages Resource Center, OSU

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Good afternoon, ladies, and gentlemen!

Before I came to Ohio State working for my PhD in 1987, I was a teacher at Wuhan University. Today, as one of the bridge builders between the two universities, I would like to introduce you to organizations that help bridge Columbus and Wuhan.

Wuhan is the capital of Hubei Province, with a population of over 11 million. There are over 80 universities and colleges there, with a total college student population of over 1 million. Wuhan University, one of the top ten universities in China, is regarded as having the most beautiful campus in the whole country.

In 1981, Ohio State and Wuhan University signed an MOU, establishing the first sister university relationship between the USA and China. This year, 2021, marks the 40th anniversary of the friendship. A 5-minute video is being planned to celebrate the long friendship at an “Earth Day” Event on April 22. Please keep an eye out for that event.

1) The “Wuhan University Ohio Alumni Association” was founded in 2003, when a Wuhan University delegation visited OSU. Dr. Qiu Hong at JP Morgan Chase is the current Board Chair. There are more than 200 people in their WeChat Group.

This organization assisted President Liu of Wuhan University in meeting with President Gee on December 23, 2007.

In the early stage of the corona virus, the Wuhan University Ohio Alumni Association initiated a fundraising campaign and donated masks to Wuhan University. I know there are many people in the audience today that donated. I would like to say Thank You.

In March last year, when COVID-19 was getting worse in Columbus, Wuhan University presented ten thousand masks to Ohio State with a warm letter signed by the President of Wuhan University. The *Columbus Dispatch* published a front-page article about this friendship on May 19, 2020, titled “Ohio State’s Ties to China pay off amid pandemic” and saying: “A gift from more than 7000 miles away has helped save lives in Ohio.”

Moreover, Dr. Xia Yun at OSU, Honorary Member of the Wuhan University Ohio Alumni Association, coordinated and hosted a ZOOM meeting between OSU Medical School and Wuhan University Central Hospital on March 24, 2020.

2) In the above collaborations, the “OSU China Gateway Office,” directed by Ms. Phoebe You, contacted OSU about how to receive the mask gift from Wuhan University. In addition, she

organized a fundraising campaign among around 1000 OSU alumni and friends living in Mainland China, to make donations to Wuhan people. These 1000 alumni are our useful resources in China.

In 2011, Ms. You assisted President Gee in visiting Wuhan University. In 2020, she coordinated a ZOOM meeting between President Drake and President Dou, opening a new page of the friendship between OSU and WHU.

3) The third organization I would like to introduce is the “Greater Columbus Chinese Chamber of Commerce.” I have witnessed its growth and development under the leadership of Dr. Yung-Chen Lu and now Monica Xia, and I always enjoyed taking part in the activities organized by them.

On September 20, 2019, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce successfully co-organized the “Ohio-Hubei Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum” on September 20, together with JobsOhio and the Hubei Department of Commerce.

4) “JobsOhio” plays a leading role in economic development. I enjoy working with Justin Kocher and Amy Lei on receiving delegations from Hubei, China. Since there is no equivalent office of International Affairs in Ohio as Hubei has, JobsOhio carries out the duties of an Office of International Affairs. They have a lot of resources in networking with Hubei, China. The successful ceremony on this slide is strong evidence the efficiency and effectiveness of JobsOhio in bridging Ohio and Hubei.

5) In 2018, an organization “Ohio-Hubei Friendship Association” was founded. Professor Henry Xiang, a Hubei native, is the President. Dr. Lin Xu, from Fujian, is Vice President. Therefore, this organization is not limited to Hubei folks but is open to all those who are interested in collaborations between Ohio and Hubei. This organization was one of the key organizers to present the “Imperial Chime Bells of China” to around one thousand seven hundred attendees in Columbus, OH in September 2019.

6) The “Ohio Center for Cultural Exchange” was founded in 2009. Mr. Mike Lohre, Manager of WTOSP, Wuhan to Ohio Summer Program, is the President. Mr. Bob Eckhart, Manager of Summer Communication English Program, is Vice President. Bob has traveled to China for 39 times since 2004. Both Bob and Mike might be more famous in Hubei, China, and the Chinese American community. The photo was taken in 2009, when the second WTOSP group from Wuhan University arrived in Columbus.

7) Almost everybody knows that Dr. Lu is the Founder of “Asian Festival”, but few know that his birthplace is Wuhan! He has made tremendous contributions to friendship between Columbus and Wuhan. With his strong support, the Asian Festival co-sponsored the cultural event “Hubei Peking Opera Night in Columbus” on March 2, 2018 and received a Wuhan acrobatic troupe to perform at the Asian Festival in May 2019.

8) I highly recommend US Heartland China Association to you. Governor Bob Holden is the Chair and CEO, and Professor Galal Walker at OSU is the President. Covering 20 states that stretch from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, USHCA builds a broader platform for us to reach out to

other states and Wuhan. They already conducted Chinese Students Forums for the Chinese students.

9) The last strong connection is OSU National East Asian Languages Resource Center, with Professor Walker as Director. NEALRC co-organized “US-China Culture Symposium” with Chinese partners in September 2019 and co-published a book *Zhuangzi: Bilingual Edition* with Chongwen Press of the Changjiang Publishing and Media Group in Wuhan.

Moreover, the “Chinese Flagship Program” has trained more than 100 MA students who wrote theses in Chinese and defended in Chinese. Here are four graduated students as examples, who are working either in China or in the China related fields. Jake Parker, Senior Vice President at US-China Business Council, Washington DC; David Goodman, Executive Director, CBRE, Shanghai, China; Jared Psigoda, Founder, CEO R2Games, Shenzhen, China; and Laura Garzon, Foreign Liaison RLC Technologies INC. VA and Chongqing, China.

Right now, Mr. Joey Smith, an MA student in Chinese and PhD in Environment Science, is co-organizing a Forum on April 5, and an “Earth Day” event on April 22, with his professors and teams at Wuhan University and Ohio State.

Although we are in different fields, we have one job title in common: Bridge Constructor between US and China. To build a Happy, Healthy and Harmonious World is my life and my dream. Please feel free to contact me if I can be helpful to you on the way to the dream.

Thank you!

li.28@osu.edu