January - March 2012

UCA Confucius Institute for Arkansas Celebrates Chinese New Year


Consul General, Xu Erwen gave the opening remarks for the event from Houston, Texas, and Gary Fletcher, the Mayor of Jacksonville. Consul General Xu wished for all in attendance to have a happy New Year and lauded the wonderful cooperation between the United States and China. Mayor Fletcher expressed his desire that with continued mutual respect and an open dialogue of cooperation, the bond between the two countries will only strengthen, both in this New Year and for many more to come.

The show opened with the national anthems of both China and the United States with the Jacksonville High School Color carrying both nations’ flags to the stage.

The performance included acts from the Nanjing Acrobatic Troupe as well as local high school students and local artists. The acrobatic troupe had several acts, all exhibiting profound strength and balance, including “Ballet Dancing on Head”, “Single Hand Balancing”, and “Beauty of Contortionists”. The Jacksonville High School Jazz Choir sang two songs, “Luck Be a Lady” and “It Don’t Mean a Thing If It Ain’t Got That Swing”. A jazz trio led by Dr. Alan Storeyguard performed “Wade in the Water” and “Baby, You Don’t Have to Go”. Hannah Shellito and Chase Smiley of the Jacksonville High School Drama organization sang two songs from the Broadway musical Little Shop of Horrors and Lisa Kirkpatrick and Darral Pogue gave a wonderful exhibition of ballroom dancing. The evening ended with a performance of “It’s a Small World” by the Rebecca, Emily, Abigale and Lydia Vandervate. Students from Jacksonville High School also wrote and performed a skit in order to show their appreciation for the Confucius Institute’s support for the event.
Chinese New Year Celebrations Throughout Arkansas
January, 2012 – Throughout the state of Arkansas, classrooms with Chinese language programs overseen by the Confucius Institute for Arkansas held various events celebrating Chinese New Year. The festivities for the Year of the Dragon were mostly held on January 23, but some schools, like those in the Pulaski County school district, celebrated over an entire week. The various events included decorating the classroom with lanterns and paper cutouts, watching events in China on closed-circuit television, learning the customs, traditions and legends of Chinese New Year and cooking the traditional dishes of the holiday.

The Confucius Institute has Chinese language classes in the Batesville, Beebe, Bentonville Cabot, Conway, Harrisburg, Hot Springs, North Little Rock, Pulaski County and Wynne School Districts along with the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts and Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative.

A Lecture on Chinese Business from UIBE
February 7, 2012 – Two professors from Beijing, China’s University of International Business and Economics, Dr. Men Ming and Dr. Feng Naixiang spoke to an auditorium filled with business students from UCA’s College of Business about China’s economic development over the past 30 years.

UCA CI Hosts Dr. Clayton Crockett’s Talk, “A Chinese Postmodernism?”
March 1, 2012 – The UCA Confucius Institute for Arkansas hosted a public lecture by Dr. Clayton Crockett, an Associate Professor and the Director of the Religious Studies Program here at the University of Central Arkansas. His lecture, which was entitled “Chinese Postmodernism”, and consisted of two parts. The first was a brief historical survey of Chinese and French thought from 1967 to the present, including statements on French and Chinese revolution as compared to the revolutionary fervor that was occurring throughout the world, particularly in the United States. The second half of Dr. Crockett’s lecture discussed the contributions of the French Sinologist François Jullien for understanding French philosophy in light of Chinese thought and culture.

UIBE Art Troupe Celebrates Lantern Festival with UCA Students and Teachers
February 7, 2012 – The art troupe from Beijing’s University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) presented a series of cultural performances in celebration of the Chinese Lantern Festival at 7:00 PM at UCA’s Reynolds Performance Hall. This tour was sponsored by the University of International Business and Economics as well as Hanban, the Chinese office dedicated to the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, along with the UCA Confucius Institute of Arkansas.

Dr. John Parrack, the interim Director of International Engagement, opened the show with warm remarks welcoming the performers from UIBE, along with the university officials who were traveling with them, and expressed the desire for continued collaboration between UIBE and the University of Central Arkansas. The performance featured two traditional dances from Chinese ethnic groups, the Dai and the Xinjiang. There were Shaolin and Taiji martial arts demonstrations as well as a snippet from the Beijing Opera, “Tiannvsanhua” as well as a Face Changing act that has its roots in Sichuan Opera as well as a Chinese acrobatic balancing act. Also, the troupe performed the Chinese song Good Life and gave the Americans in the audience a taste of the festivities from Chinese New Year. Rounding out the traditional Chinese performances was a renditon of the Alan Jackson song, “Little Bitty.”

UIBE Performers Visit Elementary School
February 8, 2012 – The art troupe from Beijing’s University of International Business and Economics performed for the students of College Station Elementary School in College Station, Arkansas, just southeast of Little Rock. The students in attendance were excited for the show and many were eager to volunteer for the audience participation portions of the show.
The Confucius Institute of the University of Central Arkansas held Third Annual Hanban Teacher Workshop

March 31st – April 1st, 2012- The Third Annual Hanban Teacher Workshop was successfully held by the Confucius Institute from the University of Central Arkansas in Conway.

Michael Rowland, the Public School Program Advisor for the Arkansas Department of Education, Dr. Guo-ou Zhuang, the Director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Central Arkansas, Dr. Shoudong Feng, professor of Education from the University of Central Arkansas, Dr. Dong Xie, professor of Psychology from the University of Central Arkansas, Dr. Jia Zhu, professor from the World Languages department, and 16 Hanban Chinese teachers attended the workshop.

Michael Rowland delivered the keynote address at the workshop. On behalf of the Arkansas Department of Education, he expressed his heartfelt thanks to Hanban and the Confucius Institute for their support for the Teaching Chinese in Arkansas Program and lauded the success the program had during the previous year. Mr. Rowland was one of the administrators who went to China to interview new teaching applicants for the coming school year and understood that these Chinese teachers can have many difficulties during their two years in the state and commended their ability to cope. Dr. Guo-ou Zhuang, the Director of the Confucius Institute announced plans for the program’s future. The mentors from each school district appreciated the wonderful work of the Chinese teachers and expressed their desire to help build a supportive network between all the districts dealing with the Confucius Institute.

Fourteen Chinese teachers, working in different Arkansas public schools, as well as a long distance education center, gave brilliant demo classes, sharing their teaching resources and working experiences. Dr. Shoudong Feng gave a speech on integrating technology into lessons and helped these teachers analyze any problems they had in the classroom. Dr. Dong Xie gave a speech on the usage of coping skills and stress management in working and living in foreign countries.