The Confucius Institute for Arkansas and the Arkansas Economic Development Committee Received a Delegation from Henan, China

July 13, 2012, the Confucius Institute at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA CI) along with the Arkansas Economic Development Committee hosted a visiting nine-member delegation from Henan Province, China. The delegation was led by Zhao Qing, the Director of Henan Council for the Promotion of International Trade for Foreign Economic Cooperation. Governor Mike Beebe hosted the delegation for breakfast, during which he extended a warm welcome to the delegation, coming from Henan, Arkansas’ sister state in China. He talked about his trip to China this past April. He hopes that their visit will strengthen the relationship between Henan Province and Arkansas. During the breakfast, Dr. Zhuang, the Director of UCA CI, introduced the “Teach Chinese in Arkansas” project, a program that Governor Beebe is very proud of. The program will strengthen the connection between the United States and China.

Dr. Zhuang was accompanied by Jingjing Li, the Deputy Director of UCA CI, Mark Hamer, the Director of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission’s projects in Asia and Cindy Huang, one of the Chinese language teachers working in Arkansas.

The delegation was then taken on a tour of various Little Rock buildings, including the Bill Clinton Presidential Library, the Arkansas Department of Biochemistry Certification Office, the North Little Rock Development Planning Office as well as other governmental offices to learn about Arkansas’ economic development plan as well as economically feasible programs of cooperation. It was a very informative trip and the delegation hopes this will strengthen the relationship between the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, the Confucius Institute and Henan Province, China.

HIGHLIGHTS

Educators from Hangzhou, China Visit Arkansas to Learn American Teaching Practices

September 25 to October 6, 2012 – Twenty-two educators from schools throughout Hangzhou, China came to UCA to learn how American schools teach their students. Their experience began on Tuesday, September 25, at UCA where they attended a seminar hosted by the College of Education. The event began with some brief words from Dr. Steven Runge, UCA’s Provost and Vice President of Student Affairs and Jane Ann Williams, the director of UCA’s department of International Engagement.

During the educators’ trip to the state, they attended workshops at the College of Education at UCA. They also visited schools in several cities, including Hot Springs, Harrisburg, Beebe, and Conway, to directly observe American teaching styles in a variety of classrooms. Many of the schools they are visiting, such as Harrisburg Middle School, Beebe High School, Conway High School, and Hot Springs High School, have already learned some about how China educates students; they are schools involved in the Teach Chinese in Arkansas Program, a joint venture between the Confucius Institute for Arkansas and the Arkansas Department of Education.

In addition to the firsthand observations of classroom practices, the educators from Hangzhou learned about American teaching licensure procedures, public school administration and governance, skills for teaching students with special needs, and ways to involve parents and the community in the child’s educational experience. When they finished the program, each teacher received a certificate presented by President Tom Courtway of UCA.
**UCA Hosts 2012 Mid-Autumn Festival**

September 28, 2012 – The CSSA hosted the Mid-Autumn Festival Celebration, cosponsored by the Confucius Institute for Arkansas, at 6 PM in the McCastlain Ballroom. The celebration was attended by members of the Chinese community of Conway and UCA as well as a delegation of educators from Hangzhou, China. There were also teachers from the Teach Chinese in Arkansas Program in attendance from Maumelle, Batesville, and Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts, as well as the students from their classes.

The events performances included two traditional Chinese performances, a classical music piece and a dance known as a Peacock Dance. There were also two modern dance pieces, a hip-hop style performance and a dance to the popular Korean song “Gangnam Style” by Psy. The evening also had three moments of audience participation, including how to fold a fan and two games: ping-pong ball races and shuttlecock kicking. The evening ended with a vocal performance from the UCA Chinese Culture Club; they sang the Chinese pop song, “Friends.”

In addition to the evening’s entertainment, the audience was able to sample traditional Chinese mooncakes. Also, there was a raffle at the very end for various prizes.

**Six Arkansas Students Travel to China**

June 15, 2012 – The Confucius Institute for Arkansas held an orientation for six Arkansas middle and high school students, along with one chaperone, who are going on a trip to China. The trip is part of the Chinese Bridge program sponsored by the Confucius Institute and Hanban. The Chinese Bridge Summer Camp for High School Students is open to students taking Chinese in school that are in grade 8 through 12. The program is two week long and the students will spend the majority of the time in an international school in Jilin province. There, they will be immersed in Chinese language and culture classes. The last four days of the trip will be spent in Beijing, seeing the sights and having the opportunity to use the Chinese that they have learned in school and on the trip in a real world situation.

For many of those going on the trip, it will be the first time they will leave the country. Everyone who attended the orientation meeting was excited about this once in a lifetime opportunity to study Chinese language and culture in China.

**Chinese Consuls of Education Visit UCA**

October 10 & 11, 2012 - Yiqun Zhang, Chief Consul of Education, and Baiyun Xu, Consul of Education, members of the Chinese Consulate located in Houston, Texas visited Conway, Arkansas. Their trip began with a dinner held in Conway, where the members of the Chinese Consulate met with members of UCA’s Department of International Engagement, the Arkansas Department of Education, and the Confucius Institute for Arkansas. There were also four teachers from the central Arkansas region that are employed in the Confucius Institute’s Teach Chinese in Arkansas Program.

The following day, Thursday, the two members of the Chinese Consulate observed a Chinese class at Conway High. The class is taught by Ms. Yi An, one of the volunteer teachers in the Teach Chinese in Arkansas Program. After observing the language class, the consulate members returned to UCA to meet with Tom Courtway, the university president, Dr. Steven Runge, the Interim Provost and Vice President for Presidential Affairs, Elain McNiece, Dean of the Graduate School, and Jane Ann Williams, the director of International Affairs. Mr. Zhang and Ms. Xu concluded their trip to UCA by holding a discussion with some Chinese students studying at UCA.

**Seven Hanban Volunteer Teachers Arrived in Arkansas School Districts**

July 30th, 2012 - The Confucius Institute at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) held a reception for the seven new Hanban volunteer teachers, who will be teaching Chinese in primary and secondary schools throughout the state. Dr. Steven Runge, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Laura Young, the Associate Provost of UCA, Michael Rowland, the Public School Program Advisor of Arkansas Department of Education, Jane Ann Williams, Director of International Engagement, Dr. Guo-ou Zhuang, Director of the Confucius Institute, as well as principals and representatives from seven Arkansas school districts attended the reception.

Dr. Runge, spoke at the reception stating that in the past five years, the Teach Chinese in Arkansas Program has made great strides despite the setbacks from the State Department last November over visa classifications. He expressed his thanks to the Arkansas school districts and to the Confucius Institute for their continuing support for the Teach Chinese in Arkansas Program.

When the reception ended, the seven Hanban volunteer teachers left for their districts, accompanied by officials from their new schools.