

## Freeman Programs in China Panel Presentation

*Augustana College*

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*Ralph Bertrand  
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Dr. Jen-Mei Ma introducing the panel, 2003 ASIANetwork Conference

### **Augustana College's Program in Asia at Central China Normal University** **Sangeetha Rayapati, Augustana College**

Augustana College's "Building Bridges" program, funded by the Freeman Foundation, is a four-year project aimed at increasing faculty and student interest in Asia and Asian Studies.

In the fall of 2001, Dr. Van Symons, Professor of History, approached faculty from varying disciplines to solicit participants for the "Building Bridges" program. These volunteers, organized in teams of two faculty from each discipline, submitted proposals describing how further study in China could support their curricula. The intent of the first trip was to immerse faculty in Chinese culture and to provide a short learning experience with Chinese faculty in each represented field, that is, in our case, the fields of business, biology, geology, theater and music (vocal and instrumental). Our travels took us to Hong Kong, Guilin, Wuhan, Xian, Chengdu, and Beijing as well as Kyoto and Tokyo, Japan.

Our study experience was based in Wuhan, where Augustana College has maintained close ties to Central China Normal University and the Wuhan Performing Arts School. Because of these well-established connections and preparation by our Asian Studies faculty, faculty fellows were also able to establish important relationships with their Chinese counterparts that will facilitate our second-year objectives, namely, providing a cultural immersion and study experience for Augustana students.

The second phase of the program was then initiated in the 2002-2003 academic year with informational meetings, a call for student participants, review of applications and selection of participants. Applicants were required to be a major, minor, or participant in the discipline, submit two recommendations, provide a cumulative GPA, and write a personal statement about how this trip could impact their education. From all of the student applicants in each field, only five students and one alternate per discipline were selected. Other guidelines followed were that students could apply for a fellowship in only one of the fields and that gradu-

ating seniors would also be considered. Students would also be required to make some sort of presentation about what they had learned upon returning to campus. The group of thirty talented and enthusiastic students representing a variety of disciplines and classes were then selected.

With this set of students in mind, faculty began organizing study experiences with their Chinese facilitators and preparing a series of preparatory educational sessions for our students. Some teams planned field work, some planned research projects with publication as a goal, and some organized exchange concerts and trips to other cities in order to give our students the broadest experience possible. Because of the SARS outbreak, we decided to postpone our trip until the summer of 2004. We will then implement year two and three of the Building Bridges program concurrently.

Although our own study experiences are defined in terms of our own areas of research, our time spent together in a foreign country provided us the opportunity to appreciate other disciplines and to begin to sense how others view the world somewhat differently. When we experienced an earthquake in Tokyo, our geologist explained it to us. When we observed traditional Chinese opera and kabuki theater, the music and theater faculty shared their insights. This exposure to culture and to the role of an academic field in a culture different from one's own is what we ultimately share with our student fellows.

In addition to these two trips to China and Japan, there are several more ways in which the Building Bridges Program seeks to increase interest in Asia. The subsequent years of this intricate program involve an intensive language study experience for 10 students and a tour of China and Japan by choral and instrumental groups from the Music Department. In addition to these programs for students, there are short-term faculty exchanges and opportunities for graduating seniors or recent graduates to teach English at Central China Normal University. But, we believe that the most unique aspect of our four-year program is that it brings students and faculty from a variety of disciplines together for a significant period of time. With experienced, dedicated and enthusiastic colleagues leading the way, Augustana College's Building Bridges can literally "build bridges" between our Asian Studies program and the broader academic community it serves.

Don't forget...  
The **deadline** for submitting items  
for the Spring 2003 *ASIANetwork*  
*Exchange* is  
**February 1, 2003**  
Thanks!



Sangeetha Rayapati and Ralph Bertrand

### **The Biology in Chinese Culture Program of Colorado College at Tzu Chi University, Taiwan** **Ralph Bertrand, Colorado College**

Due to the demands of a rigorous course sequence, science majors at Colorado College have limited opportunities to study overseas. In response, Colorado College's Biology and Chinese Culture Program (BCCP) was designed to allow natural science majors the opportunity to study abroad while gaining credit toward their respective majors. The BCCP program, funded by a generous grant from the Freeman Foundation, was created to support greater cultural understanding between young scientists from Asia and the United States. Students participating in BCCP continue to pay Colorado College tuition while the grant covers the costs of transportation, room and board, and excursions throughout Taiwan and other Asian sites. The first BCCP program, beginning in the spring of 2002, involved a group of seven Colorado College students who traveled to Tzu Chi University in Taiwan. In 2003, the program sent ten students. The 2004 spring semester will send another seven students.

Tzu Chi University is located in the picturesque seaport city of Hualien, Taiwan, situated between the Central Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Tzu Chi University, funded entirely by the Tzu Chi Foundation, emphasizes research in the life sciences and medicine. Tzu Chi University supports the Foundation's mission of charity, medicine, education, and culture.

Students begin the BCCP after winter break when they first return to Colorado College and take a two-week preparatory Chinese language class before departing for Taiwan. While at Tzu Chi, Colorado College students take a series of four courses per semester. Faculty and students participate in only one course (three and a half weeks each) at a time, which allows faculty freedom in structuring their courses.