



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York



Center for China Studies

CCS Newsletter

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**I. The 11th Session of the CCS Consultation
(October 2020 to October 2022)**

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II. The Director's Notes

October 2020 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Center for China Studies (CCS) at SUNY Buffalo State. Unfortunately, the CCS is unable to celebrate this momentous occasion with an appropriately extravagant event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This does not, however, diminish in any way the role that the CCS has long played on our campus, as well as other SUNY campuses, and its many notable achievements and activities of the past two decades. The Center for China Studies has contributed greatly to the diversity and internationalization of the campus as well as the local community, and it has consistently advanced academic and professional exchanges with China and increased the enrollment of international students from China. Although the year 2020 is full of uncertainty with the world-wide pandemic and the deterioration of US-China political and economic relations, we at the Center for China Studies are still optimistic about the future and hope to achieve even more with our mission of scholarly exchange, scientific research, and the promotion of friendship and understanding between the two peoples. At the end of the fall 2020 semester, Dr. Michael Lazich, the Editor of the CCS Newsletter, a CCS consultant, and our dear friend and colleague, will retire from his teaching job at Buffalo State, and this is the last issue of our newsletter that he will copy-edit. Let us thank him for his diligent work for the Center over the past two decades and wish him the best of luck in his retirement life.

III. CSS English and Culture Study Group

For visiting scholars at Buffalo State, it is important to understand American culture and practice English in addition to conducting research in their own area of specialization. A course titled “American Culture,” taught by Mr. Phil Klumpp and Mrs. Barbara Klumpp, has therefore been offered to all visiting scholars from China. In the past, this course met every Tuesday at noon, although it has been taught as an online course since early 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This did not, however, affect the diversity of the teaching format or richness of content. This class mainly introduces American culture, and each class is based on a certain theme. So far, under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. Klumpp, we have learned about various aspects of American culture such as American family celebrations, wedding customs and funeral customs, elections in the United States, traditional American holidays, interesting places to visit in the United States, and American religions. Cultural differences between the East and the West were also a focus of this course: for example, collectivism vs. individualism, linear thinking vs. circular thinking, implicit expression vs. direct expression, and different parenting styles and educational ideas. Compared with the Chinese teaching style, which emphasizes direct instruction by the teacher, American classrooms pay more attention to students’ participation and the interaction between teachers and students. In each class, Mr. and Mrs. Klumpp prepared a warm-up oral topic at the beginning, such as “the most dangerous situation you have ever been in”, “a person who influenced you to choose your career”, “a time when someone close to you died”, “a farm that you have visited.”

Thus, students had a chance to share their own experiences or opinions. In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Klumpp often offered slide presentations, or shared interesting short videos or movie clips in class, so that students could express their views on the videos. These were excellent opportunities for us to practice both listening to and speaking English. In addition to their online teaching, Mr. and Mrs. Klumpp also invited us to their home



Visiting scholars celebrating holidays at the Klumpps in 2019.

to participate in parties and to celebrate some important holidays such as Christmas Day, Valentine’s Day, and Halloween. We enjoyed traditional American dinners, barbecued in the backyard, learned to make jack-o ‘-lanterns, and played various kinds of interesting games. These occasions not only left us many unforgettable memories but also provided us valuable insights into the lifestyle of American families. Living in a foreign country in 2020, when facing the critical threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, was difficult for Chinese visiting scholars. However, Mr. and Mrs. Klumpp’s warmth and enthusiasm made us feel right at home. In conclusion, this course gave us a good opportunity to understand American culture and practice English, even if we had to stay at home most of the time this year. We sincerely hope the pandemic will be over soon so that we can go back to a real face-to-face class instead of studying online.

- Zhang Dan

IV. CSS Seminars during the COVID Crisis

The year 2020 has been witnessing the rapid spread of COVID-19. The pandemic has affected every aspect of our life. At Buffalo State College, learning has been moved Online to virtual classrooms. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm of students pursuing knowledge and the dedicated efforts of faculty promoting learning have not been negatively affected. On May 29 and June 5 and 12, Buffalo State College’s Center for China Studies, directed by Dr. Zhang Jie, SUNY Distinguished Professor, has

held three webinars on the platform of Zoom titled “Multidisciplinary Research Seminar of the Visiting Scholars.” More than ten Chinese visiting scholars reported on their recent research while at Buffalo State, ranging from economics and sociology, to language teaching and translation.



In the seminars, the scholars shared their new findings and explained some still unresolved puzzles in their research and welcomed questions raised by their participating peers. These were win-win academic exchanges. Speakers were enlightened by the discussions, and listeners got to know some interesting details regarding areas of research beyond their own disciplinary fields.

As Dr. Zhang remarked after the third seminar, “It was an opportunity for scholars of different disciplines to learn more about each other’s research and possibilities for collaboration.”



Differing from previous seminars held by the CCS in years past, this was a successful academic endeavor under the new norms of the pandemic crisis. The CCS will continue to promote such academic experiences that serve as a bridge for Sino-US intercollegiate exchanges.

- Huang Aihua

V. Visiting Scholars Autumn Excursion with Dr. Steve Macho

The Autumn Excursion, held on October 17, 2020, is an annual event for the CCS visiting Chinese scholars to celebrate both China’s Mid-Autumn Festival, traditionally held on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month, and America’s Thanksgiving Day. Dr. and Mrs. Macho invited Dr. Zhang Jie and CCS visiting scholars from China to their home for this occasion. They prepared an elaborate pre-Thanksgiving dinner that included traditional Thanksgiving dishes, such as the Macho’s braised pork and sausages, sweet potato casserole, green bean casserole and Hubbard squash, as well as classic Thanksgiving pumpkin pies and lemon cupcakes. Chinese scholars contributed to the menu by making Chinese fried dumplings. After dinner all participants enjoyed an outdoor bonfire while they sang, danced, laughed and talked. The day presented a wonderful opportunity to taste traditional American food, enjoy American daily life, and experience two different cultures. Due to the COVID pandemic, however, scholars were obliged to wear face masks, keep physical distancing, and wash their hands frequently.

CCS Chinese visiting scholars expressed their humble gratitude to Dr. and Mrs. Macho for their friendly enthusiasm and warm hospitality before leaving.

- Chen Tian



Party at the Macho’s

VI. Retirement of Dr. Michael Lazich

It was with a note of sadness that I was recently obliged to inform Dr. Zhang Jie that because of my upcoming retirement at the end of this semester I would no longer be serving on the Board of Advisors for the Center for China Studies. I have been a member of the Board of Advisors for nearly twenty years, and my active involvement with the affairs of the CCS has been one of the most memorable highlights of my career at SUNY Buffalo State. The CCS has long played a vitally important role in furthering the mission of our college to engage actively with the international community and to promote a culturally diverse learning environment for our students and professors. Over the years, dozens of visiting scholars have spent time at Buffalo State as guests of the CCS, actively engaging with our college community and offering a variety of opportunities to further our knowledge of Chinese history, politics, and culture through China-related events and presentations. As a full time faculty member of the Department of History and Social Studies Education



specializing in the history of China, I have had the opportunity to mentor many of the Chinese scholars that have spent time on our campus, assisting them with their various research projects and in the process forging many warm and lasting friendships. I sincerely thank Dr. Zhang Jie for his untiring efforts to promote such highly valued cross-cultural exchanges through the activities of the CCS, and I hope that Buffalo State will continue to provide the needed support for students and professors to engage in China-related scholarship and research.

- Michael C. Lazich



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