UNMC and its Asia Pacific Rim Development Program (APRDP) recently held its inaugural graduation for its China Scholarship Council Faculty Medical Education Trainees (Midwest China Region).

The three-month training program, held at UNMC’s Omaha campus, continues UNMC’s effort to spread its primary care and medical training practices globally, especially with close partners in China.

The faculty educated at UNMC will, in turn, go back to their home universities and teach their own students in these new methods. Many of these faculty will educate not only homegrown Chinese students, but also international students, said Zenghan “Hannah” Tong, Ph.D., a senior research associate in pharmacology and experimental neuroscience who also works for APRDP.

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UNMC Delegations to China

UNMC faculty and staff travel to China several times a year to recruit new students, develop and maintain relationships with Chinese institutions, and participate in symposia. This past September and October several delegations traveled to China.

China Trip Enhances Connections, Knowledge Base

By Vicki Cerino, UNMC Public Relations

Faculty and staff from UNMC traveled halfway around the world recently to exchange experiences and knowledge on Ebola and other infectious diseases.

The one-week trip to Shanghai, Xi’an and Beijing, China, included experts in medicine, research, clinical laboratory science, transportation and decontamination, as well as representatives from Nebraska’s Department of Health and Human Services and Emory University.

Ken Bayles, Ph.D., UNMC associate vice chancellor for basic science research, said the idea was to make connections and share experiences in the treatment of highly infectious diseases that require specialized containment facilities.

The group visited various hospitals and the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, as well as the Chinese equivalent of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In Xi’an, they visited 8th Hospital which was the frontline for the 2003-2004 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in China.

Chris Kratochvil, M.D., UNMC associate vice chancellor for clinical research and vice president for research for Nebraska Medicine, said the trip was an excellent opportunity for UNMC faculty and its U.S. colleagues to exchange information with Chinese colleagues.

Also included on the trip were UNMC faculty and staff John Lowe, Ph.D., Ming Qu, Ph.D., (also of Division of Public Health, Nebraska HHS), Zenghan “Hannah” Tong, Ph.D., and Jialin Zheng, M.D.

Academic Health Centers International

In late October, Don Leuenberger, Special Assistant to the Chancellor, Zenghan “Hannah” Tong, Ph.D., and Jialin Zheng, M.D., attended the 2015 Regional Meeting of the Association of Academic Health Centers International (AAHCI) held at Peking University. The meeting focused on medical education reform. Photo page 7.

Recruitment

Dele Davies, M.D., Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, David Oupicky, Ph.D., Joseph Siu, Ph.D., Keith Swarts, Zenghan “Hannah” Tong, Ph.D., Dong Wang, Ph.D., and Jialin Zheng, M.D., attended the International Graduate Scholarship Fair (IGSF) in Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai. These fairs introduce the top Chinese students to international graduate programs. This year there were 111 graduate and professional schools participating, each trying to attract the best and brightest students to apply to their programs. More than sixty students expressed interest in UNMC’s programs at the fairs this year.
Family Medicine Delegation


Presentations at the Shanghai Symposium focused on the role of family medical practitioners, personalized medical care, and communication as a key to patient safety. At the Summit in Guangzhou, presenters discussed the role of family medicine in the US, procedures to establish primary care centers, and how to begin training and accredit trainees.

Brad Britigan, M.D., Dean of the College of Medicine, Denise Britigan, Ph.D., Dele Davies, M.D., Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Jeff Harrison, M.D., Vice Chair of Family Medicine, Kim Jarzynka, M.D., Mike Sitorius, M.D., Chair of the Department of Family Medicine, Marilyn Sitorius, M.D., Zenghan “Hannah” Tong, Ph.D., Kent Zhao, M.D., and Jialin Zheng, M.D., participated in the Symposium and Summit.

Cancer Delegation

Faculty and staff from UNMC’s Fred and Pamela Buffett Cancer Center visited Tianjin Medical University Cancer Institute & Hospital (TMUCIH) in Tianjin, China. There they toured the hospital and participated in the First Joint Symposium on Cancer Research between TMUCIH and UNMC. TMUCIH is the oldest oncology hospital in China, and is one of the largest centers for cancer prevention, treatment, training, and research in China. Participants included Vimla Band, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Genetics & Cell Biology, Kai Fu, M.D., Ph.D., Bo Han, M.D., Ph.D., Tony Hollingsworth, Ph.D., Director of Pancreatic Cancer Research, Javeed Iqbal, Ph.D., Alice Kueh, David W. Mercer, M.D., Chair of the Department of Surgery, Matt Winfrey.

Members of UNMC traveled with Governor Pete Ricketts during his first trade mission to Asia.

“International business relationships are vitally important for Nebraska to succeed in the global economy, and trade missions, such as the trip to China earlier this year, help grow the partnerships our state needs to be globally competitive. The support of the faculty and students of UNMC, who have over a decade of enduring relationships with China, is an integral part of our state’s relationship with the country. UNMC’s faculty and students play a vital role as ambassadors by highlighting our state’s world-renowned medical community. This trip to Beijing was a brief but important step to further develop ties between China and Nebraska, and it is a pleasure to work with UNMC faculty and students as we continue to work to expand our relationship with China.”

Governor Pete Ricketts
Since 2010, APRDP has invited students from select Chinese universities to Omaha to work directly with UNMC researchers for 8- or 12-week of research. This summer, 15 students from Shandong University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine (SJTUSM), and Tongji University.

The Summer Research Program affords visiting students many opportunities. One of the most obvious is the ability to do research at some of the most cutting-edge research facilities in the world. Zixiao Chen, a participant from SJTUSM, commented on how the experience of working in a lab at UNMC “will be really helpful for me in the future when I become a doctor” because along with “clinical work, laboratory research is also an important work for doctors” in China.

Participants also made new connections with UNMC faculty and students, all of whom attach a great importance to science and medicine that is the most impressive part when it comes to research training in Omaha,” says Hanwen Zhang, a student from Shandong University. SRP participants all commented on the ways that UNMC students and faculty went out of their way to help them, to offer comments on their research, and encourage them in their progress. “Dr. Kaustubh Datta and my co-workers in the lab taught me how to do research,” writes Han Wang from Shandong University. Yi Yang from Shandong University says that working with Dr. Lowes and his students “exposed me to research ideas and techniques I didn’t know previously. Now when I confront a scientific problem, I can be more creative and come up with more strategies to approach it.”

This year’s participants said they have fond memories of UNMC and Omaha. Many wish to return sometime. If they do return, they will not be alone: around 15%-20% of the participants return to UNMC as Ph.D. degree-seeking or health profession students.

APRDP is already working with its Chinese partner universities to bring the next cohort of research exchange students to UNMC for the summer of 2016. Interested UNMC faculty can become involved by contacting the APRDP Office.

aprdp@unmc.edu
International Student Research Forum

Students from UNMC joined others from around the world to present their research at the International Student Research Forum (ISRF). This year’s Forum was held at the University of Aberdeen, in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Jayme Nekuda, Ph.D., Associate Director of Human Resources, and Keith Swarts, Director of Business Services, have organized and sponsored UNMC’s participation in the forum for the past nine years. The goal of the ISRF is to provide the brightest young scientists with an opportunity to present their research and make connections with others beyond disciplinary or national boundaries. UNMC’s participants are selected from a pool of more than 50 applicants. The selection process takes 6 months. Nekuda states, “the process allows us to select the best and brightest students who then have the opportunity to showcase their research on an international stage.”

Brian Coburn, 5th year M.D./Ph.D. Candidate in Rheumatology at UNMC, found the ISRF stimulating. “The forum was incredibly useful in connecting with up-in-coming student scientists from around the world. Often, we connect with other American scientists at big national conferences, but this doesn’t help break down barriers and establish comfort with talking to foreign investigators. This forum focuses on building comfort for developing these types of relationships.”

These relationships continue beyond the forum. Lisa Weissenburger-Moser, Ph.D. Candidate in Epidemiology and two-time participant in the ISRF, says, “I’m going to have life-long friends because I networked through this forum. I was able to stay in touch with students in Denmark and discuss what we had done throughout the year apart when we met again in Scotland.”

Participating institutions in 2015 included the Graduate University of the Chinese Academy of Science (Beijing, China), Griffith University (Gold Coast, Australia), the University of Southern Denmark (Odense, Denmark), the University of Aberdeen (Aberdeen, Scotland), and UNMC.

“I would recommend this conference to any student who wants to see the research that students around the world are doing while experiencing another country’s culture, food, and history.”

Lisa Weissenburger-Moser, Ph.D. Candidate in Epidemiology

“The people I met and perspectives I gained by attending this forum have and will continue to enhance my thinking about research for the rest of my career and life.”

Michael Price, Ph.D. Candidate in Cellular/Integrative Physiology

UNMC Business & Finance and the APRDP endorse UNMC students’ participation in the International Student Research Forum.

To learn more, visit the website: unmc.edu/aprdp/research/isrf
Events and Happenings

Image A: Drs. Fengshou Sun and Baoguo Zheng from the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C. visited Nebraska on October 18 and 19. They met with CSC students in Omaha and Lincoln. At UNMC they met with Dele Davies, M.D., Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, as well as the APRDP staff.

Image B: Chinese clinicians participated in the 4th U.S.-Sino Family Medicine Leadership Course at UNMC. Various training techniques, including models and simulations, play a role in this training. In the picture, two participants model doctor-patient interaction while Jeff Harrison, M.D., Vice Chair of the Department of Family Medicine, looks on.
This year Dr. Shanzhu Zhu, president of the Chinese Society of Family Medicine, joined the group. Dr. Zhu said “The U.S. has the gold standard for training, and at UNMC, family medicine ranks very highly. We’re learning from the gold standard.”

Image C: Don Leuenberger, Special Assistant to the Chancellor, second from the left, presents a UNMC flag at the October 28 groundbreaking of the Hainan Chaotan Bay International Hospital in Hainan Province, China. Also attending were Kai Fu, M.D., Ph.D., associate director of the APRDP, Bo Han, M.D., Ph.D., business development specialist for UnMed Health Consulting-Shanghai (UHCS), and David W. Mercer, M.D., Chair of the Department of Surgery.
Collaborations between UNMC and Hainan are growing. Seven faculty members and educators from Hainan recently graduated from a 3-month training program at UNMC.

Image D: Jialin Zheng, M.D., Director of the APRDP, was one of 42 U.S. scholars who were invited to attend the White House welcome ceremony for Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sept. 25. The ceremony was attended by U.S. President Barack Obama. The scholars are Chinese-Americans from different U.S. higher education institutions who have helped promote U.S.-China educational collaboration.
Brad Britigan, M.D., Dean of the College of Medicine, addressed the graduates. “Congratulations on completing this program. UNMC has been working to create this program for many years, and it is the result of our prior efforts and successes. The response has been positive. We are trying to improve primary care in China and it has paid off in efforts such as these. Because you have completed this program you are all alumni of UNMC now. Carry the message about the opportunities and experiences here to your colleagues.”

The APRDP and the Chinese Students and Scholars Association at UNMC welcomed new students and scholars during a picnic in Elmwood Park in early October. Summer Research Program participants, Clinical Exchange students, and CSC Medical Education Trainees also joined the picnic.

Image E: The APRDP and the Chinese Students and Scholars Association at UNMC welcomed new students and scholars during a picnic in Elmwood Park in early October. Summer Research Program participants, Clinical Exchange students, and CSC Medical Education Trainees also joined the picnic.

Image F: Don Leuenberger, Special Assistant to the Chancellor, and Jialin Zheng, M.D., Director of the APRDP, attended the 2015 Regional Meeting of the Association of Academic Health Centers International (AAHCI) on October 28-29.

Image G: Xiaoming Wang, M.D., Vice President of Capital Medical University, presents Dele Davies, M.D., Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, with a scroll with the Chinese character for “prosperity” on it.

“We see them as our ambassadors,” Dr. Tong said. “And through their international students, they will pass on our UNMC mission and methodologies all around the world.”

Lina Chen, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of pharmacology at Xi’an Jiaotong University, was happy to be back at UNMC for a second time - she’d previously been a visiting scholar for research. She was impressed with UNMC’s simulation technology and the iEXCEL program.

Dr. Chen looked forward to sharing her newfound knowledge with her own students – educational techniques like small group discussions, problem-based and peer-assisted learning, and an increased emphasis on competency-based learning concepts.

The CSC Faculty Medical Education Trainee program, organized by close collaborations between faculty members in the College of Medicine and College of Public Health, is part of an ongoing collaboration with the Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC). Since 2006, 160 students from China have come to UNMC for study or training, as part of the partnership between the CSC and UNMC.

“Congratulations on completing this program. UNMC has been working to create this program for many years, and it is the result of our prior efforts and successes. The response has been positive. We are trying to improve primary care in China and it has paid off in efforts such as these. Because you have completed this program you are all alumni of UNMC now. Carry the message about the opportunities and experiences here to your colleagues.”

Brad Britigan, M.D., Dean of the College of Medicine
In this issue:
CSC Faculty Medical Education Trainees Graduate Delegations to China Summer Research Program International Student Research Forum

“All of us at the Asia Pacific Rim Development Program would like to wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

“Our goal is to support UNMC’s mission ‘to lead the world in transforming lives to create a healthy future for all individuals and communities...’ We do so by bringing the best students and scholars from around the world to UNMC and by spreading the spirit and knowledge of UNMC to the Asia Pacific Rim. Our central task is to provide service to our mission, our students, and faculty. Students are at the heart of everything we do. We are successful in this because of your spirit and support. Thank you for your support this past year.”

Jialin Zheng, M.D., Director, Asia Pacific Rim Development Program

Asia Pacific Rim Development Program’s (APRDP) mission is to leverage UNMC’s global position as a leader in health education, research and patient care, especially in the Asia Pacific. It strives to increase research scope and efficiency, provide meaningful exchange programs for faculty and students, and foster friendships and cultural understanding, ultimately improving health education, care and science in China, the U.S. and worldwide.

Please join me in supporting APRDP’s long-standing mission by making a gift that will impact the next generation. Make your gift to the:

Asia Pacific Initiative Fund

by visiting our website or contacting Melonie Welsh at the University of Nebraska Foundation: melonie.welsh@nufoundation.org