

*Welcome to President Mark B. Rosenberg's blog chronicling his 2011 visit to China. The president is sharing commentary and photos from his trip, so be sure to check back in the days ahead to learn more about FIU's Marriott Tianjin China Program and the students, faculty and administrators who make it a success.*

I have often said that the sun never sets on FIU. While this has been metaphorically true in the past — particularly given our international mandate — it is factual today.

Fresh on the heels of six energizing graduations on Monday and Tuesday, May 2-3, 2011, at the U.S. Century Bank Arena at Modesto A. Maidique Campus, we are now preparing for yet another graduation of students from our School of Hospitality and Tourism Management in Tianjin, China, at the campus of the Tianjin University of Commerce. Our Tianjin location happens to be exactly 12 hours time difference from Miami—thus—the sun never sets on our FIU!



*Visiting with FIU students.*

Upon leaving Miami International Airport early Wednesday morning, our small Tianjin-bound delegation (Howard Lipman and Bill Draughon) met up with FIU hospitality students Tian Ye and Jiang Zhitong, among others. While the former was headed home to Inner Mongolia for the summer, the latter was on his way to New York City for some rest and recuperation. Tian will return for the Fall semester to complete his master's degree. Jiang is familiar to many of us: He was a lead performer this past Spring semester in the Chinese New Year Celebration at the Graham Center. An accomplished singer of Chinese ballads, he acknowledged in the airport lobby that his favorite performer is Michael Jackson—evidence of the power of American pop culture!



*Go FIU!*

FIU Professor Jinlin Zhao, a native of Beijing, made the trip as well. Jinlin's infectious personality and love for his work helped to make the 17-hour trip less arduous.

His life story is fascinating. Rare in China, Jinlin comes from a family of five siblings. He received his bachelor's degree from the Beijing Second Foreign Language Institute, served as a policeman in the city, and then traveled to Virginia Tech to pursue his Ph.D. in hospitality. Since coming to FIU he has made his mark, helping to found the growing hospitality program in Tianjin and now serving as an insider in the development of FIU's strategy toward China.



*Professor Jinlin Zhao*

As we drove in a small, cramped taxi from Beijing's international airport this afternoon to the JW Marriott on the city's outer ring, Jinlin could not contain his joy at returning home to spend a moment with his siblings, before joining our back-to-back meetings tomorrow and our long-awaited, overflow alumni reunion tomorrow night.

Still euphoric from the energy of the just-completed graduations in Miami, I must admit that I was distracted by white flakes that flew by as I listened to his story. What were the flakes, I asked? Ah yes, it was the spring pollen blowing from the budding willow trees lining the Airport 5th Ring Expressway.

Springtime in Beijing! And we are FIU in another time zone and another world, on the cusp of yet another graduation. What a blessing to be associated with an institution that adds value a world away from the Tamiami Trail and Biscayne Blvd. That's why we are...Worlds Ahead!