

BLOG from Tianjin, China

May 11-12, 2013

From Beijing

There is a saying in China that the country is “very good at hiding its brightness.” Beijing offers unparalleled opportunities to build FIU’s linkages in the world’s most populous country. Much brightness can be found. And so it has been the rest of the week, with visits to one of the country’s top two institutions (the other being Beijing U) – Tsinghua University. At this distinguished center of higher learning, we met with the leadership of the School of Social Sciences, Dr. Shi Zhiqin, and members of his team. Dr. Shi – an expert on European affairs, leads the equivalent of our School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). It is our expectation that he will soon visit FIU and then create a partnership to ensure that we can have a more thorough research and student exchange, particularly given the strong role that Tsinghua’s graduates play in the leadership of the country.

One of the delights of this visit? Our Colleges of Engineering and Computing and Architecture + The Arts are partnering with Tsinghua’s engineering program in the 2013 Solar Decathlon Competition to be held in Datong, China, in August 2013. The purpose is to build an energy efficient, cost effective and attractive solar-powered house that can serve as a model in China for residential construction. This partnership would not have been possible without the personal relations between TU Professor Zhang Zhihui (whose son attends FIU) and FIU Professor Yimin Zhu, in our OHL School of Construction. We will follow closely this collaboration and are excited about the final stages in August when the project will be judged!

Following visits to the Chinese Service Center for Scholarship Exchange and the China Education Association for International Exchange (located on the beautiful campus of Beijing University), Colombia’s Ambassador to China, our friend the Honorable Ambassador Carmenza Jaramillo, hosted our FIU delegation at a beautiful and enthusiastic reception dinner at the embassy/residence. What a special evening at the historic site, which had formerly been part of South Vietnam’s diplomatic representation in the country. Ambassador Jaramillo spoke with pride about her association with FIU and represented our university and its thousand or so Colombian students in residence as if she were the FIU president! We were so pleased to make new friends from Lebanon, Spain, Uruguay and Hong Kong, among other places. Special thanks to Ambassador Jaramillo for such a delightful evening.

[Click here to see the 2013 TUC-FIU Commencement Photos!](#)

Our Saturday alumni gathering, framed by a beautiful sunlit day in Beijing, brought nearly 175 graduates to the friendly service-oriented Marriott Beijing Northeast Hotel for an afternoon of fellowship and fun. FIU China Alumni Chapter Communications Chair Lin Gao gave a warm welcome to our graduates, many of whom were from one of the graduating classes coming out of our partnership with Tianjin University of Commerce. Other graduates were there from engineering, international business and economics. Many of our guests commented to me that they wanted to get together more than once a year, and that they hoped we could put together a good contact list so that they might be able to communicate more intensively and frequently. I was so happy to see Casey Arauz '10, a Killian High graduate who has mastered Mandarin and now is guest relations manager at the Pangu 7 Star Hotel in Beijing. One of our very loyal alums from Shanghai, Cheng-Chen C. Hsiao '95, was also with us!

[2013 TUC-FIU Alumni Association Reception](#)

From Shanghai on Mother's Day! (Dedicated to my wife Rosalie Rosenberg and my mother Laura Rosenberg)

A day later, in cosmopolitan Shanghai, we celebrated Mother's Day in advance of meetings with university representatives and members of the South China hospitality industry. A Sunday highlight included a tour of the dynamic city – vibrant, artful and more casual than Beijing. There is perhaps no mega city in the world as charming as Shanghai, from the incredible art deco architecture on the west side of the Huangpu River to the world's tallest skyscrapers on the east side. FIU Hospitality Professor Jinlin Zhao led us through Old Shanghai to his favorite dumpling restaurant, the Nanxiang Steamed Bun Restaurant. No better place in China to be on a Mother's Day than this jammed restaurant, famous for its wide variety of dumplings.

The family gatherings along the scenic river walkways reminded me of my wonderful family and how blessed we are to be able to experience the world and enjoy our incredible diversity. Who knew when we were able to celebrate Mother's Day years ago with our mom that one day I would be able to tell you this story of Mother's Day from far-away Shanghai! No brightness was being hidden this day in this expansive city. It's such a privilege to share this story of brightness with you on this day that's dedicated to recognizing and remembering our dear mothers!

[Photos from Shanghai, China 2013](#)