

Expanding International Horizons:

The Academic and Cultural Fusion of Sister School Summer Programmes



In the summer of 2023, the International Affairs Division of our university facilitated the participation of students in two sister school summer programs. This issue documents the academic excellence, global perspectives, and enthusiasm for cross-cultural exchange exhibited by our students in these two international exchange activities.

The first program was the "2023 Oxford Summer Programme" held at the University of Oxford, Hart Hall. Led by the Director of Division of International Affairs and colleagues, a group of 21 students embarked on an 11-day journey of English language and culture. The program offered a diverse range of activities, including campus and historical exploration of Oxford University, visits to iconic English landmarks like Blenheim Palace, excursions to the Bodleian Library, workshops on presentation skills and creative writing, a Shakespearean theater workshop, academic debate training, an introduction to contemporary British art, and presentations of their experiences.



This short-term program allowed students to enhance their English language skills, immerse themselves in British culture, and engage in cross-cultural communication and knowledge exchange with Oxford University students and faculty. Beyond that, it provided valuable insights into the academic atmosphere, curriculum planning, and activity organization unique to Oxford.



Student feedback on the program has been overwhelmingly positive. They commend the role of Residential Advisors (RAs) in program coordination and express gratitude for the RAs' meticulous planning and enthusiastic service. Students recognize that RAs not only played a pivotal role in organizing activities but also served as essential companions during their time in Oxford. Furthermore, they highlight how the program not only improved their language proficiency but also instilled in them the courage and confidence required to navigate life abroad.

The second part of this issue features an excerpt from an article by Yao-Cheng, Xiao, a second-year master's student in the Department of Physical Education. This article recounts the "陽光支教·孔子行腳" program, a cross-strait and Hong Kong-Macau university student volunteer teaching initiative organized by Central China Normal University. This year marked the program's 10th iteration and its debut in Suizhou. The team conducted a week-long volunteer teaching program at Luoyang Town Advanced Primary School in Zengdu District, with participation from six universities, including students from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, mainland China, and an international student. Together, they provided enriching lessons to 62 students at Luoyang Town Advanced Primary School.



Accompanying their teaching mission, the team visited various cultural sites, including Suizhou City Planning Exhibition Hall, Suizhou City Museum, Sui County Mushroom Expo Hall, and the birthplace of Yan Emperor Shennong. They also participated in ancestral worship ceremonies and enjoyed chime performances, gaining a profound understanding of Suizhou's rich history and culture.



Group Photo at the Results Presentation Event.

Though this two-week Hubei teaching program was intense, every day was filled with meaningful activities. The rich cultural visits and late-night lesson preparations provided an immersive experience akin to the life of "special forces soldiers."

Culturally, even in Taiwan, there are differences between the northern and southern regions, but the disparities between the two areas across the strait are even more pronounced. However, through "陽光支教·孔子行腳" partners from diverse cultural backgrounds were able to join a common team. In order to focus on content discussions and achieve knowledge exchange, team members demonstrated the utmost sincerity, ultimately forging friendships with each other.



Group Photo of the Team in Front of Central China Normal University.

Notably, the team's activities received media coverage, including reports in Suizhou Daily, Suizhou Comprehensive News, Civilization Suizhou, and the Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan Office of Central China Normal University.



Group Photo at the Shakespearean Theater Workshop.

This issue features the academic excellence, global perspectives, and enthusiasm for cross-cultural exchange exhibited by our university's students in two international exchange activities. We hope that the success of these activities will inspire more international exchange initiatives, bringing diverse international perspectives into our campus.