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### Too Soon To Tell?

The invitation to offer these remarks initially seemed like a very tough assignment. I was asked “to talk about how study abroad can enrich one’s life, extend horizon, broaden experience and shape a sound personality.” So my very first thought was to see if some blend of Traditional Chinese Medicines and Tai Chi might be the best way to achieve all of these outcomes. But of course all of us are here because we actually do believe that while international education is not a panacea, it has the power, as Senator Fulbright once observed, to “transform nations into people and humanize international relationships.”

And in the world of international education, China today occupies a singular status. Ten days from now, the Institute will release its new *Open Doors* census of academic mobility. China will again figure prominently as the top sending country but also as among the world’s leading academic destinations. In the accompanying graphics, you can see the 10-year trends which reflect how integral internationalization is to China’s higher education and national reform strategy. The strategy focuses on promoting the country’s higher education growth and attracting international students and scholars to study and work in China. And as it has encouraged more of its students to go abroad, China has also emphasized the importance of attracting these students back home and also welcoming non-Chinese students and faculty members. By announcing the goal of hosting 500,000 international students by the end of this decade, China is also signaling the steadiness of its commitment to making international education a central part of how it engages with the rest of the world. Achieving the position China occupies today, in short, demonstrates the impact that government policy can have on our field and why annual conferences such as this one are important for the world we share.

So I am honored to be here as your guest and my colleagues and I at the Institute of International Education are grateful for the close working relationship we have with CEAIE and China’s higher education institutions. IIE first welcomed Chinese students to the U.S. over 90 years ago, and one of our first publications was aimed at helping Chinese students adjust to U.S. campus life. More recently, we have focused on encouraging American students to study in China, and have led delegations of American higher education leaders to China, in collaboration with CEAIE. And of course we are deeply honored to assist the U.S. and Chinese governments in implementing the Fulbright Program, through which hundreds of Chinese and American students and scholars have been exchanged over the decades. Indeed, China was the first country to participate in the Fulbright Program and it remains one of America’s most active exchange partners.

We all know from countless reports and studies that studying or teaching abroad is a life-changing personal experience. The bigger question is how does it change entire countries? Does it make foreign policies – and the people who form and execute them – less or more internationalist in outlook? Does it change what is taught in the classroom and what students learn from each other? Does it impact pedagogy? And can the same effects be achieved by virtual exchanges? Above all, is international education the surest antidote we have to conflict among nations and a preventative for war?

Unfortunately we do not yet know the answers to these questions. Take, for example, the last question which was actually the reason why the Institute of International Education was established in 1919 in the immediate aftermath of World War One. Its founders – two of whom would go on to win Nobel Peace Prizes – believed that the exchange of students would prevent anything like what they had just gone through from happening again. And based on that vision, we opened our doors very early on to exchanges with Germany, Japan, and the then newly formed Soviet Union and received many visiting delegations from these countries. Yet, all of these activities did not prevent World War Two or the Cold War. So I have entitled my talk “Too Soon To Tell,” recalling the reply Chou En Lai made when he was asked on the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution: “What impact do you think it had on world history?”

Permit me to frame my observations by sharing three stories.

Our annual focus on U.S.-China educational exchange tells us that the students coming from China to the U.S. are increasingly younger and are interested in a wide range of subjects beyond the more traditional study abroad fields of science and business. Americans heading to China are also interested in a wide range of fields, and are combining classroom studies with internships and other non-credit practical learning experiences. While all of these academic trends tracked in *Open Doors* are interesting, I am finding even more interesting what happens outside the classroom. And this is where transformation and impact may be greatest.

In 1996, the Goodman household was pleased to host a Chinese high school exchange student, who preferred to be called Bill. His English was already slightly better than mine and outside of class we were able to have long discussions about what he was reading in the *Washington Post* and how this related to our structure of government. Bill noted that since our papers routinely published government secrets, the press must indeed be a fourth branch of government even though only three are specified in our Constitution.

My boys began to worry about Bill when after supper he would help my wife wash the dishes, talk with me so much about the newspapers, and then put in another two or three hours of solid study in his room. My boys wondered if he was homesick or unhappy. I explained that students in other countries where I had visited actually work and study much harder than I found to be the case in America. And that there was nothing wrong with that. After a few weeks, my wife had a mixed Chinese and American team of dishwashers and our sons' grades improved.

Now Bill had a fellow Chinese exchange student, called Mike, who stayed in another home and together they became involved in our local high school's environmental movement. The aim was to do things to promote a green approach on and off campus. At the same time, the boys noticed that the local fire department was conducting its annual campaign to get people to replace the batteries in their smoke detectors. Mike asked what happened to all the batteries that we throw away, especially since they contain some very hard-to-degrade materials. No one knew beyond putting them in the trash.

So the boys worked with the school's chemistry teacher to get educated about what is inside a battery and why there needed to be a better approach to disposal. And they created a battery recycling week on campus during the week and then from door-to-door on the weekend. More than 2,000 batteries were collected and disposed of properly.

Mike went back to Shanghai when the semester was over and we met again in 2000. He and others, he said, had also started a battery recycling program to prevent them from being thrown into the Huangpu River. It was not an easy task. The student group approached the local government with the idea and it was rejected as having been influenced too much by their stay in America. Disappointed by this reaction but convinced their campaign would be beneficial for China, Mike and company went to the Communist Party Youth League and asked the Party to overrule the government – which it did. Mike told me the Party Secretary said collecting and disposing of batteries properly was something that would be good for China and it didn't matter to him where the idea originated.

I then asked Mike how many batteries they collected so far. He seemed troubled by my question and then had to admit that he did not exactly know the number because they had in fact collected something like 2,000 tons and he did not know how many individual batteries were in each ton.

A final story grows out of an encounter during my last visit to China where IIE's Beijing office arranged a dinner with American Fulbright students who were then in the middle of their China projects. Most were engaged in research projects while affiliated with their Chinese host institutions in the capital or within an hour or two train ride away. The woman next to me, however, told me it had taken her two days to get to Beijing.



She explained that she is an environmental science graduate student from The Ohio State University, doing her PhD on river water micro-organisms in Southwest China. Her main focus was to try to assess how glacial meltoff was impacting the aquatic biosphere and understand the implications of those changes for global climate change and long-term environmental management and planning in the region. Her field research project involved collecting

samples in a very remote village near the glacial headwaters of one of Asia's major river systems. To get to Beijing from the village, she told me, you had to take several busses, then a train, and finally an air flight.

Naturally, I assumed she was in town to get some of her samples tested.

She said no and, in fact, had not brought any of her water with her. She was back in Beijing to check in with her host institution about some administrative issues, but was also here consulting with a charitable organization about whether they could fund surgery for a young girl in the village who was badly injured in a car crash. The father had been killed, the mother crippled, and the nine-year-old girl sustained many problematic head injuries.

Now this remote village rarely sees any outsiders. Perhaps this tall, red-headed, Buckeye from Ohio was the first American in the village's 5,000 year history that they had ever met. She is certainly someone they will never forget.

"What else could I do? If the girl did not get help, she would have absolutely no future. And no one would care for her when I left. And maybe I was the only person that could find a medical mission group that could help her. I can always collect water samples. This was Cichenzhuoma's only chance, maybe, at living her life." The more she talked about the situation the more this Ohio State Fulbrighter reminded me of the powerful impact educational exchanges can have, changing and saving lives, far into the future.

**"The Year I Lost My Father and My Smile"**



**"But Thanks to Amway, Grace Children's Foundation, the Shanghai Youth Medical Volunteer Team, and the United States Fulbright Program, I Got My Grin Back"  
---Cichenzhuoma"**

The international students featured in these remarks – both Chinese and American – are our future leaders. What they learned in school and the grades they received are impressive. But what may be most important to shaping our future relationship is what they learned about each other's country and history and values. With the insights and knowledge they gained abroad, they were inspired to take actions that benefitted wider communities and went way beyond the classroom. In the process, they are helping to make the world and future we share a less dangerous place.

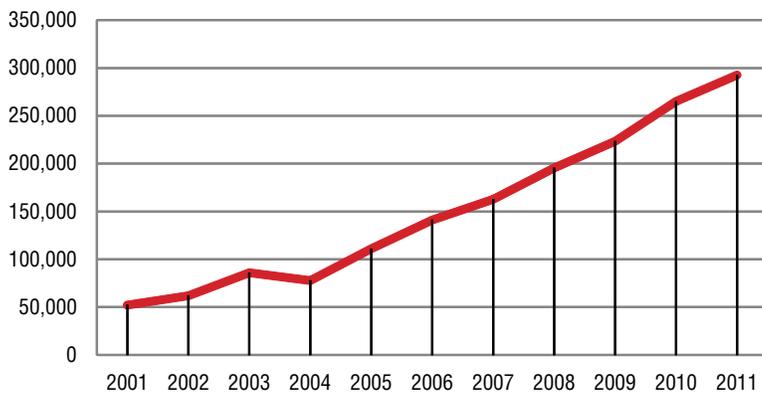
# China: Student Mobility Trends

Internationalization is integral to China's higher education national education reform strategy. The strategy focuses on promoting China's higher education and attracting international students, world-class experts, and researchers to study and work in China. China is also committed to supporting more Chinese students to study abroad and encouraging them to return home upon completion of studies.

While China continues to be the top-sending country of international students in the world over the last decade, China has also become a major host of international students, having welcomed over 292,000 international students in 2011 - an all-time high. China recently set an ambitious goal of hosting 500,000 international students by 2020 and has allocated funding to attract international students to its campuses, including providing up to 50,000 scholarships.

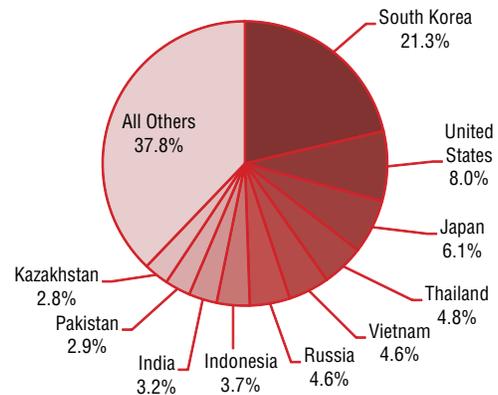


**A. International students in China, 2001-2011**



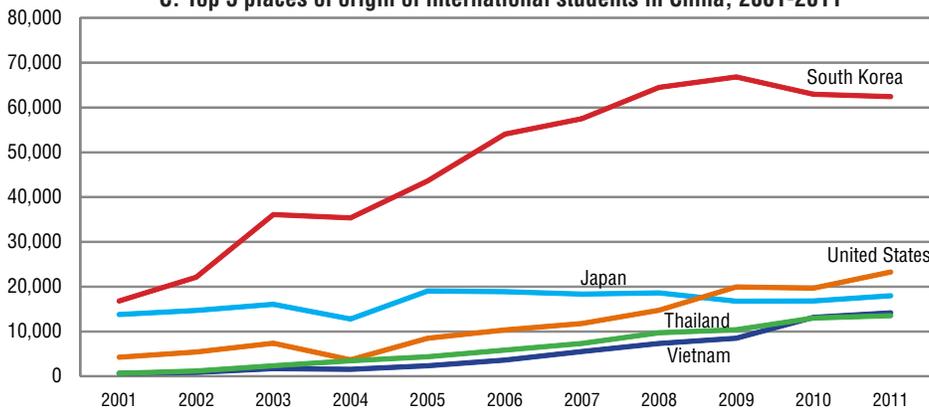
SOURCE: Project Atlas / CSC

**B. Top 10 places of origin of international students in China, 2011**



SOURCE: Project Atlas / CSC

**C. Top 5 places of origin of international students in China, 2001-2011**

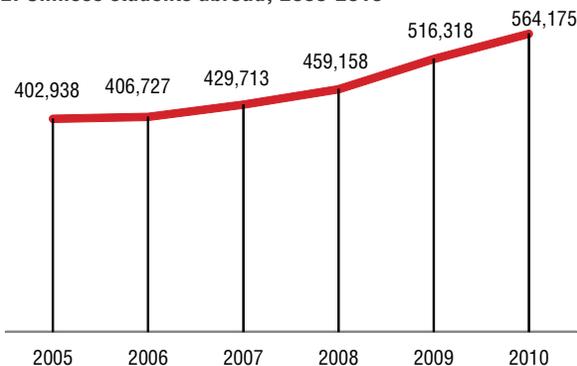


SOURCE: Project Atlas / CSC

The China Scholarship Council (CSC) provides "financial assistance to the Chinese citizens wishing to study abroad and to the foreign citizens wishing to study in China in order to develop the educational, scientific and technological, and cultural exchanges and economic and trade cooperation between China and other countries."

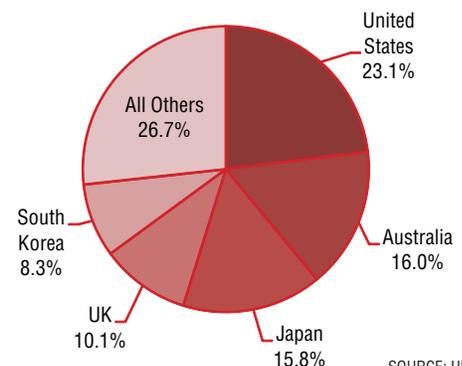
[en.csc.edu.cn](http://en.csc.edu.cn)

**E. Chinese students abroad, 2005-2010**



SOURCE: UNESCO

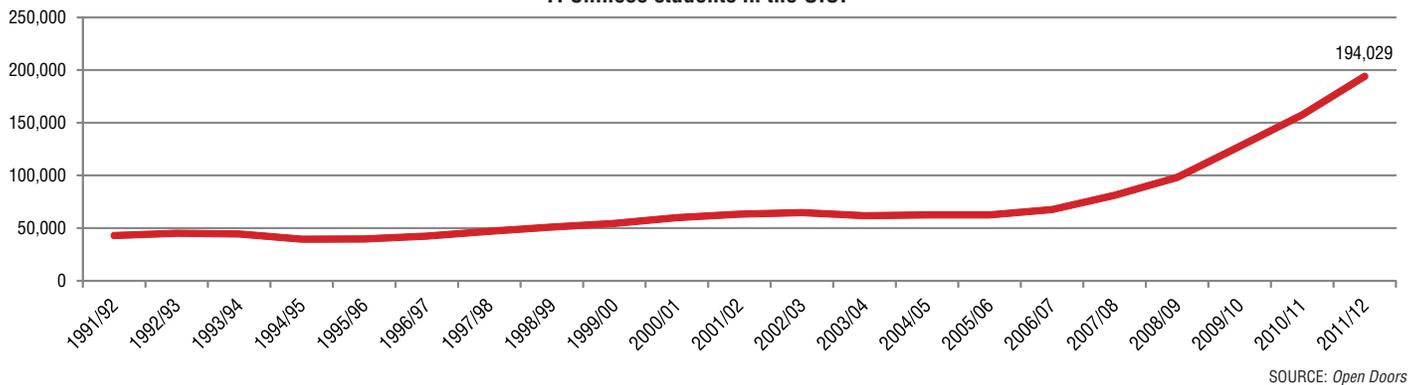
**D. Top 5 study destinations of Chinese students, 2010**



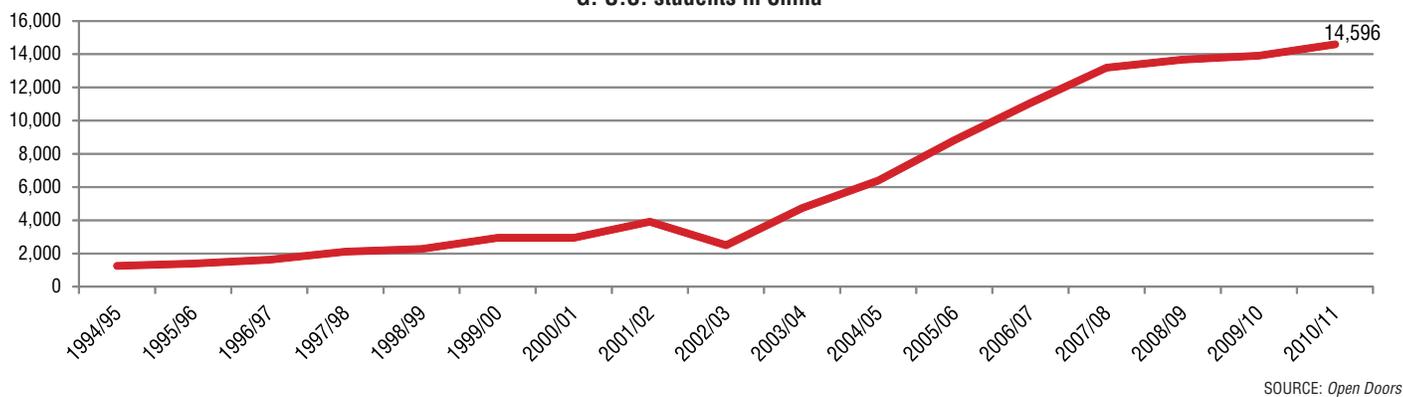
SOURCE: UNESCO

# U.S.- China Educational Exchange

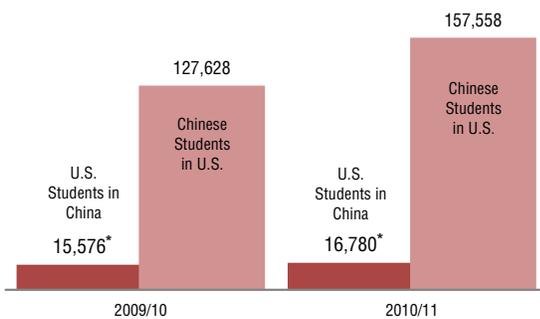
F. Chinese students in the U.S.



G. U.S. students in China

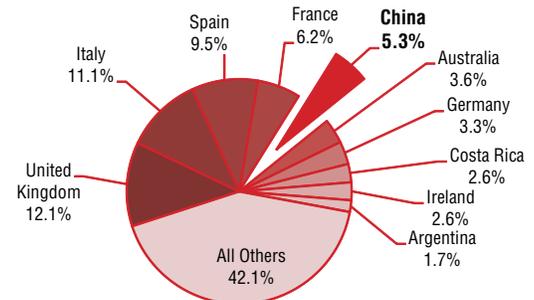


H. U.S.- China educational exchange balance



SOURCE: Open Doors, Project Atlas

I. Top destinations for U.S. students to study abroad, 2010/11



SOURCE: Open Doors

J. Total U.S. student participants in education abroad activities in China, 2011\*

Category of study	Students	Percent
Study abroad for credit (all types)	15,647**	58.6%
Study tours	4,019	15.1%
U.S. students pursuing full degrees in China	2,184	8.3%
Chinese language courses	1,518	5.7%
Student exchanges	758	2.8%
Internships or work abroad	670	2.5%
High school students	430	1.6%
Volunteering or service-learning projects	196	0.7%
Individuals not enrolled in formal course of study	258	0.9%
Other education abroad activities	1,006	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,686</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## U.S. Students in China: Meeting the Goals of 100,000 Strong Initiative

This data was collected in a first-ever study on the full scope of U.S. student participation in education abroad activities in China.

92 percent of U.S. higher education institutions in the survey reported a predicted increase in the number of U.S. students going to China over the next 5 years.

Download the full report at [www.iie.org/AmericanStudentsinChina](http://www.iie.org/AmericanStudentsinChina)

\*This data includes Hong Kong and Macau. \*\*The 15,647 total includes data reported in the Open Doors Report for China (14,596), Hong Kong (1,033) and Macau (18). Source: U.S. Students in China: Meeting the Goals of the 100,000 Strong Initiative