

## From the Director

During an especially busy summer I was fortunate to meet Carolina students and colleagues in Thailand. Each time this happens I am reminded just how important study abroad experiences are for our students. It is always remarkable to see our students growing as they learn about Asia by studying and living in the region.

I was also fortunate to be invited to visit several research institutes in the region including universities in Bangkok, Manila, Taipei, Shanghai, Kunming, Perth and Brisbane. With email, however, one is seldom really "away" from Chapel Hill. This summer it was impossible to neglect the financial issues that have impacted the University.

As many will be aware, centers and institutes received particular attention as cuts were considered and implemented. The Carolina Asia Center didn't escape the budget cuts, and we lost funds that had previously been used for communications and supplies. At present, the Center receives state funds that cover only a part of the salaries we receive for our tiny staffing allocation.

In the short term, the cuts impact our programs, meaning that we need to reduce some of the things we'd like to do. In the medium term, the cuts mean that we have to seek other sources of funding. Of course, this is no easy task in the current economic environment.

In the past 5 years, we have made some great advances, supporting faculty and expanding options for our students (see below), but even more has to be done. That means we need to find additional funding.

If you'd like to support the Carolina Asia Center, some options are outlined on the next page.

Kevin Hewison, *Director*

### CAC Milestones, 2005-09

Funds raised (2002-08)	> \$3.3 million
Faculty positions supported	5
Fellowships awarded	8
China travel awards to faculty	10
Course development awards	23
Research awards to faculty and graduate students	13
Funding for student-initiated activities	30
Funding for faculty-initiated activities	69
Items added to the Library (2002-08)	> 3,300
New Asian studies courses (2002-08)	> 90

## New China in Old Amoy: UNC's Semester Abroad Program

By Michael and Judith Tsin

As cooler weather settles on Chapel Hill, it stands in stark contrast to the tropical heat that greeted 15 UNC undergraduates as they arrived at Xiamen University (Xiada) last August. Located on China's southeast coast, Xiamen—known to Westerners in the past as Amoy—plays host to UNC's Semester in China program. As one of China's gateways, the city is also renowned for its rich history, thriving economy, sandy beaches, and clear



The UNC group at the historic site of Hulishan.

air—the latter a rarity in today's China—and is ideal for students to experience both the old and the new of a country that is transforming itself with breathtaking pace.

In a fieldtrip to the nearby port city of Quanzhou the students found the legacy of Arab, Indian and European settlement: the still-standing remains of an 11th century mosque and even older Muslim cemetery as well as headstones of traders from around the world. Today these monuments are surrounded by miles of granite and marble quarries serving the global luxury-kitchen trade that extends to North Carolina.

Contemporary Xiamen is a magnet for migrants within China and visitors from overseas: the neo-punk hairstylists from neighboring areas won a keen following among our group, the noodle vendors from the distant Northwest, the laborers who come from every corner of the country; and the many entrepreneurs, foreign executives and students that keep the city's international connections alive.

Fall 2008 marked the third year of UNC's program at Xiada. For four months the students lived the everyday

reality of this rapidly changing China, surrounded by sparkling new high-rises, navigating traffic that often seemed to operate in a Darwinian mode, and communicating with increasing ease with the locals. They had opportunities to travel independently, some to major cities such as Shanghai and Beijing, others venturing as far as the southwestern province of Yunnan. They learned about the strong ties between the Xiamen region and Taiwan: our group was invited to a government forum on the growing links between Taiwan and China.

In addition to classes in Chinese language, the students took two courses on contemporary China, taught by a UNC professor and a Xiada faculty member respectively. Their research papers displayed the variety and depth of the semester's experiences, with topics that included China's changing social mores, environmental challenges, China's hip-hop culture, welfare for migrant laborers, comparisons between Chinese and Western medicine, and relationships between expatriate Western men and Chinese women. The group's spirit was perhaps best encapsulated in the last get-together in Xiamen—a boisterous rendition of their best-loved Chinese songs at a favorite karaoke parlor. The only thing they may miss more is fruit

smoothies bought in the old alley just down from the new McDonald's.

Michael Tsin is Associate Professor of History at UNC-Chapel Hill.

## Triangle East Asia Colloquium in Spring 2010

Keep Saturday, April 17th free for TEAC 2010. Organized by Barbara Ambros of the Department of Religious Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill, the theme for is "Animals in East Asian History." The featured speakers are Christine Marran (Japanese literature and popular culture, University of Minnesota), Ian Miller (Japanese history; Harvard University), Fa-Ti Fan (Chinese history, Binghamton University) and UNC's Wei-Cheng Lin.

Visit [www.carolinaasiacenter.unc.edu](http://www.carolinaasiacenter.unc.edu) for more information.

## Phillips Ambassador to China

Summer 2009 in Beijing, China. As I sit and look back on my experience in China, I am literally overwhelmed with a sense of gratefulness, excitement and resolve.

Phil Phillips, the man behind the Phillips Ambassador program, put it best when he said “The 21st century belongs to Asia and to me, studying abroad is not a question- it is the answer.” I am truly privileged to have represented Carolina as a Phillips Ambassador to Asia,

and my experience has been enriched in countless ways. Now back in Chapel Hill, I am eager to tell the story of how I caught the “China-Fever!”

As an Entrepreneurship minor I interned at a public relations agency in Beijing. I'd set out at 7:00 am Monday to Thursday and arrive to the office at around 8:30 am after an eye-opening trip on the public buses and subways of Beijing. At the agency I got to share working life with my Chinese colleagues and gained a hands-on view of entrepreneurship in action in the world's most rapidly developing economy.

In life, I believe there are certain experiences and memories that will echo into the future—moments so significant, so profound, so meaningful, as Gary my Chinese roommate put it, that I will always cherish them, always learn from them, always be influenced by them. Every Saturday during my Beijing summer provided these experiences as my Chinese friends and I traveled to North Beijing to visit the ever-growing migrant community there.

Chinese migrant workers come to Beijing from every province of China seeking secure income and hope to provide their family with a better life. Because of legal restrictions, the families are not allowed to live in Beijing so they settle on the outskirts of the city in makeshift migrant villages. Living in impoverished conditions, the parents often work up to 15 hours a day in the city while their children stay in the village and go to school. With no support from the government, the principal of the school has dedicated his life to these children. Pitching in, I spent my Saturdays there doing everything from teaching English to playing kickball and rock-paper-scissors in the yard. I saw

hope and passion in the eyes of these children as they spent hours every day practicing their English and Chinese skills so they can one day go to high school and maybe even college. After feeling such a connection with the children and doing everything I could while there, I left China in August with a deep awareness that I will return to that village to continue to share the message of hope.

It was difficult to leave Beijing—a place I learned to call home—where I was challenged, stretched and blessed, where I made life-long friends with my Chinese hallmates, where I grew to see the world through a new set of lenses, a place I will always cherish, love, and long to return.

*Wyatt Bruton is a junior with a major in Public Relations in the School of Journalism & Mass Communication and Minor in Entrepreneurship and History.*



*Wyatt Bruton with children from a migrant village outside of Beijing*

## Eating My Way through China

During my freshman year, I could not understand why my Chinese teachers insisted that I learn how to say “monosodium glutamate” in Chinese. However, in China, I ended up using the phrase, “Wo bu yao wei-jing,” (“I don't want MSG”) almost every day of my study abroad buying street food. My American and Chinese professors weren't convinced that eating street food was wise. Was this dangerous and unhealthy? Maybe. Did I ever get sick? No. Did anyone else? But then I'd had years of “training” eating questionable culinary “creations” at home.



*Vashti M. Chandler is a senior with a double major in Asian Studies and International Studies and a minor in Chinese. Vashti kept a photo blog documenting her adventures and street food finds (<http://www.vashtichandler.com>).*

My time in China was an absolute thrill. I arrived in Shanghai at the end of the monsoon season, in June of 2008. Upon arrival I was surprised to see how different China was from the way I had been picturing it. I was immediately overwhelmed by the large numbers of people, having grown up in a small town in rural Colorado.

Summer in Shanghai involved 15-20 hours of Mandarin each week, as well as a course on “Chinese Business Issues and Practices.” Given the rigorous academic approach of the CIEE Shanghai program, I learned an enormous amount in a short period of time, and was able to practice my Chinese extensively while out exploring and savoring street food.

After a few weeks of no street food related illness, I threw caution to the wind, and decided to take on the challenge of finding the best street food in Shanghai. Whether it was a street side roast duck shack, a fried dumpling stand, or a soup dumpling steam table in the middle of the sidewalk, I was on a mission to try it all. By the end of my 10 week stint in Shanghai, having found some of the greatest hole in the wall (literally!) restaurants, I was off to Xiamen for the UNC Semester in China Program.

My fall was, like my summer, an incredible and enriching experience. I took a number of interesting classes from our knowledgeable and attentive UNC professor, Dr. Michael Tsin, as well as a few additional Chinese courses. Our UNC group took frequent trips to nearby towns, cities, and “villages” where we experienced some of the Fuzhou Province culture, history, and, of course, food first hand.

I hated to leave China and all of its great street food behind at the end of the Xiamen program, but I have been comforted lately by the prospect of returning to a new city this spring. I hope that spending another semester abroad in China, this time in Beijing; will bring me a wider view of China, its cultures, and its street food as I continue learning Mandarin.

## Welcoming new Asian studies faculty

A number of new faculty members have recently been hired across the University. The center held a small reception in September to meet and greet these new faculty.

New faculty members include:

Wei-Cheng Lin – Art  
Sara Smith – Geography  
Wenhua Shi – Communication Studies  
Yong Cai – Sociology  
Xi Chen – Political Science

Asia Connections 

Carolina Asia Center  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
FedEx Global Education Center  
Campus Box #7582  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7582, U.S.A.  
phone: (919) 843-0129  
fax: (919) 843-2102

[www.carolinaasiacenter.unc.edu](http://www.carolinaasiacenter.unc.edu)

## Make a gift to the Carolina Asia Center

Your gift to the Carolina Asia center will support a wide range of campus-wide activities to foster cutting-edge research, innovative teaching, and strategic partnerships.

Please make checks payable to The Carolina Asia Center.

For other ways to give, please contact Daniel Lebold, Director of Development for International Studies at 919.962.6864 or email [Daniel.lebold@unc.edu](mailto:Daniel.lebold@unc.edu).



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