

**Global Encounter: China**  
**Framing MSU's Engagement in China for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**  
Thursday, May 18, 2006

**Welcome/Introductions/Overview**

**Goals:**

To gather information from those who have their feet on the ground in these regions/areas, now and in the future  
To interact with colleagues who are also engaged.  
To frame MSU's Global Engagement in a way that takes the best of what MSU does and links with strong partners in other areas.

**Session I:**

**"Where Are We and Where Do We Need to Be in China?"**

**Comments by Jeffrey Riedinger, Acting Dean of International Studies and Programs**

The China Concept Paper (posted on the ISP Global Encounter website now and prior to this summit) was developed following the November, 2004 visit by President Simon to Beijing, China as part of Global Food Safety Forum. Also in attendance were John Hudzik, Lonnie King, Jeff Armstrong, Jeff Riedinger, and others. This visit raised the following questions: What are we doing in China? What are we known for? What are MSU's faculty doing there? What are our students studying there? What are Chinese students studying at MSU?

This led to three thrust areas of concentration: education, food systems, and environment (not limited to these, but these are three initial thrusts to begin discussing). Why identify themes? MSU is big with a large budget (\$1.2 Billion) and lots of research projects; we are a huge enterprise. Nonetheless, there is a limit to what we can do, with whom, and on what subjects. What is the hallmark of Dr. Simon's presidency? It is great to do hundreds of projects across the globe with hundreds of institutions, with individual faculty efforts leading to good concepts and projects. But with limited resources, in allocating travel funds, making new faculty hires, and forging strategic relationships with countries/partners, we have to make choices. This is why the Global Encounter discussions were initiated to help lead this decision making. We can't be all things to all people. We need to focus on institutions that share our values, our commitment to enhancing knowledge and research on real world problems. How can we help people? Where do we excel? Where can we make a difference?

Maybe there are other institutions that are excellent in areas we are not, so we can benefit from each other and be able to make an impact.

We are operating in a fundamentally different higher education environment. Our role used to be building Higher Education institutions abroad and training faculty to lead those institutions. Now our international peer institutions have come far, have the experience and are keeping their students home. We now are equals; we have questions, they have answers, and vice versa. What are issues that are important to us and to our partners? It is a competitive environment. How do we deliver degree programs in this atmosphere?

The MSU China Turf Grass program is different – students take classes in China and online, faculty go there to teach them, we utilize adjunct faculty or Chinese faculty trained here, students receive only part of their training at MSU, 4-5 year program where students only come to the U.S. for one semester. Most of the program is in China. New way of reaching students, limits high cost of education in U.S., builds very strong partnership with institutions in China. Common alumni, linked faculty. If we were to roll out dual degree programs (2 diplomas) (not joint degree programs) then we have to make choices around the globe: What programs and with whom? There is strong demand for our highly ranked programs such as packaging, supply chain management, etc. but with a limited number of faculty, limited number willing to travel, etc. in these disciplines, we can't be everywhere. There are subject areas where we can end up with a major impact on those countries and on MSU so those are the areas to concentrate on.

In allocating scarce resources, we must be mindful of return on investment. Not measured in dollar terms, not where will we make the most money doing what, but if we invest in this partnership, this dual degree program, this research program, this student exchange, where will we have the most positive impact on the citizens of Michigan, U.S. and the partner country/institution? What are the criteria to make this decision? Starting point is to look at MSU-Global Online Connections structure of how they decide what to focus on. Roughly costs \$50,000-\$100,000 per online course so now MSU more closely reviews what online courses to build. Look at who will buy it, what is the pay off for that course, what can it be used for besides the initial investment (for credit courses, non-credit certificate programs, modules for other courses/programs). This is a good strategy for us to focus on in deciding where to put our investment. MSU-Global Online has this structure built, so the China Concept Paper pulled from that structure to help frame how to make choices on who/what/where in this international discussion. Additional and/or different criteria are also needed.

The China decision was easy – we can't see a future for MSU that does not include being in China. There are a lot of faculty already engaged there, students from there, students going there, and it is a major country in the world. But what are the other countries? And what will we be known for in China and elsewhere?

Audience questions on approach or specific issues on the China Concept Paper:

- 1) Implied questions – what does MSU have to offer to the world/China? What new thing do we want to offer? What are we “selling” that we already do well? What do we want to “sell” but don't do well now?
  - a. Who is working in China but isn't involved in this discussion to date? Need those people engaged in the discussion.
  - b. Who has expertise but is not experienced in China but would make a great impact if they focused there?
  - c. Ian Gray – University-wide Research Jewels outlined at the VP level after feedback from each academic Dean. These are research themes that transcend the University – where there are multiple areas of expertise surrounding that theme on campus. Unfortunately, this process did not pick up some important multi-disciplinary and international projects. It identified specific department expertise, not cross-college projects. What else do we need beyond these themes?
  - d. Faculty hiring priorities – discussion each year with academic deans.
  - e. This Global Encounter process is intended to help the Provost with decision making on new hires and new projects. What are the issues of the future, countries of the future, etc.
- 2) Partnerships in undergraduate education are possible but the Chinese system is not that easy. Chinese system is very structured. Students will disrupt their program in China if they come here for one semester. Graduate education in China is much more flexible. The Chinese seem to be ignoring graduate studies and research.
  - a. Undergraduate Turf Grass program was mentioned because it is operational. Others are in various stages, but have to be approved by local government and then by national Ministry of Education. This is a different process than in prior years. Undergraduate dual degree programs will probably be the exception, not the norm. Others options in the discussion are masters/doctoral programs. Countries are making major improvements in undergraduate education, encouraging students to stay home. Turf Grass program was designed from scratch so it is designed specifically for these students so they don't sacrifice their program in China to come to MSU.

- b. Graduate level is more flexible and the program can be catered to have some studies in the country, some at MSU, then go home to finish. This builds human capacity in other countries. Another benefit if they can't get the degree unless they go home is that it is easier to get their visas if the program is built that way.
  - c. We can also jointly share the costs of faculty to deliver the program. We hire some faculty, partner hires some, and share delivery of the program between the partners. Our Provost feels hiring decisions and research projects of the future will be made in collaboration with our partners.
- 3) What other parallel discussion are happening in China to know what they are looking for?
- a. Look at what degrees the ministry has approved. This information is available online.
  - b. MSU Administration members are meeting regularly with the Chinese Ministry of Education.
  - c. Confucius Institute discussions have allowed us to have discussions other than those related to language.
  - d. Various meetings with Chinese universities. MSU's Office of China Programs held a competition this spring for faculty interested in going to China. Faculty and staff were asked to propose who you'd meet with, what you'd discuss, etc. Made 5-6 awards this year, and will continue in future years. ISP's APP&R made a specific request for funds to send faculty to China and to bring colleagues here. Will again be on a competitive basis – what is the end project (proposal to NIH, NSF or foundation; Degree program; Study Abroad; etc.) if you receive funds?
- 4) In October, 2006 there will be a trip to China for a forum on quality assurance in global online learning and the official opening of the MSU China office. Provost Wilcox will be going to host our partner universities and private partners and open the office. Looking for series of events highlighting MSU during that period. Let ISP know if you have something going on in China in the early fall, or if you could organize an event during that time.
- 5) Extraordinary array of international alums. In some countries there are very organized associations. In China, there are lots of alums (degree graduates and visiting scholars or other parts of MSU family) but they are not well organized. Focused on fixing that. Trying to look for events that bring the alums into the mix.
- 6) MSU, in some cases, is getting funds for some programs but subsidizing other programs – what are we doing now and what about the future? International students come because they can afford us. In the past, many students came to the U.S. on U.S. Government funds but funding is much reduced. Faculty are going to some countries, our students going

- to other countries, and international students are coming from countries who can afford us, all of these being different mixes of countries. We need to look at where the international students are **not** coming from as it is not affordable. At the undergraduate level there are very few scholarships available. At the graduate level there are some, mainly assistantships. Some countries have refocused on scholarships to send their brightest students to the U.S. to study. We need to link up to help that effort. Model is to stay with the MSU sticker price, then have scholarship programs to get the net cost affordable. How many are coming for what program dictates what our options are. Focus on ways to not make them spend years here at high cost. Dual degrees, certificate programs, online offerings, various ways to make it possible for the disadvantaged student to attend MSU. Current online certificate program for graduate level is at the college level and is not on an MSU transcript. But there are also not-for-credit certificate programs.
- 7) Extent to which we should try to foster relationships with other universities? How much should faculty be “advertising” that we are interested in building relationships?
- a. Dr. Zhao – Director of the MSU Office of China Programs. Point of contact for what is in play in relationship to China initiatives.
  - b. Any hosting of important visitors (not just those from China), please talk with ISP for help to connect the visitors to key individuals at MSU. Not wanting to raise expectations, but make a strong connection with visitors. There is some funding available. Faculty who have connections in their fields should let us know so we can build on that.
- 8) Health not mentioned as a key thrust area– why? The participants in this summit could raise that to one of the key thrusts. Food systems term is broad – farm to fork. Impacts health so health is not left out. Human and animal health are in the mix – also in the Environment thrust. But that is a purpose of these Global Encounter discussions. At the time of President Simon’s visit, the number of health faculty working in China was not high. But that also leads to the discussion of “who ought to be in this discussion?” Also health communication (AIDS, Breast Cancer, etc.). In every field, the field needs to make some decisions themselves as there are a limited number of people who can do the work. Can’t be everywhere and do everything.

- 9) Value of programs, connections of faculty, but what about mindset of the university community that needs to be educated on what it means to be internationally sensitive/aware. Needs to be part of the whole campus, not just creating new programs abroad. But how is it internalized on campus? How do we become more welcoming? Something that even impacts the local community. Need to make international guests and residents more comfortable, and make our community more aware of the benefits of being an international community.

**This material was generated from Global Encounter-China, <<http://www.isp.msu.edu/globalencounter/china>>, held at Michigan State University on May 18, 2006. This interactive and participatory event was designed to obtain input and to elaborate in a country-specific forum on relevant themes, opportunities, issues, and opportunities affecting MSU's current and future engagement in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.**