CSB, SJU Mark 20 Years in China

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The traditional gift for a married couple celebrating its 20th anniversary is china.

CSB and SJU are celebrating a 20th anniversary this year. But instead of receiving china as a gift, CSB and SJU are celebrating their 20th anniversary in China, strengthening their relationship with Southwest University.

Southwest University was formerly two different schools – Southwest China Normal University (the original partner of CSB/SJU), and Southwest China Agricultural University. The two Chinese schools – whose campuses were located next to each other in the city of Beibei in the Sichuan Province in China – merged in July 2005 to become Southwest University.

CSB President MaryAnn Baenninger and Br. Dietrich Reinhart, SJU president, visited the school Nov. 11-12. While there, they formalized a proposal to exchange science students. CSB/SJU science majors from the biology, chemistry and/or physics departments will conduct research with an undergraduate partner student from the corresponding department at Southwest University, under the direction of a professor from the Chinese school, for a six-week period in May and June. The Southwest University students and their CSB/SJU partners will then travel to CSB/SJU and do research for six weeks in July and August under the direction of a CSB/SJU professor. The schools plan to begin the program in May or June 2006.

The relationship between CSB/SJU and Southwest Normal began with S. Baulu Kuan, OSB visiting Southwest Normal in the early 1980s. S. Baulu chose the site because of the beauty of the campus and the famous art department there. She also believed that its rural setting (45 miles from Chongqing, one of the world’s largest municipalities and a major industrial and manufacturing center) was not unlike CSB/SJU’s location (70 miles from Minneapolis/St. Paul).

In 1984, S. Baulu brought Academic Dean Robert Spaeth and Vice President Charles Villette to Southwest Normal in 1984. Southwest Normal officials presented Spaeth and Villette a contract to establish formal relations and exchanges.

The contract, which was signed in 1986, provided for faculty and student exchanges. CSB/SJU has sent an average of two or more recent graduates to Southwest Normal every year to teach English. In addition, many CSB/SJU faculty have also served as visiting scholars and taught courses to Chinese students.

More than 300 CSB/SJU students have participated in the semester-long study abroad program at Southwest Normal, and another 100 students have participated in the month-long (January-term) study abroad trips.

CSB/SJU has hosted at least three presidential delegations from Southwest Normal.

In May 2005, Presidents Baenninger and Reinhart, as well as President Song Naiqing, signed a new five-year agreement to continue exchanges and cooperation between the schools. A new version of the May 2005 agreement was signed during the presidents’ November visit to Southwest University.
Sometimes, Joe Des Jardins dreads going to class. At other times, he can’t wait to go to class. It all depends on the section. Two sections. Same course. The difference is that in one section, the CSB/SJU professor of philosophy faces a wall of silence – polite, smiling silence, but silence nonetheless. In the other section, students are engaged, ready to question, challenge and participate.

Des Jardins aired his frustrations as faculty and staff tackled the prickly question of student engagement during a campus conversation, Academic Culture at CSB/SJU: Engaging the Life of the Mind, Oct. 27, in the CSB Alumnae Hall. Des Jardins opened the conversation as one of three panelists. He was joined by Kristen Nowak, editor in chief at The Record; and Gar Kellom, SJU vice president for student development.

As a student, Des Jardins experienced both sides of the same engagement coin that he now faces as a professor. As an undergraduate, Des Jardins said there was little intellectual life. “It was lonely for the few of us who enjoyed intellectual life.” That changed, however, when he attended graduate school at Notre Dame. There, he said the exciting intellectual experience of being part of something much larger than himself changed his life.

Now, as a member of the Core Task Force, he said he and his colleagues work to identify the unifying elements of an undergraduate, liberal arts education. Academic engagement is central to that work. “We try to envision what a great core would be,” he said.

Nowak said that students are responsible for their academic engagement. “We have to want to read more.” She acknowledged that students can be encouraged to assume that responsibility. “We like to talk about current events and how they apply to us.”

It is important to apply concepts in the classroom to what’s going on in the world, she said.

Kellom brought the total campus experience to the conversation. “I’m not sure it’s just about academics. It’s the package that we say we’re about: intellectual, spiritual, physical.”

The campus conversation, moderated by Provost Henry Smorynski, was convened to address three key questions: What is the level of intellectual engagement among our students today? What are our expectations of intellectual engagement inside and outside the classroom? What do we need to do to improve the level of intellectual engagement at CSB and SJU?

One participant described the poor quality of assigned work as the equivalent of an academic wedgie.
Answers to the first question described student academic performance at CSB and SJU as a mixed bag, ranging from outstanding, to average, to so-so to lazy. One participant described the poor quality of assigned work as the equivalent of an academic wedgie. Students don’t make a clear distinction about priorities. Many turn in work that indicates they took no pride in the quality of their work. They did the work to get it done. They had to wedge the academic work into their schedule.

Maybe, another responded, students turn in sloppy work because they don’t know yet what good work is.

One participant wondered whether the senior class mean GPA of 3.28 proves that this is Lake Wobegon, where everybody is above average. In surveys, for example, prospective students, first-year students and seniors all choose the same words to describe the campuses: friendly, comfortable, fun, community. Academically challenging places fifth or sixth.

This raised the question of whether grade inflation contributes to the problem.

Faculty need to address the issue of rewarding lackluster student performance with a 3.28 mean GPA, one participant said. Another suggested indexed transcripts as a remedy to grade inflation.

Conversation also focused on the totality of campus life and the role of academics within the holistic educational effort that offers opportunities for leadership, spiritual growth and service. One comment suggested that there are trade-offs in providing the total package.

Woven throughout the conversation was this nagging dilemma. Faculty tended to agree that, while they have many engaged students, they would like to see expectations raised for the academic slackers. Yet, they had to weigh those expectations against the facts that CSB and SJU attract good students. They leave happy. They lead relatively successful lives. With this in mind, the nub of the question became: Is this who we are? If so, how does that fit in the context of who we want to be? The answer awaits another conversation.

**Drekonja’s Memoir Available at Campus Bookstores**

The book *Following the Trail of Max Birnbaum*, a memoir by Otmar Drekonja, is now available at the CSB/SJU bookstores. The book is priced at $10.95.

A native of Klagenfurt, Austria, Drekonja is professor emeritus of German. He retired in 2000, after teaching for nearly four decades at CSB/SJU. He directed 15 groups and more than 200 students on study abroad programs in central Europe, including many semesters of the Salzburg study abroad program, which he founded in 1977.

**Saint Benedict’s Monastery Contributes to Minnesota Digital Library**

Submitted by Katie Perry, monastery publicist

“Minnesota Reflections,” the first digitization project of the Minnesota Digital Library, opened for public browsing on Oct. 1, at http://reflections.mndigital.org. This Web-based collection features digital copies of photographs, stereographs and postcards from across Minnesota. Saint Benedict’s Monastery joined with more than 55 libraries, museums and special collection archives to help the Minnesota Digital Library create “Minnesota Reflections.”

This new resource for Minnesota includes more than 6,000 digital images of the state’s past. All were taken before 1909. The site includes information about the pictures, such as where the original was taken and who owns them. Saint Benedict’s Monastery contributed with 138 photographs to this statewide collection.

The images chosen were arranged to tell the story of the first 50 years of the Sisters of Saint Benedict’s Convent (now referred to as Saint Benedict’s Monastery) in St. Joseph, beginning with their coming to America in 1852, to teach the children of the German immigrants. In 1857, they moved from their first settlement in Pennsylvania to St. Mary’s Parish in St. Cloud. In 1863, they took up residence in St. Joseph, where they taught in the district schools, cared for orphans, opened a boarding Industrial School for Ojibwa girls and a boarding academy, and where they established their motherhouse, which was to become the largest Benedictine monastery in the world. During this period the Sisters’ teaching and healing minstry took them to schools throughout Minnesota, besides a few schools in North Dakota, Wisconsin and Washington, and to three hospitals in Minnesota and one in North Dakota. Accordingly, the images depict such developments as the Sisters and students at Saint Benedict’s Mission on the White Earth Reservation, the first hospital in St. Cloud, Saint Benedict’s Hospital on Ninth Avenue and life at Saint Benedict’s Academy in St. Joseph.

**Charles Kapsner: Paintings and Drawings from Life Experiences Now on Exhibit**

Submitted by Kristin Darnall, director of audience development, Fine Arts Programming

The work of native Minnesota fresco artist and classical realist painter Charles Gilbert Kapsner is being featured in the SJU Target and Alice R. Rogers Galleries.
building. His great, great aunt, Mother Cecilia Kapsner, was CSB’s first president in the early 1900s. “This show is a homecoming for me,” said Kapsner. “I have over 20 relatives who dedicated their lives to these institutions. And both institutions have always been at the forefront of the arts. Art is the way for me to leave my legacy.”

Gallery hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Sunday and 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursday.

Nominations Needed for Caritas Award
Every spring since 1995, the Caritas Award is presented to one CSB alumna, one SJU alumnus, one CSB student and one SJU student for outstanding community service or social justice work. In addition, each honoree is able to designate a sizeable donation to his or her community service or social justice organization of choice.

The Caritas Committee is now accepting nominations for the Spring 2006 awards. Please suggest current juniors or seniors, or graduates who have been putting in extraordinary time and effort into improving the lives of those around them. Nominees who work as advocates to change unjust policies or structures are welcome, as are those who have put their efforts into building homes, counseling children, or cooking for people who are homeless.

Some past recipients include:
Rachel Stokman Brown (’97) – Open Arms and AIDS ministry
Stacy Rooney (’98) – work with Salvation Army and St. Cloud Woman’s House
John Huebsch (’83) founding family member of Common Hope, Guatemala
Mike Sersch (’99) – work at Dorothy Day Center in Winona

To further the culture of service on the CSB/SJU campuses, the Caritas Awards commend active members of service and social justice by recognizing them for making the campuses, communities, nation and world a better place to live.

To learn more about the Caritas Award or to access the nomination forms for both students and alums click onto: www.csbsju.edu/csbcampusministry. The nomination deadline is Friday, Dec. 9.

Physics Club Hosts Design Competition
The CSB/SJU Physics Club hosted its 5th annual Design Competition for high school science students on Oct. 28 on the SJU campus. The event allows students to apply their knowledge and ingenuity to design devices to accomplish prescribed tasks. Students compete in teams or individually, designing devices for three categories at their respective schools. They bring those devices to campus for judging. While on campus, they compete in a fourth impromptu category.

During the day, participants have the opportunity to visit two research sites in the physics department, see demonstrations of introductory and intermediate lab experiments, visit an introductory lab in session and join small group tours of the campus.

This year’s competition attracted 72 students from eight schools. Lynn Schultz, CSB/SJU physics lab manager, organizes the event with assistance from the Physics Club and physics faculty. More information about the competition is available at http://www.csbsju.edu/physics/Design/index.htm.
Faculty/Staff News

The Liturgical Press is pleased to announce the publication of Homilies for Weekdays: Year 2 by Fr. Don Talafous. Fr. Don serves as alumni chaplain at SJU. He is also the author of The Risk in Believing and A Word for the Day, both published by Liturgical Press.

Homilies for Weekdays, the first of two volumes, contains creative suggestions of what a homilist might say about the daily readings for the two-year Lectionary cycle. This extensive compilation for each day is a result of Fr. Don’s many years of experience in preparing homilies. Written on both a popular and pastoral level, these homily ideas may also serve as daily reflections or meditations on the Scriptural texts for readers interested in nourishing their Christian lives with scripture. The volume for Year I will be available fall 2006.

To order a copy, visit the Liturgical Press Web site at www.litpress.org.

Thorpe Running, a Regents Professor emeritus, recently traveled to Argentina, where he received an award and gave two presentations. On Sept. 22, he gave a lecture at the National University of Lagos de Zamora titled “The Negative Poems of Alejandra Pizarnik.” On Sept. 27, a ceremony was held in his honor at the P.E.N. Club in Buenos Aires. At this event, he gave a talk titled “From Borges to Isaacson,” and the P.E.N. Club presented him with the Buenos Aires Prize for his work on Argentine literature. He received a diploma, a gold pin in the shape of a quill pen, and a cash award.

Martha Tomhave, CSB/SJU professor of history, will have her book, The Work of the Heart: Young Women and Emotions, 1780-1830, published by the University of Virginia Press as part of its Jeffersonian America series, in 2007.


CSB/SJU professor of nursing Kathleen Ohman, EdD, MS, RN, CCRN, attended and presented two conference sessions at the third International Health Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, Aug. 3-5. The titles of her presentations were “Evaluating Undergraduate Nursing Students’ Critical Thinking in Clinical Practice” and “Family Presence during Resuscitation: A Critical Research Review and Proposal.” Dr. Ohman also chaired and facilitated conference sessions on Aug. 3. This conference was attended by nursing faculty, physicians, and registered nurses from various countries including Australia, Canada, Ireland, England, New Zealand, Botswana, Natal, Nigeria and South Africa. Key conference sessions focused on HIV/AIDS in the workplace of nurses in South Africa; the prevalence of HIV, Hepatitis B, syphilis and TB among victims of sexual assaults in South Africa; ethical issues in critical care; and evidence-based practices.

While in Johannesburg, Dr. Ohman toured an HIV/AIDS treatment center at the Coronation Women and Children’s Hospital with Dr. Ashraf Coovadia and met with nursing faculty from the University of Witwaterstrand. Dr. Ohman and nursing faculty from the University are currently working on a joint venture to expand Dr. Ohman’s research on family presence during resuscitation.

Shawn Thomas, assistant professor of biology, and two of her research students, Colt Edin, a junior biology major from Askov, Minn., and Sarah Hegg, an ’05 CSB graduate from Mankato, Minn., presented the preliminary findings of their study investigating the potential of outbreeding depression and mate choice at the 2005 annual meeting of the Animal Behavior Society in Snowbird, Utah. The poster was a Genesis award entry, the society’s undergraduate research competition, and received an honorable mention.

Thomas was also invited to take part in a National Science Foundation workshop on the evolution of monogamy in rodents. She presented a keynote address on the sociobiology of murid rodents, as well as a talk on her original research on the formation and maintenance of pair bonds in the purportedly monogamous prairie vole.

Jean Scoon, SJU director of advancement publications, institutional advancement, was a guest lecturer on Oct. 20, in a class called Writing in the Professions at St. Cloud State. She presented a session on “Email: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.”
In the Media

CSB/SJU Professor of History and Director of Asian Studies Richard Bohr was a guest on Minnesota Public Radio’s Midday program on Tuesday, Nov. 8, “Building ties with China.”

CSB President MaryAnn Baenninger is featured in the November/December issue of Among Women Magazine.

CSB/SJU Associate Professor of Economics Louis Johnston’s article, “Understanding Interest Rates,” appeared in the November issue of Business Central Magazine.

The Saint John’s Bible was mentioned in a Sunday, Nov. 6 New York Times article, “The Bible, Chapter and Every Other Verse.”

William E. and Virginia Clemens Professor of Economics and the Liberal Arts Daniel Finn’s article, “Hello, Catholics,” was published Friday, Nov. 4, in Commonweal Magazine.

The Charles Kapsner Art Exhibit at SJU was featured Monday, Oct. 31, in a St. Cloud Times article, “Little Falls man captures the art of fresco.”

SOT Dean Bill Cahoy and Associate Dean S. Mary Forman, OSB, were quoted Sunday, Oct. 30 in a St. Cloud Times article, “Theology sprang from spirit of reverence.”

CSB Fine Arts Programming was mentioned in a Friday, Oct. 28 Minneapolis Star Tribune article “Dance by chance.”

CSB/SJU Assistant Professor of History and Chair of Environmental Studies Program Derek Larson was quoted in a Sunday, Oct. 23 St. Cloud Times article, “State’s top polluter dwells in Sherburne.”

SJU head hockey coach John Harrington and head football coach John Gagliardi were interviewed on the Fox Sports Net Live program on Thursday, Oct. 27.

CSB/SJU Associate Dean of Admission Karen Backes was quoted in a Monday, Oct. 17 St. Cloud Times article, “Students, it’s your choice: ACT or SAT?”

SJU student John Mary Lugemwa was featured in a Saturday, Oct. 15 St. Cloud Times article “Around the World: A heart for Africa.”


Media links are available on the Communication and Marketing Services Web page at http://www.csbsju.edu/news/