

# ONLINE FEATURE

## TRAVELING TO THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

On October 11, 2012, NJIT President Joel Bloom and his wife, Diane Bloom, assistant professor of education at Kean University, embarked on the first leg of their ten-day trip to the People's Republic of China. They were accompanied by Charles R. Dees, Jr., vice president for university advancement and Donald Sebastian, senior vice president for research and development. Traveling more than 18,000 miles by air, the journey would take them to six cities (seven for Vice President Sebastian) in the nation known in centuries past as the Middle Kingdom. Along the way, they would meet Associate Professor of Architecture Richard Garber and NJIT alumni, and build mutually beneficial relationships with leaders in higher education and business.

Following is an account of the trip in the words of Vice President Dees, who has expressed special appreciation of the role that Vice President Sebastian played in making their journey a definite success.

### DAY 1

Arriving in Beijing on Friday, October 12, the group checked into the hotel and had some free time to unwind from the lengthy trip.

The first evening in Beijing

was spent enjoying a uniquely energetic performance by the China National Symphony at the National Centre for the Performing Arts. Ying Wu '88 and Angela Huang accompanied the group to the theater.



*Standing (left to right) at the Pear Valley reception: Pan Liu '07, Yuanyuan (Helen) Cao '92, Qi (Jackie) Zhou '04, Weichen Ye '98, Jingong Pan '03, '09, Tao Qu '98 –event host, Ning Wu '99, Xin (David) Tang '02, Xuezheng Wu '06. Seated (left to right): Vice President Dees, President Bloom, Diane Bloom, Ying Wu '88, Vice President Sebastian.*



*Detail of the Forbidden City in Beijing*

### DAY 2

Saturday afforded a bit of free time to explore Beijing on our own before heading off to the alumni barbecue and reception in Pear Valley, outside of the city, hosted by Tao Qu '98. Touring, which was arranged by Ying Wu and his staff, Angela Huang and Pan Liu '07, included a visit to the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square. Each of these landmarks exemplifies the renaissance that China has experienced in recent years.

There were 25 NJIT alumni in attendance, many of whom reside in Beijing and the surrounding area. Reconnecting with alumni, bringing them up to speed on the latest programs and events at NJIT and hearing about their many accomplishments was certainly a wonderful way to begin this trip to the Middle Kingdom.

The NJIT NEXT campaign video was previewed by the group at the alumni reception and was extremely well received – garnering a great deal of excitement.

### DAY 3

No rest for the weary! Sunday morning started early, with a lengthy car ride to the western district of Fengtai to learn about the Yihai Education Group's "living learning community." Linda Wong is the head of Yihai Education Group, and prior to our visit to China, Linda had the opportunity to visit the NJIT campus and enjoy lunch with President Bloom.

This is a privatized educational initiative. Students attend classes and take part in extracurricular activities all within their residential community. Yihai Property is a well-known real estate developer and has invested considerable resources in education over the past twelve years in Beijing. Currently, they have six schools with approximately 4,000 students, gaining wide recognition for this private educational enterprise in the Beijing area.

After spending a day touring and meeting with the principals of Yihai Education Group, we returned to our hotel. There we met Dick Sweeney '82 – Albert Dorman Honors College Board of Visitors member, co-inventor of the Keurig® brewing system and NJIT benefactor – for dinner and a recap of our first few days in China.

### DAY 4

Monday began with an early-morning breakfast meeting with Ying Wu before departing for the first of two university meetings.

Our first meeting was at Beijing University of Technology where NJIT currently has a joint master's in engineering management.

## THE EXECUTIVE TEAM OF THE NEW ORIENTAL EDUCATION GROUP HOSTED A DINNER WHERE DISCUSSIONS ENSUED REGARDING FUTURE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC VENTURES.



*Meeting at Beijing University of Technology (BJUT): (left) Diane Bloom, President Bloom, Vice President Sebastian, Vice President Dees; (right, from top) Tina Wang, project chief, International Office; Wang Wenjie, director, BJUT Youth League; Li Juan, director, Postgraduate Students' Affairs Office; Wu Wenyong, director, International Office/dean of the College of International Education; Guo Guangsheng, BJUT president; Zong Gang, executive deputy dean, School of Economics and Management; Liao Mei, deputy dean, School of Economics and Management; Dong Xiaomei, project chief, International Joint Education Program.*

Since the program began in 2009, 97 students have graduated and are now members of our alumni network. Professor Guo Guangsheng, president of the university, hosted the meeting, which focused primarily on plans to enhance and renew the cooperative program. The group had planned to visit NJIT in November 2012 but were forced to cancel the trip due to Hurricane Sandy. We look forward to welcoming them on campus in the future.

The meeting concluded with a traditional Chinese lunch hosted by the university. Later that day, we moved to our next appointment at Beijing Institute of Technology, where we were greeted by Zhao Changlu, vice president of the institute. We were taken on an escorted tour of the campus and lab facilities.

The executive team of the New Oriental Education Group hosted a dinner where discussions ensued regarding future

international academic ventures. This day, which was very focused on academic opportunities and potential collaboration, provided the group with a great deal of information about possibilities for the future.

### DAY 5

After an early morning departure from Beijing, we landed in Changsha, the provincial capital of Hunan Province. We were greeted at the airport by Qi (Jackie) Zhou '04 who escorted us to Zhuzhou, where she is an economic-development leader for the city's high-tech district.

Zhuzhou is a small industrial city (only about four million residents!) about an hour's drive from the capital. It is host to the corporate headquarters of China South Rail (CSR) – a vertically integrated company that is a primary resource for the national high-speed electric train project connecting much of China with

rail service approaching speeds of 200 mph. The group spent the afternoon touring CSR headquarters and an electronics manufacturing center before settling in with company leaders who included Vice General Manager Feng Jianghua to map out strategies for collaborative research and development projects addressing issues in high-speed rail travel. Finally, we were hosted for dinner by Zhuzhou Vice Mayor He Jianbo.

### DAY 6

Our flight on Wednesday was a 7:25 a.m. departure taking us to the bright lights of Shanghai. Here, we had time to tour the city, visit the Shanghai World Financial Center and be part of the hustle and bustle of this amazing city. The day offered the group a bit of time to relax and catch their breath from the comprehensive schedule of this trip.

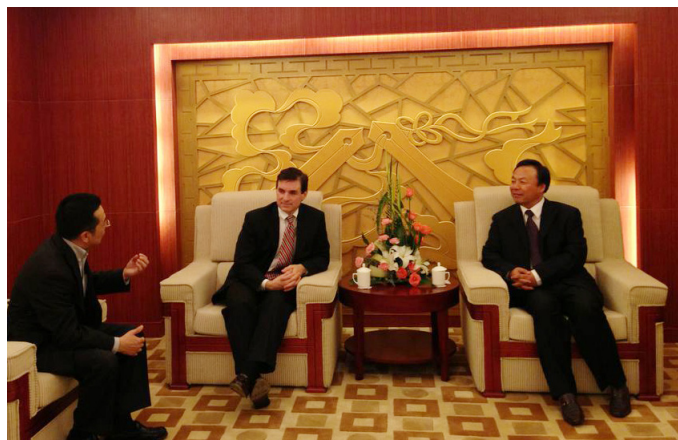
However, Don Sebastian was whisked from the airport on a three-hour drive to the city of Ningguo. He met there

with leaders of Anhui Huapu Energy Saving Materials Co., Ltd. and toured their two technology demonstration homes. He then met with Ningguo party leader Qian Shaquan to reach an agreement for funding a joint building-technology initiative that will involve NJIT faculty and students from several disciplines.

### DAY 7

The day started with business discussions at the Shanghai headquarters of China Triumph International Engineering Co., Ltd. They have been supporting our 2013 China Solar Decathlon team and are a partner with Apollo Solar Energy, Inc. in sponsoring research at NJIT. President Peng Shou and President Bloom came to an agreement to extend those collaborations in the form of a new center devoted to building integrated photovoltaic technology.

Xin (David) Tang '02 spent the day with us, accompanying us on a visit to the Changzhou Technology Park in Jiangsu



*Qian Shaquan, Ningguo party leader (right), meeting with Vice President Sebastian and Jingong Pan '03, '09.*



## THE TEAM ARRIVED IN HONG KONG EARLY SATURDAY MORNING AND HEADED OFF TO A LUNCH MEETING WITH H. C. MAN, DEAN OF ENGINEERING AT HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY.

Province. Here we met with Huang Yuan and Zhang Zhahui, deputy directors of the Science and Education City and Kevin Xu, dean of the School of International Education and Exchange at Changzhou University. Deputy Director Yuan led the tour and advised us of developments in Changzhou in recent years and explained plans for continued success in the future. A major focus of the university is promoting distance learning via online courses.

At the conclusion of the tour and presentation, we enjoyed a traditional Chinese lunch at the university before heading off to meet some of the local officials.

### DAY 8

Another early morning departure, and a three-hour plane ride, took us to Chengdu, capital city of Sichuan Province in western China. Chengdu is also home to Apollo Solar Energy, Inc., whose Chairman and CEO is Jingong Pan '03, '09. Jingong accompanied us through most of the preceding trip and we were surprised at the airport by another

alum, Shawn Chou '02. Shawn is CIO of Shanghai Voice Communication & Technology Co., Ltd. He was in Chengdu on business when he learned of our visit and we were happy to enjoy his company throughout the day.

We spent the afternoon visiting Apollo headquarters where Jingong showed us the technologies for transforming rare earth metals into highly refined feed materials for applications such as thin film solar panels – the focus of a two-year-old collaboration among NJIT, Apollo and the China National Building Materials Group. That evening we were introduced to Sichuan Hot Pot style dining and entertained by the centuries-old style of the Sichuan Opera, including a performance of *bian lian* (Face-Changing) that relies on closely guarded secrets which defy explanation.

### DAY 9

The team arrived in Hong Kong early Saturday morning and headed off to a lunch meeting with H.C. Man, dean of engineering at Hong Kong Polytechnic



*A view of Hong Kong*

University. The team enjoyed a ride on the ferry from Hong Kong to Kowloon. The lunch venue, Above & Beyond Restaurant in the Hotel ICON, is owned and operated by Hong Kong Polytechnic University and all of the staff members are students as well. The restaurant is notable and listed among the finest dining locations in Kowloon. Also in attendance at the luncheon meeting was Daniel Yip.

Dean Man provided us with a tour of the university and coffee on campus, where we observed undergraduates in their caps and gowns as our visit took place during their graduation period.

### DAY 10

The last meeting of the trip was with Esther Suen of Simatelex. She is responsible for more than 20,000 employees and has business ties to both the Yip family and Dick Sweeney. Esther has been a generous benefactor of NJIT and this meeting solidified her future commitment to the university and our ongoing campaign.

Sunday afternoon was spent touring more of Hong Kong and visiting some of its many shopping districts. Early in the evening the group took advantage of a farewell ride on the ferry in Victoria Harbor. Later that evening we had dinner with Daniel Yip, his wife Nancy, and his prominent alumni siblings – Chung L. (Thomas) Yip '89 and Chung Kin (Acton) Yip '89, '90.

The trip was a whirlwind of six cities (seven for Don) – Beijing, Zhuzhou, Shanghai, Ningguo, Changzhou, Chengdu, Hong Kong – in ten days and covering more than 18,000 air miles. But it proved to be very well worth the effort. We came away with a revitalized Chinese alumni group, new business opportunities, academic alliances and potential students for our master's programs as well as new possibilities for international program growth. This trip has provided us with so much opportunity in a land where we were greeted enthusiastically by a most hospitable group of people. ■



*From left: Vice President Dees, Dean of Engineering H. C. Man, President Bloom and Vice President Sebastian at Hong Kong Polytechnic University.*