As a public research university looking forward to celebrating its centennial anniversary in seven years, UCLA has long considered cultivating global citizens among the strategies for achieving its core mission of academic excellence and civic engagement. The university serves as a nexus between our diverse local community and the broader global community. This dynamic is particularly notable in our long and celebrated history with China.

A prominent part of this history is the famous “Ping-Pong diplomacy” in 1971 which began when Glenn Cowan, a 1976 UCLA alumnus, mistakenly boarded the bus of the Chinese team at the World Table Top Tennis Championship in Nagoya, Japan. The accidental meeting led to diplomatic relations, and a year later, UCLA hosted the visiting Chinese Ping-Pong team at Pauley Pavilion.

Prior to this famous event, UCLA served as a pioneer among American universities engaging China. As early as 1930 our curriculum included courses on Chinese culture, society, and history. During the 1960s Professor Emil Smith helped to create the National Committee on Scholarly Exchange with the People’s Republic of China and served as its founding member. In 1978, UCLA became sister universities with Zhongshan University of Guangzhou—one of the first sister university pairs in the nation. As part of this agreement, UCLA established an English Language Center at Zhongshan, and hosted three hundred Chinese students in Los Angeles to study English. By 1979 UCLA established the China Exchange Program which paved a path for the next level of engagement with China.

As home to the largest Chinese-speaking population in the U.S., Southern California provides a particular advantage for relevant engagement with Chinese Americans as well as with China. However, location is not the only advantage, as UCLA has continued to grow programs, partnerships, and initiatives designed to build bridges with our Chinese constituents. Our efforts have established permanent resources that generate ongoing interaction. In the past several months alone, UCLA has hosted a number of notable guests from China, including acclaimed film producer Zhang Jizhong, renowned business leader Wei Jiafu, and Madame Xu Lin, director-general of Hanban. The director-general’s visit followed the naming of the UCLA Confucius Institute, Southern California’s first and only Confucius Institute, as one of its Institutes of the Year by Hanban.

There are three major factors that influence the overall integration of China initiatives at UCLA. First, due to the country’s position as a global power in world economy, politics and culture, China programs are designed as central to our global vision, as opposed to merely a regional program of study. Second, the mission of UCLA as a large, public university is aligned with that of its Chinese counterparts, which provide a benefit in terms of institutional affinity. Third, UCLA has been widely recognized as a leader in both China studies and in Chinese American studies. This extraordinary combination of academic
strengths enable UCLA to engage China not only at the global scale, but also at the heart of American society at a time when China’s presence is increasingly felt by American people in everyday life, and when new generations of Chinese Americans have become more actively engaged in American politics and transnational sociocultural exchange.

UCLA’s strength and dedication to China have been awarded with a consistent growth in enrollment, research partnerships, and formal agreements. In the past three years, the number of international Chinese students has grown nearly sixty percent. Students from China represent a full fifty percent of international undergraduate students, along with forty percent of international graduate students, and the number is growing quickly. By comparison, nationwide, only twenty-two percent of international students in higher education are Chinese. UCLA ranks 6th for international students at U.S. colleges and universities, with 6,249 foreign students enrolled in 2010-11, an 11% jump from the previous year.

UCLA also ranks fourth in the U.S. for the number of students who study abroad, with more than 2300 students attending programs in over fifty countries, and eleven programs in China. Many students who study abroad in China are of Chinese heritage, but the number of students who study abroad in China and have no Chinese heritage has been rising steadily, marking a heightened interest in and engagement with China.

The number of Chinese faculty members is also growing and many of our internationally renowned professors are of Chinese heritage. Among them are Dr. Terence Tao, UCLA’s first mathematician to receive the Fields Medal, the “Nobel Prize in Mathematics,” and holder of the James and Carol Collins Chair. Tao was twenty when he earned his Ph.D. from Princeton University and joined UCLA’s faculty in 1996, and then became youngest person to ever attain full professor status at UCLA at age 24. He has won a great number of accolades in addition to the Fields Medal, including the MacArthur “Genius” Award, membership at both the Royal Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and most recently, the Crawford Prize from the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Min Zhou, Professor of Sociology and Asian American Studies, is also a notable academic and the inaugural appointee of the Walter and Shirley Wang Endowed Chair in U.S./China Relations and Communications at UCLA, the first endowed chair in American higher education that focuses on U.S./China relations and
Chinese American Studies. She has received many academic awards and honors, including the 2007 Chiyoko Doris '34 and Toshio Hoshide Distinguished Teaching Prize in Asian American Studies at UCLA, a resident fellowship at the Russell Sage Foundation and the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, and the Chang Jiang Scholar Lecture Professor by Sun Yat-sen University in China. She is an elected member of the Council of the American Sociological Association, Chair of the Section on Asia and Asian America of the American Sociological Association, and President of the North American Chinese Sociologists Association.

Dr. Chih-Ming Ho holds the Ben Rich-Lockheed Martin Chair Professor in School of Engineering. He is the Director of Institute for Cell Mimetic Space Exploration (CMISE). In 1991, he moved from USC to UCLA to lead the establishment of the micro-electro-mechanical-system (MEMS) field in UCLA and served as the founding Director of the Center for Micro Systems. To this day, the UCLA MEMS research has been recognized as one of the top three programs in the world. He served as UCLA Associate Vice Chancellor for Research from 2001 to 2005. He was ranked by ISI as one of the top 250 most cited researchers in all engineering categories around the world, and has been inducted to both the National Academy of Engineering and the Academia Sinica and elected to the American Physical Society as well as American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Dr. Ho holds five honorary professorships, has published 260 papers, and holds ten patents.

Strategically positioning itself as the key bridge between the U.S. West Coast and China, UCLA leaders, students, and faculty spanning all areas of campus have utilized the university’s relationship with China to advance research, teaching, training, scholarly exchange and public service. With over seventy signed agreements including forty-two Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) on record, the largest number between UCLA and universities in any other country, China is the premier partner for our international initiatives.

The number of collaborations, student and faculty programs, recruitment efforts, and initiatives that promote China as a world leader is too high to cover in detail. The programs below are highlighted as ones that encapsulate our goals for research, recruitment, partnership, and integration of China into the fiber of UCLA.

- The Joint Research Institute (JRI) in Science and Engineering between Peking University (PKU) and UCLA is comprised of fifty-nine faculty members from PKU and seventy-eight faculty members from UCLA. Together, this partnership has facilitated collaborative research projects ranging from semiconductor materials and microelectronics, to climate and environmental changes, to studies of vision cells. JRI also facilitates faculty and student exchanges between PKU and UCLA, and has helped to establish a new interdisciplinary clean energy research center at UCLA with multiple research partners from China, including PKU. JRI continues to establish multiple industrial partnerships including Asia-Info, the largest
internet infrastructure company in China, Baidu, the provider of the most popular search engine in China, China Mobile, the largest mobile communication provider in China, and Xilinx, the largest programmable logic device provider worldwide. This collaborative research plays a crucial role in the globalization of scientific research, and once more, UCLA is at the forefront.

- The Crossdisciplinary Scholars in Science and Technology program (CSST) has 148 faculty members in thirty-eight UCLA departments, and promotes cross-disciplinary education and research training across all fields, to recruit top Ph.D. candidates from China. Highly accomplished students from top ranking universities in China are interviewed and invited to study and engage in research at UCLA for a summer prior to the fourth year of their undergraduate studies. Ultimately, over one third of these students are recruited and enrolled in graduate programs at UCLA. The CSST is an important pipeline for developing long-term research and education collaborations between UCLA and top Chinese universities.

- One of the highest ranking universities in China, Zhejiang University (ZJU), is a long-term partner of the UCLA School of Medicine, and the partnership has proven fruitful to both parties. UCLA and ZJU have shared curriculum, faculty development and diagnostic services, and in 2009 ZJU adopted the entire UCLA School of Medicine’s medical curricula into its teaching practices. In addition, the two schools participate in a medical student exchange program, with more than 100 ZJU students performing clinical rotations at UCLA. The reciprocal visit by UCLA students is planned for the 2012-2013 academic year. This exchange of students and faculty has paved the way for a joint center for medical research and education, as well as a UCLA-ZJU Medical Diagnosis Center at ZJU where world-renowned UCLA physicians diagnose patients in China.

In addition to our international collaborations, UCLA has a number of significant resources on campus that promote China throughout the university and within the local community. A number of centers including the Center for Chinese Studies and the Asian American Studies Center have long offered public lectures on China and exchange programs with China in local communities in Southern California.

The UCLA East Asian Library is one of the 10 largest in North America, and its Chinese collection is the largest in Southern California, serving not only the UCLA community but also faculty and graduate students from other UC campuses, the University of Southern California, other research institutions and the general public. The library collection includes hundreds of rare Chinese art, literature, history, religion and medical books, and its staff has developed special collections highlighting Chinese statistics, archaeology, local gazetteers, genealogy, film and theater, and digitalizes unique Chinese resources such as the Tom Leung private archives of Kang Youwei’s royal society.
Another prominent resource is the UCLA Confucius Institute, which plays a vital role in the study of Chinese language and culture and provides important public service in California, supporting programs on interactions between Chinese and Western healthcare traditions, and producing programs showcasing the visual and performing arts traditions of China. Through its efforts, more than 250 California high school students have travelled to China for summer language study. Through a partnership with the Kobe Bryant Family Foundation and the After-School All-Stars organization, the Confucius Institute offers a unique program that allows L.A. high school students to explore China through the study of Chinese martial arts and Mandarin language.

These centers and others at UCLA also provide training for K-12 teachers and students to incorporate China into the LAUSD curriculum. In past years, workshops such as, “Visualizing Cultures: Modern China and Japan” held in partnership with the Pacific Asia museum, were designed to help high school teachers develop rich lessons on Modern China and Japan. Another example is “China: From Imperial Palaces to Corporate Boardrooms,” a three-day seminar led by the Asia Institute. Trainings also focus on language instruction such as the one hosted by the Confucius Institute to prepare Mandarin language educators and materials appropriate for the California K-12 classroom.

The university’s academic plan, “Transforming UCLA for the Twenty-first Century,” recognizes its role as an international university in terms of research, exchange, and civic engagement. Among seven priority areas for extending UCLA’s interdisciplinary capacities and building institutional strengths, three include international involvement: 1) the development of “research conducted internationally, and application of research conducted in Los Angeles to urban areas worldwide;” 2) the establishment of comprehensive strategic partnerships with the world’s best universities (focusing on Asia and Latin America) to support collaborative research, teaching and engagement;” and 3) doubling, by 2019, the number of students who study abroad. China is an integral piece in this plan and we aim to continue to build on our past and present success. Our intent was well represented during Chancellor Block’s recent representation at Haban’s annual conference where he represented all North American universities, and presented a “friendship tree”—a California Redwood sapling—to Chinese officials, symbolizing strong and steady growth of cooperation and friendship between UCLA and China over the next ten years and beyond.