

MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans, Faculty, and Staff

From: C. L. Max Nikias

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Date: October 10, 2006

Subject: USC U.S.-China Institute

Office of the Provost

C. L. Max Nikias
Provost and
Senior Vice
President for
Academic Affairs

On behalf of President Sample, I am delighted to announce the creation of the **USC U.S.-China Institute**. This interdisciplinary research institute will produce rigorous, policy-relevant social science research that focuses on the U.S.-China relationship. It will also work to attract top faculty, Ph.D. students, and post-doctoral students in various disciplines who are studying this relationship. The institute will develop innovative courses and will create interdisciplinary degree and certificate programs, as well as new areas of study for Ph.D. students. The institute will have a university-wide scope, bringing together scholars from all disciplines and schools, and will report directly to the Office of the Provost.

USC is in an exceptional position to become an international leader in the area of U.S.-China relations, and this institute is an outstanding step in this direction. It will strive to position itself as the most authoritative resource for scholars, policy makers, government officials, and journalists seeking information on research, trends, and issues related to China and its relationship to the United States.

Among research centers and think tanks, this institute will be distinctive. There are few—if any—university-based research institutes that focus on policy-relevant social science work relating to U.S.-China ties. Some leading universities have China or Asia centers, but many focus on historical studies or the humanities, with less emphasis on the social sciences. Meanwhile, think tanks studying this relationship cannot match USC's interdisciplinary environment, let alone involve students in the research effort or take the results into a wide variety of classrooms. Moreover, the institute's publications, public events, and professional development efforts will foster greater popular understanding of the complex and evolving relationship.

The institute will host various categories of fellows each year, including (1) resident fellows drawn from USC; (2) visiting and affiliated fellows from across the United States, China, and the world; (3) media, business, and policy fellows drawn from those working in the region; (4) post-doctoral fellows; and (5) USC graduate fellows working in this area.

The USC U.S.-China Institute will have a physical location on our campuses, providing scholars and other fellows a place to interact and collaborate. The institute will work with a range of schools and units, including the East Asian Studies Center, the Center for International Business Education and Research, and the Pacific Council on International Policy. It will host conferences and events, and affiliate with appropriate entities and scholars in China and the [United States](#).

Leadership

An international search for the institute's faculty director is underway. **Clayton Dube**, recruited from UCLA, is providing leadership as associate director. Dube is best known for his service as the UCLA Asia Institute's assistant director. During his tenure there, he headed the Asian studies teacher training program and oversaw a variety of instructional, research, and outreach initiatives. Among the projects he directed were two student-driven web publications, AsiaMedia and Asia Pacific Arts, each of which now has more than one million readers annually. Dube brings with him to USC more than \$700,000 in grants to support the institute's teacher training program.

Dube's research has focused on how economic and political change in China since 1900 affected the lives of people in small towns. He has taught Asian and world history at several colleges and has written teaching guides on Chinese history. He served as associate editor for *Modern China*, an academic quarterly published by Sage Publications, from 1998 to 2002. Dube first visited China in 1982, living and working there for three years. He has since returned many times to carry out fieldwork and to lead study tours.

In his new role at the USC U.S.-China Institute, Dube will work with the institute's steering committee and with leaders across the university to:

- identify and recruit top-flight faculty, building on the university's existing strengths in contemporary Chinese studies and addressing gaps in our coverage of issues integral to U.S.-China relations;
- ensure that the interdisciplinary scholarship sponsored by the institute is rigorous, cutting-edge, and accessible to policy makers, the media, and others;
- oversee the selection of the institute's fellows;
- pursue affiliations with leading universities in the United States, China, and abroad;
- organize conferences and events;
- facilitate the integration of the research with educational programs for undergraduate and graduate students, including internships, the production of publications, and study abroad initiatives;
- work with the provost and the university's development staff on fundraising and grant proposals.

The institute will also draw on the expertise of its Board of Scholars. This board consists of some of the most distinguished scholars working in this field.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge Vice President **Elizabeth Garrett** for her leadership role in the formation of the USC U.S.-China Institute. She put together an interdisciplinary team and worked closely with me and other members of the USC academic community. Her creative ideas and excellent energy proved instrumental in the establishment of this institute. I also want to thank **Howard Gillman**, associate vice provost for research advancement, and **Jim Ellis**, senior executive director for global initiatives, for their tremendous contributions and outstanding work.

Upcoming Conference

On April 20-21, the USC U.S.-China Institute will host its inaugural conference, entitled “The Future of U.S.-China Relations.” In addition to the keynote address by a prominent figure in U.S.-China diplomatic history, leading scholars will present original work focusing on state-to-state relations; energy and environment; economic change and prospects for businesses; growing inequality within China; popular culture; and political reform. Among the confirmed participants are David Dollar (World Bank), Edward Friedman (Wisconsin), Andrew Nathan (Columbia), Geremie Barmé (Australia National University), Guo Liang (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), Elizabeth Economy (Council on Foreign Relations), and David Zweig (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology). In addition to this conference, the institute is sponsoring a series of public lectures and plans to underwrite several research workshops.

Drawing on USC’s Strengths

In creating this institute, USC leverages several of its strengths, perhaps most notably its location in Los Angeles, the heart of the Pacific Rim. USC already has significant ties to China. More than 1,600 students from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong currently study at USC, and we have international offices in Taipei and Hong Kong.

In May, the USC Board of Trustees visited China, making stops in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. During that trip, President Sample announced the creation of this institute on May 23, along with trustees **Herb Klein** and **Ronnie Chan**, both of whom will serve as advisers to the institute. Klein’s long-standing involvement in U.S.-China relations will surely prove invaluable. In 1973, he and Dr. Henry Kissinger represented the United States in three days of personal discussions with Chou En-lai covering U.S.-China relations after the ceasefire in Vietnam. He is also a graduate of the USC School of Journalism.

Meanwhile, several USC schools have executive and other training programs that have allowed the university to establish connections throughout China. These programs include an MBA offered in Shanghai by the Marshall School of Business, advanced training programs for public health officials overseen by the Keck School of Medicine, and executive training programs for municipal public officials offered by the School of Policy, Planning, and Development.

Moreover, USC has numerous researchers making important contributions to our understanding of key issues facing China. We have talented and dedicated faculty working in important fields, including public health, aging, migration and natural resources, popular culture, education, urban development, public diplomacy, and economic reform. This institute will facilitate this work and add another dimension to it, exploring the implications of these developments on the U.S.-China relationship. These efforts will provide a solid foundation for informed policy making, for

programs and practices that improve lives and foster enhanced understanding of contemporary China.

USC is a founding member of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities and home to the USC East Asian Studies Center, the USC Center for International Business Education and Research, and the Pacific Council on International Policy, an independent leadership forum. Each of these assets will surely strengthen and shape the institute.

Our Strategic Plan

Establishing the U.S.-China Institute is a critical move for USC. It clearly answers a number of objectives in our strategic plan, including: expanding our global presence, meeting societal needs, building networks and partnerships, and spanning disciplinary and school boundaries.

The institute's creation is a proactive response to China's growing importance. Every day, leading newspapers have at least one story focused on China—its ascent as an economic and military power, the strains of various internal conflicts, the uncertainty surrounding the status of Taiwan, its quest for natural resources, and its influence in Asia and Latin America. In 2005, China's economy grew by nearly 10 percent, making it the world's fifth largest economy and presenting tremendous opportunities and challenges for American companies. In this dynamic environment, the relationship between the United States and China will affect both countries profoundly and shape the course of world events.

USC must assume a leadership role in studying these changes and exploring the opportunities and challenges they present. We stand at an important juncture in our country's history, and the creation of the USC U.S.-China Institute reflects President Sample's commitment to a mission that is socially relevant, creative, and forward-thinking.

cc: Steven B. Sample
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Dennis F. Dougherty
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