

# Thirteen Magical Years

The Confucius Institute at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa  
2006-2019

*by Cynthia Ning, Hawai'i director, CI-UHM; associate director, CCS*

It started with a phone call in late 2005. A professor from the Shanghai Jiao Tong University contacted Taochung “Ted” Yao of UH’s Department of East Asian Languages & Literatures, suggesting that SJTU and UH apply jointly for funding from China’s Ministry of Education, through the National Office of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (“Hanban”), for a Confucius Institute based at UHM. Ted asked me to follow up, in my position as associate director of the Center for Chinese Studies (CCS) and an established Chinese language educator myself.

Shortly thereafter, Prof. Roger Ames of the Department of Philosophy forwarded me an e-mail message from David McClain, then UH president, instructing us to look into establishing a Confucius Institute at UHM. A delegation from the PRC Consulate in Los Angeles had paid him a visit to make this suggestion, and he had agreed to look into the possibility. David delegated the task to Roger (of course—“Confucius” Institute!), and Roger passed it to me.

Some time later I was in Beijing on separate business. I asked Prof. HAO Ping, then president of the Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU, “Beiwai”), what he knew about Confucius Institutes, and if UH should apply for one. Hao Ping strongly recommended we do so, but partner with BFSU rather than SJTU. Since Beiwai is widely known as one of China’s premier institutions, charged with educating China’s diplomats and therefore outstanding in foreign language and area studies, UH was delighted to partner with them.

Things moved quickly thereafter. Forms were filled out, agreements signed, an initial transfer of over \$100,000 received; and on November 6, 2006, a delegation from China arrived to formally open the Confucius Institute at UHM, housed within the Center for Chinese Studies. We were the sixth CI established in the U.S. By 2017, there were over 100 CIs generally at US universities and nearly 200 Confucius Classrooms in US K-12 settings. In its first year of operation, Ted Yao and I were co-directors.



*Back row, left to right* Xu Di, Dean, College of Education, UHM; Dong Zhixue 董志学, Consul for Education, PRC Consulate General, LA; Gao Yinqi 高印琪, Student Affairs Officer, BFSU; Zhu Meiping 朱梅萍, CI—PRC Director, Professor of English, BFSU; Liu Peng 刘鹏, Deputy Director, Office of International Affairs, BFSU; Linda Lingle, Governor, State of Hawaii; Denise Konan, Chancellor, UHM; Hao Ping 郝平, President, BFSU; Li Yaosheng 李曜升, Counsellor for Education, PRC Consulate General, LA; Zhu Chuanlu 朱传路, CI—Instructor, Asst. Professor of Chinese, BFSU; David McClain, President, U of Hawaii; Rosita Chang, Director, Center for Chinese Studies, UHM; Zhang Xiaohui 张晓慧, Director, Office of Confucius Institutes, BFSU






*Front row, left to right* Donald Young, Professor, College of Education, UHM; Wang Qinghong, Special Liaison with China, East-West Center; Wu Qing 吴青, Assistant Dean, School of English & International Studies, BFSU; Kate Zhou, Professor, Political Science, UHM; Cynthia Ning, CI—U.S. Director, Assoc. director, Center for Chinese Studies, UHM; Neal Smatresk, Vice Chancellor, UHM

In the thirteen years that the CI-UHM operated, we were fortunate to have hosted a series of superb faculty and students recommended to us by BFSU, and supported entirely by Hanban once we accepted them. They received airfare, salaries, living stipends, and subsidies for housing. As the scope of our activities increased, we requested and were provided with greater numbers of colleagues. All came to us as J-1 scholars or teachers. Generally, the directors/teachers had two-year terms (renewable once), and the grad student volunteers each came for a year, and then went home to write their theses and graduate with MA degrees in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, using data they had collected in Honolulu.













## PEOPLE

The CI-UHM was staffed via a vibrant pathway from Beiwai, which sent us stellar educators.

### PRC directors

				
Zhu Meiping 朱梅萍 2006–8	Gao Hong 高虹 2008–10	Li Qikeng 李期铿 2010–15	Wu Qing 吴青 2015–18	Zhai Zheng 翟峥 2018–19

### Teachers






					
Zhu Chuanlu 朱传路 2006–8	He Jun 贺军 2008–10	Shu Ning 舒宁 2010–12	Zha Yunyun 查芸芸 2012–15	Dong Xu 董旭 2012–15	Wang Shuangmei 王霜梅 2015–17
					
Deng Xiaowen 邓小文 2015–17	Wang Na 王娜 2017–19	Jiang Wenyan 蒋文燕 2017–19	Bai Na 白娜 (Maryknoll) 2018–19	Zhang Wei 张玮 (Maryknoll) 2018–19	Zhuang Yi 庄祎 (UH-West Oahu) 2018–19

## Graduate Student Volunteer Teachers

						
Xiang Zheng 向征 2008-9	Zhou Jinlan 周晋岚 2009-10	Tang Yuning 唐宇宁 2010-11	Yin Yulu 尹玉璐 2011-12	Jiao Jiao 焦姣 (Kaiser) 2011-12	Jia Zhe 贾喆 (Kaiser) 2011-12	Shi Hui 石卉 (Pau'uilo) 2011-12
						
Zhang Ran 张然 2012-13	Liu Meiyi 刘美仪 2013-14	Qu Yaojia 屈耀佳 2013-14	Zhai Mengying 翟梦莹 2014-15	Yang Jia 杨佳 2014-15	Li Xiaofei 李晓菲 2014-15	Wang Yajun 王雅君 2015-16
						
Yang Piao 杨飘 2015-16	Zhang Yue 张悦 2016-17	Wang Jiaying 汪佳影 2016-17	Zhang Wei 张玮 2017-18	Tian Jiaxin 田嘉欣 2017-18	Zhou Ruifang 周瑞芳 2018-19	Li Simin 李思敏 2018-19






## CI Board of Directors

2009-18

				
Yan Guohua Vice President, BFSU	Zhang Xiaohui, Director, BFSU Office of CIs	Reed Dasenbrock UHM VCAA Chair, CI-UHM BOD	Andy Sutton Dean of UHM SPAS	Frederick Lau Director, UHM CCS



2018-19

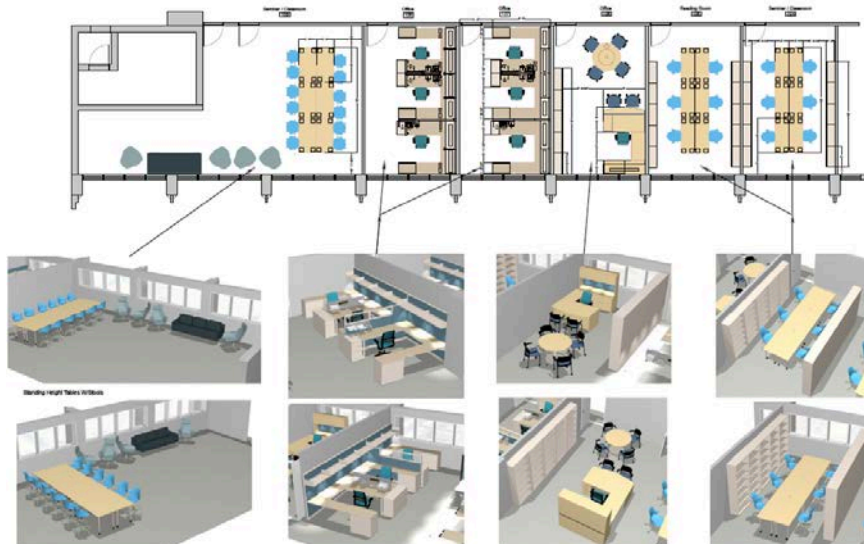
				
Yan Guohua Vice President, BFSU	Jin Limin Director, BFSU Office of CIs	Michael Bruno Provost, UHM Chair, CI-UHM BOD	Andy Sutton Dean of UHM SPAS	David Yang Director, UHM CCS

### Center for Chinese Studies Staff

					
Rosita Chang Director 2006-09	Frederick Lau Director 2009-2018	David Yang Director 2018-19	Cynthia Ning Associate director US Director, CI- UHM	Daniel Tschudi Coordinator	Jialin "Sunny" Sun Projects Coordinator

## PLACES

When we began, there was no room for us on the Mānoa campus, so we were grateful for two offices in Burns Hall allocated to us, gratis, by the East-West Center. In return, we taught a weekly lunchtime Chinese language course for its staff. By 2010, the UH administration was able to provide a two-room suite in the newly renovated Sakamaki Hall, which served as office and classroom space for the teachers. We retained one office in Burns Hall to house the PRC director. In March, 2015, the CI-UHM was named a "Model Confucius Institute" by Hanban. The chancellor of UHM at the time, Robert Bley-Vroman, designated the first floor Makai wing of Moore Hall as the site of the new CI, and accepted \$1 million from Hanban to renovate it. The upgraded CI-UHM space included three offices, two seminar rooms, and one conference room for the sole use of the CI, and five general use classrooms reserved for UH general use on weekdays, and CI use evenings and weekends. The new space became available to us on November 22, 2016.



## PROGRAMMING

Beyond this charge, taken from the Constitution and By-laws of Confucius Institutes ([http://english.hanban.org/node\\_7880.htm](http://english.hanban.org/node_7880.htm)), it was up to each of the global CIs to develop their own specific programs.

“Confucius Institutes devote themselves to satisfying the demands of people from different countries and regions in the world who learn the Chinese language, to enhancing understanding of the Chinese language and culture by these peoples, to strengthening educational and cultural exchange and cooperation between China and other countries, to deepening friendly relationships with other nations, to promoting the development of multi-culturalism, and to constructing a harmonious world.”

Still, some CIs diverged. The U of Michigan, for example, focused solely on music, and SUNY-Binghamton only on Chinese theater. Given the strength of UHM in teaching foreign language, the CI-UHM decided to build on Hawai‘i’s capacity in Chinese language instruction. Following were the key components of our programs.

### 1. Chinese language classes

Since Hawai‘i already had numerous healthy Chinese language programs already in place, we sought to collaborate, enhance, and fill in lacunae, rather than compete.

- At UHM, we built a non-credit weekend program for the community, to complement the credit-bearing program offered through East Asian Languages & Literatures. We began by working with the **Outreach College** to offer three levels of mainly conversational courses, in each of three terms (Fall, Spring, Summer), eventually adding Business Chinese, Chinese Calligraphy, and two levels of courses for Young Learners. On average, the courses enrolled about 60 students per term, ranging in age from 5 to 80, and ran between 9 am and 4 pm on Saturdays. By 2017, we were also offering two levels of instruction to members of the **US-China People’s Friendship Association**, at their request, on Sundays. In 2018 we added a Tuesday 2-hour language and culture class for the community, through UHM’s **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute**. The Wednesday noontime class for the **East-West Center** was eventually opened to UH employees, and continued for 13 years. In addition, the CI-UHM offered a popular Friday afternoon **Chinese Corner** language practice opportunity that was regularly attended by 10-20 UH students, generally Chinese language majors from EALL. In total, we reached about 300 students per year, for a total of over 3,000 learners at UHM over the course of our operation.



*A Young Learners class celebrates Chinese New Year*





*This picture snapped by a CI-UHM volunteer in Moore Hall won a national prize in China*

- In 2018, we responded to a request from **UH-West Oahu**, which had been trying to establish a Chinese language program but had failed to attract any enrollment. We brought in a trained, designated teacher, and through a combination of active, hands-on language and culture classes and a program of outreach into the community and local schools, were able to offer two classes enrolling 32 students in the first year of operation.
- We received requests for assistance from two Hawaii DOE school principals leading up to the 2011-12 school year. The **Kaiser Complex** in Hawaii Kai was establishing an international baccalaureate, and wished to offer Chinese throughout the K-12 curriculum. So we brought in two full-time teachers who rotated through four elementary schools (Aina Haina, Hahaione, Kamiloiki, and Koko Head), giving every grade level between 20 minutes and 40 minutes a week of Chinese. In addition, **Pau'uilo School** on the Big Island, long noted for its innovative curriculum, wished every one of its 600 students to receive training in Chinese, so we brought in one full-time teacher for them. She resided with the principal and his wife, and offered daily half-hour classes to grades K-8. A total of 2,000 school students were learning Chinese through the CI that year. Afterwards, both schools wished to continue the programs, but in May, 2012, the U.S. State Department issued a nationwide directive stating that CI teachers sponsored by universities in the J-1 scholar category could not teach in K-12 schools. The College Board then offered to sponsor J-1 teacher visas for our incoming instructors, but the DOE lost heart and decided not to continue, and the programs closed down.



*Shi Hui teaching at Pau'uilo School in 2012*

- In 2015 we were invited by the leadership of the **Maryknoll School**, a private Catholic school in Honolulu, to help them establish the state's first foreign language immersion program. We brought in national experts to advise us, and in 2017 two kindergarten classes began half-day immersion programs in Chinese, focusing on math, science, and religious studies. The

results were so encouraging that Maryknoll decided to add a grade level every year, through grade 6. We brought in two experienced elementary school teachers through Hanban to assist the Maryknoll teachers, and developed Chinese language curriculum in STEM topics for K and G1 levels. This program is thriving and has attracted additional private support.



*Teacher Jane Luo leads a class of kindergarteners in the Maryknoll Chinese immersion program*

## **2. Training in best practices in Chinese language pedagogy**

- For 12 years, we applied for and received funding from the US Department of Defense's **STARTALK** program, to run a jointly funded (with CI) 3.5 week combined teacher-training institute and Chinese language camp in July, residential for both faculty and students for 10 years and for residential for faculty only for the last 2 years, on the Mānoa campus. These enrolled about 15-20 teachers and 20-25 students, in what was to many a life-changing experience. For the 13<sup>th</sup> year, we had been planning to continue the program even without STARTALK support, since the Asia Pacific International School had offered to step in as our partner. A stack of applications had already been received.



*2016 Startalk Institute & Camp excursion*

For a 15-minute professionally produced highlights video of the 2016 Startalk-Confucius Institute Chinese Language Camp, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94NYLKLdo8Y>





*Hands-on,*

### *Experiential Chinese language learning activities at camp*

- We worked with the **Hawai'i Association of Language Teachers** for many of our 13 years in operation, to provide a keynote speaker for the annual conference. These included noted applied linguists such as Stephen Krashen, workshop leaders such as Myriam Met, and ACTFL Teachers of the Year such as Yo Ozama.
- The **Chinese Language Education of Hawai'i** (CLEAH) collaborated with us in offering symposia, retreats, and workshops to Chinese language teachers in Hawai'i.
- CI-UHM US Director Cynthia Ning was invited to many other CIs and **language training sites**, including in Brussels, Rome, Göttingen, Nuremberg, London, Durham, Canberra, Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Taipei, Kaohsiung, Manila, Guadalajara, Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, Madison, Austin, New York City, etc., to give presentations or multiple day language training workshops. She also provided a series of **English Language Corner** training sessions in English to the faculty of the CI.

### **3. Support to Chinese language learners**

- We began with **speech contests** and **calligraphy exhibitions**, and expanded to the wildly popular (drawing over 100 contestants each time) **dictation contests** (akin to the English language spelling bees). These are offered in tandem with CLEAH, engage upwards of 20 local schools, and have been attracting community support for prize funding. A number of UH students who won the speech contests have gone on to compete regionally on the West Coast, with CI support.





*Calligraphy contest, 2014*



*Speech contest, 2016*



*Dictation contest, 2018*

- The annual **Mid-Autumn Festival** and **Chinese New Year** celebrations offer activities, performances, and food-samplings in Moore Hall and on the UH-West Oahu campus. Sometimes, busloads of children from nearby schools listened to lectures and participated in activities.



*Mooncake sampling in Moore Hall, 2016*

- We collaborated with UH's EALL to offer an annual **Chinese Culture Day** on campus, and with CLEAH to run a biennial Chinese Culture Day for the Hawaii school community, at rotating locations.



The CI offered an annual **Graduate Student Award** (\$500 cash prize) to a UHM student, in conjunction with the Chung-Fong and Grace Ning Fund. A 2016 winner was Ryan Fleming, PhD candidate in Philosophy.

- Munlun School has worked with us for many of the past 13 years to offer **HSK exam** opportunities to local learners.
- When **visiting troupes** supported by Hanban came to Honolulu, we generally took them to Hawai'i's schools, where oftentimes the entire school would gather in the gym to enjoy the performance. Troupes have visited Roosevelt High, Le Jardin Academy, Punahou School, Maryknoll School, and Mid-Pacific Institute.





*A troupe from Yunnan performs minority dances*

#### 4. Cultural enrichment for the UH and wider communities

- The CI-UHM contributed \$10,000 in 2009 and \$15,000 in 2013 to the [Department of Theater and Dance](#), to support the Chinese theater productions of *White Snake* and *Mu Guiying*, respectively.



*Mu Guiying*

- We provided \$5,000 per year to UH's [China Collection](#) in the Hamilton Library, for the acquisition of China-related material.
- Similarly, we contributed \$5,000 annually to the [Hawai'i International Film Festival](#), to bring Chinese filmmakers, including directors and stars, to Hawai'i and sometimes to campus. UH's Academy for Creative Media collaborated on these events.



*Film director Xie Fei (center, gesturing) has an intimate chat with faculty and students in Moore Hall*



*George Wang of ACM interprets for director Zhang Yimou (left) at a press conference*



*CI-UHM director Cyndy Ning interprets for director Jia Zhangke (left), while ACM professor Konrad Ng moderates*



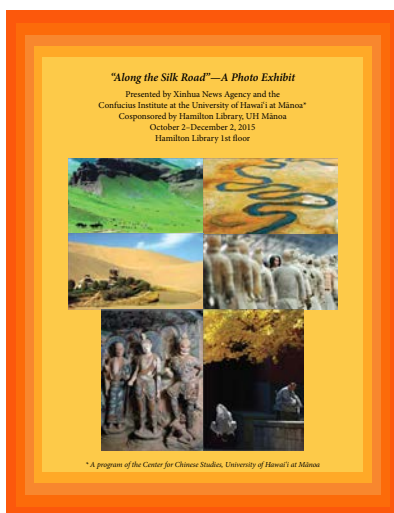


*Director Lu Chuan (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) speaks at a symposium with UH faculty (from left) Seio Nakajima, Peng Yun, George Wang, and Wimal Dissayanake*

- In 2016, we donated \$5,000 to the **Honolulu Museum of Art** to subsidize the Chinese Film Week, focusing on the lifetime work of auteur filmmaker Wu Tianming.
- We worked with other US CIs, UHM's Hillel, and Honolulu's **Jewish community** in 2016, to bring an exhibit of posters and artifacts from the Shanghai Museum of WWII Jewish Refugees to Hamilton Library, and produce an exhibition booklet with a history of Jews in China, and survivors' stories of the flight from Europe.



*2016 Exhibit from the Shanghai Museum of WWII Jewish Refugees*



The LA Chinese Consulate helped us to put on a number of other **photo exhibits**, including of prize-winning amateur photography from China called "Tempo of China," and another of stunning images from Western China, in an exhibit called "Along the Silk Road," arranged in conjunction with the Xinhua News Agency.

- In 2016, we sponsored a day-long celebration of Chinese culture at the **Ala Moana Centerstage**, in celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CI-UHM.



- We sponsored **conferences**—one on the centennial of the 1911 revolution in 2011, another on Sun Yatsen in America in 2016, and in 2018 we provided \$5,000 to EALL in support of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Business Chinese Education.
- In many years, we sponsored **a Distinguished Speaker Series**, bringing prominent speakers in journalism (Peter Hessler, Shai Oster), literature (Dai Jinhua, Andrew Jones), philosophy (Ai Huang), history (Kenneth Pomeranz), international relations (Charles Freeman), economics (Huang Yasheng), law (Jerome Cohen), comedy (Da Shan and Ding Guangquan) etc. to Honolulu, to deliver public lectures.



*Above left: Lecture by US ambassador Charles Freeman;  
Above right: Lecture by comedian Da Shan*

*Left: Lecture by Xu Jialu, vice chair of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the PRC.  
Interpreted by Cyndy Ning*

- We organized many **concerts and performances** over the years—of guqin, naahmyam, Chinese folk music, Chinese philharmonic orchestras playing Western music, etc.





Naahmyam



Jingju



*Performance by a Chinese folk orchestra in Orvis Auditorium in 2018*

## 5. Support for US-China exchange

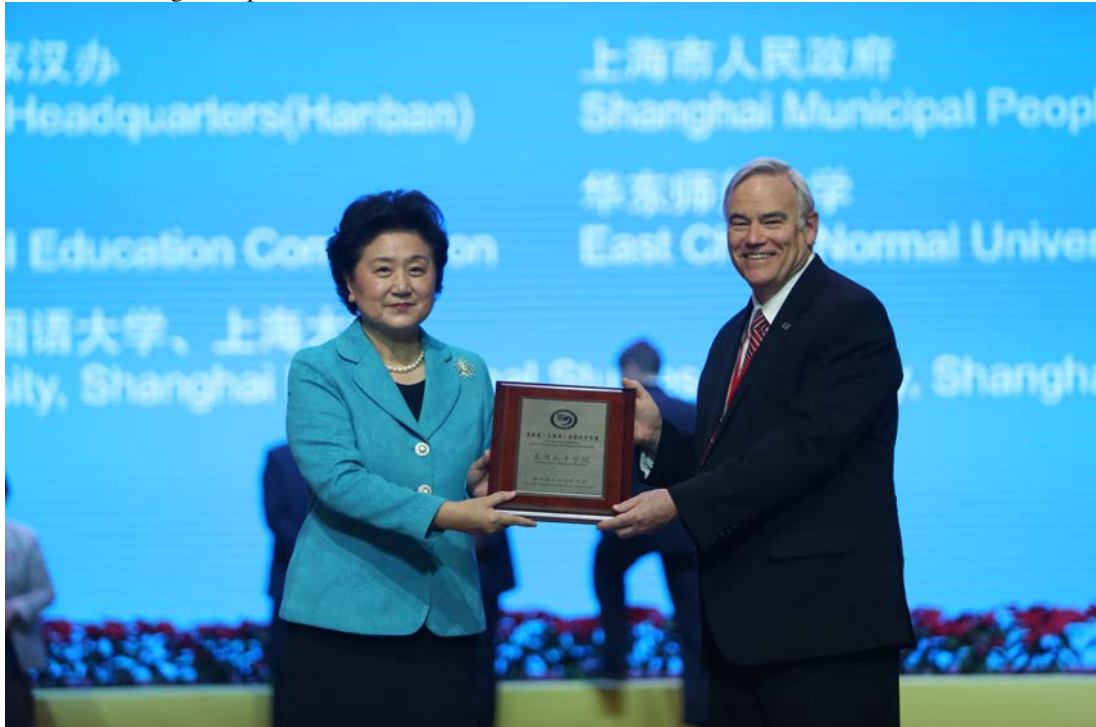
- The Mānoa Academy Beijing sent groups of 10-15 UHM undergraduates to China in the summertime, to study at BFSU, under sponsorship from the CI-UHM.



*Mānoa Academy Beijing students on the Great Wall, in Summer, 2017*

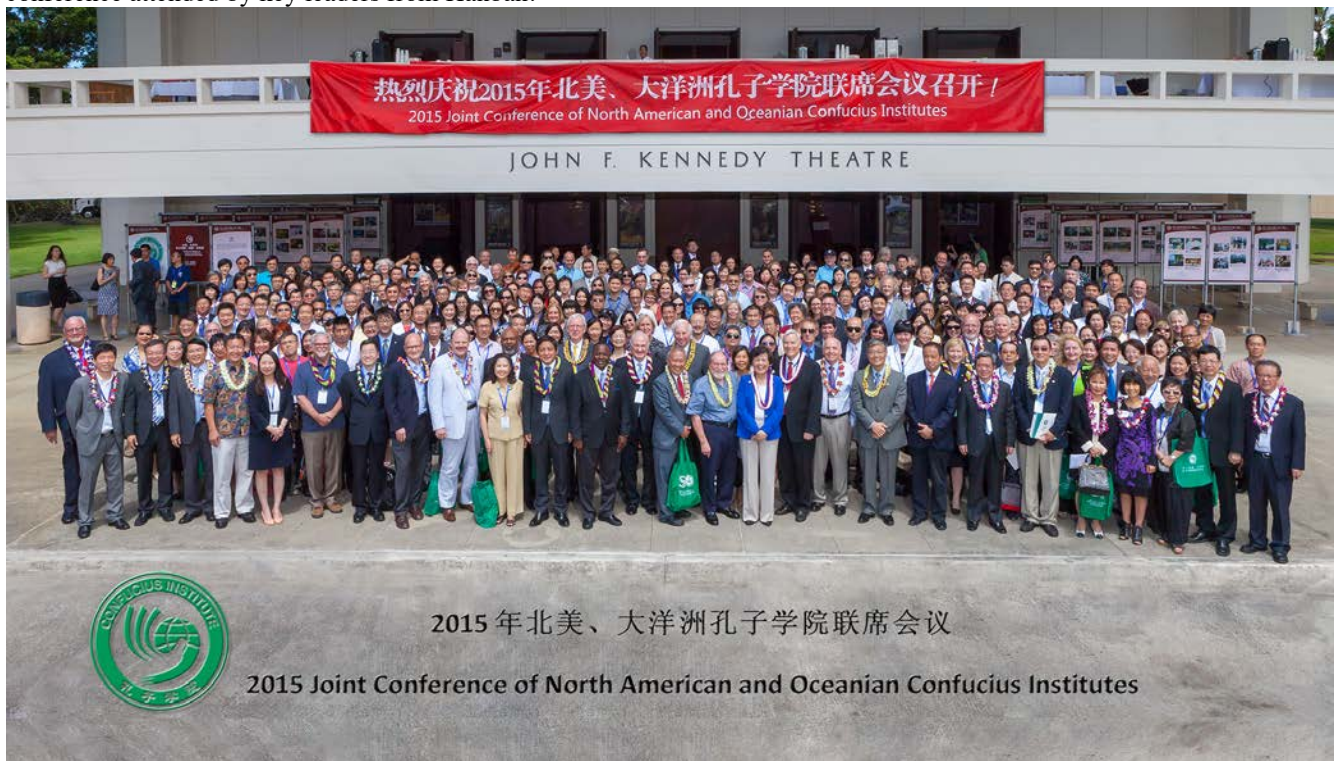


- Every year, a team from UH traveled to China to take part in the annual meeting of global Confucius Institutes. On three occasions, the CI-UHM was given special awards.



*In 2015, UHM chancellor Robert Bley-Vroman accepts a “Confucius Institute of the Year” award from PRC Vice Premier Liu Yandong*

- In 2015, delegates (including university presidents) representing nearly 100 US Confucius Institutes gathered at UH for a 2-day conference attended by key leaders from Hanban.

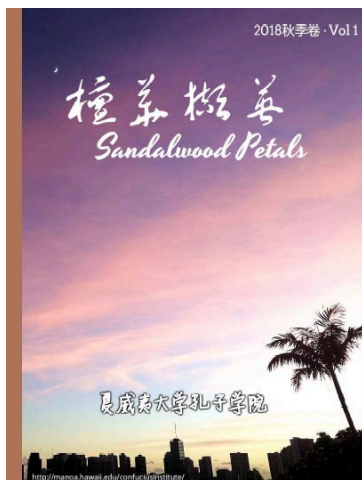


*Xu Lin, director general of Hanban, stands in the front row center, in the royal blue jacket. To her right is ex-governor Neil Abercrombie, and to her left UHM chancellor Robert Bley-Vroman. BFSU president Peng Long stands to the left of the woman in the yellow pantsuit, in the front row.*



- The CI-UHM facilitated **UH faculty traveling to China** to do research: Jayson Chun of UHWO studied for a month at BFSU in 2018, Michel Mohr of UHM's Dept of Religion will conduct research at Fudan U for six months, and David Dinh of UHWO will spend a month at BFSU.

## 6. Outreach through Chinese media



In their last year on the Mānoa campus, the talented faculty of the CI-UHM, led by Communications professor and CI-UHM PRC director Zhai Zheng, started a two-pronged outreach program through the Chinese media, one via a **WeChat public account**—a blog that pulled in subscribers from across the U.S. and China, that led to a 200+ page compilation called the *Sandalwood Petals* magazine, available for free download at <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/confuciusinstitute/>

The other initiative led to a full-page monthly color spread in the **Hawaii Chinese Daily**. Following are facsimiles of the four pages that have appeared to date. They include articles about Honolulu's Chinese community, and the adventures of CI-UHM's faculty and students.



For a 3-minute professionally produced video overview of highlighted activities of the CI-UHM 2007-10, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjKJcS-JLrQ&t=17s>

## 7. In the pipeline

(funded for 2019-20; now cancelled)

- In summer, 2019, 50 undergraduate students from the **UHM Shidler College of Business Administration** and UH West Oahu were scheduled to study Chinese in Beijing under sponsorship from the CI-UHM, under the “Expressway to China” summer program.



- A summer **teacher training institute and Chinese language camp** were scheduled to be held in July, on the campus of the Asia Pacific International School, on Oahu’s north shore. Some 40 people would have participated.



- The CI-UHM was going to bring Chinese chefs to Honolulu in a focused exploration of **Chinese cuisines**, in tandem with Kapiolani Community College’s culinary arts program.



- We were seeking to establish a Chinese language program at **St. Louis School**, through the intercession of St. Louis alumnus and UH regent Stanford Yuen.
- We were going to help build up the Chinese language program at the **Asia Pacific International School**, at their request, by bringing in additional teaching faculty from China.



# Aloha and Godspeed, “See 爱”

A recent e-mail from Beijing expressed the acronym “CI” as “See 爱” (pronounced *ài*, meaning “love”). Indeed, “seeing love” is preferable to “seeing conflict” at every turn.

We hope that better times will come, and our friends from China will return. We will be waiting.

For a sendoff, please see the video at this link. It was produced by students—students of Chinese in the CI-UHM, and the teachers of the CI-UHM, who are themselves students of English—in tribute to the beauty of Hawai‘i.

<https://youtu.be/codEgok4B0o>

