History of the China Exchange Program

The rich history of Beloit’s engagement with East Asia, and with China in particular, dates back to the earliest days of the College.

Beloit's interactions with China date to just after its founding in 1846. Examples of this connection with China: Henry D. Porter and Arthur H. Smith, members of the class of 1867, traveled in 1872 to P'ang Chuang as missionaries. Ching Ye Tang, the first student from China, enrolled at Beloit in 1914 and later won a Wisconsin State Oratorical Contest.

Beloit has enjoyed exchange partnerships in China since 1985, when a partnership was undertaken with Fudan University in Shanghai. Under the provisions of the partnership, both students and faculty could be exchanged between the two institutions. In 1989, the events of Tian An Men Square resulted in a decision on the part of Fudan University to cease sending students to Beloit College. However, Beloit College students and faculty continued to travel to Fudan, and Fudan University sent faculty members to Beloit for year-long residencies. In 1997/98, Fudan University resumed sending undergraduates to Beloit College as exchange students.

Beloit College’s current ties of friendship and academic cooperation with the People’s Republic involve institutional partnerships with Shandong University in Jinan, Shandong Province and Henan University in Kaifeng, Henan Province. Both universities have high national standing within China and offer our study abroad students excellent opportunities for the study of Chinese language and culture.

Beloit College students began studying in Jinan and Kaifeng in fall 2006, with formal exchange agreements concluded in the same academic year. From the very beginning of joint activity, Henan University has invited Beloit College graduating seniors to teach English at the university. As a result, each year Beloit College helps select three students who will spend the following academic year in Kaifeng as full-time university English instructors.

Several Beloit College faculty delegations have visited the two institutions since the inception of the exchange relationships, with a delegation from Henan University, led by the University President, visiting Beloit College in November 2009. Beloit College will host a Henan University staff member for the spring 2010 semester in addition to students from both its Chinese partner institutions.