



PENN WHARTON
CHINA CENTER
宾大沃顿中国中心

Annual Report 2025

Message from the Penn Wharton China Center

2025 marks the tenth anniversary of the Penn Wharton China Center (PWCC). Over the past decade—a journey of dedication and significant growth—the Center has consistently championed the academic spirit and global perspective of the University of Pennsylvania. PWCC has successfully expanded its intellectual footprint and fostered innovation across this dynamic Chinese landscape, firmly establishing itself as a vital bridge connecting Penn and China. Stepping into the new year, we reflect on 2025’s achievements and renew our commitment to moving forward together toward greater success. This report includes a few highlights from the past year. We hope you enjoy it!

What We Do

The Penn Wharton China Center opened its doors in 2015 and builds on Penn’s 200-year history of collaboration with China in research and education.

PWCC provides on-the-ground support for programs and collaborations between Penn’s 12 schools and many academic, government, and business partners throughout China. The Center supports:

- Penn-based programming, like Penn Global Seminars and China Education Initiative courses;
- Key stakeholder events, such as Forerunner China, an award-winning Penn pre-orientation program for incoming Chinese international students and their families;
- Non-degree “Executive Education” programming; and
- Communications outreach to alumni and stakeholders in China.

The Center also provides critical logistical (e.g., visa, travel, and event planning) support to members of the University traveling to China.

2025 At a Glance

- Founded in 2015, PWCC moved to its current location in the Yintai Office Tower in CBD in 2024
- The highlight of 2025 was PWCC's 10th anniversary, which brought Provost John Jackson, Wharton Dean Erika James, and Weitzman School of Design Dean Fritz Steiner to Beijing for a week of meetings with Penn alumni, current students, and partners, capped by a reception at the Park Hyatt Beijing
- In 2025, PWCC awarded its first two residency grants to Penn faculty
- PWCC also supported the visits of Penn Carey Law Dean Sophia Lee and Graduate School of Education Dean Katharine Strunk to China
- Other highlights of the year included Penn Global Seminar in China, Professor Neysun Mahboubi's Policy Task Force on U.S.-China Relations; Wharton Professor Kevin Werbach's Global Modular Course, which visited Beijing to engage in discussions on AI regulation; 10th anniversary of Forerunner China, Penn's signature pre-orientation program for incoming Chinese international students and their parents; the Beijing portion of the Future of US-China Relations Project's latest cohort; and hosting US Embassy staff for a visit to the center and discussion on the future of US-China academic collaboration.

Who We Are

Our team, with a presence in both Philadelphia and Beijing, is responsible for leading the PWCC and fostering collaboration and opportunity across the University and its stakeholders.



Amy E. Gadsden, PhD

Associate Vice Provost for Global Initiatives
Executive Director of Penn China Initiatives
Deputy Director of Penn Washington



Scott Moore

Managing Director of Global Initiatives,
Research, and Strategy, Penn Global
Practice Professor of Political Science



Jason ('Jay') Canavan

Chief Counsel of the Wharton School &
Associate General Counsel of the University
Executive Director, General Manager, and Legal
Representative of Penn Wharton China Center
Corporate Secretary of UPenn International



Chris Zhang

Senior Administrative Manager,
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Event Manager,
Penn Wharton China Center

Welcome Message from Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, Vice Provost for Global Initiatives
Penn Wharton China Center 10th Anniversary Annual Report

Over the past decade, the Penn Wharton China Center (PWCC) has become a critical part of the University of Pennsylvania's global strategy. The Center supports rigorous research collaboration, academic exchange, long-term institutional partnerships in China, and sustained alumni engagement—reinforcing Penn's role as a global university. As the University moves toward implementing its strategic plan, *In Principle, In Practice*, PWCC is a cornerstone of Penn's global engagement and a symbol of the importance of its China-based community of students, scholars, alumni, and friends.

Several highlights from this past year illustrate that role in practice. The tenth anniversary visit in October 2025 by Provost John L. Jackson and Wharton Dean Erika James, together with Weitzman School of Design Dean Frederick Steiner, reaffirmed the University's long-term academic presence in China and underscored the value of direct, in-person engagement with partners, students, alumni, and policymakers. Additional visits by Penn Graduate School of Education Dean Katharine Strunk and Penn Carey Law Dean Sophia Lee further demonstrated Penn's cross-school commitment to engagement in the region.

Programmatic growth remained a defining feature of the Center's work. The Forerunner China Program, now in its tenth year, continued to expand PWCC's role in preparing incoming students and families for Penn's academic culture and global community, while the Center also hosted the third cohort of the Penn Project on the Future of U.S.–China Relations, convening emerging scholars and practitioners for interdisciplinary, evidence-based research and dialogue on the evolving U.S.–China relationship.

The year also marked the launch of the Penn Wharton China Center Residency Grants, supporting Penn faculty whose work benefits from sustained, on-the-ground engagement in China. The inaugural grants enabled residencies at PWCC in Beijing focused on public scholarship and academic exchange, including Professor Chao Guo's research on time banking as an innovative model for elder care and Professor Emily Hannum's work on the future of rural education in China. The Center also hosted a Penn Global Seminar designed to introduce students to the most challenging issues in U.S. - China Relations. Together, these initiatives underscore PWCC's role as a platform for rigorous, policy-relevant scholarship grounded in long-term institutional engagement.

As the Center looks forward to its next decade, Penn remains firmly committed to its continued growth and impact. I thank the Center's leadership and staff, our faculty and students, and our alumni and partners for their contributions over the past ten years. Their work has established a strong foundation for what comes next.

Sincerely,

Ezekiel J. Emanuel, MD, PhD
Vice Provost for Global Initiatives
University of Pennsylvania

May 16-26

Penn Global Seminar (PGS) 2025 Policy Task Force on U.S.-China Relations

From May 16–26, 2025, Professor Neysun Mahboubi of the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics led the Penn Global Seminar (PGS) *Policy Task Force on U.S.-China Relations* on a 10-day field research trip to China..

Since its launch in 2015, the PGS program has worked to break down barriers to international learning. Through its integrated model of "semester-long seminars plus immersive field research during breaks," the program is open to undergraduates across all majors and class years, with dedicated resources ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds have equal access to firsthand global learning experiences. This course built on that foundation by requiring students to draft policy papers on topics including security, trade, climate, and technological competition, then travel abroad to test their findings on the ground.

The delegation consisted of 16 undergraduates and one teaching assistant, along with Professor Mahboubi, who visited academic and policy institutions in Beijing and Shanghai. On the academic front, the team held joint discussions with faculty and students from Tsinghua University's Center for International Security and Strategy (CISS), Peking University's Yenching Academy, Fudan University's Center for American Studies, and NYU Shanghai, presenting and refining their policy recommendations with Chinese peers and experts.



For policy research, the team met with the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, the Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress, the Shanghai Department of Commerce, and the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS). They also held closed-door roundtables with officials from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, the Australian Embassy in Beijing, and the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai, gaining direct insight into how policymaking institutions operate. The students also met with foreign correspondents in both Beijing and Shanghai, and were hosted by Penn alumni in Shanghai for a very nice dinner, where they had the opportunity to present highlights from their visit.



Beyond policy work, the itinerary included cultural experiences at the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the Bund, and in Hangzhou, West Lake and Longjing Tea Village. Whether or not students were visiting China for the first time, the trip as a whole provided outstanding opportunities not available to many American students, especially in recent years.



May 19–24

Wharton Global Modular Course (GMC) Beijing Program 2025

From May 19 to 24, 2025, Professor Kevin Werbach (Chair of Legal Studies and Business Ethics at Wharton, and Director of the Wharton Accountable AI Lab) led a Global Modular Course (GMC) group to Beijing for a week-long field study focused on the topic of “Global Perspectives on AI Regulation.” This immersive program enabled students to gain firsthand insights into China’s AI governance landscape through expert dialogues and comparative policy analysis.



The Wharton GMC program offers students hands-on learning opportunities tailored to local environments by conducting courses directly in specific global business centers. The Beijing program aimed to give participants firsthand insight into how technological innovation and compliance governance operate in real-world business and policy settings. The curriculum combined academic discussions with company visits, addressing topics from macroeconomic policy to specific corporate strategies.

During the study trip, participants attended seminars on AI governance at leading universities in China and gained insights into macroeconomic and industry trends. They also engaged with experts from both academia and industry, exploring the future of AI development from strategic and scholarly perspectives.

In the company research segment, students visited several representative technology platform enterprises to gain an in-depth understanding of their technological practices in the fields of automation, cloud computing, and digitalization. To better connect with the early-stage innovation ecosystem, the itinerary also included visits to technology startups and discussions with investment firms and startup teams, further illustrating the capital environment, entrepreneurial trends, and ecosystem vitality within the AI sector.

As part of the program, participants also attended a networking event with Wharton alumni working in technology, law, and finance, providing opportunities for face-to-face exchanges with Professor Werbach and the students.. The itinerary also included cultural experiences, such as a Peking hot pot dinner and a visit to the Great Wall, allowing international students to immerse themselves in local culture while engaging with key business topics.



June 21

Forerunner 2025 China Event

Forerunner is a one-day orientation program specifically designed for newly admitted international students and their families, aiming to prepare international students for a smooth transition to life at Penn. By participating, students gain early insight into Penn's unique academic culture, connect with their future classmates, expand their campus networks, and learn how to fully utilize the University's various resources and support systems.

On June 21, 2025, the Forerunner China Program was successfully held at the Park Hyatt Beijing. This year marked the tenth anniversary of the Forerunner program's founding, imbuing this event with profound significance. Over 300 incoming Penn students and parents attended, including international students across various programs such as undergraduates, master's students, and doctoral candidates.



The event commenced with a keynote speech by Dr. Amy Gadsden, Vice Provost for Global Initiatives, who emphasized Penn's mission as a global university. Following Amy's speech, Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, Vice Provost for Global Initiatives, Dr. Rodolfo Altamirano, Executive Director of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), and Jordan Pascucci, Associate Dean and Director of Admissions, extended a warm welcome to the incoming students via video messages. Lily Zhang, Director of Advising, Compliance, Information Technology, and Operations, and Dr. Yuhong He, Director of Integration, Community Engagement, and Marketing for ISSS, also delivered remarks.





The morning's Faculty Panel gathered distinguished scholars from various schools, including Professor Chao Guo (School of Social Policy & Practice), Professor Howard Hu (Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics), Professor Neysun Mahboubi (Director of the Penn Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations), Brian Vivier (Curator of the Global Collections at Penn Libraries), and Professor



Huayan Zhang (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Penn Medicine). Drawing on their respective areas of expertise, they offered in-depth insights into the Penn classroom experience and academic expectations, while sharing valuable perspectives on what it takes to succeed as a Penn student.





This was followed by the U.S. Immigration Policy Navigation session, led by the professional team from ISSS. In a year marked by frequent changes in immigration policies, the session provided detailed answers and introduced the latest 2025 visa application procedures, SEVIS system requirements, and practical entry suggestions.



The afternoon program was equally full and engaging. The Alumni Panel featured four outstanding international Penn alumni: Nancy Hu (Private Equity Investor), Xiaojun Liang (Industrial AI Expert), Ying Liu (Mental Health Entrepreneur), and Yifan Wang (Incoming Investment Banking Associate at Bank of America). They shared their academic journeys and career development trajectories from different industry perspectives, offering diverse life inspirations to the new students.





The interactive sessions energized the event and created a lively, engaging atmosphere. During the Penn-Philly Knowledge Quiz, incoming students enjoyed a relaxed opportunity to connect while gaining a deeper understanding of their future campus and city. In the Campus Resources Sharing segment, student leaders used skits to vividly illustrate practical scenarios that students may encounter in the U.S., covering topics such as safety, healthcare, housing, career planning, and academic support. These demonstrations provided students with a clear, firsthand view of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



The event also featured dedicated breakout sessions, offering in-depth opportunities for engagement with both students and parents. Incoming students had the chance to interact directly with current Penn students, learning about campus life and club involvement, while parents exchanged insights and strategies for supporting their children's educational journey.

The event concluded with an evening networking reception attended by numerous Penn alumni. Guests enjoyed relaxed conversations, fostering connections and creating lasting memories to cap off a successful day.



Marking a decade of growth and continuous advancement, this year's Forerunner event highlighted the program's ten years of development and success. Since its inaugural event in Beijing in 2015, Forerunner has expanded its reach to serve international students and parents around the world, including regions such as China, India, Southeast Asia, South America, Africa, and the Middle East.

Participants praised the program, noting that "this is an excellent way to network and connect with faculty, alumni, and future classmates." Beyond offering comprehensive matriculation guidance, Forerunner plays a vital role in helping new students integrate into the broader Penn global community even before they arrive in Philadelphia. Looking ahead, Forerunner will continue to support Penn's international student body, paving the way for more students worldwide to begin their journey at the University.



June 23

PWCC Residency Grant Program

Time Banking: Creating a New Paradigm for Elder Care

In 2025, Penn Global and the Penn Wharton China Center (PWCC) jointly launched the PWCC Residency Grant Program. This initiative provides funding to Penn faculty, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows, supporting residencies of up to ten days at PWCC. During this period, recipients are required to host at least one public lecture and a series of activities or projects in collaboration with a partner institution in China.

As the first recipients of this grant, Professor Chao Guo of the School of Social Policy & Practice and Professor Charlotte Ren of the School of Arts & Sciences delivered a special presentation on June 23rd at the PWCC conference room titled, "Time Banking: Global Innovation in Elder Care – Experience and Insights from China." This presentation was part of an ongoing transnational comparative study on time banking and elder care services, which they are conducting alongside Professor John J. DiJulio, Jr. of the School of Arts & Sciences. The event drew a large in-person audience and was simultaneously live-streamed via the PWCC WeChat Official Account to reach a wider public.



During the lecture, the two professors introduced the origins, core concept, and global development of time banking, a social innovation mechanism, under the theme "When Time Becomes Currency." Professor Ren explained that time banking is not an abstract concept but a practical mechanism operating on "time credits." Members accumulate "time credits" by providing mutual services, thus promoting resource sharing and community collaboration. This mechanism offers a novel solution for mitigating the challenges of "manpower shortages and unequal resource distribution" in elder care services. She stressed that the time banking concept is rooted in the idea that "everyone has value," advocating core principles such as equality, reciprocity, trust, co-creation, and respect, while also cautioning that cultural differences and institutional compatibility must be considered during widespread adoption.



The subsequent roundtable discussion featured Professor Wenhao Cheng of Tsinghua University's School of Public Policy and Management, Ms. Ling Wang (Penn Alumna and Asia Lead of Employee Engagement and Disaster Response, Microsoft Philanthropies), and Dr. Zhuang Sang (Director of Government and Public Affairs (Beijing) for Qilu Pharmaceutical Group) as discussants. They engaged in an in-depth dialogue on the localized application prospects of time banking, mechanisms for youth participation, and other related topics, discussing perspectives spanning policy support, corporate social responsibility, and community practice. The dynamic interaction contributed to a vibrant and engaging atmosphere throughout the event.



As the first successful initiative supported by the PWCC Residency Grant Program, the event highlighted the outcomes of cross-disciplinary research while laying a strong foundation for deeper academic exchange and collaboration in social innovation between China and the United States. Looking ahead, PWCC will continue to work closely with distinguished Penn faculty to deliver forward-thinking, practice-oriented, and socially impactful academic programming for alumni and the broader public in China.

June 23-27

The Penn Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations Third Cohort's Beijing Visit

From June 23-27, 2025, the third fellowship cohort from the Penn Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations conducted an intensive week-long visit to Beijing. Against the backdrop of today's complex international landscape, this visit aimed to build direct communication channels between scholars and policy experts from both countries, fostering mutual understanding through on-the-ground engagement and dialogue.

During the visit, the delegation held in-depth discussions with multiple Chinese institutions, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, Xinhua News Agency Think Tank, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress. On the diplomatic and multilateral front, the delegation met with the U.S. Ambassador to China and visited the British and Australian embassies. Additionally, participants held roundtable discussions with representatives from international organizations based in China, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), UN Women, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Ford Foundation, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), effectively broadening the scope of dialogue.



A highlight of the trip was the "2025 Next Generation Dialogue on U.S.-China Relations" symposium, co-hosted with Tsinghua University's Center for International Security and Strategy. The symposium focused on five core areas: national security, research and education, climate and environment, global governance, and trade and economics. The symposium featured a structured format with pre-set topics and was strategically scheduled toward the end of the visit, significantly enhancing the focus and depth of discussions. The project team regards this as a model for high-quality academic exchange.



The visit concluded with a meeting between the delegation and foreign correspondents based in Beijing, offering international media valuable insights into the latest thinking among U.S.-China relations scholars. This Beijing visit provided an important platform for scholars and policy experts from both nations to connect amid a challenging international environment. Through candid and substantive exchanges, both sides deepened their mutual understanding and laid the groundwork for future discussions. The Penn Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations is committed to cultivating the next generation of U.S.-China relations experts, and see it as part of this mission to include opportunities for high quality dialogues on the ground in China.



September 23

“Meet the Masters Series”

In-Depth Dialogue with Top Investor Wei Zhou

On September 23, 2025, the Penn Wharton China Center, in collaboration with the Wharton Beijing Alumni Club, hosted the "Meet the Masters Series" in Beijing, with simultaneous live streaming on WeChat. The event was moderated by Yuchen Jin, Vice Chairman of the Wharton Beijing Alumni Club. This session's featured guest, Wei Zhou—Chairman of the Wharton Beijing Alumni Club, former Managing Partner of KPCB China, and Founding Managing Partner of CCV shared profound insights into his career transformation from a state-owned enterprise employee and serial entrepreneur to a top-tier investor, as well as his investment philosophy and views on AI trends.



In reflecting on pivotal career choices, Mr. Zhou recounted his decision in 1995 to leave a state-owned enterprise for a private startup. This period, characterized by "developing during the day and sleeping on the floor at night," established his lifelong creed of daring to break through bottlenecks. Later, at the peak of his second venture, he resolutely chose to temporarily step away from his career to pursue an MBA at Wharton. He admitted that while this decision seemed like a sacrifice of financial opportunities in the short term, the Wharton experience significantly broadened his perspective and laid the groundwork for his subsequent entry into top-tier firms like KPCB. Mr. Zhou emphasized that critical decisions should be based on long-term goals and personal interest, rather than being constrained by immediate gains.



Addressing the evolution of his investment philosophy, Mr. Zhou, drawing on his background in physical electronics, expounded on the importance of "Bayesian thinking." He cited the lesson learned from his early involvement in clean energy investment at KPCB, where he disregarded commercial maturity due to being "sentiment-driven." He stressed that the essence of investment lies in finding the optimal intersection of technology and market. While his physics training instilled in him the habit of summarizing principles, he argued that in this rapidly changing era, investors must, like Bayesian logic, constantly update their knowledge and revise prior judgments based on new information, rather than rigidly adhering to past experience.

When discussing opportunities within the AI wave, Mr. Zhou highlighted that the deep integration of AI with complex sectors such as healthcare, finance, and manufacturing will be the main battlefield over the next decade, with the potential to create multi-billion dollar companies. Simultaneously, he is optimistic about AI companionship becoming a super-entry point for future user interaction, as well as the potential of robotics as the "physical embodiment" of AI. For young professionals aspiring to enter the VC industry, Mr. Zhou advised establishing differentiated advantages, focusing on in-depth work in technology or industry frontlines, and actively expanding their network with young entrepreneurs. He encouraged young people to embrace the changes brought by AI, viewing it as a chance to overtake competitors and challenge the established order.

October 15–18

Penn Provost John Jackson China Visit Celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of the Penn Wharton China Center

2025 marked the tenth anniversary of the Penn Wharton China Center (PWCC). To celebrate this milestone, a delegation including Penn Provost John Jackson, Wharton Dean Erika James, Stuart Weitzman School of Design Dean Fritz Steiner, and members of Penn Global, arrived in Beijing in mid-October for an in-depth visits. This trip was intended not only to reflect on PWCC's achievements over the past ten years but also to reaffirm Penn's commitment to U.S.-China academic cooperation through direct, face-to-face communication.

During the visit, the Provost and the Deans engaged in a series of meaningful, multi-level exchanges. They met with officials from the U.S. Embassy in China and traveled to Tsinghua University's Schwarzman College for candid and in-depth discussions with Tsinghua leaders and scholars on the current landscape and future prospects of academic exchange between China and the United States.

The Provost also engaged closely with Penn's community in China. At the Penn Parents' Luncheon, he expressed heartfelt appreciation to families for their steadfast support of the University's growth. He also spent time meeting with Penn students and young alumni in Beijing, engaging in open conversations to better understand their experiences, perspectives, and aspirations. These warm and personal interactions further deepened the ties between Penn and its community in China.



The PWCC Tenth Anniversary Gala, held on the evening of October 16th, was the centerpiece of the visit, drawing numerous alumni leaders, donors, and partners. The event commenced with an opening address by Penn Vice Provost Amy Gadsden, who extended a warm welcome to all guests present. Following her, Penn Trustee George Hongchoy delivered remarks. He reviewed PWCC's ten-year journey, from its initial planning to its current scale of hosting tens of thousands of visitors, and emphasized that despite constant shifts in the global environment, Penn's determination to continuously increase investment in research and education in China remains unwavering.



Following George's speech, Provost John Jackson took the stage to deliver a keynote speech. He shared the University's latest strategic vision, "Penn Forward," detailing the School's remarkable achievements in enhancing educational accessibility, increasing global influence, and making breakthroughs in frontier areas such as mRNA vaccine development and AI safety. Regarding the future development of PWCC, he clearly outlined three key priorities: expanding support for educational programs in China, strengthening collaboration between the Penn campus and Chinese universities, and further deepening connections with alumni based in China.



Following the speech, Vice Provost Amy Gadsden invited Provost John Jackson, Wharton Dean Erika James, and Stuart Weitzman School of Design Dean Fritz Steiner to the stage for a roundtable dialogue. In a relaxed and engaging setting, the panelists discussed recent highlights and developments within their respective schools, timely issues of interest to students, and China's distinctive role in the University's global strategy.

Adding a lighthearted note, the participants also shared their favorite Chinese dishes, creating a lively and welcoming atmosphere. The conversation combined intellectual substance with warmth and humor, offering cross-disciplinary perspectives while fostering a closer connection between Penn's leadership and the audience.



This tenth-anniversary celebration and visit honored PWCC's history over the past decade and set a solid foundation for Penn's future endeavors in China. From deep academic discussions to interactive community engagement, every event once again confirmed Penn's commitment and responsibility to build a communication bridge between the U.S. and China. Standing at this new historical starting point, the Penn Wharton China Center will continue to assist the University in advancing its mission of global education and research collaboration, embarking on its next exciting decade.



November - December 2025: Leadership Visits

In 2025, Penn continued its strategic partnership in China through leadership delegation visits, deepening cooperation in education, research, and talent development.

Penn GSE Dean Katharine O. Strunk's Visit

From November 30 to December 8, 2025, Katharine O. Strunk, Dean of Penn GSE, led a delegation to Beijing, Suzhou, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Shenzhen, and Hong Kong to expand academic partnerships with China's leading educational institutions and deepen alumni relations. The delegation included Jason Cronk, Assistant Dean for Enrollment Management and Administration, and Jane L. Lindahl, Director of Development and Alumni Relations.

During the visit, Dean Strunk visited Tsinghua University, Soochow University, Shanghai International Studies University, and Shenzhen University. At Tsinghua University, both parties signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), and Dean Strunk delivered academic lectures at both Tsinghua University and Shenzhen University. The delegation also conducted site visits to local educational institutions and hosted recruitment sessions and alumni events in multiple cities. This visit facilitated multiple collaborative initiatives in academics and talent development while strengthening the school's presence and alumni cohesion in China.



Penn Carey Law School Dean Sophia Z. Lee's Visit

In November 2025, Sophia Z. Lee, Dean of Penn Carey Law School, visited Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Beijing. Dean Lee met with leadership and faculty at the University of Hong Kong, Koguan School of Law at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Tsinghua Law School, Peking University Law School, and China University of Political Science and Law, to discuss research collaboration, dual-degree programs, student exchanges, and co-teaching initiatives.

Dean Lee emphasized the shared mission in global legal education and social service, and the commitment to advancing legal education exchange and talent development through structured partnerships. She also hosted alumni gatherings, strengthening connections with the school's alumni community in China.



Looking Ahead 2026

As it enters its second decade, the Penn Wharton China Center (PWCC) remains dedicated to advancing academic exchange and the on-the-ground implementation of collaborative projects. Through diverse engagement frameworks, the Center continues to provide sustained support for Penn faculty and students conducting in-depth research and intellectual exchange across China.

PWCC Awards Residency Grant to Prof. Lin Zhongjie, Benjamin Z. Lin Presidential Professor of Urban Design, Weitzman School of Design

PWCC has awarded a residency grant to Prof. Lin Zhongjie for his project *Fragments of the Future: The Everyday Drama of Chinese New Towns*, which examines China's new town movement and post-growth urbanization.

A central component of the residency is the co-curation of the exhibition *Fragments of the Future* for the 10th Shenzhen–Hong Kong Bi-City Biennale of Architecture/Urbanism (UABB), in collaboration with Prof. Tao Zhu (Tongji University) and Dr. Harry den Hartog (TU Delft and Tongji University). The exhibition will be on view in Shenzhen from January 9 to March 31, 2026. As one of China's most influential architecture and urbanism events, UABB offers a major public platform, and the exhibition will prominently feature Penn and PWCC, strengthening their visibility in the Greater Bay Area.



The residency also supports a series of academic and public programs. These include a joint international workshop in Suzhou (March 1–14, 2026) with the National University of Singapore, Tongji University, Southeast University, and Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University; a public lecture at the University of Pennsylvania in March 2026, co-organized by the Center for East Asian Studies (CEAS) and the Center for the Study of Contemporary China (CSCC); and a summer 2026 event at PWCC focused on post-growth development in Chinese new towns, drawing on the exhibition and Prof. Lin's forthcoming book, *Constructing Utopias: China's New Town Movement in the 21st Century* (Oxford University Press, 2025).

In addition, Prof. Lin will deliver lectures and book talks in several Chinese cities, including Fuzhou, Xiamen, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Shanghai, Beijing, and Shenzhen, and will publish a research article on Zhengdong New District in *LA+*, the journal of Penn's Department of Landscape Architecture. Together, these activities form a coherent body of scholarship and public engagement that will support long-term research collaboration and institutional partnerships.

PWCC Residency Project “The Future of Rural Education in China” to Launch in Spring 2026

The project is led by Emily Hannum, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology and Education and Associate Dean for the Social Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Arts and Sciences. A senior scholar specializing in poverty, child welfare, and educational equity in rural China, Professor Hannum directed the Gansu Survey of Children and Families—a landmark 15-year longitudinal study. Her work provides a comprehensive, long-term perspective on social mobility and educational attainment, drawing on extensive research experience in the region.

Amid declining fertility, rapid urbanization, and large-scale outmigration from rural communities, the provision of education for children remaining in rural China has become an increasingly urgent challenge. In response, the PWCC Residency Grants project *The Future of Rural Education in China* is scheduled to launch in spring 2026, led by Professor Emily Hannum, bringing together leading scholars to examine how China is reshaping its rural education system in the face of profound demographic change.

While rural depopulation is a growing concern in many societies worldwide, China stands out for the speed of its demographic transition and the scale of its policy responses. These responses include widespread primary school consolidation, the expansion of boarding schools at increasingly young ages, and the use of live-streamed, MOOC-like instruction to transmit lessons from well-resourced urban classrooms to rural schools, where local teachers facilitate learning. These experiments have generated both promising innovations and serious concerns regarding equity, educational quality, and child well-being.

The residency aims to convene experts on rural education in China to produce a substantive working paper series tracing emerging problems, policy experiments, and strategic possibilities within China’s rural education system. These papers will support two major long-term outcomes: an edited volume on China’s educational responses to rural depopulation, and a collaborative international research proposal examining global approaches to rural education in contexts of population decline.

Project activities will include a public seminar on new directions in rural education hosted by PWCC, a collaborative research meeting at a partner university in Beijing, and a hybrid-format working paper launch event hosted by the University of Pennsylvania. The research developed through the residency will also form the basis for a major grant application to the Spencer Foundation.

Anchored in China’s ongoing experiments but informed by international comparative perspectives—including collaboration with scholars of rural education in Australia and beyond—the project seeks to generate actionable knowledge on how education systems can better serve children living in materially constrained rural environments, contributing to future policy development and sustained global research collaboration.



Upcoming Penn Global Seminars

In May 2026, the following two PGS courses will travel concurrently to China for 10-day field residencies. PGS offers pivotal global learning opportunities for Penn undergraduates across all disciplines and class years, broadening international horizons through unique cultural exchange and immersive experiences, helping students gain direct insights into China's dynamic professional and cultural landscape, and ensuring the seamless translation of classroom theory into field-based practice.

Chinese Language and Culture: High Intermediate Chinese II

The course is led by Ye Tian and Jing Hu from the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations. This seminar enhances language proficiency while deepening understanding of contemporary China's culture and society. Topics include infrastructure, economic reforms, ethnic minorities, population policies, E-commerce, and 5G technology. Students will be paired with language partners from Chinese institutions for online discussions before the May 2026 trip. During the 10-day field residency, students will meet partners in person, explore historical sites, and visit museums to apply classroom learning and develop intercultural competence.



Global Business Communication for Impact

The course is led by Sara Mangat and Jacqueline De Ritis Feild of the Wharton Communication Program. This practice-based course equips students with essential business communication skills like persuasive pitching and professional presence. The seminar emphasizes adapting U.S. communication strategies to different cultural and organizational norms. During the field residency, students will gain firsthand insights into cultural differences and, through company visits and executive discussions, obtain in-depth and practical insights into how communication practices and professional hierarchies vary across industries and regions, thereby developing the practical skills and global mindset needed to lead and collaborate in a global professional environment.



Forerunner China 2026

Penn Global will celebrate over a decade of Forerunner China in the latest iteration of Penn's signature pre-orientation program for incoming Chinese students and their parents, scheduled to be held in Shanghai in mid-June 2026.

The Penn Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations

Penn Project Fourth Cohort's Beijing Visit

Thanks to a new award from the Carnegie Corporation as well as funding from the Ford Foundation and Luce Foundation, the Future of U.S. - China Relations Program will continue, with a new cohort of fellows set to visit Beijing in late June 2026.



PENN WHARTON
CHINA CENTER
宾大沃顿中国中心

Thank you

Thank you for your interest in PWCC!
We invite outreach from interested parties for future collaboration.
Please feel free to contact us at chinainfo@pwcc.upenn.edu