

Visitors

The ACC welcomed several visitors to the center since the grand opening. In May, officials from the U.S. Embassy Coordinator for Outreach and Engagement Greg D'Elia and Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs Tom Skipper visited with TUS Vice President Zhang to tour the ACC and TUS facilities. The visitors were introduced to the history and details of TUS.

Also in May, University of Minnesota-Duluth students visited the ACC and spent more than three hours learning and exchanging ideas about U.S. and Chinese sports culture. The American student group of nineteen, participated in numerous discussions including baseball in China and sport as a business. The group received a demonstration on how to perform a traditional Chinese dance and was able to watch preparations for the Dragon Boat races and a Kung Fu performance. Finally, the students participated in badminton matches against Chinese students who are studying badminton as their major.



Key Partners

Together, the University of Minnesota and the Tianjin University of Sport create meaningful cultural programming at the American Cultural Center for Sport that advances the U.S. mission to create an appreciation for the strength and diversity of American culture and society.



University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota has a long and deep history of exchange and partnership with China's universities and academies. In 1979, the University was one of the first universities to resume academic exchanges with China. The University established the China Center in 1979, a first-of-its-kind at a U.S. university. For more than thirty years the China Center has been building U.S.-China bridges. In 2008, the University opened a Confucius Institute in partnership

with the Hanban and Capital Normal University in Beijing. And most recently, in 2009, the University established the Beijing Office to further support student recruitment, alumni relationships, and institutional relationship building. Today, the University hosts more than 2,200 students from greater China, while its American students are studying in China in greater numbers each year.

The University's School of Kinesiology is ranked among the top ten programs nationally. The sport management program and sport sociology graduate program has expertise in sport culture related programs while the school's Tucker Center for Girls and Women in Sports is specially endowed to introduce the role of sports in education, social equity, and diversity.



Tianjin University of Sport

Tianjin University of Sport (TUS) is one of the top sport universities in China with comprehensive disciplines, advanced equipment, and outstanding faculty. The University's Research Center for Humanities and Sociology of Sport is a key social science research facility of China's State General Administration of Sport. TUS has worked closely with the University of Minnesota's

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

中美体育文化交流中心 AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER FOR SPORT

2011-2012
Annual Summary

Year in Review

The University of Minnesota's (UMN) American Cultural Center for Sport (ACC) has been operating at Tianjin University of Sport (TUS) since early 2012, with the UMN's China Center overseeing its administration. The first months served as the initial set-up for the office. ACC Coordinator Daniel Konold along with the UMN's Beijing Office staff and TUS partners made necessary arrangements to turn the office into a well-functioning and welcoming, sports-themed space.

The grand opening ceremony for the office was held in March and since then, the ACC has planned several programs and events, implemented outreach efforts to promote the center, and hosted various guests. While TUS was on summer holiday, ACC staff was able to design, develop and implement a website that includes information about the center, event listings, and a blog. In the coming year, the ACC will continue to develop programs and events that bring culturally oriented instruction, exchanges, and engagement to TUS students, faculty, staff, and the greater community.

Grand Opening Celebrations

More than 200 Chinese faculty and students filled the TUS auditorium on March 20, 2012 for the grand opening of the ACC. Representatives from UMN, TUS, the U.S. Embassy, China's national sport administration, the city of Tianjin education commission, and other distinguished guests also attended the inaugural celebration and opening ceremonies.

Dr. Nicole LaVoi, associate director of the UMN Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, delivered the keynote speech, "The Evolution of American College Sport & the Role of Females." Dr. LaVoi's presentation covered U.S. cultural values such as gender equity and pay equity. It also recounted the history of U.S. women in sport and American attitudes and values towards this movement over the last 120 years. Yang Xiping, sociology professor and TUS vice president, gave a parallel presentation about issues related to women in sport in China, followed by an interactive conversation with the audience.





Programs

The ACC offers several American sport-related programs and activities to TUS students, faculty, staff, and the greater community to develop an understanding of fundamental American values. The ACC selects monthly themes and develops events and activities based on each theme, such as weekly American sport activities and a series of “Culture Conversations.”

Tuesday Morning Football

In September, the ACC began the “Tuesday Morning Football” program. This series broadcasts live games from the National Football League’s (NFL) “Monday Night Football” schedule. The first live game the ACC hosted was the game between the Green Bay Packers and Seattle Seahawks, which had a controversial touchdown catch that forced the NFL to end the referee lockout. The ACC was able to readdress the controversy in the following weeks around the topic of fair play.

Ultimate Frisbee

The ACC will work with the TUS’ ultimate Frisbee team, Tianjin Speed, to incorporate American cultural values into their practices. The award-winning team meets to practice twice a week and proposed activities lead by ACC staff include training drills on how Frisbee is integrated at American universities.

American Football in Tianjin

The ACC partnered with an upstart American football team in Tianjin to help with coaching, sporting equipment, and providing a practice field. Creating partnerships such as this one will help to establish the ACC as a community resource for American culture and sports in Tianjin, as well as increase the visibility of the ACC in general.

American Sports Film Festival

The ACC office was transformed into a theater for the American Sports Film Festival, giving attendees a cinematic experience by projecting films onto the wall and projecting sound with speakers. Four different American sport-related films were shown to more than 70 people to convey American culture. Some audience members cited that they were unfamiliar with some of the sports in the films but nevertheless, were able to grasp the underlying cultural concepts with ease. The films made a powerful impact on attendees while also delivering an element of entertainment. The films featured were *Whip It*, *Glory Road*, *Miracle*, and *Rudy*.



Outreach

Daniel Konold, ACC program coordinator, and his TUS counterpart visited several TUS departments to introduce the ACC to faculty members. Mr. Konold also met with a sports journalist and the American Chamber of Commerce in the People’s Republic of China in Tianjin to discuss ACC programs. In August, Mr. Konold traveled to Beijing to speak with UMN alumni about the ACC.

The ACC was invited to NFL China’s 2012 season kick-off festivities in September. The activities gave Mr. Konold several opportunities to meet with network and sport executives from China, former NFL athletes and current NFL cheerleaders. This networking opportunity helped to secure guest lecturers for the upcoming months. Also in September, ACC staff presented the lecture, “Sports on American College Campuses,” and taught a session on American football at Wuhan University. The lecture and activity were part of the opening ceremony for Ohio State’s American Cultural Center.



Guest Lectures and Exchanges

Guest lectures by experts, athletes, and other reputable professionals is a highlight of ACC offerings. ACC constituents are able to learn from and interact with guest lecturers in various ways, including question-and-answer sessions and demonstrations. In June, more than 300 faculty and students attended the lectures of two guests from Minnesota. University of Minnesota Professor Rayla Allision presented, “Intellectual Property in Sports Law” and Minnesota Hennepin County Attorney Michael Freeman spoke about “When Celebrity Athletes and Coaches Make Mistakes.”

The ACC attended a cultural exchange event at the U.S. Embassy in September, as a guest of the U.S. Ambassador to China, Gary Locke. Mr. Locke gave an address where he applauded the work of the ACC and encouraged ongoing and innovative cultural exchanges between the U.S. and China.

Resources

The ACC resources include reading materials about sports, sporting equipment, and U.S. sport memorabilia. In addition, the ACC maintains a website, blog, and events calendar.

