Teaching at the Center for American Culture at Guizhou University and at Guizhou Normal University
Guiyang, China

Background
During the summer of 2011, Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC and Greenville Technical College in Greenville, SC partnered to establish a collaboration with Guizhou University in Guiyang, China. This endeavor had been approved by the Chinese government and was supported by the American Institute for Foreign Study. The intent was to improve the American public’s understanding of China and to provide a physical location for the Center for American Culture and Research. The Center would provide faculty release time for lectures in China. Guizhou University would provide a coordinator to assist with the cultural programming and faculty release time for the lectures and workshops in China. Greenville Technical College would provide a director to administer the grant and faculty release time coordinator for the programming and logistics of the Center.

The grant objective was to establish a permanent resource center at Guizhou University. This would include a library with books, magazines and newspapers from the US and meeting rooms and office space. Lectures and seminars by faculty members from PC and GTC would be scheduled to coincide with interdisciplinary themes and to highlight the strengths of the American educational system. This would include experimental language immersion programs for middle and high school students at Guizhou Normal University, a new Confucius Institute and a program to assist Guizhou University in its endeavor to become a Confucius Institute. The project would be multi-disciplinary and aimed at helping the Chinese achieve a broader understanding of American culture. Visits to local K-12 schools would also be arranged including meetings between school administrators and American faculty members.

Preparation
In the fall of 2011, the Center for International Education at GTC announced an application process for faculty interested in participating in this project. Dr. Reggie Bruster was selected as the project director and the following faculty members were selected to deliver presentations in China:

- Dianne Chidester – American Community Colleges
- Kathryn Hix – The Harlem Renaissance
- Brian Halmbach – Funding Theater in the US
- Mary Ryan-Morris – Volunteering in the US
- Jacque Stewart Taylor – Encouraging Creativity
- Bonnie Smith – Delivering Human Services in the US
- Tim Smith – American Approach to Marketing
- James Williams – Nonviolence and the Civil Rights Movement
- Dr. Reg Bruster coordinated arrangements with Dr. David Liu at Presbyterian College and Dr. Kejian Jin, visiting professor at Presbyterian College from Guizhou University. In Guiyang, the graduate students in the School of International Relations and their supervising professor prepared by making local arrangements, scheduling classes and translating presentations as exemplified here with a translation of some of Gandhi’s nonviolent principles used in Mr. Williams’ lecture.

1. Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.

2. Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.

3. Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment.

Presentations
The GTC faculty traveled to 2 groups, one at the beginning and one at end of April 2012, each group staying for approximately one week.

The first group toured and met with administrators at residential middle and high schools in the Guizhou University campus. The second group visited classrooms and participated in a panel discussion with faculty members at an experimental language immersion elementary school in Guiyang. Both groups made presentations and interacted with students, faculty and administrators at Guizhou University and Guizhou Normal University, also located in Guiyang.

Additionally, both groups concluded their travel to China with a few days in Beijing to experience life in the capital city and see such things as Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City.

Impact
Surveys were distributed to students at Guizhou and Guizhou Normal Universities for the purpose of assessing the impact of the presentations made by GTC faculty. The results were overwhelming positive. Faculty participants were required to provide summaries and reflections of their experiences in the classrooms and China generally. Kathryn Hix encompassed many of the common sentiments in an op ed article about this project published in the Greenville News June 9, 2012. "...when I think back on this trip, I remember most fondly the relationships I formed with colleagues and students. We were treated to amazing meals, sightseeing adventures and even an amazing performance at the Peking Opera. But what resonates with me most is the great rapport we established with the people, our counterparts in China. The intellectual and experiential knowledge gained by the faculty participants will now be shared with the GTC community.

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