

Vautrin Education Exchange Memorandum of Understanding

CONNECT partners directly with schools and professional educators to provide a three-week exchange to the U.S. During an exchange, participants will shadow a professional in a professional setting to gain a better understanding of the western workplace, hopefully in the participant's field of interest. They will live with individual host families to experience daily life and culture in an American home. In addition, there will be opportunities to visit several school settings and tourist attractions and participate in English discussion groups regarding educational practices.

Purpose

CONNECT complements knowledge participants acquire in their teaching experiences by providing a practical, professional job shadowing experience in an environment that expands the participants' global understanding and enhances their English communicative skills.

We hope our participants will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and character that lead to enriched careers and vibrant communities.

Impact

For three weeks, the participants will be in a life-transforming environment through home stays with American families who will love with truth and grace, and for two of those weeks the participants will job shadow in a workplace where these values can be reinforced in a professional setting.

The essential element of the life-transforming environment is love. We want the participants surrounded by families and professionals who sincerely care about them, wish to see them succeed, and are willing to sacrificially serve them in the home and workplace.

Each participant is placed in homes for their entire stay in the U.S., for it is in the home that they experience authentic American culture and witness firsthand the application of the values professed by the hosts.

Most of the participants' time is spent in various workplaces observing, participating in different work activities and interacting with professionals. Gaining insight into the professional educator's work and firsthand experience in the workplace are the focal points of *CONNECT*. However, this is an exchange program, and should not be considered a paid internship or practicum for course credit.

Goals

The goal is for personal and professional growth. Professionally, we want the participants to grow in two areas: gifting and vision.

Gifting: Many *CONNECT* participants, despite being locked into a specific teaching job, do not know how to improve and excel in their teaching. Exposure to people working in the teaching profession will help the participants understand how to develop their own skills in the demands of that career. Many Chinese base their career choice solely on highest salary or the easiest point of entry. We want them to realize they will be much happier developing their career through the educational practices that best suits their gifts.

Vision: We also want the participants to have a vision for their career choice that is beyond a personal pursuit of wealth and status. We want them to realize that professionals have a higher calling to be excellent at their work and serve others. They are not just working a job; they are impacting those around them. This changes the way they approach their work and those they interact with daily. Professionals should also be role models of integrity and not succumb to common pressures of bribery and dishonesty. This requires an individual to center his thinking and decision-making on a system of values, which has a high regard for what is good and right.

Additionally, we want the participants to leave the U.S. more confident in their ability to communicate in English, grow in their understanding of American culture and broaden their worldview. We also want them to laugh a lot and enjoy themselves, their peers and their American friends.

Team

To successfully achieve the goals of *CONNECT*, it is suggested that each U.S. partner recruit a team. A team should consist of a project coordinator, a host family coordinator, a professional experience coordinator and a transportation coordinator. The team model should look very similar to a short-term, overseas team, but instead of flying to another country, the team stays in the U.S. to serve the Chinese teachers.

Beyond the core team are a host of volunteers who help the coordinators, provide transportation, meals, hosting, entertaining, mentoring and discussion leaders. Typically, it takes around 20 volunteers to adequately provide a project for four participants.

Participants

CONNECT targets undergraduate and post-graduate Chinese university students, as well as professional educators, from various majors who are proficient in English and for certain programs we provide opportunities of Chinese professionals.

Participants pay \$3,500-\$4,200 each depending on their program, which they understand will place them in American homes and workplaces for exposure to professional careers and western culture. We tell them that this cost includes medical insurance, SIM card, accommodations, breakfast and dinner, professional mentorship and any necessary expenses in the U.S.--transportation and ticket prices to local site-seeing and cultural events. Honestly, this price point is only achievable because of your generosity; there are other similar programs that charge twice as much.

Responsibilities of *CONNECT*

Our responsibilities include:

- Working with our partners to promote the exchange and ensure the participants' preparedness for the U.S.
- Selecting qualified participants
- Provide cultural training for participants before leaving China
- Provide advanced financing for our U.S. partners for group program expenses incurred (ie. orientation, welcome/farewell banquets, group excursions/entertainment, evening discussion group snacks, group transportation). Financing is issued via Blue Bridge International, LLC "BBI" (*CONNECT*'s US-based, parent company)

Responsibilities of the U.S. Partner

The main responsibilities of the U.S. Partner include:

- Ensuring the participants' safety and care from when they land in the U.S. until they leave the U.S.
- Providing host families for the participants to live with for the full length of the exchange
- Arrange and manage the participants' U.S. schedule:
 - Orientation -- half a day
 - Welcome Banquet -- once
 - Language Training -- one to two days
 - Local university and worksite tours -- one day
 - Professional experiences in workplaces -- most weekdays
 - Volunteer work -- one day
 - Reflection groups/discussion groups -- once or twice a week
 - Cultural activities -- weekly
 - China presentation event -- once
 - Farewell banquet -- once

Host Families (Also view "Host Family Guidelines and Expectations")

Participants will live with families that love through grace and truth.

Most participants are an only child and so enjoy joining a family with other children. Families with children are not a program requirement, but such placements are worth prioritizing.

If necessary, multiple participants can be placed together in one home, two to a room, if the accommodations are comfortable and each participant has his/her own bed.

Host families are expected to provide their guests with breakfast and dinner for each day the participant is at their home.

Weekends are a special opportunity for the host families to spend extra time getting to know their participant and introducing them to American life. Cultural activities such as attending church, visiting museums, parks or concerts, going to the movies, watching a sporting event or spending a day at the lake are all encouraged. In the past, the participants' favorite activity was visiting a farm, on which they rode 4-wheelers and shot rifles. The meals and other costs incurred by the host families that aren't for a project-wide event are viewed as a gift to the participants; therefore, financial compensation for time or money spent on the participants by the host families is not available.

The U.S. partner needs to be prepared to immediately relocate the participants to a different home if circumstances require such intervention.

Professional Experience Opportunities (Also view "Job Shadowing: Guidelines and Expectations")

The job shadowing opportunities can be designed several ways.

Education

The Vautrin Education Exchange has found its success in providing participants with a broad exposure to the US education system. For each participant, this should include:

- Some combination of multi-level exposure—kindergarten, primary, middle and high school
- Experience one-on-one mentorship by U.S. teachers

- Learn different teaching philosophies and styles
- Expand curriculum and lesson planning skills
- Broaden understanding of student social issues
- Develop new classroom management strategies
- Teach a lesson on Chinese culture and language
- Participate in teacher/student relationships

Sometimes a variety of professional experiences is better. Not only does the broad exposure help participants, it also helps program coordinators by giving them more options from which to choose.

Due to jet lag and the fatigue of using a second language constantly, it might be in the participants' best interest to conclude the job shadowing schedules between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. Extra time at home helps them rest, reflect on what they have experienced and have energy of any evening discussion groups or activities.

***CONNECT* Program Events**

Orientation

When the participants arrive, they need an orientation time to learn a bit about the city and what to expect for the next three weeks and what is expected of them.

Welcoming and Farewell Banquets

Culturally, banquets are used in China as a means of establishing and celebrating relationship. A welcoming banquet can be designed to introduce participants to some of the professionals they will be interacting with in their job shadowing experience and cast a vision for ways in which the professionals hope to have an impact on the participants' gifts and visions. Similarly, a farewell banquet celebrates the relationships that have been formed, lessons learned and gives the professionals one last chance to bestow their guests with honor before returning to China.

Workplace Tours

Participants should be given a chance to visit the workplaces they are assigned if that is possible. While touring may seem boring to Westerners, it is a regular Chinese activity filled with much photo taking.

Professional English Training

If possible, we'd like the participants to spend a couple of days working on their English skills before entering their workplaces. Some of that comes from just being immersed in an English-speaking environment. Local partners for previous projects have provided some type of ESL training that takes into consideration the various job shadowing the students will experience.

Volunteer Experience

Spending some time volunteering, maybe at a food bank, homeless shelter, crisis pregnancy center, helps to balance the participants' exposure to the wealth that America portrays while increasing their vision for ways of helping the poor.

Discussion Groups

Once or twice a week the participants should meet together with a local professional to process their experiences, discuss the types of teaching strategies they are interested in utilizing when they return to their jobs, and talk about tackling the most pressing problems in their professional communities. It's during this time that the participants are challenged to consider the values necessary for true professional success and talk about the value-based problems facing the professional communities in their own culture.

China Presentation Event

We'd like to give the Chinese a chance to be the teachers by arranging an evening for them to present their life and culture to the friends they have made in the U.S.

**Participants will debrief with *CONNECT* representatives (Pinnacle network of teachers) after they return to China, the results of which will be shared with your team. We would like them to leave the U.S. with the most positive mindset, without having been asked to consider what could have been better until they are back in China.

Cultural Experiences

We want the participants to experience American life. The host families can provide many of these opportunities themselves by involving them in family activities from fun (watching movies) to mundane (grocery shopping), but the U.S. partner should plan a few group activities throughout the exchange. For example:

- A trip to a nearby attraction or major city
- A seasonal sporting event: basketball, baseball, football or hockey
- A local university campus event

Finances

Each U.S. partner will be sent program funds of \$400/student in advance of the program.

- \$400/participant is budgeted for group program expenses incurred (ie. orientation, welcome/farewell banquets, group excursions/entertainment, evening discussion group snacks, group transportation, materials, etc.). *Receipts necessary

Process of funds, US partners must:

1. Sign a Program Finance Agreement with BBI.
2. Email a scanned copy of the receipts along with a completed expense report (blank reports provided by *CONNECT* in an Excel workbook format) at the completion of *CONNECT* Program project to don.traub@lianxingglobal.com.
3. Mail original receipts, completed expense report and a check for any remaining cash to:

Blue Bridge International, LLC
c/o Mike Malan
1629 Blue Spruce Drive
Fort Collins, CO 80524

Program advancements will be made via wire transfer or check within two weeks of receiving a scanned copy of the signed Program Finance Agreement.

Appendix A (Suggested Team Roles)

Project Coordinator

Every successful team needs a team leader to pull together all the resources necessary to accomplish its objectives and to troubleshoot when problems arise. The project coordinator would fulfill this role by recruiting all the other coordinators, casting the vision for the *CONNECT* Program, leading the project preparation period, establishing clear lines of communication with team members and with their *CONNECT* representative, and providing oversight to the actual project when the participants are in the U.S. As one can imagine, this role requires many hours of labor and is probably best suited for someone that is gifted in coordinating.

Host Family Coordinator

CONNECT Programs are very unique from other types of exchange programs offered to Chinese in that participants stay with host families. Our Chinese partners also recognize this as a highly attractive aspect of the program. Thus, the host family coordinator has an important role of recruiting willing host families and matching the participants with the appropriate families. The host family coordinator is responsible for all communications with the host families, passing along host family information to the project coordinator and dealing with any participant/host family issues that may arise during the project.

Professional Experience Coordinator

Providing opportunities for *CONNECT* Program participants to develop professional skills and interact with professionals in their area of interest is a vital element of the exchange program. Though not always possible, our goal is to provide a large variety of opportunities in which the participants may engage. It is the professional experience coordinator's role to find these opportunities by promoting *CONNECT*'s vision through their network of Christian professionals. Once participating companies/professionals prepare descriptions of their professional experience opportunities, the coordinator should pass these along to the project coordinator. This role also has the responsibility to recruit professionals to lead the weekly discussion groups. Once the project is underway, the professional experience coordinator should follow-up with the schools/professionals to ensure the participants are receiving a quality experience.

Transportation Coordinator

Transporting the participants to and from the workplace is a worthy challenge for the most gifted coordinator. Host families are often unavailable to provide all the necessary transportation needed, as they may be working or preoccupied with family responsibilities. Besides, they are already greatly contributing to the program. Some mornings the participants will need to arrive early to their workplace, and it is common to have multiple transportation needs throughout the day for just one participant. The transportation coordinator would need to recruit a pool of volunteers willing to meet the transportation needs, create a transportation schedule, and coordinate with the transportation volunteers and the host families to ensure the transportation needs are met.

Appendix B (Sample CONNECT Program Project Schedule)

Current Master Schedule **KEY** — **BLUE** : ACTIVITY OUTSIDE THE HOME **RED** : DEPARTING/ARRIVING HOME **GREEN** : FREE TIME AT HOME/WITH FAMILY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<p>27-Jan EVENING 4:49pm Niklaus Arrives 8:35pm Vanessa & Jack Arrive Travel to Host Home</p>	<p>28-Jan DAYTIME 9:00 am: Depart 9:30 am: Orientation Coffee (Jeremy) money for food, cell phone, camera, wear casual clothes 10:15 am: Cricket/AT&T Lunch 1-3:30 pm: USI Campus Tour EVENING 4:13pm Laura Arrives 4-4:45 pm: Early Dinner? 5-9 pm: Winter Jam (Host family pick up at Ford Center) 9:30pm: Return</p>	<p>29-Jan 8:15 am: Depart 9:00 am - 10:30 am: ESL training at UE notebook, pen, camera, casual clothes (Wheeler Pick-up) 10:30am-4pm Driving City Tour (incl. job shadowing location) 4:10 pm: Evansville host pickup 4:30 pm: Henderson host pickup EVENING 6:00 pm: Depart 6:30pm - 9:00 pm: Welcome Banquet (Crossroads) camera, wear business casual clothes 9:30 pm: Return</p>	<p>30-Jan DAYTIME/EVENING FREE TIME with family</p>
<p>31-Jan DAYTIME/EVENING FREE TIME with family</p>	<p>1-Feb EVENING FREE TIME with family</p>	<p>2-Feb DAYTIME Shadowing and Training - See individual participant schedule EVENING 5:30 pm: Depart 6-8 pm: Evening at Farley home wear casual clothes, dinner provided 8:30 pm: Return</p>	<p>3-Feb EVENING FREE TIME with family</p>	<p>4-Feb EVENING 5:30 pm: Depart 6-8 pm: Evening at McClary home wear casual clothes, dinner provided 8:30 pm: Return</p>	<p>5-Feb EVENING FREE TIME with family</p>	<p>6-Feb 8:30 am: Depart 9 am: Trip to Indy (Hunsaker from CFC) casual clothes, camera, money for shopping, food, souvenirs 7 pm: Pacers vs. Pistons 1-1:30 am: Return</p>
<p>7-Feb MORNING FREE TIME with family AFTERNOON/EVENING 3:30 pm: Depart 4-9:30 pm: Chinese New Year/ Super Bowl Party (Ryan home) 10 pm: Return</p>	<p>8-Feb EVENING FREE TIME with family</p>	<p>9-Feb EVENING 5:30 pm: Depart 6-8 pm: Evening at Crafton home wear casual clothes, dinner provided 8:30 pm: Return</p>	<p>10-Feb EVENING FREE TIME with family</p>	<p>11-Feb EVENING 5:30 pm: Depart 6-8 pm: Evening at Wheeler home wear casual clothes, dinner provided 8:30 pm: Return</p>	<p>12-Feb EVENING FREE TIME with family Iceman Game???</p>	<p>13-Feb MORNING FREE TIME with family 2-4 Evansville Museum EVENING FREE TIME with family</p>
<p>14-Feb DAYTIME/EVENING FREE TIME with family</p>	<p>15-Feb DAYTIME FREE TIME with family, packing, last minute shopping EVENING 6:30-8 pm: Farewell Dinner (Crossroads) business casual, camera, gifts, certificates 8:30 pm: Return</p>	<p>16-Feb MORNING 5:59 am: Niklaus flight 6:40 am: Vanessa flight 6:45 am: Laura flight 10:09 am: Jack flight</p>				