

The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation Press Release

Hospitality and Tourism Educators Gain Resources to Enhance Education Across China

July 18, 2018, Chongqing – Hospitality educators from 162 vocational schools and universities in 28 Chinese provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions gathered at the Chongqing Marriott Hotel for the 5th Annual China Hospitality Education Initiative (CHEI) Teaching Conference. The four-day conference, held July 10-13, was themed *Looking Through a New Lens: Inspiring the Next Generation of Hospitality Innovators*.

A visionary project of The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation, CHEI offers a portfolio of programs to help educators prepare youth in China for hospitality and tourism careers. These programs include faculty internships in hotels, field trips to hospitality venues, guest lectures on campus, hospitality English curriculum, teaching resources, conferences, regional forums and more.

Many teachers across China have not had exposure to real-world hospitality operations or opportunities to network with industry professionals, academic experts, or even peers teaching in similar programs at other schools. The CHEI Teaching Conference brings industry and academia together offering workshops and opportunities to network, experience hotel operations first-hand, and gain knowledge and resources to incorporate into classrooms to better prepare students for career success.

“The foundation of CHEI’s success is its unique partnership between academia, industry and philanthropy,” said Anne Gunsteens, executive director of The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation. “This collaboration has enabled us to develop unique China-centric programs and resources that meet the specific needs of academia and industry, and that can be shared with the broad community of educators. CHEI launched 5 years ago with only 9 partner schools. Today, CHEI actively works with 98 vocational schools and universities in 23 provinces and is having an impact on 220,000 students.”

This is the first year the conference was held in southwest China. Chongqing is the largest of China’s four municipalities and is the world’s fastest growing tourism city, as reported by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). Conference attendees included school presidents and government officials. Craig S. Smith, Marriott International’s president and managing director of Asia Pacific, and Chairman Xiao, the host hotel’s owner, attended the closing gala celebration.

“We are honored to welcome attendees to this year’s CHEI Teaching Conference,” said Regan Taikitsadaporn, chief human resources officer at Marriott International, Asia Pacific. “As CHEI’s initial and leading industry advisor, Marriott is committed to continuing to help enhance the collaboration between industry and academia, and offer real-world experiences to Chinese educators to help them prepare students for rewarding hospitality and tourism careers.”

“This conference highlights the perfect convergence between growing industry needs and teaching methodologies, and aims to provide the best resources and training to front-line teachers,” said Joy Dong, CHEI project director. “Since its launch, CHEI has been committed to working with school administrators to help develop high-quality teachers and students.”

On the first day of the conference, global academic experts and hospitality industry leaders helped kick off the final round of the groundbreaking national student competition, *The CHEI Challenge: Unlocking Career Success*. “We are excited about our newest program, The CHEI Challenge student competition,” said Dong, “which has opened a new chapter for soft skills’ development (e.g., critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration) and created a tremendous impact on the students’ career competency, innovation and entrepreneurship.”

Quotes from conference attendees:

- “In January 2017, China launched the Foreign NGO Management Law that regulates how foreign non-government organizations conduct activities in China,” said Wang Yuan Hao, president, Anhui Zhong-Ao Institute of Technology. “Our institute has collaborated with the Marriott Foundation to file the temporary record of CHEI activities with the Anhui Public Security Bureau in Hefei. The activities are aligned with the government rules and regulations for academia in China. Our school was one of the first beneficiaries of CHEI programs. As a result, the quality of our hospitality and tourism graduates has improved, with increased teaching satisfaction and industry retention, according to recent MyCOS survey data.”
- “The collaboration between schools and industry is the only solution for vocational education in China,” said Zhang Yong Jun, vice president, Maanshan Teacher’s College. “CHEI has established the bridge for communication between schools and industry, which is so meaningful because they listen and stay current with what the schools need.”
- “The student competition held at the conference this year encourages more students in the hospitality and tourism major to grow and develop,” said Qu Li Xin, vice president, Wuxi City College of Vocational Technology. “The competition has well-designed steps at various levels. The CHEI team, mentors and industry professionals really care about the students and teachers. It touched everyone’s heart and soul. The competition connected industry and academia to produce better students who gained personal attributes, high loyalty to the industry, and an international mindset.”
- “CHEI provides hands-on work experiences and shares enhanced teaching methodologies for front-line teachers,” said Kate Liu, CHEI teaching consultant and teacher, Shandong College of Tourism & Hospitality. “The teaching-learning resources developed by CHEI have changed my way of classroom teaching. I now have great faith in my students’ ability to work in the industry. The CHEI vision has changed our work attitudes and keeps us moving forward every day.”

Moving forward, CHEI will further localize programs in China and grow its cadre of CHEI teaching consultants to expand its capacity to meet the demands for CHEI programs. New programs being launched this year will focus on increased technology in the classrooms and community learning experiences that bring classrooms in China and the US together virtually. Visit www.chei.org for more information about CHEI programs.

About The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation

The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation was established in 1965 with the purpose of giving back to the community. Under the current direction of J.W. Marriott, Jr. and Richard E. Marriott, the Marriott Foundation is dedicated to helping youth secure a promising future, especially through education on the secondary and higher education levels, mentoring and youth leadership programs. Equally important are organizations that help provide relief from hunger and disasters, support people with disabilities, and create gainful employment opportunities for vulnerable youth and adults.

CHEI Advisors

CHEI was developed in partnership with global academic and industry advisors, including San Diego State University and Marriott International.

San Diego State University (SDSU) is CHEI's initial and leading academic advisor. Through its L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, SDSU has experience working with Chinese schools and the hospitality industry to develop programs that are globally respected and uniquely Chinese. A nationally-ranked research university, SDSU provides more than 30,000 students with a robust academic curriculum with an increasingly international emphasis. The university's L. Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management has a vision to "be the most personalized school of its kind in developing hospitality leaders."

Marriott International has volunteered its services to help ensure the teaching-learning resources and programs are relevant to industry needs. Marriott also provides faculty internships and industry networking opportunities for hospitality and tourism educators and students in China. Marriott International, Inc. (NASDAQ: MAR) is based in Bethesda, Maryland, USA, and encompasses a portfolio of more than 6500 properties in 30 leading hotel brands spanning 127 countries and territories. Marriott operates and franchises hotels and licenses vacation ownership resorts all around the world.

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