

Arkansas Tech University
Professional Development Grant Report
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I attended the 24th Association of Chinese Professors of Social Science in the United States (ACPSS) International Conference at Troy University, Montgomery in Alabama on October 12-14, 2018. At the conference, I presented a paper “Communicating the Sino-American Rapprochement to the Chinese Public” and also chaired a panel on Buddhism in China.

I have learned a lot at the conference, not only from the panels I attended, but also from conversations with scholars from other fields including political science, economics, sociology, philosophy, law, religion, education, communication, anthropology, archeology, literature, arts, musicology, psychology, geography, linguistics, library science, women's studies, development studies, and other commonly recognized fields of social sciences and humanities. The keynote speech “Chinese Political Culture and Public Opinion Research” given by Dr. Tang Wenfang, Stanley Hua Hsia Professor and department chair of Political Science at the University of Iowa was especially intriguing because his conclusions challenged the assumptions of many attendees and provoked enthusiastic discussions on the status of public opinion in contemporary China. A lot of colleagues and I continued the discussion on the topic after the speech, which is especially meaningful for me considering my research interests in the Chinese media.

Since I was elected to serve on the Board of Directors of ACPSS in 2017, I had been engaged in the organizational activities of the conference throughout the whole process ranging from selecting conference themes, communicating with the host institution, organizing panels, and conference registration. This work has provided precious opportunities for me to engage in organizational work, which I will be able to apply to serve the Tech community better.

At the conference, I have also got to know many scholars working in China. We have maintained contact and discussed possibilities of building academic exchange programs after the conference. As a result of the discussions, a professor of East China University of Political Science in Shanghai has invited me to give a lecture at his university in summer 2019. I am glad that I was able to engage other scholars and Chinese institutions as a representative of Arkansas Tech. My next goal is to set up Study Abroad programs at Chinese universities.

In conclusion, the conference trip to the 24th ACPSS conference at Troy University, Montgomery has benefited my research and professional career tremendously. It has also opened up opportunities to build educational exchange programs with Chinese institutions. All of these achievements would be impossible without the university support through the Professional Development Grant. I truly appreciate the university’s support for faculty development in this regard.

Sincerely,

Guolin Yi