



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

June 29, 2018

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SCHEDULE

8:30 am | Registration and Networking

9:00 am – 9:15 am | Welcome and Introduction

Section A 9:15 am – 10:45 am | Identifying the Challenges

Moderator: Mr. Paul Boesen, Co-Founder and Senior Advisor, Washington Center for International Education

- Dr. Elisa Zhai Autry, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Washington Center for International Education
Overview of international student trends and patterns
- Dr. Brandon Vaidyanathan, Associate Professor of Sociology, Catholic University of America
Mental health issues in faith communities and schools: ongoing research and interventions
- Ms. Fara Cepak, Teacher from Chance for Change Academy (Alexandria, VA)
International students in alternative schools – what are the challenges?
- Ms. Li Jiang, Student from George Mason University
Student voices – what are our struggles?
- Q and A

10:45 am – 11:00 am | Coffee Break

Section B 11:00 am – 12:30 pm | Seeking Solutions

Moderator: Mr. Brian Swarts, Program Director, Pepperdine University DC Program

- Ms. Kristi Ong, Franconia Family Therapy Center
Responding to teens' and young adults' mental health challenges: A psychologist's perspective
- Dr. Ken Guan, Indiana University
What can educational institutions do to integrate international students?
- Ms. Hannah Hakes, International Students Inc.
Holistic approaches in caring for international students – practices from local faith communities
- Ms. Yun Fei Gibb, MPD and Officer Hannah Luo, MPD
Never hesitate to seek help from our local police stations – resources and guidance from the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia
- Q and A

12:30 pm – 1:00 pm | Lunch and Reflection

SPEAKERS

Dr. Elisa Zhai Autry

Dr. Autry is WCIE's co-founder and executive director. Her work integrates her Asia-focused academic background with expertise in non-profit organization management, her passion for international education, and her active community engagement in both the U.S. and Asia to help bridge academia and practice. In addition to her work in WCIE, Dr. Autry also serves as an affiliate professor and teaches at the Honors College at George Mason University. In addition to her teaching and research, Dr. Autry has had extensive experience working in Washington's think tanks, exchange programs, or non-profit organizations. Before coming to D.C. in 2010, Dr. Autry was as an assistant professor of sociology at Miami University. She has published widely both in English and Chinese. Dr. Autry received her Ph.D. and M.A. in Sociology from the University of Texas-Austin, and a B.A. in Sociology and Law from Peking University (China). She and her family reside in Alexandria, Virginia.

Mr. Paul Boesen

Mr. Paul Boesen is a WCIE co-founder and senior advisor. He also serves as managing director of an English language school in Bethesda, Maryland, English Now!, and as senior advisor to GreenPoint Group, a strategic advisory firm that connects people and resources in the United States and China. Mr. Boesen's background in education includes experience in general management as well as international program development and administration. Prior to his work in education, Mr. Boesen worked in investment banking and private equity for the Goldman Sachs Group in New York, Frankfurt, and Singapore; and for the World Economic Forum in Geneva and Beijing. He also served as executive director of the US-China Education Trust; and he serves on the Steering Committee of the One Million Strong Initiative, a Presidential Initiative to promote Chinese language education in American K-12 schools. Mr. Boesen's academic background is in economics, Asian studies, and law. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Harvard Law School and resides in Falls Church, Virginia, with his wife, Elizabeth, and their three children.

Ms. Fara Cepak

Fara grew up in the Washington D.C. area. She graduated with a Master's in International Relations from the American University (Webster) in Vienna, Austria, where she then lived as an expat for four years and travelled extensively. Fara currently teaches social studies at the Chance for Change Academy, an alternative school under the umbrella of T.C. Williams, a public high school in Alexandria, Virginia.

Ms. Kay (Yun Fei) Gibb

Kay (Yun Fei) Gibb is the community outreach coordinator for the Metropolitan Police Department's (MPD) Special Liaison Branch (SLB). The SLB focuses on promoting police-community relations to the growing minority communities in Washington, DC. The SLB is composed of the Asian Liaison Unit, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Liaison Unit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Liaison Unit, and the Latino Liaison Unit. Ms. Gibb has been with the department since 2013. Prior to joining MPD, she worked as a Media Research Analyst for Georgetown University's ISIS center, where she monitored open source media in East Asia providing trend analysis and reports to government sponsors. Ms. Gibb moved to D.C. in 2004 from Taiwan when she was admitted to a Master's program at Georgetown University.

**Dr. Ken Guan**

Dr. Guan is the Residence Life Coordinator at the Indiana University Bloomington. Dr. Guan earned his doctorate in Higher Education specializing Human Resources Management and Organizational Behavior, along with a Graduate Certificate in Institutional Research at the Indiana University Bloomington. His dissertation focused on assessing institutional efforts to build culturally engaging environments, to support international and domestic undergraduate students in the U.S. Prior to his doctoral studies, Dr. Guan served in various roles in higher education as an instructional consultant, residence life coordinator, and international student services and support coordinator. He currently chairs the committee that recognizes best practices worldwide in international education through NASPA.

Officer Hannah Guo

Officer Hannah Luo has joined the Metropolitan Police Department since 2014. She moved to the United States from China with her family in 2007 and majored in Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland. As an ethnic Korean from China, she is well versed in both Chinese and Korean cultural practices. She is assigned to the fourth district and currently works as the Asian Liaison Unit affiliate officer. Officer Luo is certified in both Mandarin and Korean languages with the Metropolitan Police Department.

Ms. Hannah Hakes

Hannah Hakes is on staff with International Students Inc. Hannah grew up in the Philippines until age 18 when she transitioned to the US to study at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She graduated with a BA in Fine Art and a BS in Art Education and then taught art for 3 years. With an MA from American University in International Education and Training Programs, and several years of teaching experience in the middle school setting, she is passionate about education, inspiring, equipping and releasing others to leadership. Hannah directed a ministry to international students for seven years at the Northern Virginia Community College. She also serves as the director of the North East regional TRUE Leadership Conference. She is passionate about equipping international students to become confident, capable, and wise leaders with visions to bring goodness, truth, life and transformation to the world.

Ms. Li Jiang

Ms. Li Jiang is a graduate student majoring in nutrition at George Mason University. Li grew up in China and worked as a nutritionist in Shenzhen and Hong Kong several years before she came to the United States. She also served as a guest speaker to the popular Hong Kong TV show, the Scientist Home, for two years. As someone who struggles with depression, Li actively seeks ways to help others by raising awareness of mental health challenges.

Ms. Kristi Ong

Kristi is a licensed psychologist at the Franconia Family Therapy Center located in Alexandria, Virginia. She received her BA in Psychology from Wheaton College and her Masters in Marital and Family Therapy from Bethel Seminary in San Diego. Kristi has a broad range of experience with children, adolescents, young adults and adults who are facing challenges in the areas of depression, anxiety, marital, child-parent concerns, ADHD, self-esteem, and grief and loss issues. Before



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coming to FFTC, she served as Director of Family Services at the Adolescent and Family Growth Center in Springfield, VA.

Mr. Brian Swarts

Brian is currently the Director of Pepperdine University's Washington, D.C. campus where he runs an interdisciplinary program in global leadership, focused on public policy and international affairs. In addition to directing the campus, he teaches courses in NGO management and global development. Prior to this role, Brian was working with international NGOs in DC sector on both policy and programs. Most recently, he spent six years at The Salvation Army World Service Office, where his last position was Director of Global Strategy & Partnership, leading planning and management for programs in over 120 countries worldwide. This was a particularly rewarding job where he oversaw responses to major disasters in Japan, Philippines, Nepal, Pakistan and Haiti, as well as leading a number of economic empowerment programs for women and youth in East Africa and South Asia.

Dr. Brandon Vaidyanathan

Dr. Vaidyanathan is Associate Professor of Sociology. He was born and raised in the Arabian Gulf. His educational background includes a BBA from St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, an M.Sc. in Management from HEC Montreal, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Notre Dame. His research examines the cultural dimensions of religious, commercial, medical, and scientific institutions, and has been published in many peer reviewed journals. His first book, *Mercenaries and Missionaries: Global Capitalism and Global Religion in Emerging Economies* (Cornell University Press, 2019), examines the role of religion in the lives of corporate professionals in India and the Arabian Gulf. He has also co-authored a book, titled *Scientists and Secularity around the Globe* (Oxford University Press, 2019), on the role of religion in the lives of scientists in eight countries. His current and ongoing research examines the aesthetic dimensions of science and mental health issues in religious communities.