GSP China Activities Summary

Week 1 (June 10-16)
The GSP group started their first week in Beijing with an overview of the program schedule and a walking tour together with Professor Zhang Xiaodan and teaching assistant Huang Xian around nearby neighborhoods and the Peking University campus where they were staying.

Students attended a guest lecture on the second day by Mr. Xu Xinjian from the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine of PRC, who talked about product quality legislation issues in China. In the afternoon, they went to the Dahongmen Clothing Wholesale Market to conduct interviews with the businessmen and owners of stores to learn and practice how to get useful first-hand information by talking with local people.

On Wednesday, they shared their experience interviewing locals during the morning session, followed by a presentation by Xian on Chinese government. The group visited Teach for China (TFC) in the afternoon to learn about TFC’s history, organizational structure, major work, and its impact on China’s education. Students also discussed the widening income disparities in China, and especially what an NGO’s role is on working to narrow the gap of educational resources between urban and rural students.

The Center formally welcomed GSP group members and the Santiago Center’s program officer Paula Pacheco with an orientation and a welcome mix-and-mingle lunch on Thursday, June 13. We were joined by five host students from Peking University. In the afternoon, Professor Zhang Changdong from Peking University's School of Government gave an insightful talk about China’s economic growth in the past 30 years since the beginning of China’s economic reform policies.

Director Joan Kaufman welcomed the GSP group on Friday morning and joined the site visit to the Center for China-Latin America Management Studies, Tsinghua University. The Director of this center, Professor Chen Taotao, gave students a presentation about Chinese enterprises’ “going abroad” to help them understand China’s economy from a business angle. Professor Zhang and Xian led the students to review and synthesize the findings from the first week’s readings, lectures, and site visits.

Week 2 (June 17-23)
The GSP group had a fruitful second week in Beijing. After a talk about the role of migrant workers in China’s economy by Professor Zhang on Monday morning, the group visited the Dandelion School, a non-public non-profit middle school for migrant children, located in the suburbs of Beijing. The school’s faculty and volunteers spoke to students about the school’s history, mission, facility, funding, and management issues during a campus tour and shared their insights on what role a non-public school should play to provide access to quality education to migrant children. It was an opportunity for the
GSP group to learn the educational situation of children from low-income migrant families in China. Our students interacted with a seventh-grade class through working together with them on a project of industry-specific invention and by playing sports together.

Tuesday’s activities began with a visit to Tencent Company, a well-known and influential Chinese private-owned IT company, where the students learned about the development of the emerging IT sector in China and its growing political, economic, and social impact on Chinese society. The scholars also attended a public talk titled “Chinese Labor in a Time of Transformation” at the Center given by Professor Zhang Xiaodan addressing the issues of migrant workers and union politics.

Wednesday’s activities gave the students an opportunity to learn and compare the evolution of economic systems in China and Chile. Professor Dong Jingsheng, director of the Center for Latin America Studies at Peking University, came to the Center to give the GSP students a talk about the evolution of China-Latin America bilateral relations over the past centuries, followed by a visit to the China-Chile Business Council to learn its role in enhancing the dialogues between the top enterprises of the two countries and promoting bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

The focus of the group’s fourth day that week was on Chinese business. The GSP group visited two enterprises: Li Ning Company, a private sporting goods supply company which was established by Mr. Li Ning, and China Resources Double-Crane Pharmaceutical Company, a state-owned enterprise. During those visits, students started to explore the rebirth of large state-owned enterprises in key industrial fields and the rapid increase of private entrepreneurship, and investigated the similarities and differences between state-owned and private-owned Chinese business.

Vice Minister Liu Shijin, the director of the Development and Research Center (DRC) of the State Council, warmly welcomed the group on Friday and gave an informative snapshot of the evolution of the Chinese economy in the recent 30 years. He and another two division directors answered students’ questions on China's democracy, U.S. and China’s election systems, environment protection policy, media’s role in China, policy on education for migrant children, the hukou system, the serious inequality issue in China, innovation on new energy, etc. Following Shijin was an informal talk by an American businessman who has been living and working in China for more than 20 years, who shared his perspectives on doing business in China as a foreign enterprise.

**Week 3 (June 24-29)**

The first event for the third week was a visit to a village government located in a suburb of Beijing, named “Zhengge Village”. At the village, students had an opportunity to learn and investigate the economic development model in a rural area. The students also saw the growth and success of township and village enterprises. Later on Monday, the group visited the Economics & Technology Research Institute of China National...
Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), where we met with the President Sun Xiansheng and Vice President Lv Jianzhong, who gave an introduction to CNPC and talked about the evolution of state-owned enterprises in general. They answered many questions and shared their insights on issues, such as the state-owned enterprises’ relationship with the government, China’s oil price setting mechanism, enterprise social responsibility, political relationship between China and the U.S. etc.

Students had some free time to prepare for their final presentations for the Beijing portion of the GSP course in the morning on the second day. This was followed by a visit to the State Information Center of the National Development & Reform Commission in the afternoon. At the center, the group was able to learn the center’s major functions and its role in China’s political and economic development and the way it serves as a think tank to government. CGC|EA Director Joan Kaufman also joined this site visit.

On Wednesday, the GSP group visited American Chamber of China (AmCham China) and met with the Vice President Patrick Wang. In addition to sharing basic information about AmCham China such as its function and mission, Wang also explained a few interesting findings on challenges that foreign and domestic investors have to face based on their recent research on Chinese economy. In the afternoon, Professor Feng Tongqing from China Institute of Industrial Relations gave a lecture about China’s trade union and Chinese labor relations since 1949.

Students spent Thursday visiting Xianshuigu Town government which is located in Tianjin, a port city to the east of Beijing. In the evening, they joined the Columbia Alumni Association Reception with Columbia College Dean Valentini in Beijing.

On their last day in Beijing, the group was treated to a guest lecture by Professor Lian Si, who is a leading authority on Chinese “Ant Tribes”, from University of International Business and Economics. His lecture focused on new thoughts and findings from research on the living conditions of current college graduates. Then the students completed their final presentations on their three-week experience in China on diverse topics, such as environmental economics, education, health care, enterprises, media, social inequality, etc. Director Joan Kaufman hosted a farewell lunch at the center, during which the GSP members and center staff discussed potential improvements for future programs.