Navigating the Now and the Future

September 2020 - August 2021
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Our network of Global Centers has become central to the University’s teaching, research, and scholarship. The Centers afford students and faculty the opportunity to engage with the people and ideas shaping the modern world, at a moment when that need could not be more urgent. And when they return to our home campuses, those who have travelled abroad play an essential role in broadening the intellectual outlook of all of us. It is simply a fact that we would not be the same institution without the Global Centers.
A challenging year the world over, 2020 vividly illustrated the perils of not heeding recommendations backed by scientifically proven data. Making decisions based on populism and false assumptions has cost the world dearly.

Yet the response to the Covid-19 crisis by health care professionals and the medical research community has demonstrated the power of pooled resources, as brilliant minds came together from around the world to come up in record time, albeit still not quickly enough, with real solutions to a global pandemic not seen in our lifetime. The world can now afford more than a glimmer of hope, as millions of vaccines are being distributed globally, and now that knowledge and reason are once again prevailing in political leadership.

This cooperative approach, and its attendant benefits, was also a hallmark of the Columbia Global Centers network during 2020. The Centers quickly mobilized and pivoted to offer more than 500 instructive webinars—tackling issues related to the economy, Covid-19, forced migration, climate change, and many other critical topics—that brought Columbia expertise in conversation with essential voices from all over the world, to reach hundreds of thousands of audience members. The Centers collaborated in their programming with every school on campus, which led to new, sustained opportunities for tangible and impactful collaborations that engage our faculty with regional partners around relevant topics.

The Global Centers also offered students virtual internships, providing our local and regional networks of employers exceptional talent and skills. The program generated 1,900 applications from students in more than 50 countries. More than 400 students from 15 schools across campus took up positions last summer, and the program has been expanded and extended into the academic year.

Perhaps the most pioneering work the Centers performed during the crisis was in leading the University’s efforts to provide international students study and community spaces—to convene, connect, and collaborate—at the Global Centers and nine pop-up sites around the world, in addition to student access to study facilities in 80+ other cities. More than 4,000 students have registered for and accessed the spaces, and thousands more have been engaged in robust programming and through new communication channels designed to meet the needs of our international student body. At a time when so many turned inward and the world became insular, we went out—even more—and we adapted, innovated, and built community. We were not isolated groups serving specific locations, but a global body functioning together for all. Our defining purpose—is being an essential, international part of the University—has never been more clearly realized.

The network of Columbia Global Centers has turned a corner in a way that is enormously beneficial—to their stakeholders in every region, and to the University. This year, 2021, is one of consolidation for our network, as we strive to continuously grow and strengthen the international presence essential to the University and the global community.

I am immensely grateful to our many partners and supporters all over the world who make the work of the Columbia Global Centers possible and impactful, and I am especially proud of our staff, who have worked tirelessly throughout the year to ensure that we deliver on our promise.

In hope and faith,

Safwan M. Masri

Executive Vice President for Global Centers and Global Development, Columbia University
The Beijing Center in Retrospect

Columbia Global Centers | Beijing serves as an important regional hub for the Columbia community in East Asia, facilitating and promoting academic exchange, research, and scholarship programs in the region. We help provide our faculty, students, and alumni with a broader global view and international experience by forging connections with local intelligence.

Facing unprecedented challenges in 2020-2021, we created an on-campus atmosphere that supported the remote learning of more than 2,500 international students, enabling them to continue their study, research, and networking in China.

The Beijing Center designed and hosted 76 programs and activities that provided unique opportunities for knowledge exchange and skill development across multiple disciplines, including medicine & public health, environment & sustainability, business, innovation & entrepreneurship, engineering & applied sciences, women in leadership, arts, culture & history, education and others.

More than 100 Columbia and regional scholars, researchers, and leaders joined our thought-provoking conversations during which they shared and discovered ideas that spawned new initiatives.

Throughout this tumultuous year, the Beijing Center maintained an active regional community, provided essential services, and inspired broad social influence with timely and critical expertise and resource sharing. Our efforts culminated in 5 million social media views, email exchanges, and online participation, garnering praise and plaudits from our stakeholders.
Year in Numbers

Sept. 2020-Aug. 2021

76 Programs and Events

60,000+ Total participants

Columbia faculty 70+
Columbia students 6,000+
Columbia administrators/staff 55+

Columbia School or Center’s Engagement

Media Matrix and Digital Influence

WeChat followers
Email subscribers
Twitter followers
LinkedIn followers

Weibo followers 7,600+
Weibo followers 11,000+
Twitter followers 170+
LinkedIn followers 230+

Website page views
Facebook followers 250+
Bilibili followers 1,700+
Website page views

7,600+
250+
1,700+

170+
230+
11,000+
7,600+

20+
250+
230+
11,000+
7,600+

20+
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230+
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7,600+

Columbia College
Columbia Business School
Columbia Engineering
Columbia Law School
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
School of International and Public Affairs
School of Nursing
School of Professional Studies
Barnard College
Teachers College
School of Social Work
Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory
University Initiative for International Students

Throughout this University-wide initiative providing support to international students during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beijing Center along with the Global Centers network and WeWork, welcomed thousands of students from across the region to the Center where they could convene, study, and collaborate. We also organized diverse and tailored academic, career, and networking programs and events to help students integrate with the broader University community. More than 3,000 students in more than 10 cities of China have benefited from this initiative over the past academic year.

Students watch Columbia President Lee Bollinger’s conversation with Prof. Safwan Masri on the history of Columbia and its on-the-ground support and resources for international students during the University Leadership Forum for International Students on December 8, 2020.
Columbia is dedicated to offering students a quiet and comfortable place to study and make in-person connections. Thanks Columbia for the convenience you have brought to us during this special time.

— Sen XU  CBS ’21

It’s a very convenient and cozy space for study. I enjoy the bright sunshine from the big windows, the open public space, and the free coffee.

— Coey LI  GSAS ’22

The willingness and determination to host a student workshop resulted in a safe, quiet, and fully-functional space provided by the University. Thank you Columbia for creating all the opportunities for your students around the world during this hard time.

— Jun YAO  SEAS ’21
In response to international students’ increasing need for library services, the Beijing Center, in partnership with the C.V. Starr East Asian Library at Columbia University, developed a series of workshops on advanced library resources, tools, and methods. About 200 Columbia students participated in the workshops.

In support of undergraduate students during the year of COVID-19, the Beijing Center designed a webinar led by Columbia scholars from China and South Korea to facilitate in-depth understanding of East Asian cultures. Three students of the Undergraduate Global Engagement program, who have co-founded a podcast titled Silver Lining under the guidance of the Columbia Global Collaboratory, moderated the discussion. The Center for Undergraduate Global Engagement and the Weatherhead East Asian Institute supported the event.

‘Notions of Sacrifice’ in COVID-19 Responses in East Asia:
Insights into the historical, cultural, and sociological origins and mechanisms behind the fight against COVID-19

Chenghi Wang, Chinese Studies Librarian at the C.V. Starr East Asian Library, provides guidance to students on how to use the library’s online resources.

Eun Kyong Shin, Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Korea University

Yanjie Huang, Columbia University Ph.D. Candidate in Modern Chinese History
Local Orientation and Networking Building

November 7, 2020

Teachers College Students and Alumni Gathering

November 14, 2020

Columbia Law School Students and Alumni Gathering

40 students and alumni at Columbia-designated space in Beijing

Columbia-designated space in Beijing

Columbia-designated space in Shanghai

Columbia-designated space in Beijing
Columbia Class of 2021 Graduation Celebrations in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Hong Kong

December 16, 2020

Columbia SIPA Students and Alumni Gathering

The Beijing Center transformed from its usual workplace setting to a festive space for graduation celebrations.
Graduates at Columbia-designated space in Hong Kong toss their caps to celebrate the end of their academic life at Columbia.

Shanghai graduation celebration in a snapshot.
Career Development

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed dramatic challenges in many respects and has forced transformations in building our future programs. The Beijing Center put student career development as one of our priorities in response to the international travel restrictions and the worldwide shrinking job market. We have designed and delivered a series of career development programs including six virtual career fairs, four global virtual internship programs, one industry insight panel, a weekly WeChat column, and a dedicated webpage providing the latest career opportunities in the Greater China region.

Our Partners

Willis Towers Watson  
SIMON • KUCHER & PARTNERS
Strategy & Marketing Consultants

FARFETCH  
P&G  
Tencent

CMSC  
招商致远资本

GE Healthcare  
BOE  
Lenovo

Huawei  
pwc  
网易游戏

JD.com  
Haier  
KREAB

gm  
小米  
字节跳动

Manulife 宏利  
石墨文档  
Win.d  
SHEIN
## Virtual Career Fairs

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Industry Insight Panel

Student Feedback

The virtual career fair is a great platform for students and employers. There were many promising career opportunities, and loads of information from the attending companies.

— Jingchen HU  SEAS ’21

For a student who is a year away from graduation, this career fair gave me a clearer vision of where I stand now and what I should do next to achieve my goal.

— Shibo ZHAO  SEAS ’22

Employer Feedback

The virtual career fair was tremendously helpful to Abelian. I graduated from SEAS a couple of years ago, and I am always eager to recruit SEAS alumni. More than 15 students have submitted their resumes.

— Zhao JIN  SEAS ’13
Abelian Technologies

The event went far beyond our expectations. Columbia Engineering students and alumni are very enthusiastic. Many of them have added me on WeChat to find out more about jobs and how to apply. Thank you, the Beijing Center, for organizing this successful event!

— Merico
Prospective Student Programs
Columbia is among the most diverse and inclusive universities in the U.S., with one of the largest numbers of international students and scholars. Statistics from the International Students and Scholars Office show 10,172 international students enrolled at Columbia in Fall 2020.

The Beijing Center is among the most active contributors to connect Columbia schools with their prospective students.

Information sessions co-hosted by the Beijing Center provided students and their parents with first-hand, from-the-source knowledge of the admissions process, academic programs, campus activities, students life, and financial aid. These events helped incoming students explore resources and opportunities available at the University and the Global Centers through talks with peers, current students, and alumni.

The prospective student programs have connected more than 900 students, who later enrolled to Columbia, with the vibrant and prosperous community.


2. On March 26, 2021, 65+ SEAS newly admitted students at the Shanghai WeWork Space.

3. On March 27, 2021, 40+ newly admitted students attended the SIPA welcome receptions both in Beijing (top) and Shanghai (bottom).

4. On April 2, 2021, 40+ SEAS newly admitted students at the Shenzhen WeWork Space.

5. On April 18, 2021, a Columbia-wide Welcome Receptions engaged over 400 new Columbia students in Beijing (top) and Shanghai (bottom).

6. June 5, 2021, Columbia Undergraduate Information Session at the Beijing Center
Thematic Programs

College Walk and Broadway
Artwork by Myles Zhang
The Beijing Center has invested extraordinary effort in developing our thematic programs. These programs showcase the University’s core values and expertise, providing inspirational experiences that have made a long-lasting impact on both local and global communities. They stimulate sustainable and innovative collaborations with our local partners on global challenges in the fields of Environment and Sustainability, Health and Medicine, Global Competence Education, Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and Women in Leadership.

In response to the energy needs, climate change challenges and opportunities in green technologies among emerging Asian nations, the Beijing Center developed a Global Seminar Series titled Energy and Climate Change in Emerging Asia, in partnership with the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia SIPA and the Mumbai Center. The webinar series focused on common energy needs and differing climate change challenges among emerging Asian countries.

More than 200 students and 400 public audiences participated in local live streaming events.
Dr. Noël presented an overview on the major trends and key questions about Chinese energy and CO₂ emissions from 1960 to 2060.

Prof. Sandalow talked about three promising areas where U.S. and China could work well together in his presentation on China-U.S. Climate Change Policy.

In the most heart-stirring and powerful webinars of 2020, the Beijing Centre helped present “Nurses on the COVID-19 Frontlines” which brought together 400 nurses from all over the world. Although continents apart, the nursing professionals shared experiences that showcased their common courage and resilience in dealing with gravely ill patients, and their own physical and emotional burnout.

The Beijing Center invited frontline nursing faculty, students, and clinicians from Zhongnan Hospital of Wuhan University in Wuhan, and Columbia University School of Nursing and New York-Presbyterian Hospital in New York, to share lessons learned that are essential for an effective pandemic response.

In Spring 2021, the Beijing Center featured a presentation by Jennifer Dohrn, Associate Professor and Assistant Dean of the Office of Global Initiatives, on “Advancing Nursing Practice to Achieve Global Health Equity: What We Learn from Pandemics”. Dr. Dohrn talked with nurses in China about global developments in the profession.
The COVID-19 pandemic has not only caused millions of tragic deaths, but it has also led to rising tensions between countries, communities, regions and ethnicities, spurring calls for de-globalization. During this unprecedented crisis, global competence education is now more important than ever before.

Therefore, the Beijing Center has launched a thematic symposia series in partnership with Teachers College at Columbia University, Beijing Normal University School of Arts and Communication, and BNU-ANOBO Children’s Global Competence Research Committee. We invited numerous global education leaders, scholars, and entrepreneurs to discuss the role of education and educators in helping people develop global competence, and how they can continue to evolve, innovate, and achieve better performances. On December 19, 2020, in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Center on Chinese Education at Columbia University, Teachers College and to pay the tribute to the founding director, Professor Mun C. Tsang for his outstanding and tireless work on educational collaboration between China and Teachers College, the Beijing Center co-hosted a forum titled “Cross-Fertilization of Culture and Education: U.S.-China Education Forum” to reflect on meaningful collaborations among US-China educators, strong historical ties between Teachers College and counterparts in China, and stimulate deeper cooperation.

The Beijing Center also facilitated conversations on reform and innovation in education. Thomas Hatch, Professor of Education at Teachers College, talked about his new book, *The Education We Need for a Future We Can’t Predict*, detailing his vision of efficient, effective, and equitable schools. Discussions also centered on development of student-centered learning environments, innovative curriculum, and pedagogy in China and the U.S. among scholars from Beijing Normal University and Tsinghua University High School and the co-founder of ETU Education.
A panel discussion on the education reform in the U.S., China and other countries.

Prof. Thomas Hatch presented his new book, *The Education We Need for A Future We Can’t Predict*, on April 22, 2021.

Yinuo Li in conversation with Thomas Hatch on student-centered, whole-person education on June 5, 2021. More than 1,600 people joined the online discussion.

Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Innovation and entrepreneurship are among the driving forces behind massive economic growth in China and around the world. There is little doubt they will play even more crucial roles in the coming fourth industrial revolution.

In partnership with Zhongguancun Collaborative Innovation Center (Zlink+), the Beijing Center curated the "Pioneer Open Mic" business incubation project, including a series of roadshow events, mentorship programs, one-on-one office hour activities, exclusive networking events, and more. The goal is to provide communities at Columbia University and various Ivy League schools with life-changing opportunities by endowing students and alumni with a passion for innovation.

Eight young entrepreneurs and company founders, four of whom were Columbia alumni, shared their stories and vision to inspire emerging business leaders tap into AI+ education and the new consumer goods industry. More than 600 participants took part in the series.
1. Hanxiang Wang GS '21, Founder of Instruct AI
2. Xinran Hou CBS '17, Founder of Jiaxi
3. Yuan Ma GSA '14, Founder of L'Origine
4. Naizeng Fang GSA '14, Founder of Coco 100
I always thought that there was nothing an antifeminist would want more than to have women only in women’s organizations, in their own little corner empathizing with each other and not touching a man’s world. If you’re going to change things, you have to be with the people who hold the levers.

—Ruth Bader Ginsburg, 1933 – 2020

The passing of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg gave us pause to reflect on a life that personified the ethos of our Women in Leadership program.

Our women leadership program this year continued to present a series of interactive lectures and inspirational conversations and discussions. Our goal is to help equip emerging women leaders and entrepreneurs with essential business and management skills and instill the confidence to take on leadership roles.
The Beijing Center invited our advisory board member Yang Lan to share her stories and insights on new pathways for forward-looking women leaders. We also co-organized and promoted a women’s innovative leadership program in China that was jointly developed by Barnard College and Her Village Academy.

Forty-one Chinese women who are entrepreneurs and business owners gathered at the Beijing Center for a training session of the program on July 23, 2021.
In response to a call to support the anti-racism movement, and to foster a more inclusive community, the Beijing Center, in partnership with the University’s research institutes and administrative offices on campus, presented a thematic series titled Stand in Solidarity: Combating Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia.

Columbia faculty members, scholars, teachers, and students from China and the U.S. presented their findings on the recent and dramatic increase in hate crimes targeting Asians in the U.S. A survey conducted by Professor Qin Gao and her colleagues at Columbia University School of Social Work found that, among 400 New Yorkers who are Chinese or Chinese-Americans, 57% of them experienced at least one type of discrimination in daily life, and 20% of them felt threatened and harassed, which indicates the increasing severity of the racism, xenophobia and exclusion issues embedded in America society.

The series also offered psychological support, actionable solutions and recourse for the U.S.-bound Chinese students in response to the racism hurt. The goal was to help them better understand heightened racial tensions in the U.S. and address discrimination against Asians and Asian-American communities.

Urban Reflection on COVID-19 is a student initiative that asked the participants to submit design or essay works discussing the phenomenon and heuristic solutions within the field of Chinese Urbanism and providing ideas to enhance resilience and preparedness in a post-pandemic future.

This initiative was organized by Columbia Global Centers | Beijing and Columbia University Urban China Network, a student organization of the Urban Planning program within the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.

As a part of this initiative, a series of online discussions were hosted featuring industry experts and practitioners to help more than 2,500 participants better understand how to apply big data response mechanisms in the urban planning sector, and facilitate the vendor economy and other sectors in a sustainable way.

Among 100+ worldwide design and essay submissions, six winners were selected after a full month of review by a number of experts, including Weiping Wu, Professor of Urban Planning at Columbia GSAPP and Director of the M.S. Urban Planning program, and Guicai Li, Dean of the School of Urban Planning and Design of Peking University.

In August, the Beijing Center co-curated a month-long exhibition to showcase award-winning projects and excellent design projects.
Marketing and Outreach

Van Am Quad
Artwork by Myles Zhang
Taking advantage of the popularity of social media, the Beijing Center developed a strategy of multiple media matrices to expand the influence of the University and the Global Centers across the Greater China region. The matrices enable us to forge a deeper understanding between Columbia and China, and create opportunities for open communication between the two countries so that future academic engagement and collaboration can emerge.

Content Operation

The Beijing Center has expanded its social media presence on multiple new platforms, including WeChat Channels, Bilibili, and TikTok, creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content and attracting more diversified followers from across the region and the wider Columbia community.

Event Operation

Equipped with well-developed Columbia China public program platform and strong brand influence, the Beijing Center has been able to successfully deliver Columbia themed events and programs to the community.

Media Matrix and Partnership

To advance the University’s local reputation and provide relevant expertise, the Beijing Center has maintained strong networking with local mainstream media, including BTV, CGTN, China Daily, iFeng, Sohu, and other outlets.

Online Community Management

The Beijing Center has maintained an active and growing Columbia China community on WeChat with more than 5,900 Columbia students, alumni, parents, and friends. Taking advantage of our media products, online and in-person events, the public can learn about the Center and the University and share and exchange information and resources with others in the community.
Media Influence

WeChat

WeChat Channel Short Videos:

261,000+ views

Top WeChat Articles:

200,000Views on WeChat

Livestream Platforms

Bilibili:

13th Annual Columbia China Business Conference, April 6-9, 2021
15,000+ participants

iFeng-Live:

2021 Columbia China and the World Forum, August 7, 2021
9,000+ participants

Sohu Kanzhan Live Stream:

ANOBO International Children’s Tech and Art Traveling Exhibition Opening Ceremony, July 24, 2021
116,000+ audiences

150,000+ audiences
Seven influential national news outlets featured the ANOBO Traveling Exhibition

Since Fall 2020, the Beijing Center has partnered with the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) at Columbia University to launch its WeChat column on the Beijing Center’s WeChat platform. The Chinese-English bilingual column makes ISSO’s information and services more accessible to international students, scholars, and parents. The ISSO column has surpassed 6,500+ views and 500+ likes and has received enthusiastic responses from the community.

Advancing the Columbia Custom Program

The Beijing Center is helping to expand the market and increase awareness among local and regional partners of Columbia University’s educational resources.
The Digital Strategies for Business program is designed for senior managers and executives seeking to create innovative strategies and business models to ensure their organization continues to thrive in the ever-changing digital age.

The Women’s Innovative Leadership Program is designed to equip emerging women leaders and entrepreneurs with essential business and management skills. This program helps them develop a set of interpersonal skills and action plans to increase happiness and achieve positive growth, and inspire them with clear visions and strategies, leading to a successful leadership role and effective organizational changes.
Alumni Engagement
Three-City Halloween Gathering

The Beijing Center and Columbia Alumni Clubs in Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen jointly organized a gathering at the Columbia-dedicated WeWork spaces in Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen. More than 200 students and alumni joined the event to network and celebrate Halloween with their peer students and alumni leaders in China.
Urban and Architectural Space in the Pandemic Era
(from top to bottom):
1. Round table discussion with 21 renowned architects
2. Lectures by Jun Cai CBS and Ziyu Zhuang GSAPP
3. Exhibitions featuring all panelists’ work

Panel & Exhibition: Post-COVID-China Urbanization (from top to bottom):
1. Exhibition of excellent design projects
2. Panel discussion featuring award winners and professional practitioners (CU alumni)
3. Presentation and critique
Faculty House
Artwork by Myles Zhang
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<td>Symposia Series: Reset the Future I: Educating Globally Competent Children</td>
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<td>Barnard Beijing Convocation 2020 &amp; Student-Alumnae Gathering</td>
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<td>Columbia, Yale, Penn, Dartmouth Undergraduate Student Panel &amp; Gathering</td>
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<td>Clean Skies over Our Cities: Lessons from the Covid-19 Lockdown</td>
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<td>Columbia Student-Alumni Book Discussion Series I: Guns, Germs, and Steel</td>
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<td>Virtual Career Fair for all Statistics and MAFN students and alumni</td>
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<td>In Conversation with Wei Sun: Leading the Charge into China</td>
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<td>Columbia Halloween Gathering &amp; UIIS Orientation at Columbia-designated spaces in Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen</td>
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Glossary of Acronyms

CC  Columbia College
CU  Columbia University
CBS  Columbia Business School
GS  Columbia School of General Studies
GSA PP  Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
GSA S  Columbia Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
LAW  Columbia Law School
MAFN  Mathematics of Finance Program at Columbia University
SEAS  Columbia Engineering
SPA  Columbia School of International and Public Affairs
SPS  Columbia School of Professional Studies
TC  Teachers College, Columbia University
UIIS  University Initiative for International Students
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