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To Asia With Love: Toward Experiential Asian Studies at CSB/SJU

By 1900, America's push for the "Evangelization of the World in This Generation" and its growing secular involvements in Asia had inspired a handful of U.S. liberal arts colleges to offer Asian Studies courses in order to prepare students for service in an Asia plagued by poverty and domestic upheaval.¹ In succeeding years, more colleges added such courses to equip Americans to fight three wars in Asia. In the wake of the Vietnam War, still others committed themselves to preparing students for a new Asia that was fast integrating itself into the global economy and becoming prosperous and stable.

CSB/SJU is one such institution. This current academic year marks the tenth anniversary of its Asian Studies Program. Building on a rich legacy of Benedictine involvement in Asia and decades of Asia-related courses and activities on these campuses, the Asian Studies Program seeks to prepare our students for personal and professional engagement in and with Asia and Asian America in the newly-dawned Asian Century. Progress to date has been encouraging — but there is still a long way to go.

The Birth of Asian Studies at CSB/SJU

Responding to the call of Pius XI, monks from Saint Vincent's Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, and Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, established the Catholic University of Peking (Furen) in 1925. Five years later, six sisters from Saint Benedict's Monastery arrived to set up a woman's college at Furen. For the next two decades, Furen sought to instill "scholarship in the service of society" among its students.² Later, the sisters established a community and a clinic in central China, where — braving plague, Japanese occupation, and civil war between Chinese Nationalists and Communists — they ministered to refugees, wounded soldiers, and the "poorest of the poor."³ After Mao expelled the missionaries in 1949, Furen was absorbed by Beijing Normal University, and the Benedictines relocated to

Taiwan, where they rebuilt Furen, and to Japan, where the sisters established a girls' school in Hokkaido and the monks created Saint Anselm's Priory in Tokyo, later moved to Fujimi.

In China, the Benedictines encountered time-honored beliefs which resonated with their Christian convictions. These included the Confucian love of learning and an ethical system rooted in family. There was also The Buddha's vision of community immersed in spirituality and compassion and the exhortation to environmental stewardship in Chinese Daoism and Japanese Shinto. Believing that the study of Asia supports the Benedictine commitment to the liberal arts as "the center of disciplined inquiry and a rich preparation for the professions, public life, and service to others in many forms of work,"⁴ several Benedictines returned to CSB and SJU to infuse Asian Studies into these campuses.

In 1969, with support from the legacy of Minnesota railroad pioneer James J. Hill, CSB and SJU, along with St. Cloud State College, created the Tri-College East Asian Studies Program to promote appropriate faculty, curricular, and library development. In the process, CSB and SJU became the first of Minnesota's private colleges to offer an individualized East Asian Studies major. After the Hill grant expired in 1977, the Tri-College program was disbanded. Fortunately, CSB and SJU continued to offer courses on Asia, including Chinese and Japanese language, and to utilize the resources of the Midwest China Center, a consortium of academic, church, foundation, civic, arts, and business institutions dedicated to public education on China. Course work was supplemented by such January Term offerings as "Zen Buddhism," "Chinese Art and Calligraphy," "Mahatma Gandhi's Nonviolence," and "China: Awakened Giant" as well as by such Asia study tours as "The Many Faces of Japan" and "The History and Practice of Medicine in China."

Meanwhile, East-West interchange was exploding. Thanks to three decades of regional stability under America's military umbrella, Asia's leaders had begun to supplant war and revolution with economic development. By emulating Japan's export-driven economic surge of the 1970's, the "Four Tigers" of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore began taking off during the following decade. Throughout Asia, people were working hard on behalf of family and state, achieving educational excellence and high literacy rates, promoting public-private partnerships, attaining the world's highest savings rates, and integrating raw materials, capital, technology, and management skills into a global economic juggernaut. Advances in jumbo jets, supertankers, and container ships were fast transforming the "Far East" into America's "Near West." The U.S. expanded its export of capital goods and services to Asia, which returned to America technological innovations, financial investment, and management innovations.⁵

By 1995, Asia's income surpassed that of America and Europe combined. This development had profound consequences for the United States. With over seventy percent of America's global business centered in Asia — one-third more than with Europe — and with 2.5 million American jobs tied to Asia, the region was now America's largest trading partner. Then came China. Thanks to Deng Xiaoping's successful crusade to transform socialism into market economics and to integrate the People's Republic of China (PRC) with the global economy, the country's boundless supply of inexpensive labor and raw materials was attracting so much investment from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and 51 million overseas Chinese that the PRC is now the world's third-largest trading partner and its fastest-growing economy. China is projected to become the world's largest aggregate economy by 2010. This reality, coupled with India's economic surge, further strengthens the claim that the twenty-first century is indeed the Asian Century.

In 1883, railroad-builder Hill, envisioning a trans-Pacific trading empire, connected Minnesota with China and Japan by rail and ship. Regarding global commerce as an exchange of cultures, Hill, along with the Pillsburys, Dayton, and other first families of Minnesota business, began collecting Asian art for public display in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA). And immediately following World War II, Minnesota-based Northwest Orient Airlines pioneered a shorter, polar route to Asia.

Export-dependent Minnesota is the beneficiary of Asia's economic boom. Every one billion dollars in exports creates 23,000 Minnesota jobs. Fully 33% of Minnesota farm profits and 12% of the state's factory wages come from foreign sales. Unlike most other states, Minnesota enjoys a global trade surplus, because the state's well-diversified economy produces so much of what Asia needs, including supercomputing and food processing as well as medical, electronic, information, scientific, environmental, and educational technology and services. By the mid-1990s, Asia had become Minnesota's largest trading partner, receiving thirty percent of this state's manufactured goods and forty percent of its agricultural exports.⁶

By this time, too, Asian America was becoming an ever-more visible community within an increasingly diverse America. Fleeing upheaval in their homeland and persecution in the American West, Minnesota's first Chinese family arrived in 1876 to set up shop in St. Paul.⁷ Other Asians soon followed, convinced the state's commitment to education and public services would prepare them for a stake in the American dream. Northwest Airlines has brought thousands of Korean children to join Minnesota families. Discovering the convergence of Asian and Minnesota values — diligence, hard work, and compassion — the new Asian Minnesotans have opened small businesses, entered the professions, and flourished. And they have

been a crucial bridge to their Asian homelands.

According to the 2000 census, Asian Minnesotans number 166,217 (among ten million Asian Americans), up from 98,000 in 1990 and less than the projected 230,000 for 2005. They are second only to Latinos as the state's fastest-growing ethnic minority. (Minnesota is also home to the highest concentration of Hmong people, a total of 40,000, and the second-largest Tibetan community in the United States.) By 2003, 5,435 Asian Minnesota firms were employing 15,921 Asian Minnesotans. With a buying power of \$1.5 billion, Asian Minnesotans are a significant consumer base, contributing \$185 million to the state's tax rolls.⁸

The Expansion of Asian Studies at CSB/SJU

Clearly, a rising Asia and Asian America required a growing body of young American "Asia Hands"⁹ in every field of endeavor, from education and journalism to business, diplomacy, and law. In order to prepare our students for unprecedented opportunities for personal as well as hands-on, professional engagement with the two Asias on both sides of the Pacific, CSB/SJU in 1994 created the Asian Studies Minor (the individualized major remaining in force), and in 1995 the Asian Studies Program (one of eight interdisciplinary and pre-professional programs). In doing so, we became one of 146 colleges in the Carnegie listing of 154 Category I liberal arts colleges to conclude that the "demise of the bipolar world forcibly reminds us that Asia is no longer a monolithic 'other,' and that our culture, our population, and our students will be part of an increasingly Asian world."¹⁰ Accordingly, these 146 colleges began expanding their Asian Studies offerings, ninety teaching one or more Asian languages and 76 offering an Asian Studies concentration.¹¹

The experience of our earlier Tri-College effort resonated with the experience of a number of other Asian studies programs around the country:

The coverage of Asia at any one institution is frequently unbalanced, emphasizing only one country or one region; language enrollments are still dwarfed by enrollments in European languages; programs are largely interdepartmental, using volunteered faculty time and lacking clout within the institution; and the core curricula continue in large part to be Euro-centric.¹²

Nevertheless, CSB/SJU was determined to overcome these obstacles. By integrating a curriculum broadened beyond our traditional strengths in East Asia with co-curricular elements, the program's mission is to affirm the Benedictines' commitments to Asia and multiculturalism as well as global service and citizenship and to support two pillars of our institutional mission: to "excel in the study of the intersec-

tion of global cultures and community sustainability, leavened by the commitments of the Catholic intellectual life” and to help students become “shapers and leaders of the next generation . . . [of] a rapidly-changing world, one filled with new opportunities but fraught with unprecedented challenges.”¹³

Thanks to the willingness of departments to offer new Asia-related courses, the Asian Studies curriculum currently includes 26 courses in art history, economics, history, language (Chinese and Japanese), literature, management, philosophy, political science, and theology in East and South Asian as well as Islamic lands taught by 14 professors. In addition, 15 non-Asianist faculty teach Asian components in 26 courses. In this way, students learn about Asia’s time-honored traditions, its modern transformation in the wake of Western imperialism, its emergence as the world’s new economic center, and our evolving relationship to Asia and Asian America.

Students are supported by the Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Wang and S. Telan Hu, OSB, Scholarship in Asian Studies (in honor of S. Telan’s nearly forty years of teaching Chinese language at CSB/SJU) and a growing study abroad program. Through cultural immersion in Asia, our students are challenged to apply their classroom learning; develop critical thinking; build mutually-respectful, collegial relationships; and acquire the intercultural communication skills they need to become bridge-builders across the Pacific.

Through the Benedictine’s global connections, study in Japan began in 1971 with Sophia University in Tokyo but was significantly expanded in 2003, when History Professor Dave Bennetts secured an exchange agreement with Tokyo’s Bunkyo Gakuin University (BGU), which sends many students to his annual ESL summer camps described below. Japan travel scholarships in honor of Fr. Neal Henry Lawrence, OSB, of Saint Anselm’s Priory and Walter F. Mondale have supported our students in Japan. Study in China began in 1985 with the signing of an agreement with Southwest China Normal University (now Southwest University) in the Chongqing municipality, heart of rapidly-industrializing interior China. Last November, this agreement was expanded when the CSB/SJU presidents went to Southwest to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of our relationship. Since 2004, study in Asia has been enhanced by annual May Term study tours of South China, where students experience first-hand the profound social, cultural, and political transformations taking place in the world’s most rapidly-growing economic region.

Among Asian Studies programs across the country, CSB/SJU’s stands out for its unique on-campus resources, beginning with Richard Bresnahan’s Pottery Studio. After apprenticing in Japan with the Nakazato family, master potters for 13 generations, Richard (SJU ’76) became Saint John’s Artist-in-Residence and began grafting Asian pottery techniques onto indigenous Upper Midwest materials. In this way,

he dramatizes the Benedictine approach to unity in diversity and the importance of the arts in Asian Studies. Across from his studio, he built North America's largest wood-fired kiln, which he named in honor of his mentor, S. Johanna Becker, long-time pillar of Asian Studies at CSB/SJU. Through the years, Richard has trained and mentored an international community of potters, all the while inspiring our students to pursue the study of Asia and its Mid-America connections.¹⁴

Since its inception in 1989, Dave Bennetts' ESL summer camps at SJU have graduated over 1600 students from Japanese high schools and colleges and involved dozens of CSB/SJU professors, who have learned about and integrated Asian elements into their regular courses and also taught in Japan. For the more than 225 CSB/SJU students who have served as camp counselors, this close encounter with another culture has been life-changing. Many have enrolled in Asian Studies courses and studied and worked in Japan. In addition, a number of Japanese summer camp graduates have enrolled in CSB/SJU, enhancing campus diversity, while hundreds of central Minnesota families hosting weekend home-stays have become more interested in Asia.

The monastic communities, too, have enriched Asian immersion by bringing Buddhists to campus through monastic exchanges and by pursuing a worldwide Benedictine effort to re-establish ties with Catholics in China. Because the Chinese government believes the Benedictine concept of autonomous governance does not threaten "patriotic" Chinese Catholicism by insisting on loyalty to the Vatican, Saint John's began training Chinese seminarians after Deng Xiaoping approved greater toleration of organized religion in the early 1980's.¹⁵ In addition, Asians have become visiting scholars at SJU's Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research.

A special student-managed resource is the Asia Club. Composed of students of diverse backgrounds, the club organizes activities to dramatize the importance of Asian values to American life and to strengthen campus multiculturalism. Its trademark event is the annual Asian New Year, which celebrates the rich diversity of the Asian and Asian American experience, attracting over a thousand attendees from the campus and wider communities.

The Asian Studies Learning Community

When the Asian Century dawned in 2000, the Asian Studies advisory committee recommended that the program create an Asian Studies Learning Community (ASLC) within the campus-wide "Extending the Classroom Walls" project funded by the St. Paul-based Bush Foundation. With its focus on holistic, collaborative, interdisciplinary, and inclusive community-based education, we hoped the learning community model would help consolidate the gains of the previous five years by

better integrating existing and potential Asian Studies stakeholders and resources in the following ways¹⁶:

1. Integrate a growing number of Asian Studies learning opportunities and partners.

This effort began with study abroad. Ironically, students returning from Japan and China had difficulty finding classmates interested in hearing about their Asia experiences. Working with the Center for International Education (CIE), the ASLC initiated an annual “The Asia I Expected; The Asia I Discovered Forum” to connect returning students with the subsequent semester’s Asia-bound cohort, along with study abroad directors, ESL camp counselors, and other interested students (including those at Saint John’s Prep, which has begun to teach Chinese language) as well as faculty, staff, and alumnae/i to explore issues of identity, relationships with Asian peers, and re-entry into American society. These encounters have illuminated ways to improve the exchange experience, identified study abroad veterans willing to serve as classroom resources, and recruited new Asia Club members. Another accomplishment is ASLC’s advisory role with the Fine Arts Program in bringing to campus outstanding performers from Asia.

2. Encourage the development of new pedagogical and organizational insights and stretch beyond the classroom into new areas and alliances across disciplines, pedagogies, administrative areas, and cultures.

In cooperation with Student Development, Multicultural Programs, and Academic Advising, the ASLC has sent students to Asian American conferences and encouraged student-teacher partnerships. Last summer, for example, thanks to a grant from the Council on Undergraduate Research, Eve Vang (CSB ’07), under the supervision of Political Science Professor Manju Parikh, interviewed recent Hmong immigrants on the challenges of adapting to life in Minnesota. Moreover, with advice from his history professors, Tom Craft (SJU ’05) wrote an outstanding paper on Theodore Roosevelt’s bias toward Japan while mediating the Treaty of Portsmouth, which ended the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. Tom’s article was published in the current issue of *The Wittenberg Journal of East Asian Studies*, America’s pre-eminent undergraduate Asian Studies forum.

The ASLC has also supported faculty development, an effort begun during the Tri-College Program, built into the faculty exchange agreements with BGU and Southwest University, and the goal of two faculty/staff study tours: the first to East Asia during the summer of 1997 (which saw six non-Asianist faculty insert what they had learned into 13 courses) and the second to India during March 2005 for the purpose of enhancing the curriculum and investigating study abroad, teaching, internship, and service learning opportunities. Since 2000, the ASLC has

dispensed twenty curriculum development grants to enable faculty to insert such Asian themes as Chinese medicine, U.S.-China relations, Hindu mathematics, and Asian Minnesota health care into the curriculum. In addition, a number of professors are now well connected to universities and colleges in Asia and have received Asia-related faculty development funds through Academic Affairs. Finally, Professors Jeanne Cook, Greg Walker, and Dave Bennetts were awarded sabbaticals last spring to develop new courses on gender communication in China, Chinese music, and the “Asian American Experience,” respectively.

3. Increase student and alumnae/i involvement in study abroad, service learning, volunteer opportunities, internships, and career preparation in Asia and Asian America.

Each year of the Bush grant, the ASLC has invited a resident scholar to spend a few days on campus educating our community about Asia and Asian America and helping us to enhance our co-curriculum. These experts have advised our students to go beyond mere language competence to develop intercultural expertise, technical skills, and broad networks in order to be competitive in today’s global environment. In cooperation with the University Chair in Critical Thinking, Alumnae/i Affairs, Career Services, the Career Resource Center, the Internship Program, and Service Learning, the ASLC has reaffirmed this advice in its annual “Working With Asia: An Internship and Careers Forum.” In these sessions, presenters from a wide array of firms and organizations have helped our students to identify and prepare for internships and jobs. The ASLC has arranged student internships with Asia-involved companies as well as with the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, Minnesota Trade Office, MIA, Minnesota History Center, Twin Cities Public Television, Minnesota Public Radio, and the *St. Cloud Times*. And just last summer, a dozen CSB/SJU students, encouraged by the recent India study tour, went to Calcutta to pursue a service learning experience at Loretto Day School, Sealdah, whose principal, Sr. Cyril Mooney, had been in residence on our campuses during the fall of 2004.

In the effort to capitalize on Asia’s skyrocketing need to learn English as well as to help our students fulfill volunteer and service aspirations, gain language and cultural skills beyond study abroad, and become American goodwill ambassadors as they envision long-range Asia-related careers, the ASLC has been active in making referrals to teaching opportunities in Asia. Since 1995, CSB/SJU has sent nearly 150 teachers to Asia. In China, the Maryknoll China Service Project places current CSB/SJU students as summer high school teachers and recent graduates in teachers colleges. Annually, Southwest University hires Bennies and Johnnies as instructors in its English Department. Our graduates who teach in Japan do so through BGU, high schools in Okinawa and its outer islands, and the Japan Exchange and Teaching

(JET) Program. Before our teachers depart for Asia, ESL specialists Sarah Pruett and Lynda Fish have generously provided basic teacher training and resources.¹⁷

4. Enhance media and personal networks to identify and connect Asia-related communities and resources here and in Asia.

In order to market Asian Studies and keep our stakeholders informed, the ASLC has developed an Asian Studies website and communicated with Asian Minnesota through such newspapers as the *Korean Quarterly* and *Asian American Press*. In cooperation with Admission, the Multicultural Program, and the Diversity Office, the ASLC has worked hard to recruit Asian American students through family and community networks as well as through such festivals as Hmong New Year. With the assistance of our alumnae/i in Hong Kong and Japan, we have recruited a growing number of Asian students to our campuses. Finally, our membership in ASIANetwork has enabled us to collaborate with like-minded colleagues among the 165 schools which make up the consortium.

5. Collaborate with other Minnesota resources to serve our Asian neighbors at home and abroad.

According to one observer, "Asian-American students are matriculating in growing numbers at liberal arts colleges [currently there are 6,000 enrolled in U.S. colleges, a doubling of the 1996 figure], and they look to these institutions to offer courses that provide knowledge about their ethnic heritage."¹⁸ While CSB/SJU has long offered courses on the Asia background to Asian America, Professor Bennetts debuted his "Asian American Experience" course in the spring of 2006.¹⁹ We hope this course will assist in retaining Asian heritage students, who often major in education, social work, nursing, and management to equip themselves to serve their communities after graduation. In support of this effort, the ASLC has collaborated with the state-supported Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans and the Asian-Pacific Roundtable to provide opportunities for the kind of student and faculty research on Asian America described above, for involvement in community-wide business and economic development efforts, study of the election campaigns of State Senator Mee Moua (the first U.S. Hmong legislator in American history), and assisting former Governor Jesse Ventura's staff in organizing the state's trade mission to China in 2002. For her service to the Asian Minnesota community on- and off-campus, Hoa Thi Nguyen (CSB '04), Asian Studies minor and Asia Club president, was presented with one of four coveted Asian Pacific Leadership Awards in 2003 by the Council of Asian-Pacific Minnesotans.

6. Envision new strategic directions for Asian Studies at CSB/SJU

The past five years of ASLC experiments have enabled us to chart students' steps

along the pathway to becoming “Asia Hands,” from classroom to Pottery Studio and ESL summer camp to study abroad, service and volunteer experiences, internships and teaching in Asia. Of the eighty Asian Studies majors and minors since 1995, over half are now qualified Asia Hands. Some have become teachers in Asia, ESL instructors, and Asian American student counselors in Twin Cities high schools, while others are serving the Asian Minnesota community through government agencies, social work, and theater companies. Still others are earning graduate degrees and working in U.S. government and non-governmental organizations as well as in higher education, law, business, and media.

Among our graduates who remain in Asia to teach, manage factories, and climb the corporate ladder is Kevin Clancy (SJU '00). A CSB/SJU Communication major and Asian Studies minor, Kevin became active in the Asia Club after returning from his fall semester at Southwest University and, through Maryknoll, secured a teaching position at Zhanjiang Normal University (ZNU), in the far western corner of Guangdong province. Kevin immediately encouraged CSB/SJU to invite two of his senior faculty colleagues to study education as visiting scholars at CSB/SJU during the fall of 2000. (They subsequently wrote a book about their Minnesota odyssey, which has been widely circulated in China.) One of these professors returned a year later as a Fellow at SJU's Ecumenical Institute, where he produced a book on Chinese perspectives regarding Mahatma Gandhi.

Kevin also convinced ZNU's Communist Party secretary to allow him to teach an intercultural communications class linked via Internet to a CSB/SJU course taught by Communication Professors Jeanne Cook and Don Turk. Kevin then secured support from ZNU and CSB/SJU to bring several of his best students to CSB/SJU for three weeks in January-February 2002 and a second cohort in the winter of 2003. They lived with CSB/SJU classmates and host families, gave power-point presentations on China and Sino-American relations, performed at our Asian New Year celebrations, and visited a wide array of Minnesota people and places. ZNU since has joined with Maryknoll in hosting our South China May Terms.²⁰

The Next Phase: Experiential Asian Studies Under “WorldStar”

ASLC activities have enlarged the community of Asian Studies stakeholders; stretched faculty development to grow the interdisciplinary curriculum, into which we have inserted Asian American Studies;²¹ enhanced career preparation through study abroad, service learning, internship, and teaching opportunities; and connected our classrooms to local, regional, national, and global resources in ever-more integrative and coordinated ways. And during the current effort to redesign the Core curriculum, we are moving Asian Studies from the periphery into the main-

stream of that curriculum. The result has been a fusion of humanistic and “applied” Asian Studies, an approach praised by Daniel H. Rosen, founder of China Strategic Advisory, during a recent interview on Minnesota Public Radio.²² Even as the Bush funds expire, the ASLC has provided Asian Studies with a template for our next developmental steps as we seek, during the post-grant years, to sustain the ASLC’s successes through further cooperation with and funding from the institutional partners mentioned above and to develop an even more comprehensive, experiential approach to preparing Asia Hands.

To this end, the Asian Studies Program is embarking on a cooperative venture with the WorldStar program developed by Dr. Dallas Kenny, CSB/SJU Dean of International and Experiential Education, to strengthen global academic programs, partnerships, and recruitment; enhance campus multiculturalism; and broaden international dialogue. Under the WorldStar banner, Asian Studies will offer a more clearly-defined, step-by-step curricular and experiential learning pathway, from pre-admission to post-graduation, beginning with language and intercultural training.

In particular, Asia-interested students will be invited to participate in a three-week language and culture summer camp or Asian Minnesota community project prior to entering CSB/SJU. During their first year on campus, students will enroll in Chinese and Japanese; write and speak on one or two Asia-related topics in their First Year Symposium; enroll in introductory Asia-related courses (the number of which will increase as we continue to emphasize faculty development); participate in the WorldStar First Year Essay Contest; join the Asia Club; take part in Aikido, Karate, or Tae Kwon Do; meet in mentoring groups composed of Asia-involved students; write for a student Internet journal, a web log, or the *WorldStar Newsletter*; and/or spend the summer at a language and culture “reignition camp.”

As sophomores, students will prepare for their junior year’s study in Asia or Asian America by taking more Asia courses; attending workshops, conferences, and films; and pursuing a six-week intensive summer language and culture camp or a service learning project before heading to Asia or Asian Minnesota. During their fall semester in Asia, students will be invited to interact with neighboring feeder high schools in hopes that some of the students there may apply to CSB/SJU — and once here enhance our campus diversity — and pursue a for-credit intercultural service learning project or internship. After returning from Asia, students will reflect on their experience in a re-entry seminar. As seniors, they will pursue the Asia-related capstone course, a research project, or a senior thesis. They will also be encouraged to mentor younger students and undertake a for-credit internship. In addition, they may become involved in joint faculty-student research and an Internet course with Southwest University and participate in the annual South China May term trip for

further immersion. Moreover, AsiaStar will seek partnerships with Asia-related business and other off-campus organizations in the effort to locate internship and career opportunities for our students.

Finally, to inspire excellence in global learning, teaching, and community building, we will award “AsiaStar” mini-grants and certificates to students, faculty, and administrators for innovative ideas, critical thinking, academic achievement, and distinguished service. Students’ accomplishments will be highlighted in their “global portfolio,” which will give them an edge in the international job market.

Much of the responsibility for managing this increasingly experiential dimension of Asian Studies will fall to Joe Rogers (SJU ’89), recently-appointed Coordinator of Asian Studies at CSB/SJU. While a student here, Joe took all the Asia-related courses he could. He then earned an M.A. degree in East Asian Studies as well as a J.D. from the University of Minnesota. With experience in coordinating Minnesota exchange programs in Taiwan and with strong professional ties to Minnesota and to CSB/SJU alumnae/i groups and institutions in Asia, Joe will provide the necessary coordination of the increasing variety of activities and partnerships needed to prepare our Asia Hands.

We hope that, in this way, the next ten years will see the Asian Studies Program continue to build on the Benedictine vision of and the growing opportunities for connecting CSB/SJU to the Asian Century.

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