FAMU Delegation Participates in HBCU-China Scholarship Network
Two-week Tour of Beijing and Shanghai
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Pictured left to right: FAMU’s Kierra Woodger, Carolyn Pompilus, Dominique Parks and Dr. Luther Wells are shown with Mr. Zhang Wangxi during their introductory Mandarin language course at the Beijing Language and Culture University. Mr. Wangxi is vice president of the Chinese university.

Office of International Education & Development – Florida A&M University’s Dr. Luther Wells and four students were members of a delegation of historically black college and university students and faculty leaders that spent two weeks in Beijing and Shanghai as guests of the China Education Association for International Exchange. Between August 1 and August 15, two faculty leaders and 20 U.S. students were introduced to China’s higher education system and culture.

Wells, the assistant faculty chaperon, is chairman of the Department of Visual Arts, Humanities and Theatre. Participating FAMU students were Kierra Woodger, recent Criminal Justice graduate and now a graduate student; Dominique Park, undergraduate Business Administration major; Carolyn Pompilus, graduate student, Agribusiness; and Brydell E. Ward, senior student who will remain in Shanghai for a semester of study. The primary faculty leader, Dr. Shirley A. Friar, is vice president for Strategic Initiatives, Planning and Compliance at Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas.

Florida A&M University, as a member of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities – China Scholarship Network, is engaged in developing study abroad linkages and exchanges with several Chinese universities for undergraduate and graduate students in non-traditional study abroad destinations of China. The Network was initiated in August 2013 when the presidents of several HBCUs and members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) traveled to Shanghai and Hong Kong to meet with the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) and China’s Vice Premier Liu Yandong. After a follow-up meeting in Washington, D.C. in November 2013, an agreement was signed by Madame Yandong to support the study of HBCU students at Chinese universities outside of Beijing, Shanghai and Xi’an. Under the U.S. leadership of Wilson Global
Communications, representatives of the participating HBCUs have engaged in monthly planning meetings to establish linkage frameworks between the American and Chinese universities. The member Chinese universities have committed to providing full scholarships for 1000 HBCU students who can study for a semester or up to two or three years in China at the graduate or doctoral level.

Earlier in the summer, FAMU president, Dr. Elmira Mangum and leaders from seven other HBCUs toured Beijing, Nanjing, Ningbo, and Shanghai to allow the administrators to solidify and develop relationships with their counterparts in Chinese higher education. The follow-up trip to China by the faculty excursion leaders and student delegation is intended to assist the HBCU education abroad offices in promoting the China study abroad initiative. Throughout the academic year, the students will showcase their experience to audiences on their home campuses.

FAMU’s Office of International Education and Development has identified and engaged in discussions with several Chinese universities that can provide the traditional study abroad experience of discipline-specific courses taught in English and intensive beginner to advance Chinese Mandarin language courses. The office is currently working to recruit students on the graduate and undergraduate levels to take advantage of this educational experience.

The HBCU delegation visited some of the most popular tourist attractions in China, including the Summer Palace, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Beijing Opera, Hangzhou’s Lingyin Temple and Leifeng Pagoda, and Shanghai’s History Museum. They participated in seminars on China-U.S. Relations, China’s History and Culture, Chinese Language Study, the Education System in China, the Political System and Economic Development, Ethnic Minorities in China, Solar Energy Use, Paper Cutting Art, and Calligraphy.

Taking a break from their excursion in China are FAMU’s Dominique Parks, Dr. Luther Wells, Carolyn Pompilus, Kierra Woodger and (in the rear) Brydell Ward.