

Student Affairs hosting counterparts from China's Qingdao Technical College

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Student Affairs officials from China visit Alfred University's Judson Leadership Center

ALFRED, NY The Alfred University Division of Students Affairs is hosting a month-long visit of its counterparts from Qingdao Technical College in China.

A group of four representatives from Qingdao's Office of Student Affairs arrived on the Alfred University campus Oct. 1 and plan to stay until Oct. 29. Kathy Woughter, vice president of Student Affairs at Alfred University, said the visit was arranged by Wilfred Huang, director of Alfred University's Confucius Institute, and W. Richard Stephens, Alfred University provost and vice president of Academic Affairs.

"Rick contacted me over the summer and said he wanted to bring in a group of four professionals (from Qingdao) and asked if we would be interested in putting together a month-long experience for them," Woughter explained.

The group has been spending time with and observing Student Affairs staff, interviewing them and sharing ideas, Woughter said. "They're going through Student Affairs, soaking it all in."

The purpose of the visit is for personnel from China to bring ideas back home and perhaps improve the way they deliver student services at their college. Two weeks into their visit, the contingent from Qingdao had visited and learned about several functions of Student Affairs, including athletics, student activities and involvement, residence life, the Career Development Center, and the Judson Leadership Center.

"Their task is to bring information, knowledge and ideas back to China," said Woughter, who noted the visit may benefit Alfred University as well.

"We'll be better able to prepare for Chinese students on our campus," she said. "For example, if we understand what (Chinese students) expect for student housing and residential life, we can provide them a better experience."

Alfred's Confucius Institute networks with colleges and universities in China, which has led to visits here by Chinese scholars. "In this instance (Qingdao Technical College) wanted to know about residence life. They spoke with (Huang) and he set up the observation in Student Affairs," Stephens explained.

Huang noted that two English instructors from Qingdao Technical College spent the fall 2016 semester at Alfred University as visiting scholars. "They went back and spoke about Alfred University to their administration. They contacted me and said they were looking for place for their student affairs people to get training."

Zhang Xupang, dean of Student Affairs at Qingdao Technical College is one of the four representatives of the Chinese college visiting Alfred University. He said he and his colleagues are hoping to glean ideas for how they can improve the delivery of services to students at Qingdao.

“We are here to learn about Alfred University’s Student Affairs,” he said. “Student life is very important (at Qingdao). We’re looking for ways to be more efficient and more effective.”

Xupang said the Student Affairs operation at his institution differs from Alfred’s in a number of ways, most notably because of the difference in size of the two schools: Alfred University’s undergraduate enrollment is less than 2,000, while Qingdao’s is more than 12,000. While Alfred University has one centralized Student Affairs Division, each of Qingdao’s schools has its own Student Affairs office.

Stephens and Huang agreed that the visit could be beneficial to Alfred University, specifically from a recruiting standpoint.

Huang said typically a visiting student from China comes to Alfred University to complete his or her studies and then potentially enroll in graduate school here. “We always hope that this type of networking will bring students to us. They (visitors from Chinese institutions) will say ‘go to Alfred University.’”

Stephens hopes that in the long run, visits like these will boost new student enrollment. “We are looking at attracting more first-year students here (from China) and it will help if we can develop more of these relationships,” he said. “We can refer (potential students from China) to these four visitors” and others who have spent time on the Alfred University campus.