

U.S. State Department Official Visits Campus to Observe High School Students' Chinese Language Learning

The Chinese Language Center of the Office of Continuing Education hosts American students who received Chinese language scholarships from the U.S. Department of State. 21 American high school students came to Tamkang University this academic year to study Chinese. From November 7 to 9, Michele Peters, Director of the Youth Programs Division of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), and Dr. Brian Gibson, Vice President of Language Programs at the American Councils for International Education (ACIE), visited Tamkang University to observe the implementation of the NSLI-Y program and to assess the students' learning and living conditions.

The director of the Chinese Language Center, Dr. Hsiang-Hua Chou, stated that the high school students arrived in Taiwan in September and are expected to study Chinese at the university until May 2025. Ching-Yi Yu, Head of the Digital Development Section and NSLI-Y Academic Director, along with program coordinator Wei-Ching Wang, explained that students are divided into classes named Clouded Leopard, Macaque, Black Bear, and Taiwan Blue Magpie, taught by experienced Chinese language instructors Hui-Chiao Wang, Tzu-Han Su, Pei-Hsuan Wu, and Si-Kai Yu. The program offers a rich curriculum of language classes, cultural studies, language partner exchanges, and outdoor activities, enabling students to improve their Chinese skills while deepening their understanding of Taiwanese culture. To further enhance their cultural experience, the program arranges weekend stays with host families, allowing students to immerse themselves in Taiwanese life and achieve both language learning and cultural exchange objectives.

Michele Peters and Brian Gibson brought a letter of appreciation from the U.S. Department of State, expressing gratitude to Tamkang University for its full support of the language learning program and for hosting Chinese courses that promote mutual understanding between the two countries. The Chinese Language Center arranged campus tours, class observations, and

discussions to help the guests become familiar with the university's environment and teaching facilities, as well as to understand the students' daily lives and learning progress in Taiwan. Both visitors were impressed by the university's beautiful campus and the Dolphin Plaza, as well as by the students' active participation in class and significant learning outcomes, for which they expressed their recognition and gratitude.

On November 7, a luncheon was held at the Gold Tulip Fab Hotel-New Taipei, attended by the Vice President for International Affairs, Prof. Hsiao-Chuan Chen, faculty members of the Chinese Language Center, and the 2 guests, to discuss the program's progress and confirm future directions for collaboration. Prof. Chen remarked that Tamkang University's Chinese Language Center is renowned for its high teaching quality and is fully capable of helping students achieve their learning goals. Si-Kai Yu shared innovative results from teaching e-brush calligraphy using tablets, which has been widely praised by students. On November 8, the guests visited several host families, observing and interviewing the students and their hosts about their interactions and living conditions. In the afternoon, they joined the students for unique Taiwanese cultural lessons, which included wearing indigenous costumes, performing a traditional harmonic dance, crafting glass beads by hand, and enjoying authentic Taiwanese hot pot. On the third day, a trip to Taipei was arranged, allowing the guests to experience the beauty of Taiwan.

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Michele Peters (third from right), Director of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and Dr. Brian Gibson (fifth from right), Vice President of Language Programs at American Councils, visited Tamkang University and presented a letter of appreciation. Vice President for International Affairs, Prof. Hsiao-Chuan Chen (fourth from right) accepted the letter on behalf of the university.



American high school students dressed in indigenous attire happily took a group photo with Peters and Gibson.



Peters (third from right) and Gibson (second from right) visited a host family.