

May 13, 2007

Governor Christine Gregoire
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, Washington 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

I am writing to you together with my Co-Chair Chunman Gissing on behalf of the Chinese Language Core Team (<http://www.internationaledwa.org/chinese/coreteam.htm>), a group of individuals in the state who are committed to promoting quality teaching of Chinese language and culture in educational institutions in the State of Washington. Following up on forum on the creation of a Confucius Institute hosted by former Governor Gary Locke and Michele Anciaux Aoki of the Washington Coalition for International Education, we would like to offer some specific recommendations about the process and format for a proposed Confucius Institute.

It is clear that this is a key time for both the formation and development of Chinese language programs not just in our state but nationally. The visit by Chinese President Hu Jintao on April 18, 2006 also highlighted the unique ties that our state has with the People's Republic of China. We applaud your signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with President Hu to promote the formation of a Confucius Institute and to establish other cultural connections. We believe strongly that educating young people in Washington State will be integral to maintaining and building upon the relationship between China and our state.

In breakout groups during the Confucius Institute forum on April 2, Randi Schaff from your offices compiled a summary of the recommendations made by stakeholders and interested parties at the meeting. At our most recent meeting of the Chinese Language Core Team, our members reviewed these recommendations, and we would like to specify specific recommendations which we support. These include:

- Provide logistical and other support for Hanban teachers coming to teach in our schools.
- Establish a mentoring program to assist native Chinese teachers to assimilate into American school cultures
- Set up the Confucius Institute to be a clearing-house for information and resources related to Chinese language and culture, creating a resource library that can be shared with educators across the state.
- Create a sister city coordinating office for cities in China connected to Washington cities and towns.
- Connect with other Chinese cultures in Washington who are not from mainland China, including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and other communities.

Perhaps most importantly, Washington State needs to work on securing qualified individuals or ones with good aptitude and potential and get them certified to teach Chinese in our public schools. We propose that State take the opportunity to launch a Confucius Institute to establish a standard for qualifying teachers to go into public school, suggest adopting the standard qualifications as set in Asia Society's guide: that the candidate (1) has a solid background in Mandarin Chinese, (2) is well-versed in American foreign language pedagogy, (3) is knowledgeable and skilled in managing students in a US classrooms, (4) is certified or willing to pursue certification and continuing professional development, (5) is willing to work with the school and community and (6) is proficient in English.

We were pleased to read in the Seattle Times that this past Friday you signed another MOU to strengthen business ties between Washington State and China. However, as it has now been more than a year since President Hu's visit and the signing of the MOU about creating educational and cultural connections, we are concerned that a lack of initiative in this matter may be perceived negatively by the Chinese. We strongly recommend that your office put these plans to create a Confucius Institute into motion. Promoting interest in Chinese language and culture among our citizens will surely support the business connections that are so important to the economy of our State.

We thank you for your time in reviewing these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Adam L. Ross
Co-Chair, Chinese Language Core Team
Chinese Instructor, Lakeside School

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CC: Gov. Gary Locke
Michele Anciaux Aoki
Randi Schaff