

## CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

**People have the tendency to let expectation be the guide and overlook the obvious facts.**

You may have heard stereotypes of Chinese international students about their wealth, consumption behaviors, or social culture. However, it is inaccurate to reduce this diverse group to one profile. There are many types of international students from China at UConn.

- Household annual income for students ranges from 20,000 USD to over 500,000 USD
- Some Chinese students can only afford to study in the U.S. with a scholarship
- Although the overarching goal of studying is to achieve socioeconomic success, this goal has different manifestations. Some students want to gain leadership and professional skills; some may want to gain cultural knowledge about America.
- Many Chinese international students are eager to learn more about the U.S. culture, but it is difficult for them to find a cultural insider to show them the way

## FOR UCONN, BY UCONN

This pamphlet was written by Sylvia Pu (Sociology PhD program), in collaboration with International Student and Scholar Services. The photo of Shanghai on the front of this brochure was taken by Yang Zhou, a UConn student.



### A Letter to the UConn Community

**Hello, my name is Shi Pu, but I go by Sylvia in the U.S.** I am one of UConn's over 2,300 international Chinese students. The education system and student culture in the U.S. is very different from that of China. As I am learning about the new environment, I also want to share my own culture and experiences with you! In this quick guide, you will find information about China's education system and student culture.

**International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)** supports the greater internationalization of the University of Connecticut through the development and delivery of services and programs that help our international students, scholars, faculty and staff accomplish their academic and professional goals at UConn.



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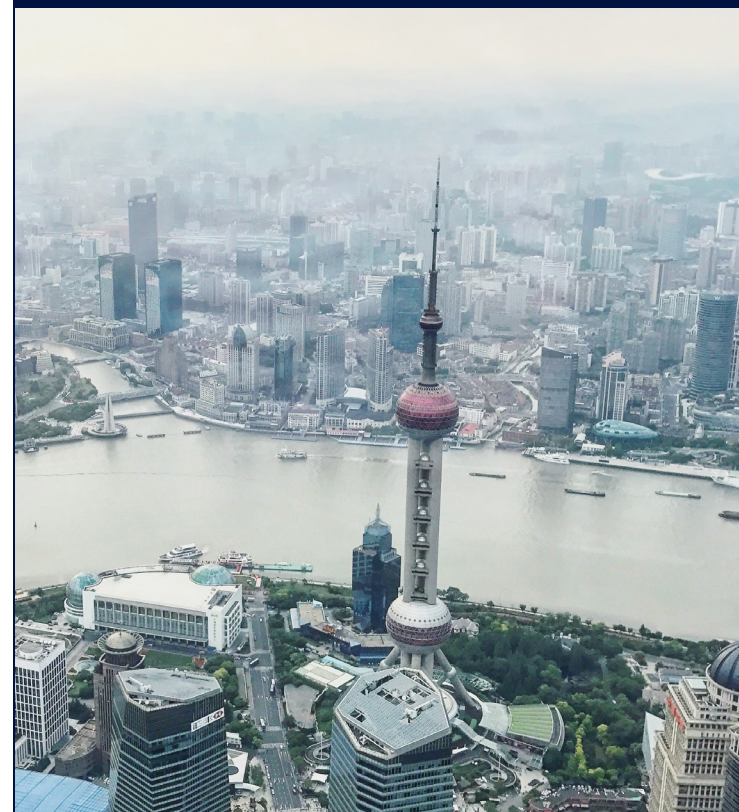
# UConn

GLOBAL

## China Culture & Education

A Student's Perspective

**International Student & Scholar Services**



## EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CHINA

- The education system in China follows a 6-3-3-4 structure. Elementary school is six years, middle school is three years, high school is three years, and college is four years.
- School resources and facilities vary dramatically due to the uneven economic development in China
- English is a mandatory secondary language in China from the third grade (though commonly taught from first grade) through the end of high school. English teaching focuses on grammar rather than communication, but the situation is changing, especially in developed regions of China.
- Standardized test results remain the major, but not only indicator of student performance. A final grade is typically based on exams and quizzes. Some schools adopt a portfolio-style evaluation model. The way that student performance is measured and evaluated varies greatly from region to region and school to school.
- Experiential learning or extracurricular activities can be understood as “distractions” from textbook studying.
- The majority of high school students receive specialized training by entering either a science track or a humanities track.



## STUDENT ACADEMIC CULTURE IN CHINA

The learning experience in China is characterized by structure.

- From early morning to late at night, time is highly structured and filled with classes and homework to ensure maximum learning. The flexible schedule in the U.S. can result in a sense of disorientation.
- Students are ranked based on standardized test scores, and the ranking affects their sense of self-worth.

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**“I didn’t know why studying hard and getting good grades on the exams didn’t get me an A. My professor told me I also need to ‘actively participate’ in class. It took me a long time to adjust to it.”**

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- In China, teachers are figure of authority, but questions are welcome. Students may be less inclined to challenge what teachers say. This is the case even when teachers and students are of similar age.
- The purpose of education is to achieve socioeconomic success. Future professional prosperity is a vital factor when choosing majors.

## STUDENT SOCIAL CULTURE

- In Chinese culture, it is expected that a students’ self-understanding centers on engaging in only moral and innocent pursuits, that exclude experimentation
- Leisure activities include going to restaurants, movies, shopping, playing video games, playing sports, and traveling.
- In China, drinking, smoking, or even dating are considered “adult” activities improper for students. This holds for even college-age students. However, this mainstream value is changing, especially for those with more exposure to American culture.
- Compared to students in the U.S. who may wencounter peers from all over the world, Chinese students may find themselves in a social network of classmates with relatively similar cultural norms and practices. However, peer groups may include students from various socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Most Chinese students are single children. Parents are very involved in the process of choosing a major and future career. When disagreement arises, students tend to try to get parents’ approval.