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CHINA TOWN HALL A UNH AND NATIONWIDE DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT



Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security advisor to President Jimmy Carter

The relationship between the U.S. and China is one of interdependency, and although complex, it is of the utmost importance to the welfare of both countries. Engaging people nationwide on the importance of this partnership and the issues that dominate both countries' agendas is the mission of The National Committee on United States-China Relations and its flagship webcast: [CHINA Town Hall](#). The University of New Hampshire's strong focus on international opportunities and research, including the recent establishment of [The Confucius Institute](#), which offers a full curriculum in Chinese language and culture, makes UNH an ideal fit to host the nationwide program, as it has since 2010.

On November 16th, 2011, the University proudly hosted the event in Richard's Auditorium, Murkland Hall — one of only 50 sites selected to present this fifth annual

event. Students, faculty and NH Seacoast community members gathered to join featured speaker, Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security advisor to President Jimmy Carter, in the discussion of "the dynamic and expanding Sino-American relationship." During the live webcast, all 50 hosting sites were able to electronically submit questions for immediate response.

The National Committee on United States-China Relations created CHINA Town Hall as a way for leading U.S. and international experts to debate Sino-American relations. NCUSCR President, Stephen Orlins, opened the event stating, "We created this program in the belief that U.S.-China relations would be the defining relationship of the 21st Century and that getting the relationship right is critical to peace and stability throughout the world." Brzezinski then presented a detailed analysis of the evolution of Sino-U.S. relations and gave a pragmatic assessment of the problems associated with the relationship. He replied to questions pertaining to the art of diplomacy with countries around the world, emphasizing that the critical challenge of the 21st century is to "strike a relationship that is different from post-imperial rivalries." On the unique challenges that both the U.S. and China face, Brzezinski holds a calculated perspective: "Each side knows...that we need each other. If there was a significant rupture in American-Chinese relations, we will be damaged, they will be damaged."

During the second half of the program, Professor Bill

Hennessey, Professor at the UNH School of Law and Director of the UNH School of Law Summer Institute in Beijing, China, introduced Jamie Horsley, deputy director of Yale University's China Law Center. Horsley noted particular progress in China's administrative law and regulatory reforms, including promoting government transparency, public participation, government accountability, improved administrative procedures, and dispute resolution. Horsley also spoke about obstacles that impede the China-U.S. relationship, including the rule of law and protecting human rights. The event left its 80 engaged attendees with an up-to-the-moment awareness of the state of U.S.- China relations. Professor Lawrence C. Reardon, Chair of the Political Science Department at UNH, was instrumental in organizing the event and impressed with the impact he observed: "Several students in my Foreign Policy class stated that they



(l. to r.) Political Science Professor and Chair Chris Reardon, Deputy Director of the China Law Center Jamie Horsley, and UNH School of Law Professor Bill Hennessey

really enjoyed the format of the talk. It gave them a better idea of the current debate on China's future and a clearer idea about the difficulties of China adopting a system that emphasized law and not the Party."

CHINA Town Hall was organized by UNH's Asian Studies Minor and Political Science Department, with support from the Center for International Education and the World Affairs Council of New Hampshire, whose president and director were in attendance. UNH President Mark W. Huddleston described the event as "a wonderful opportunity for our students and the residents of New Hampshire." UNH has a special responsibility as the state's flagship university, he continued, "to prepare its students and the broader community for engagement with other peoples and across cultures. China is one of the state's top trade partners, and global competency is essential in the international economy of the 21st century."

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