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UNH Hosts National China Town Hall on Sino-American Relations Oct. 29

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DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire is the state’s host site for the sixth annual China Town Hall, an international event that will focus on China’s rapid development and feature Gary Locke, U.S ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

“The China Town Hall: Local Connections, National Reflections” is a national day of programming designed to provide Americans across the United States and beyond the opportunity to discuss these issues with leading experts. The sixth annual CHINA Town Hall will be held at UNH at 7 p.m., Monday, Oct. 29, 2012, in Richards Auditorium, Murkland Hall. The event is free and open to the public.

UNH is one of only 59 sites in the nation selected to co-host the event with the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations and the World Affairs Council of New Hampshire. The event is sponsored by the UNH Department of Political Science and the Asian Studies program.

The event features a webcast by Locke, who assumed duty as the ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the People's Republic of China on Aug. 13, 2011, and an on-site presentation by Joseph Fewsmith, professor of international relations and political science at Boston University, and director of the Boston University Center for the Study of Asia.

“Over the past three decades, the Chinese leadership has learned to compete with the global capitalist economies to become the world’s second-largest economy and most important foreign investor in American and European bonds. While China now dispenses wisdom to the ailing economies in the West, foreigners must understand that China in many ways is still a developing nation, especially in terms of its legal structure,” said China scholar Chris Reardon, associate professor of political science and director of UNH’s Asian Studies program, who will moderate the event.

Locke has extensive experience working with China. As secretary of commerce, he co-chaired two sessions of the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade that resulted in important changes to Chinese trade policy, helping to level the playing field for U.S. businesses exporting to and operating in China. As governor of Washington, he strengthened economic ties between China and Washington State, more than doubling the state’s exports to China to more than $5 billion per year.

Locke is the first Chinese-American to serve as ambassador to China, as secretary of commerce and as governor. His grandfather emigrated from China to Washington State, initially finding employment as a servant, working in exchange for English lessons. His father, also born in China, was a small business owner, operating a grocery store.
Locke earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Yale University and a law degree from Boston University.

Fewsmith, who will speak at the UNH event, is one of the world’s top experts on Chinese elite politics. He is very active in the China field, traveling to China frequently and presenting papers at professional conferences of organizations such as the Association for Asian Studies and the American Political Science Association. He is the author of six books, including “China Today, China Tomorrow” (2010), “China Since Tiananmen: The Politics of Transition” (2nd ed, 2008), “Elite Politics in Contemporary China” (2001), and “The Dilemmas of Reform in China: Political Conflict and Economic Debate” (1994). Fewsmith is also a research associate of the John King Fairbank Center for East Asian Studies at Harvard University.

The University of New Hampshire is a leader in Asian studies in the state of New Hampshire. The university home to the state’s only Confucius Institute, a nonprofit educational institution that promotes Chinese language and culture. The university offers an undergraduate Asian Studies program that provides students with advanced Chinese language classes and a deep knowledge about Asian peoples and their experiences in the United States. UNH’s MBA programs include an intensive, 10-day international business residency program in China. During the summer, UNH hosts the STARTALK Chinese Language Summer Camp, an immersive nonresidential program for middle and high school students focused on Chinese cultural and linguistic activities, including Mandarin Chinese preparation.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.