

2019

Global Initiative of the University of Nebraska Medical Center to Improve Physical Therapy Education, Care and Science in China

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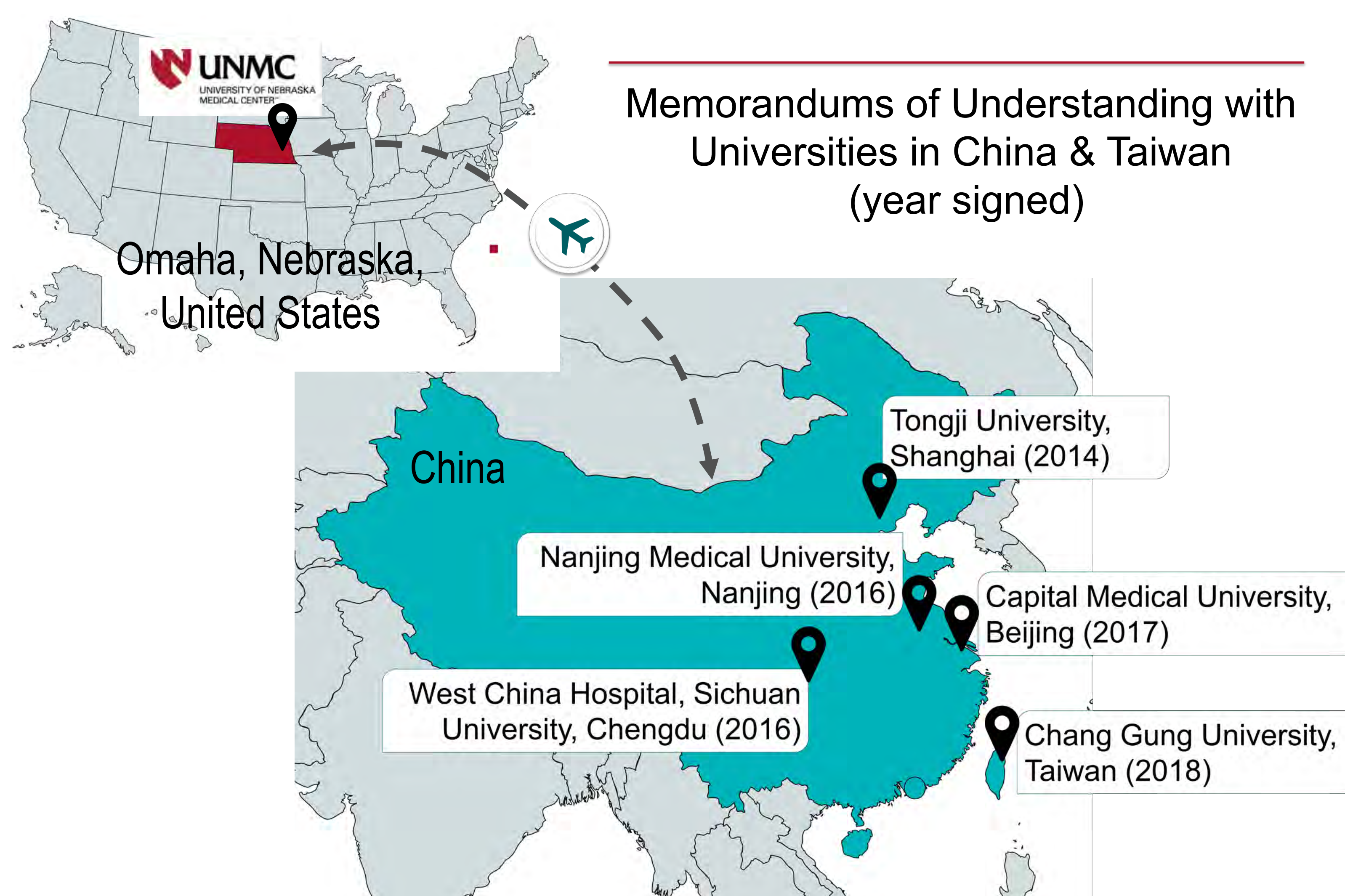
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Introduction & Background

Similar to the United States (US), an aging society, chronic diseases, work injuries, **motor vehicle accidents**, and other health concerns have increased the demand for physical rehabilitation in China. The Chinese government has identified the need for a comprehensive rehabilitation infrastructure as a national priority. Currently, there does not exist national education standards or an accreditation organization specific to the physical therapy (PT) profession in China. A challenge in remedying this deficit in PT education and practice is the shortage of qualified, well-trained faculty. One of the goals of the global initiative at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Division of PT Education is to **advance** PT education, care, and science in China by educating future PT educators and leaders.

Methods

In 2011, the UNMC Division of PT Education established a 4-year MS/DPT dual degree program to train students from China to learn both comprehensive teaching (MS) and advanced clinical skills (DPT) in PT. These students, often supported by the Chinese Scholarship Council, begin their MS degree the first year while also acclimating to the new US learning environment. They enter the DPT degree program their second year, and complete both degrees by the end of their fourth year. Additionally, the Division of PT Education affiliates with five major institutions in China and Taiwan for faculty exchanges, **participates in the Sino-US PT Education Symposium**, offers a summer program for prospective Chinese students, and organized a clinical experience in China for our DPT students.



Outcomes

Students

- MS-DPT dual degree**
Year 1: Masters & acclimating to the US learning environment
Year 2-4: DPT program and finish Masters requirements
• **Since 2011: 13 current students and 5 graduates**
- Summer Program for Educating Chinese Students** 3 weeks long
• **2017 & 2018: 22 students**
- UNMC Student Exchange to China** (1 month long)
• **Since 2017: 3 students**

Faculty

- Relationship Building**
UNMC Faculty travelled to China for Student Recruitment, learn about Chinese PT education needs, and create MOUs with Institutions
• **Since 2011: 20 trips to China**
- Faculty Scholarly Presentations**
UNMC Faculty → China
Sino-US Physical Therapy Symposium Annual Continuing Education
• **Since 2011: 10 faculty participants**
- Visiting Scholar**
Chinese Faculty member to UNMC
• **Since 2018: 2 faculty completed program**

Currently, there are 13 MS/DPT students matriculating in the program with six additional students to join this year. Of the five program graduates to date, three returned to China as University faculty and/or PT leaders in hospitals. The other two are obtaining additional clinical experience in the US as part of their optional practicum training. Ten UNMC PT faculty have presented in China and two Chinese faculty have come to UNMC as part of our faculty exchange program. In 2016, UNMC co-sponsored the first Sino-US PT Education Symposium in China with Tongji University. In addition, 22 students from China completed our summer education program, 4 DPT students completed a clinical experience in China, and UNMC PT faculty travel to China regularly to present and to enrich collaborations.

Lessons Learned

Several important lessons have been learned through this global initiative.

- Building cross-cultural relationships takes time, effort and trust (at least 3-4 visits before a formal collaboration is established).
- Chinese students coming to US need additional training on the American healthcare system and communication before entering the DPT program.
- Having a bilingual faculty member as the Director of our Chinese program was critical to facilitate accurate communications.
- Success depends on this being identified as a University-wide initiative supported by leadership.
- We have a specific plan that matches resources to the outcomes while staying focused on achieving those outcomes.

Conclusion and Future Directions

- Changes in PT education and practice in China **will need to occur to meet the rapidly growing demand**.
- Support from international collaborators will facilitate the process.
- UNMC is committed to assist individuals and institutions in the process through its ongoing collaborations and educational programs.
- We are exploring expansion to different PT education programs, such as MS in Rehabilitation Sciences or PhD-DPT Dual degree, to educate future PT leaders in China and worldwide.
- In exchange, the faculty and students in the UNMC Division of PT Education have benefited personally and professionally from this international experience and cultural exchange.

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Global Collaboration



Physical Therapy Education

