

ABSTRACT

Crisis Management: Research and Executive Training in Collaboration with Tsinghua University

Herman B. "Dutch" Leonard, Arnold M. Howitt and Tony Saich
Kennedy School of Government

This prospectus requests \$200,000 of support over an 18-month period as seed money to develop further collaboration between the Kennedy School and Tsinghua University in executive education and research on Crisis Management in China.

Substantively, the program would focus on China's societal capacity to confront sudden and urgent challenges to public well-being, whether generated by natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, hurricanes, floods), technology failures (e.g., plane or railroad crashes, chemical spills, nuclear accidents), or emergent infectious disease (SARS, pandemic flu). Program objectives would be fulfilled through faculty and student research, case study writing, conferences of scholars, executive education for senior Chinese officials, and faculty exchanges.

Program Components

Working with colleagues at Tsinghua University's Crisis Management Research Center in the School of Public Policy and Management, the KSG team would develop several initiatives:

- **A collaborative research program on emergency preparedness and crisis management in China**, focusing on how the Chinese emergency response system functions and might be improved and looking at parallel and contrasting issues in the United States and other western nations. This research would involve faculty and graduate students at each university (including exchanges and visiting relationships). Results would be disseminated not only through academic publications but also through research conferences aimed at both scholars from the world-wide disaster management research community and (separately) at public officials, business leaders, and NGOs in China.
- **Executive training for senior Chinese emergency response officials** (and senior general managers) from state-level, provincial, and city agencies. Training cohorts would first have an intensive week of training by KSG and Tsinghua faculty in China, followed after an interval of several months by a week of training by Harvard faculty in Cambridge and subsequent study visits to related government agencies in the United States.

KSG and Tsinghua faculty have been discussing this initiative for the past year. The foundation for research relationships with Tsinghua colleagues is already firmly in place. There are also clear indications that the newly created Office of Crisis Management in the State Council, as well as Tsinghua, will sponsor the executive education program, with assurances that high-level trainees will be involved.

KSG Faculty Leadership

Over the past decade, **Anthony Saich**, who heads KSG Asia Programs, has developed an extensive set of research, executive education, and faculty and official exchange programs at

KSG and in relationships with Chinese universities and government institutions. **Dutch Leonard** and **Arnold Howitt** have been active participants in these programs, regularly teaching in several executive education programs both in China and Cambridge, and hosting visiting Chinese faculty and officials. At least as pertinent to the proposed project, they have also taken the lead at the Kennedy School in research, case study development, and executive training on emergency preparedness and crisis management. Their intensive one-week executive program *Leadership in Crises* has been taught nine times since 2002, enrolling about 350 senior American officials, as well as many international participants; and shorter modules on crisis management are featured in several other KSG executive programs, including both the China Leaders in Development and Beijing Executive programs, and the Taiwan and Pakistan programs. (See <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/taubmancenter/emergencyprep/> for more detailed information about Leonard and Howitt's activities in this area.)

Context and Priority at the Kennedy School

Because of both institutional and substantive connections, this project would be a good fit for KSG. For about a decade, KSG has had a deepening relationship with Tsinghua University's School of Public Policy and Management. KSG has provided strategic advice and technical assistance for program development (e.g., executive education programs, development of the SPPM case program), partnered in creating several major joint executive education programs for senior Chinese officials (China's Leaders in Development, Beijing Executive Public Management Program, HIV/AIDS Public Policy Program), annually hosted visiting faculty, sent KSG faculty to China for summer teaching and visiting appointments, conducted joint research projects, and appointed SPPM's executive vice dean to the KSG visiting committee.

On the Kennedy School side, this initiative substantively fits well with KSG Dean David Ellwood's school-wide emphasis on the theme "Acting in Time" – i.e., improving societal ability to deal with looming public problems that nonetheless do not get appropriate action. He has launched a multi-year, School-funded faculty research initiative (Leonard and Howitt were among the first recipients of one of these grants for a study of preparedness for natural disasters), and he chose "The Looming Crisis" as the organizing theme for the annual Dean's Conference in 2007.

Seed Funding and Future Resources

If funds are received from the Harvard China Fund, we will use these to seed the initial expenses of research and case writing, visiting faculty at KSG, and planning for executive education. We have strong signals that financial support will be forthcoming from the Chinese side through the foreign experts bureau. It is likely that the government also will pay for training program costs at Tsinghua, travel expenses to the United States, and perhaps some of the costs of training at Harvard. KSG Asia programs will also seek to raise money for ongoing costs of this program from corporate donors, presumably major companies doing business in China.