

## U-M hosts Biomed Conference for Chinese alumni

Dozens of UMMS-educated Chinese medical researchers returned to Ann Arbor recently for a first-of-its-kind Michigan China Biomedical Forum.

While several reunion-style events have taken place in recent years in China, this marked the first year that Michigan Medicine has hosted the large group in Ann Arbor, a chance for the one-time UMMS students to showcase their current work for their peers and an opportunity for the institution to tout and strengthen its broader relationships across China.

"There is a long history between U-M and China, particularly in the medical school, where hundreds of Chinese students and scholars have trained. Many have gone on to prominence as leaders in the biomedical field both back in China and in the United States," said Eugene Chen, Frederick G L Huetwell Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, who helped organize the conference with Shaomeng Wang, Warner-Lambert/Parke-Davis Professor of Internal Medicine, and Weiping Zou, Charles B. de Nancrede Professor of Surgery.

Part reunion, part scientific symposium, the three-day event took place Aug. 13-15 at the Eagle Crest Marriot Conference Center in Ypsilanti. Hundreds participated, including 50-plus researchers with strong UMMS connections now working across China. Attendees included Yi Sun, Dean of Translation Medicine at Zhejiang University; Duanqing Pei, President at the Guangzhou Institutes of Biomedicine and Health, Chinese Academy of Sciences; and Qianjin Lu, Chair of Dermatology at Xiangya Medical School.

A few dozen alum now working at various US institutions also participated, including Kunliang Guan, Distinguished Professor in the Department of Pharmacology at the University of California San Diego and Weihong Tan, Distinguished Professor of Chemistry at the University of Florida. Several U-M leaders attended as well, including U-M Vice President for Research Jack Hu, UMMS Executive Vice Dean for Academic Affairs Carol Bradford, and others.

The agenda included numerous plenary talks for attending scholars to showcase their current work as well as panels on topics like drug development, biomedical research collaborations, and more. There was also opportunity for U-M faculty to showcase work of potential interest to Chinese collaborators. Felix E. Moore Collegiate Professor of Biostatistics Goncalo Abecasis spoke about advances in genome sequencing, while S.P. Hicks Endowed Professor of Pathology Arul Chinnaiyan presented on Precision Medicine in Oncology.

Senior Associate Dean for Education and Global Initiatives Joseph Kolars and U-M Director of China Programs Amy Huang gave presentations on ongoing UMMS collaborations with both Peking University Health Science Center and Central South University Xiangya School of Medicine.

"Of all of our (global health) collaboration platforms, China is without a doubt the one with the most energy and interest. Our medical school was accepting students from China back in the 1800s," Kolars told the group. "When I look at the power of the relationship between China and the University of Michigan, it's clear we would be a lesser institution without that bond."

Because the attendees also included many current UMMS faculty researchers, fellows, and PhD students, the event fostered potential future collaborations as well. Several faculty have already reached out to Chen and his co-organizers about promising connections made with new colleagues who share common research interests. A 2019 meeting is already planned, hosted in China at the Xiangya School of Medicine.

"As the first reunion like this hosted in Ann Arbor, the event was a success," Chen said. "It was an opportunity to promote Michigan Medicine excellence and our legacy among this prominent group of scholars, many of whom went away engaged and excited to work together on new biomedical research. I am grateful to those who made the trip and our UMMS colleagues who supported us in the conference."



Charles B. de Nancrede Professor of Surgery Weiping Zou, MD, PhD, speaks with attendees at the Michigan China Biomedical Forum event. Zou helped organize the event.



Biomed forum attendees (from left) Duanqing Pei, President of the Guangzhou Institutes of Biomedicine and Health, Chinese Academy of Sciences; Eric Fearon, Director of U-M Comprehensive Cancer Center; David Pinsky, Director of U-M Frankel Cardiovascular Center; and Frederick G L Huetwell Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine Y. Eugene Chen, who organized the event.



**Tags:**

[China](#)