

**Script for Governor Chris Gregoire
Inaugural International Symposium at Tsinghua University, China
Event: November 14, 2007**

Hi, I'm Washington State Governor Chris Gregoire.
Welcome to the Inaugural International Symposium on Poverty Alleviation and the Summer Service Learning Program.

I'm sorry I can't be in Beijing with you today. I remember fondly your gracious hospitality during my trip to China in 2005 and was honored to host President Hu Jintao in 2006 during his visit to the United States.

I thank the Wang Foundation and Tsinghua University for making this Symposium possible.

The most critical need between China and the United States is the ability to communicate effectively.

I hope, during this symposium, you'll take time to celebrate the success of the Wang Foundation and Tsinghua University's Service Learning program that brings together American and Tsinghua University students to live and work side-by-side strengthening cross-cultural understanding and language skills.

In the first two years of the Service Learning program, over eight hundred American and Tsinghua students, with professors from both countries, traveled to the poorest regions of China to provide education services to their residents.

I applaud your commitment and, like you, appreciate the value of connecting education and service learning to alleviate poverty and gain global understanding.

Have a great symposium.