

Interview with CEIBS Alumni International Chapter President and Secretary-General

As CEIBS prepares to celebrate its 30th anniversary, the CEIBS Alumni International Chapter (CAIC) is also marking a significant milestone; with its long-serving leadership stepping down, it is now time for the CAIC's Core Council to hand over the baton to a new generation of CEIBS alumni. To mark the occasion, we had the pleasure of speaking with the two remarkable alums that make up the CAIC's current leadership. Cedric Devroye, from the GEMBA 2015 programme, has led the Chapter's Council for nearly ten years: he has served as its President for two councils and as part of the founding team that established the vibrant CAIC community. Joining him is Tina Walendy, from the Africa EMBA 2015 programme, who has served as the Chapter's Secretary-General for two consecutive terms, from 2018 to 2021, and again from 2021 to 2024. Their leadership has been instrumental in shaping and strengthening the Chapter and its community. Ahead of their stepping down in November 2024, we joined them in looking back on a decade of success, and forward toward the future of our international community.



The CAIC President and Secretary-General receive the "Outstanding Alumni Chapter" Award by the CAA on behalf of the Council.

Q: Cedric, you have been leading the Council for nearly 10 years. Do you feel ready to step down?

Cedric, CAIC President: Oh, that's a great question! It's been the most remarkable adventure. I have loved every moment of it - I lost count of the hours, to be honest. I have developed a strong attachment to the role, but I firmly believe in the importance of bringing in fresh blood and new ideas to keep our community dynamic. So yes, after nearly a decade, I'm ready to pass the torch, though I'll certainly miss the excitement of the journey.

Q: And Tina, you have dedicated six years as Secretary-General. How do you feel about stepping down?

Tina, CAIC Secretary-General: Very good and optimistic. Both because it's time for new leaders, and because we have spent several months making sure the best fit successors are in place to take this Chapter into its second decade.

Q: As you both prepare to step down from your roles as President and Secretary-General of the CAIC, can you reflect on the main accomplishments of your two and three successful terms, spanning six and nine years in total?

President: Over the past nine years, we've focused on building a strong, connected community of English-speaking alumni worldwide. One of our main accomplishments has been the establishment of a



The CAIC President and Secretary-General welcome CEIBS President (European) Dominique Turpin on behalf of alumni in 2022.

solid international network (six WeChat groups with more than 2,500 CEIBS alumni), which has allowed us to foster a sense of belonging among our members, regardless of their geographic location.

We encourage the development of regional overseas alumni chapters because a stronger regional presence translates to a stronger international community. As an international business school, we must work diligently to build and enhance our community outside of China too and increase our visibility globally.

Secretary General: Another significant achievement has been our efforts in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion within our community. As much as we honour the C and the E of our school's acronym, the Chapter's focus is the central I of CEIBS. Alumni from Accra or Lagos should feel just as connected to our school as those in Milan, Shenzhen or Seoul. We've worked hard to ensure that all alumni, irrespective of their background or gender, feel welcomed and valued. This has been particularly important in respecting the school's values and supporting its goal of internationalisation.

President: In terms of supporting the school's internationalisation efforts, we greatly admire the dedication and hard work invested in organising Alumni Reunions, in Asia and more recently also in Europe since 2018 and in Africa since 2023. These events play a crucial role in strengthening our global network, fostering connections among alumni from diverse regions.



CAIC's Second Core Council in 2021. From left: Vice President Urvash Singh (MBA 2012), Secretary General Tina Walendy (AFEMBA 2015), President Cedric Devroye (GEMBA 2015) and Vice President Huiling Ding (GEMBA 2013)

Q: Impressive! Could you share some challenges you faced during your tenure?

President: Ensuring that our initiatives are inclusive and respectful of geopolitical sensitivities requires constant effort and adaptability. Increasing tensions and differing political climates across various regions sometimes touch the very fabric of our community, giving us even more reason to maintain a unified community and to have a strong International Chapter.

Secretary-General: Yes, we have made a conscious effort to be culturally sensitive and inclusive in all our communications and events. This meant understanding the unique challenges and perspectives of our members from different regions and addressing them thoughtfully. We also encouraged open dialogue and feedback to continuously improve our approach.

President: Ensuring that our Chapter remains relevant, even without a clear geographical base, is essential. The CAIC has always been a strong advocate for the alumni community. For example, we've championed the development of a better alumni app and pushed for more equal representation at School events. However, while times have changed, the need for our English-speaking community to speak with one voice through the CAIC remains as crucial as ever. The challenge is to maintain unity that is essential if we are to effectively challenge the status quo. Without it, our voice is diminished, leaving us with an uncertain impact. We cannot afford to be complacent. We must continually strive for improvement—not out of negativity or a desire to criticise,

but from a deep sense of pride and love for our School.

Q: Despite these challenges, it's clear you've achieved a lot. How did you manage to build such a strong sense of belonging within the English-speaking community worldwide?

Secretary-General: We placed strong emphasis on communication. Regular newsletters, updates, and active WeChat groups helped us stay connected with our members. We highlighted alumni achievements and shared success stories, fostering a sense of pride and belonging within our community. We've always tried to be mindful of the different regions and programmes our alumni come from, recognising that each has its own specificities. MBA graduates, for instance, have different expectations than their GEMBA counterparts.

President: That is very true. And keeping that perspective in mind with every decision we made was crucial to our success in appealing to all programmes. Tina and I come from different programmes, and it was vital to always consider things from the other programmes' perspectives as well.

We have always focused on creating opportunities for alumni to connect on both professional and personal levels. The events we organised, both virtual and in-person, were crucial in building a tight-knit community.



Tina and Cedric on the CEIBS Zurich campus for the CEIBS Alumni Reunion in Europe in 2022



Cedric and Tina shared CAIC updates with alumni in Singapore at the CEIBS Asia Alumni Reunion in 2019

Also, I find that enthusiasm is contagious. By fostering a positive and energetic environment, we inspire members to actively participate and contribute, further strengthening the sense of community. Understanding the unique challenges faced by our members and offering support and empathy are vital. For instance, the cohorts that studied and graduated during the COVID years have a unique appreciation and experience, leading to different ways of engaging with their alumni community.

Q: What would be your message to our international alumni?

Secretary-General: First, we need to clarify that CAIC is not the "Foreign Passport" chapter. When we use the term "International" in our communication, including in our Chapter's name, we refer to all alumni who have contributed to our global community, which by definition includes alumni from China. Building these bridges takes a lot of effort, but it's worth it!

President: Absolutely, going beyond walls and building bridges is integral to who we are. The distinguishing feature of our chapter is its English-speaking nature, which sets us apart from the majority of Chinese-speaking chapters and clubs. Nationality plays no role at all; what matters is that we speak English. This unique aspect has been central to our efforts in fostering a sense of belonging.

To come back to your question... We have a marvelous community, and alumni need to cultivate a greater sense of responsibility and take ownership

of their involvement. Don't wait for everything to be handed to you on a silver platter.

Q: What message would you like to convey to the school?

President: I think this is an easy one, and we both agree. It's important to be less apprehensive about the current environment. Embrace the challenges and dare to take bold steps forward. Progress often comes from stepping out of our comfort zones. This is what we are taught at school, and it's a useful reminder for everyone.

Secretary-General: We collaborate closely with the school to align our initiatives with its values and mission. This partnership ensures that we are not only promoting our goal of fostering a global, inclusive community. I sincerely hope that we have been able to convey the Chapter's commitment to CEIBS' broader objectives. When at times we challenge the status quo, it's always with the school's best, international interest in mind. The CAIC continues to deserve special attention from the school.



Members of the CAIC's Third Council together with CEIBS President (European) Dominique Turpin and CEIBS Vice-President and Dean Frank Bournois in 2023.



Serving in the Core Council of the CAIC is a prolonged training in intercultural relations and communications."

Q: Throughout your tenure, you've interacted with many alumni and participated in numerous events. Could you share some of the most remarkable experiences that have left a lasting impression on you, and explain what made them particularly memorable?

President: Working with my fellow Council members has been the most fun aspect of this journey. It's truly all about the people and the relationships we've built. Additionally, my interactions with the Chapter's Honorary Presidents, Prof. David Gosset, Prof. Dipak Jain, and Prof. Dominique Turpin, have been incredibly inspiring. I would be remiss not to mention the invaluable support we've received from Dean Ding Yuan and Dean Frank Bournois.

Secretary-General: Serving in the Core Council of the CAIC is a prolonged training in intercultural relations and communications. Adding to the fact that your fellow Council members are literally from all over the world, is that we all volunteer our time and resources to the community. The commitment, the discipline and the positive spirit I have experienced from fellow Council members has been very rewarding and inspiring.



Tina and Cedric at the CEIBS Alumni Reunion in Europe in London, 2023

By extension this applies to our close collaboration with fellow alumni who run the other Chapters and Clubs under the Shanghai Alumni Association, to which we as the CAIC belong (they will know us as 国际分会). There is mutual recognition and respect for the effort we all put into keeping alumni connected and engaged after graduating. There are many opportunities for us to work across Chapters to continue to honour the school's promise of providing China Depth, Global Breadth.

Q: As you prepare to step down, what legacy do you hope to leave behind for the next council?

President: I hope to leave behind a legacy of unity and resilience. We've built a strong foundation, and I believe the next Council can continue to build on this, further strengthening our global community and navigating any future challenges with confidence.

Secretary General: I hope that the path towards inclusivity and engagement has only just begun, there's so much work to be done! Our efforts to create a welcoming and supportive environment for all alumni have set a precedent, and I believe the next Council will continue to prioritise these values, ensuring that the CAIC remain a vibrant and inclusive community. ●

Building Bridges Beyond Borders: Interview with CEIBS GEMBA alumna Louise Vogler

"The confidence I gained from completing the programme was invaluable. It gave me an immense boost of courage to lead from the front, embrace new challenges, and persevere through adversity."

In the world of global finance, few careers exemplify the intersection of cultural immersion, leadership, and innovation as profoundly as that of Louise Vogler, a 2010 alumna of the CEIBS Global EMBA programme. Having worked for over 25 years at Standard Chartered Bank and with professional experience spanning four continents, Louise's journey is a testament to the power of continuous learning, adaptability, and a passion for bridging global perspectives.



Louise Vogler

Managing Director, Head of Coverage
Operations Center of Excellence,
Standard Chartered Bank

CEIBS Global EMBA 2010

A Passion for Banking, and for China

Louise's path to banking began during university, where her studies in Chinese language, history, culture, economics, and international business laid the foundation for a unique career. "I loved being an Account Manager and Credit Analyst - it was such a privilege to visit our clients, understand their business, analyse their financials and most importantly find the right product and solutions to their banking needs," she says.

Her passion for banking merged seamlessly with her love for China. A Canadian native, Louise first landed in China in 1990 under an exchange programme to East China Normal University in Shanghai, which profoundly shaped her life. "That year changed everything," she recalls. "I fell further in love with the Chinese language and culture and made friends from all over the world, including my future husband."

Determined to return to China, Louise joined the Canadian Consulate in Guangzhou as a trade officer upon graduation in 1995. "At the end of my exchange programme, I promised myself: 'One day, you will come back to live and work in this amazing country'. And sure enough, I made my dream a reality four years later when I arrived in Guangzhou with the Canadian Consulate," she says.

Louise's real passion, however, still lay in financial analysis and banking. After completing a work placement experience in the Taipei Branch of a leading Canadian Bank prior to her graduation, she already knew that her role at the Consulate would be a transitional one.

Cedric and Tina thank their fellow CAIC Core Council Members for their significant commitment and contribution over the years:

CAIC Core Council Members

Huiling Ding (GEMBA 2013)

CAIC Vice President Second & Third Councils

Urvash Singh (MBA 2012)

CAIC Vice President Second & Third Councils

Laetitia Domange (GEMBA 2019)

CAIC Vice President Third Council

Laure-Cecile Lafond-Fenonjoie (GEMBA 2020)

CAIC Vice President Third Council

Yvonne Tang (GEMBA 2015)

CAIC Vice President Third Council

Coco Jiang (FMBA 2014)

CAIC Vice President Second Council

Jun Lee (GEMBA 2013)

CAIC Founding Member & Advisory Board Member

Alanna Shi (MBA 2008)

CAIC Founding Member & Advisory Board Member

Michele Comacchio (GEMBA 2012)

CAIC Founding Member & Advisory Board Member

Margaret Kan (MBA 2008)

CAIC Founding Member

Vijay Kumar Nadipineni (MBA 2014)

CAIC Founding Member

In 1999, she joined Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) in Shanghai as a Senior Credit Analyst. Since then, her roles at the leading international organisation have spanned Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and now Europe, overseeing a global team of credit risk management operations professionals of the Client Coverage Centre of Excellence in SCB headquarter London.

Joining the CEIBS Global EMBA Programme

During the early to mid-2000s, Louise experienced significant career growth and development at SCB. With China's entry into the WTO, the economy was booming, and the banking sector - particularly for foreign banks - was undergoing rapid expansion. However, by 2009, feeling that her growth had reached a plateau, she decided to pursue an EMBA programme to take her career to the next level.

"I looked around at EMBA programmes in the Greater China region, and the one that really stood out was CEIBS' Global EMBA. I could remain in Shanghai and avail myself of a world-class, rigorous EMBA education," she says.

Convinced that studying at CEIBS would be the transformative opportunity of a lifetime, Louise found her experience at the school to be even beyond expectations.

"The confidence I gained from completing the programme was invaluable. It gave me an immense boost of courage to lead from the front, embrace new challenges, and persevere through adversity. These insights have helped me tremendously as I've moved roles and geographies and into more senior roles over the years," she says, adding that CEIBS' expansive global alumni network also serves as an excellent source for networking and making new contacts when moving to new regions.

A Global Leadership Perspective

Louise's career has taken her across continents, including Asia, Africa, and most recently, Europe with a role in London. Each move required adaptability and an openness to new cultures. She credits her

"To thrive in a global community, you need to be flexible, open-minded, tolerant, patient and curious."



global success to her curiosity and efforts to immerse herself in local languages, literature, and history, which have helped her connect deeply with different communities and lead effectively.

"To thrive in a global community, you need to be flexible, open-minded, tolerant, patient and curious," she advises. Learning local languages also helps. "All of these traits are crucial for understanding the markets you're working in and building bridges with the people around you."

Reflections on CEIBS' 30th Anniversary

Named as a Distinguished Alumni of CEIBS' 30th Anniversary, Louise Vogler's story is a shining example of how business education and global experiences can transform not only a career, but also the ability to influence industries and communities worldwide.

As CEIBS celebrates its 30th anniversary, Louise takes pride in being part of a community that empowers leaders to bridge cultural and business differences. "In an ever-changing world, CEIBS plays a critical role in creating a cross-cultural community of like-minded business professionals, academics, and government leaders who embrace mutual challenges for a better global business world of tomorrow."

Looking ahead, Louise remains committed to CEIBS' mission. "It is my sincere hope that CEIBS will continue to act as a crucial bridge between East and West, a bridge between China and the rest of the world, and that CEIBS will continue to reflect its most important strength: 'China Depth, Global Breadth'."

Thirty and Thriving: Bridging cultures, driving global success

Archie Preston's journey began with an unexpected but impactful decision. In high school, he serendipitously received a book on modern Chinese history as a prize in a contest, which sparked his interest in China.

As CEIBS celebrates its thirtieth anniversary, we reflect on the journeys of our esteemed alumni who exemplify the school's mission to bridge China and Europe through business education. One such alumnus is Archie Preston, whose career in China cross-border investment and strategy showcases the value of cross-cultural communication and global business acumen cultivated at CEIBS.

A Foundation in Chinese Studies

Archie Preston's journey began with an unexpected but impactful decision. In high school, he serendipitously received a book on modern Chinese



Archie Preston

International Strategy and Investment Director at Yuwell Global

CEIBS MBA Class of 2023 Alumni

history as a prize in a contest, which sparked his interest in China. This interest led him to major in Chinese studies at Cambridge, where he spent his third year at Peking University, immersing himself in the language and culture of China. "It was not particularly well thought through," Archie recalls, "but it ended up shaping my entire career path."

Venturing into Finance

After graduating, Archie moved to Hong Kong. There, he began his career in equity capital markets within investment banking, advising mainland Chinese companies on Hong Kong Stock Exchange IPOs. This role provided Archie with invaluable experience in understanding business models and financials, honing his skills in due diligence and analysis.

Reflecting on his transition from humanities to finance, Archie notes, "The UK's flexible education system allowed me to adapt quickly to the financial sector. It was a steep learning curve, but it equipped me with the ability to navigate complex projects effectively."

Embracing M&A and Strategic Partnerships

After four years in equity capital markets, Archie sought a more dynamic and creative role, leading him to join DealGlobe, an investment banking firm specialising in M&A. Here, he learned the intricacies of deal-making, from networking to understanding

the diverse interests of stakeholders. “The founder was a master networker,” Archie says, “and he taught me the importance of building relationships and understanding each party’s objectives.”

One of Archie’s proudest achievements at DealGlobe was leading the sale of several hospitals in the Greater Bay Area to a major US private equity fund, a sizeable deal. He also navigated the firm through challenging times, maintaining a strong and motivated team during the COVID-19 pandemic. “We got some good deals done in difficult conditions, and I was proud to see our junior team stay motivated and committed,” he reflects.

Transitioning to Corporate Strategy

Archie’s career took a significant turn when he joined Yuwell Global as the International Strategy and Investment Director. In this role, he leverages his investment banking background to identify potential investments and M&A opportunities while also building strategic partnerships with international players. Archie’s responsibilities also include setting up international operations, a challenging task that requires navigating cultural differences and ensuring effective communication



“The skills and knowledge we acquire here are perfectly aligned with the needs of Chinese companies going international. It’s an exciting time for CEIBS and its alumni.”

between teams in China and overseas.

“Yuwell Global’s ambition to expand internationally aligns well with my expertise,” Archie explains. “I have worked to enable Yuwell to establish a presence in the US and Europe, hiring teams and setting up operations from scratch. This role has pushed me to deepen my understanding of the medical device industry, from product specifications to supply chain logistics.”

As Archie continues to drive Yuwell Global’s international expansion, he remains passionate about the potential of Chinese companies on the global stage. He sees a growing recognition of Chinese brands’ quality and innovation, particularly in the medical device industry.

“CEIBS has a crucial role to play in this trend,” Archie notes. “The skills and knowledge we acquire here are perfectly aligned with the needs of Chinese companies going international. It’s an exciting time for CEIBS and its alumni.”

The Impact of the CEIBS MBA

Archie credits his CEIBS MBA for significantly enhancing his career. “The CEIBS MBA gave me the time and space to explore different career paths,” he reflects. “It wasn’t just about learning; it was about engaging with a community of like-minded individuals and thinking deeply about my future.”

He highlights the importance of integrity and interpersonal relationships in strategic partnerships and investments. “So much of this work comes down to people,” he emphasises. “Building trust and maintaining transparency are crucial. Your reputation is your most valuable asset.”

The MBA programme provided Archie with a comprehensive understanding of strategic analysis, industry opportunities, and effective management practices. Group-based projects and networking opportunities were particularly beneficial, allowing Archie to develop practical skills and build a robust professional network. “Working with different types of people on group projects taught me a lot about collaboration and leadership,” he adds.

My CEIBS Story: CEIBS Shanghai campus and me

“I had the privilege of being deeply involved in the construction project of the first phase of the CEIBS Shanghai campus, witnessing firsthand the entire process, perhaps no one knows more about the details of the project than I do.”

The masterful design of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners (PCF) has imbued the buildings of the CEIBS Shanghai campus with a subtle elegance, skilfully blending classical charm with a modern style. As I stroll through it, I am captivated by the spatial layout that artfully blends movement and stillness. Each step feels like a journey through time and space, allowing me to experience the rich humanistic charm of ancient eras while inhaling the spirit of openness and inclusivity that resonates from around the world.



Wu Hanning

Chairwoman of Shanghai
Jiangshan Real Estate
Company

CEIBS EMBA 1999

By fortunate coincidence, I had the privilege of being deeply involved in the construction project of the first phase of the CEIBS Shanghai campus, witnessing firsthand the entire process, from the successful bidding to the construction carried out by the China Construction Second Engineering Bureau LTD (hereafter referred to as the Bureau). Perhaps no one knows more about the details of the project than I do.

01. In 1997, upon learning that CEIBS was set to build a new campus in Jinqiao with the overall design executed by the architecture firm Pei Cobb Freed & Partners (PCF), I was instantly intrigued by the project. Unlike the skyscrapers previously constructed by the Bureau, the campus style represented a fusion of Eastern and Western influences, characterised by a sense of classical elegance.

I was in the preliminary discussions with CEIBS together with Mr. Chai, the Director General and Chief Engineer of the Bureau. Without an appointment, Director Chai and I headed directly to the CEIBS Minhang Campus to visit the then President, Li Jiahao.

After a brief exchange of pleasantries, President Li shared a poetic sentiment that has remained etched in my memory: “We are navigating through the fog,

As I stroll through it, I am captivated by the spatial layout that artfully blends movement and stillness. Each step feels like a journey through time and space, allowing me to experience the rich humanistic charm of ancient eras while inhaling the spirit of openness and inclusivity that resonates from around the world.

and your presence is like sunlight breaking through the clouds." His scholarly elegance and warm words exuded an inspirational power, akin to a gentle spring breeze.

During the conversation, President Li conveyed a strong commitment to collaboration. He expressed sincerely, "The construction project of the CEIBS campus holds immense significance. We must entrust it to a reliable enterprise. However, we are currently facing financial constraints. If you are willing to take on this project, you would need to



CEIBS then President Zhang Guohua (right) and Professor Wu Jinglian at the construction site.

make an upfront investment of \$40 million." Upon hearing this, Director Chai and I exchanged glances, both surprised and concerned. How could such a high-profile project with international implications be hindered by a lack of funding? The dilemma of whether to accept the project weighed heavily on our minds. Noticing our hesitation, President Li continued with a resolute tone, "While we do require an advance, please rest assured that we will never forget your support and contributions to CEIBS. Once we secure the necessary funds, you will be the first to receive repayment." After a moment of contemplation, Director Chai nodded in agreement.

02. Collaborating with Pei Cobb Freed & Partners (PCF) proved to be a challenging endeavour. On December 28, 1997, the first phase of the CEIBS Shanghai campus construction project officially commenced. While the Bureau had anticipated the difficulties and complexities inherent in this project, I was still profoundly struck during the actual progress. Successfully completing this project, which held the hopes and aspirations of numerous members of the CEIBS community, was by no means easy.

The design by Pei Cobb Freed & Partners (PCF) was nothing short of exquisite. To authentically capture



Wu Hanning poses a group photo with her classmates

Beyond the aesthetic beauty that a completed building offers, the true essence of architecture lies in the craftsmanship involved in the myriad processes that bring it to life."

the essence of the Suzhou gardens that served as their inspiration, the Bureau took the initiative to open a kiln in Suzhou, dedicated to the custom production of bricks, meticulously fired one by one by skilled brick-burners who adhered to traditional methods.

Some people compare architecture to music frozen in time. In my opinion, beyond the aesthetic beauty that a completed building offers, the true essence of architecture lies in the craftsmanship involved in the myriad processes that bring it to life. The more

adept the artisan, the greater their commitment to excellence throughout these intricate processes. This pursuit mirrors that of an exceptional composer, who tirelessly refines and perfects their musical compositions to achieve harmony and precision in their work.

The story of the CEIBS construction project extends far beyond its architectural achievements. As we approached the end of the first phase, President Li Jiahao was sadly hospitalised due to illness. On behalf of the Bureau, I visited him, and despite his condition, he expressed his concerns with a look of deep regret. "Hanning," he said, "the construction of the CEIBS campus cannot be halted. I know we still face a funding shortfall, and I'm working on solutions, so you all must hold on." I reassured him, promising that even if the Bureau encountered financial losses, we would dedicate ourselves fully to ensuring the successful completion of the campus project. Shortly after our conversation, President Li passed away. This remarkable man, who had devoted his life to hard work and service, remained preoccupied with the funding for the CEIBS campus

Reflecting on the CEIBS campus construction project, I see it not only as a remarkable achievement in my architectural and engineering career but also as a pivotal turning point that holds immense significance for my professional journey."

construction project until the very end. At last, the first phase of the CEIBS Campus was successfully completed. It now stands majestically in Jinqiao, welcoming students and guests from around the globe with its distinctive character and charm/ My involvement in the construction of the CEIBS campus remains a source of immense pride in my architectural career.



Wu Hanning with CEIBS Professor Juan Fernandez, with whom she has so far shared over 20 wonderful years

03. Moreover, I attribute a significant portion of my career's flourishing to the thoughtful guidance and support I received from CEIBS.

After completing the CEIBS campus project, I transitioned from the Bureau to pursue my entrepreneurial journey in the CEIBS EMBA programme. Once I began attending classes, I quickly recognised the distinctiveness of this institution. The course content was both innovative and original, and many concepts that had previously puzzled me were suddenly illuminated through the professors' insightful guidance.

Since then, I return to the classroom at CEIBS every few years, seeking a renewal and elevation of my knowledge and thoughts.

Reflecting on the CEIBS campus construction project, I see it not only as a remarkable achievement in my architectural and engineering career but also as a pivotal turning point that holds immense significance for my professional journey.

Looking back, I feel an even stronger resolve: running a business is akin to navigating life itself. While not every endeavour may yield immediate rewards, I believe that genuine effort and integrity will ultimately be recognized and rewarded in one way or another. ●

My CEIBS Story: Seeing beyond, through the window of CEIBS

"My greatest takeaway from CEIBS is the multitude of windows and perspectives it has opened for me, transforming me from a mere educated labour contractor into a well-rounded contributor to society."

For every CEIBS alumni, the school remains an indelible chapter in their lives. During our time at CEIBS, we experienced laughter and tears, sweetness and bitterness. As CEIBS celebrates its 30th anniversary, it embodies these profound sentiments and generous aspirations.

Peking University, Tsinghua, CKGSB, and CEIBS. Wanting to stay relevant, I was persuaded by Mr. Ma Yusheng to join CEIBS after a brief comparison of programmes.

01. My journey with CEIBS began unexpectedly in 2005. My golf buddies were suddenly unavailable; many of my peers were pursuing EMBA programmes at institutions like

The diversity among my EMBA classmates was remarkable. We represented various sectors, including foreign enterprises, state-owned enterprises, private companies, and government roles. Our industries spanned software, manufacturing, medicine, broadcasting and many, many more. There were executives from foreign companies and listed companies, chairpersons of private companies, bank

Zhou Qing

Beijing Class 3 Vice President,
Landsea Group Chairman,
Landsea Homestay

CEIBS EMBA 2003





Students take classes at Raycom Infotech Park in Zhongguancun, Beijing before the building of the CEIBS Beijing campus

governors, school principals and government leaders. The variety in our backgrounds led to diverse thoughts, behaviours, conversations, and even outfits, both in and outside the classroom.

Back then, our classes were held at the Raycom Infotech Park in Zhongguancun, Beijing, a makeshift venue without a proper campus to even take a class group photo. We envied our fellow alumni in Shanghai, who enjoyed a beautiful campus on Hongfeng Road. Since the establishment of the Beijing campus at Shangdi, I frequently return for events, not just for the activities themselves, but to reconnect with the campus and relive the memories of our past.

02. In those early days, our focus was truly on learning, and that remains true today. I remember feeling overwhelmed by the preparatory materials, struggling, as someone educated in a planned economy, to grasp the concepts of a market economy. The professors - Prof. Wu Jinglian, Prof. Jiang Ping, Prof. Xu Xiaonian, Prof. Xu Dingbo, and various foreign faculty - were serious yet inspiring. Their classes reshaped our understanding of reform and principles of the legal system. Each week felt like a mental overhaul, challenging everything I thought I knew. The most



Zhou Qing poses for a group photo with his classmates during his time at CEIBS

impressive courses were taught by Prof. Wu Jinglian and Prof. Jiang Ping, who imparted knowledge and practice in a patient and unhurried way.

When we enrolled, our average age was 38.5, with the youngest born in 1975 and the oldest in 1956. Today, some classmates have retired, and most of my fellow students will soon retire in a couple of years. However, a few of us remain active, fulfilling their duty to their businesses and employees. Sadly, we've also lost a few classmates along the way, including our beloved secretary, who passed away due to illness before we could say goodbye. We remember him fondly and wish him peace in the afterlife.

03. The pandemic changed a lot, and as a result our class has not gathered in five years. Perhaps we'll wait until we're all retired to hold reunions. As part of my work, I've developed boutique B&Bs in Mentougou, Beijing, and at the foot of the Daqing Mountain in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. One of my dreams is to create a tranquil space for my classmates to gather. As we age, the bustling city becomes less appealing, and the quiet of the countryside offers a chance to reflect and perhaps reconnect with the wisdom of ancient sages.

I fondly recall our previous biannual reunions, which were the highlight of my whole year. Nowadays, the most frequent messages in our class group chat are our class monitor's daily weather updates. He serves on the standing committee of a province, making him perhaps the world's most prominent weather forecaster. Thanks to his accurate forecasts, our class is always aware of the changing seasons.

We must not use retirement as an excuse to become complacent. Having taken good care of our families, we should continue to shine during our second wind. This is a time to cultivate cultural knowledge, share our rich experiences, and explore the essence of a fulfilling life.

04. My greatest takeaway from CEIBS is the multitude of windows and perspectives it has opened for me, transforming me from a mere educated labour contractor into a well-rounded contributor to society. The insights and support I received from CEIBS have instilled in me the confidence to pursue various endeavours.

Another significant benefit has been the connections I've forged with classmates. At the age of 50, I found myself re-employed in a company run by a fellow alumnus. Ten years later, I remain engaged in meaningful work.

One of my proudest achievements at CEIBS was founding the CEIBS Golf Team in 2006, which has now thrived for 18 years. Meeting weekly, it stands as one of the longest-running alumni organisations at CEIBS, showcasing the vitality and energy of the community.

As we reach this age, we must remember that the journey of life is endless, and our experiences at CEIBS are just a beginning. The rest relies on our individual efforts.

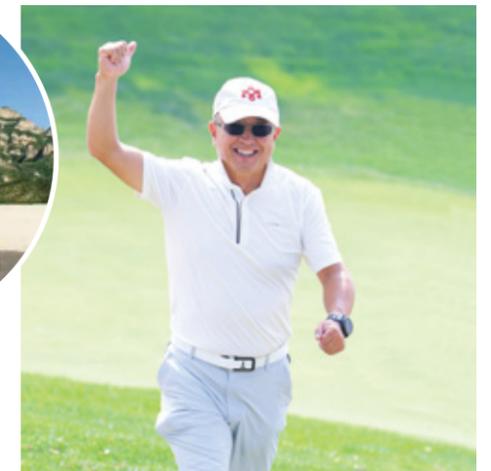
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Best wishes for my beloved alma mater CEIBS! Today, more than ever, China needs your dedication and persistence.

I wish all CEIBS alumni both material and spiritual abundance. May you all enjoy peace and good health; I look forward to welcoming you to my village for some sunshine and good conversation.



Zhou Qing's class attends a reunion after graduation