BACKGROUND:
PRC-US EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING FORUM FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

With the world’s largest construction boom and as a nation at high risk for earthquakes, flooding and natural hazards, China provides a unique real-world laboratory for earthquake risk reduction. The PRC-US Earthquake Engineering Forum for Young Researchers was the first event in a pilot program designed to expose young American faculty members and academic researchers in earthquake engineering to a brief technical and cultural experience in China. This pilot program was sponsored by the U.S. National Science Foundation, the Huixian Earthquake Engineering Foundation (located in Heilongjiang, China) and the Chinese Association of Earthquake Engineering (CAEE), under a grant supporting a research exchange in earthquake engineering. The grant’s specific purpose is the development of a joint research project between young researchers in academic institutions in the U.S. and PRC. Young researchers are defined as assistant and associate professors, post docs and advanced Ph.D. students with a strong interest in pursuing an academic career.

This pilot program sent young American researchers (those who had never been to China before were given preference) to China for a 12-day period, where they were introduced to potential “professional partners” to follow up with continued communications and research collaborations.

The scope of the forum was Earthquake Engineering or closely related research areas. The program included presentation of papers on current activities by young researchers of both countries. Participants also visited university experimental facilities and were familiarized with research programs at host institutions. American participants were introduced to “professional partners” of similar professional age and research interest through the forum program. Discussion among the young researchers focused on developing research topics of mutual interest for PRC-US pairs.

Professor George Lee, USA and Professor Xiaozhai Qi, P.R.C. served as the coordinators. While visiting Harbin, Professors Zifa Wang, Institute of Engineering Mechanics and Professor Jinping Ou, Harbin Institute of Technology, hosted the group. In Beijing, Professor Xiyuan Zhou of Beijing Institute of Technology and Professor Yayong Wang, China Academy of Building Research, were the hosts. Finally, in Shanghai, Professor Guoqiang Li, Tongji University, served as the host.