

For Immediate Release

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Visiting scholars meet for exchange of ideas at City Hall

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Harrisonburg staff took part in an exchange of ideas and culture recently, when a group of visitors from China arrived at City Hall for a discussion on how our government operates.

Three scholars from South-Central University for Nationalities visited City Hall recently to learn about Harrisonburg's form of government and ask questions about how it works. The three are currently studying at James Madison University, learning alternative teaching methods and conducting research in their specialties.



(Above) Harrisonburg City Manager Eric D. Campbell (left) speaks with visiting scholars recently at City Hall.

Harrisonburg City Manager Eric D. Campbell walked the scholars through a presentation explaining the Council-Manager form of government, and discussed with them his role in working closely with City Council and staff on moving Harrisonburg forward. Campbell answered questions about what makes Harrisonburg special, how staff works to address residents' concerns, and differences between Harrisonburg and the scholars' home city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, which has a population of more than 10 million people.

The opportunity was a unique experience for both the scholars and City staff to learn about each other and grow through each others' experiences.

"It was a great experience for us to get to meet the team from South-Central University for Nationalities," Harrisonburg Director of Communications Michael Parks said. "They came here to learn about our culture and our form of government, but we learned just as much from them during our conversations. We are very excited for them to get to experience our community here in Harrisonburg."

The three scholars are Xiaojing Ma, who teaches anthropology of tourism; Haie Li, who teaches tourism marketing; and Gang Li, who teaches human resources management. They visited City Hall with Virginia Cutchin, the co-coordinator of the visiting scholar program who serves as a cultural and community liaison. Cutchin works to expose the scholars to as much interaction with American values, people, culture and diversity as possible, she said.

This is the second group of Chinese scholars to have visited Harrisonburg as part of the program. They will continue with the program until early July.

***The City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 54,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.*



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