

## From Specialized Learning to Homestays: U.S. State Department Officials Visit Tamkang to Review Chinese Language Education Results

Campus focus

The Chinese Language Center under Tamkang University's Office of Continuing Education administers the U.S. Department of State's NSLI-Y (National Security Language Initiative for Youth) Chinese Language Scholarship Program for high school students. On March 19, the University welcomed officials from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State and the American Councils for International Education for an on-site visit. Through class observations, discussions, and cultural activities, the delegation gained insight into the academic and daily life experiences of American high school students studying in Taiwan.

Distinguished guests included Elizabeth Latham, Chief of the Youth Programs Division at ECA, Dr. Brian Gibson, Vice President of Language Programs at the American Councils for International Education, and Anna Stewart, Senior Program Manager of NSLI-Y. They were received by Vice President for International Affairs Hsiao-Chuan Chen, Dean of Continuing Education Yi-Nan Lin, and Director of the Chinese Language Center Hsiang-Hua Chou. The visit began with classroom observations, allowing the delegation to experience firsthand the teaching interactions and learning environment. This was followed by meetings with students and instructors to understand curriculum design and learning outcomes further. A luncheon was held afterward, and in the afternoon, the delegation visited the Tamsui Cultural Park for an indigo dyeing experience, showcasing the integration of language learning with local culture.

Beyond classroom instruction, the homestay program stands out as a core feature of Tamkang University's implementation of NSLI-Y. Ching-Yi Yu, Head of the Digital Development Division at the Chinese Language Center, noted that homestays extend language learning from the classroom into

everyday family life. Through immersive living experiences, students not only practice Chinese communication in authentic contexts but also gain a firsthand understanding of Taiwan's culture and social dynamics. During the week of the visit, the Chinese Language Center hosted a "Taiwan - U.S. Cultural Exploration Party for Host Families" on March 15. American students designed cultural challenge stations and participated in interactive activities with their host families, demonstrating their learning results and cross-cultural engagement. The event attracted around 80 participants and created a lively atmosphere, allowing U.S. officials to further observe the interaction between students and host families. Several students shared that learning Chinese at Tamkang differs significantly from their classroom experiences in the United States. Laura Bailey, Yingyue, and Lillie Hale noted that interaction with host families enables more natural expression and thinking. Enkhdari added that discussing social issues with host families has strengthened her critical thinking and communication skills. Mara Bech shared that participating in the Tamkang Choir, along with dormitory life, homestays, and student clubs, has greatly enhanced her Chinese learning. Overall, students agreed that their experience at Tamkang extends beyond the classroom, integrating daily life, culture, and interpersonal interaction into a comprehensive language-learning journey. Hsiang-Hua Chou remarked that the visit highlighted the results of the program's implementation. Moving forward, the university will continue to deepen Taiwan - U.S. educational collaboration, promote an integrated approach to language and cultural education, and expand the scope and depth of international academic exchange.









