

BAI XIAN ASIA INSTITUTE



Founder: Ronald Chao
Chief Executive Officer: Ronna Chao
Year Established: 2014
Mission: Promote multi-disciplinary and inter-cultural learning to build a world of understanding, trust and stability.



"AS ASIA BECOMES AN INCREASINGLY SIGNIFICANT PLAYER IN THE GLOBAL ARENA, THERE IS AN OBVIOUS NEED FOR ASIANS TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ASIA"

- Ronna Chao

A core initiative of Bai Xian Asia Institute (BXAI), the Asian Future Leaders Scholarship Program (AFLSP) sponsors high-calibre students who want to pursue higher education degrees at one of the 16 Asian universities in the BXAI network. "As Asia becomes an increasingly significant player in the global arena, there is an obvious need for Asians to know more about Asia," notes Chief Executive Officer Ronna Chao. Potential scholars are not only judged on academic excellence, but also on the willingness to connect with people from diverse academic, social and racial backgrounds. A multi-disciplinary learning approach is also encouraged.

Aside from the US\$110 million endowed to AFLSP, the institute is also rapidly building up a wide-reaching network, including those in academia and business. "We're a qualified institution of the Goldman Sachs Matching Gift Program, and partner with companies like JP Morgan, PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi. We've had high-level personnel from these companies give talks to

our scholars. Hopefully we could have some of our scholars intern at these places in the future."

When asked what her most memorable encounter was, Chao tells the story of a Mynamese scholar who leveraged on the social capital he'd built up over BXAI's annual Summer Programme, where current scholars are invited to live with others of their ilk, to organise a conference on refugee issues in Kuala Lumpur. "These kids have so much energy, passion, and drive in them." The incident inspired Chao to set up the Alumni Initiative Award last summer; alumni and current scholars are invited to focus on an issue that affects Asia, within a three-to-six-person team, and come up with solution. The winning proposal will receive a cash prize of US\$2,500 and seed funding of US\$5,000-15,000 to bring the idea to fruition. As Chao notes of BXAI's ultimate goal, "We see ourselves as a provider of blank paper for young people to freely question and discourse, examine old ideas and explore new ones, challenge themselves and each other, identify issues and design relevant solutions."