

Organization's Statement of Purpose and Rationale

The statement of purpose and rationale briefly addresses the following questions:

1. How is the mission of the organization University-wide?

Harvard Chinese Students and Scholars Association (HCSSA) has been the single largest Chinese student organization at Harvard University for two decades. We are dedicated to promoting and enhancing intellectual, social, and cultural life for Chinese students and scholars across all Schools at Harvard. We strive to nurture and facilitate communications and interactions between Chinese and non-Chinese students and scholars on campus and beyond. With the status of University Wide Student Group in the previous year, we have attracted substantially more attention from a much broader students body across all Schools. We hope to bring talents from different disciplines together and provide a platform where opinions and ideas can be exchanged and discussed promptly and efficiently. Our mission is to serve all members in the Harvard community, not only people with Chinese heritage but also those who are interested in China and Chinese culture. This year, despite the fact that almost all events will go online, HCSSA still aims to bring bonding among its members as well as all students across the Harvard Schools.

2. Why is the formation of a School-based organization not viable?

HCSSA is a student organization with a University-wide impact in many ways. Our management team consists of 59 officers and fellows from a variety of Schools at Harvard University. We have over 4500 registered members (including students, scholars, alumni, faculty and staff) and the number is increasing every day. We have an official website (<http://www.hcssa.org>), a Facebook public page, and a WeChat official Account. These online platforms are especially important in this post COVID era.

Our mission is benefiting all the Chinese students all though Harvard community and facilitate the communication between different cultures. At the beginning of every academic year, we offer free airport pickup service to all incoming Chinese students and scholars. In past summers we have picked up more than 500 new students accumulated, representing all 12 graduate/professional schools, Harvard College, Fairbank Center, Ash Center, Yenching Institute, as well as Harvard-affiliated hospitals.

In the past years, we hosted over 100 events per academic year, averaging to more than 2 events per week. All these events are open to the whole Harvard community and most of them were held with English as one of the working languages. Our activities covered a broad range of topics, including culture, education, environment, economic development, technology, healthcare and legal system, attracting audiences and participants from all Schools at Harvard as well as many other institutions in the Greater Boston area. No individual School can have the resources and capacities to address the needs of such a large community and handle the tasks of this scope. The only viable approach is to coordinate and synergize talents and capacities from all Schools in order to better serve the entire Harvard community.

3. What is the benefit to the wider University community?

By having had the University-wide status in the previous year, we were able to integrate much more resources and bring a greater variety of activities to the Harvard community. One obvious example is the communication with Medical School and School of Public Health. Since these two schools are located in downtown area, students and scholars there have often been left out in many activities taking place on the main campus previously. By being recognized as a University wide group, we have gotten significant attention from these two schools and more and more students from them joined our events. The dancing club of School of Public Health has become one of the most popular clubs in main campus. This is just one story among those fruitful collaborations with all the 12 schools. And all these collaborations have happened within the year we have been recognized as University wide group.

With talents and resources from different Schools, we were able to make a broader impact both inside and outside the campus. We have had fruitful collaborations with numerous School-affiliated student groups at Harvard. We also maintain a strong partnership with many other university student groups in the Greater Boston area and have successfully co-organized numerous intercollegiate events with institutions across the U.S. The crown jewel of our intercollegiate collaborative efforts is the annual Ivy League Spring Festival Gala, one of the largest and most spectacular Chinese New Year celebrations in the U.S. Every year we invite talented student performers from all Ivy League schools to Harvard and bring the Boston audience an unforgettable night of festive fun. In the past years we have hosted the gala in John Hancock Hall and Wilbur Theatre in downtown Boston, as well as Sanders Theatre. We are proud to have received letters of congratulations from President Bacow, Former University President Drew Faust, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, and U.S. Senator Scott Brown and Elizabeth Warren. The gala is critically acclaimed and well-received by the audience and media, including Harvard Crimson, Harvard Gazette. The 2020 Ivy League Gala was recorded and posted online because of concerns of COVID-19 and received more than one million views.

4. How will University-wide status allow the organization to achieve its mission?

Serving the largest representation for international students at Harvard, HCSSA aspires to win a University-wide status again. In the previous year, such a great honor allowed us to receive stronger support across all Schools, open up more fund-raising channels, gain access to a broader range of resources, attract more diverse talents from different disciplines, and reach out to a wider audience. But we will never stop on the way approaching our mission, and undoubtedly the University wide status is necessary for this journey. Having all these benefits, we will be poised to expand our current programs, implement new ideas and provide more comprehensive service to our members and the community. The University-wide status will have an even greater impact on the growth and development of our organization in the next year and will consolidate our foundation for greater success.