

# Conflict Resolution Conference Held in San Diego

The National Committee convened a nine-day training program in conflict management and conflict resolution this past August in San Diego. Participants were ten students each from Mainland China (selected from those already studying in America), Taiwan, and the United States. For this innovative program, funded by the U.S. department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the National Committee collaborated with the Joan B. Kroc Institute of Peace and Justice (IPJ) at the University of San Diego and the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC). IPJ provided conference space for workshop sessions and the NCRC provided professional trainers.

The program agenda was comprised of three main components: formal conflict management and resolution training through instructional lectures and breakout sessions; guest speakers; and informal group bonding activities to establish a sense of camaraderie, trust, and friendship amongst all three groups.

The first component was ably handled by Lisa Maxwell of NCRC and her fellow trainers who lectured on various topics including conflict theory, the influence of culture on conflict, game theory, negotiation, mediation, and international dialogue. Traditional lectures were supplemented by role-playing activities and small group breakout sessions where participants engaged in hands-on practice of newly learned concepts and interacted informally with other students.

The second component gave participants a way to relate what they were learning in the formal training sessions to issues and events in the real world. Stephan Haggard (Lawrence and Sally Krause Professor of Korea-Pacific Studies at the University of California – San Diego) gave a very pertinent dinner talk on resolving the North Korean conflict; Barry Naughton (Professor of Chinese Economics at UCSD) spoke on using cross-strait economic ties to manage conflict; and Richard Madsen (Professor of Sociology and Department Chair at UCSD) joined

National Committee President Steve Orlins and Gene Martin (Director of the Philippine Facilitation Project at the U.S. Institute of Peace) on a panel on living and working in the Greater China area from three different perspectives (Richard – academic, Steve – businessman, Gene – diplomat). Gene also gave a talk on his experiences working as the lead mediator helping facilitate the negotiations between the Filipino government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) with the group. In addition, Brig. General Frank Kisner (Deputy Director, Strategic Planning and Policy, U.S. Pacific Command, Hawaii) talked to the group about the American military presence in the Pacific region.

The final component of the program provided an environment conducive to teamwork and relationship building. Activities included a packed half-day of a team-building kayak workshop, volleyball and Ultimate Frisbee, followed by a beach bonfire that provided both warmth and fuel for the hot dogs, corn on the cob and S'mores. Other bonding activities included a late afternoon excursion to Balboa Park for an outdoor barbershop quartet concert, an evening at the San Diego Zoo, and an afternoon of surfing and whiffleball at La Jolla Beach.

The program was a huge success. We were extremely pleased with the selected students both in terms of their intellectual capacity and sociability. Participants learned conflict management skills that will be useful in their future professional and personal lives and the value of the "bonding" component of the program cannot be overestimated. From the very first night, students mixed freely and there was a strong desire to communicate among all three groups. As one Mainland student put it, "I've learned so much from being here this week and we all really do get along...in the future we may find ourselves working side by side and we will understand each other as similar people, not adversaries." ■



*Right:  
A set of participants  
looks over their group  
activity results before  
sharing them with the  
rest of the workshop.*