

# Students up and running

A college jogging club is raising hopes that fitness will become a priority for more students.

Guo Ying and Sun Qi report.

At 6 am every day, students gather at the Zijing sports ground of Tsinghua University in Beijing. After cheerfully greeting each other, they do warm-up exercises and then run as the sun rises.

They are members of Tsinghua's morning jogging club, founded by Yin Ximing, a PhD student from the School of Economics and Management at the university.

To stay fit and develop an early-to-rise, early-to-bed habit, Yin started jogging in the morning with some of his friends.

They met other Tsinghua students who are regular joggers and formed a loosely organized club in 2015. Gradually, the club drew more students. The club now has more than 400 members.

Despite different reasons for joining — some wanted to lose weight, some wanted to practice to pass the university's fitness tests and others ran to vent their emotions — all enjoyed running.

The club has no requirements for speed or distance, says Yin. No matter how slowly you run, other people run with you. This encourages participation.

More importantly, running brings a sense of control of their lives and bodies.

"The positive energy of sport drives study and life, and brings unexpected changes," Yin says.

Liu Bo, head of the Division of Sports Science and Physical Education at Tsinghua University, says the campus has around 40 sports clubs



More than 3,000 students at Tsinghua University run its recent campus marathon. Held three times since 2015, it has seen a growing number of participants over the years. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

**“The positive energy of sport drives study and life, and brings unexpected changes.”**

Yin Ximing, a PhD student at Tsinghua University, founder of Tsinghua's morning jogging club

and associations like the morning jogging club.

Tsinghua has a long sporting tradition. More than half a century ago, it boasted the slogan "Fighting to work at least 50 years healthily for the motherland" to demonstrate its emphasis on physical fitness. The new slogan "No sports, no Tsinghua" shows sports is integrated into the university's culture.

Tsinghua has a tradition of testing students in long-dis-

tance running — 3,000 meters for males and 1,500 meters for females.

From this year, undergraduates are also required to pass a swimming test before receiving their graduation certificate.

Liu believes physical education in universities is under threat from the internet and the growth of entertainment options that are breaking the habit of physical exercise among students.

"Tsinghua's data from 2003 to 2015 showed male students slowed by about 30 seconds in running 3,000 meters and female students slowed by 17 seconds in running 1,500 meters. Similar declines are seen in other physical tests such as long jump, pullups or situps," Liu says.

The government's Middle- and Long-term Youth Development Plan (2016-25), released in April, aims to enhance physical health among young people, urging schools to "toughen the implementation of the National Students' Physical Health Standard and help develop the

habit of lifelong exercise."

Other Chinese universities are adopting mandatory measures in physical education.

Xiamen University in East China's Fujian province, Sun Yat-sen University and South China University of Technology in Guangdong province, have listed swimming as a compulsory course.

Xi'an Jiaotong University in Shaanxi province requires students to learn tai chi, an ancient Chinese martial art.

Liu believes that in an exam-oriented system, physical education is often overlooked in primary and secondary schools. Once students reach university, it's hard to overcome physical inertia and embrace exercise. Tsinghua's mandatory measures have helped students develop better exercise habits to an extent, despite the initial complaints.

"The Tsinghua marathon has been held three times since 2015, and the number of entries grew from 2,200 in the first year to more than 3,000 this year. It is so popular that

we have to draw entries now. It shows growing acceptance of running and physical exercise," Liu says.

Hu Kai, who won the 100 meters at the 2005 Summer Universiade (a multisport event for college students worldwide), has been one of Tsinghua's most outstanding student athletes. He has a doctorate and joined the staff of its Division of Sports Science and Physical Education. Hu believes many Chinese see physical education only as a way of improving fitness and overlook its education function in character-building.

"In many of the world's leading universities, competitive sports, such as rugby, are very popular. Courage, hard work and teamwork in the game embody the value of physical education," Hu says.

Yin's morning jogging club is growing fast, and some members are developing new sports groups such as evening jogging clubs and a winter swimming association.

CHINA FEATURES

# Wenzhou-Kean University produces new graduating class

By KAN YUBING and DOMINIC MORGAN in Wuxi, Jiangsu

The graduation ceremony could not have looked more American: a grand wood-paneled theater, beaming students in caps and gowns, a valedictorian speech and even dancers in leotards.

But the event was not taking place in the United States. It was happening in Wenzhou in East China's Zhejiang province.

The 213 young people who received their degrees on June 3 graduated from Wenzhou-Kean University, a school set up by New Jersey-based Kean University in partnership with Wenzhou University in 2014.

WKU is part of a growing trend of foreign universities setting up branches in China.

By January, there were 37 foreign university campuses on the Chinese mainland, according to the US-based Cross-Border Education Research Team, a 42 percent increase since 2014.

The students at WKU followed exactly the same curricula as their peers on the East Coast, but most have never set foot in the US. They received their US-style education entirely in China.

Gaining an international education without leaving the country has become an attractive option for many Chinese students.

The tuition fees are 45,000 yuan (\$6,621) a year, almost one-third of what students would pay at Kean's main campus in the US.

But the students get an authentic US-style experience. All classes in Wenzhou are conducted in English, the majority led by more than 100 foreign teachers.

The school also follows the US system in prioritizing the students' personal development as well as their test scores.

"We encourage students to do interactive learning in the classroom instead of passive learning, and we want them to be lifelong learners, critical thinkers, great presenters and researchers," says Holger Henke, the vice-chancellor for academic affairs at WKU.

The mix of language and

communication skills that students gain from this approach is expected to give them an advantage if they plan to continue their studies abroad. Of this year's batch, more than 70 percent have won places at graduate schools in the world's top 100 universities, according to Henke.

Many students admit that they chose WKU because they saw it as a springboard to an elite school.

"I chose WKU because I believed it would bring me more possibilities to go overseas after my graduation," says Fu Xiaoting, a fresh graduate.

She will further her studies in computer science at North Carolina State University in the fall, hopefully to get master's plus doctorate degrees in the future.

According to Henke, studying at a foreign campus in China may actually be a better option than going abroad for some students, as the teaching staff members have more diverse backgrounds and are more attuned to their students' needs.

"Teachers at WKU are more aware of Chinese students' interests than those in US universities."

Pinata Winoto, an academic from Indonesia who teaches computer science at WKU, agrees that students benefit from the university's special learning environment.

"During their four years here, many students changed a lot — they became motivated, independent and developed a strong sense of social responsibility," says Winoto.

Winoto's student Pan Lijun is an example of how the university aims to help broaden students' horizons.

Pan says her experience competing in a coding contest run by Microsoft in 2014 was transformational.

"We won the third prize and, more importantly, I discovered what I want for my future through the game," says Pan.

She will start her postgraduate studies at the University of Toronto in September.

Liu Xia contributed to the story. Contact the writers through kanyubing@chinadaily.com.cn.



A total of 213 young people celebrate their graduation on June 3 at Wenzhou-Kean University, set up by New Jersey-based Kean University and Wenzhou University in 2014. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

# Humor: Apps make selfies funny

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spends more time on photo altering and mastered various skills.

"We will develop tailored tools for users to look different and with their own personalities. That's a future endeavor, more natural and more personalized," says Jiang from MeituPic.

Apart from making people look beautiful, photo-editing apps now develop entertaining tools for people to make funny photos, which is very popular in Asia where the "cute culture" is deeply root-

ed, says Jiang.

With the technology of artificial intelligence, people can be pictured like caricatures of different styles.

Bunny and cat ears, sunglasses, funny beards and cute slogans are common to see in photos posted on social networks among the young in Asia.

Chen Ye, 29, a bank accountant in Shanghai, says she has seen a rise of friends posting photos with cat ears and whiskers since last year.

Even her boss' daughter, an 8-year-old primary student, is a big fan of such cute tools of

photo-editing apps offered by various companies.

"Although it's a little bit childish, I love it. Very funny," says Chen, who is a die-hard fan. She even used such cute tools to help edit her mother's photos.

Jiang says the entertainment function of MeituPic is now more popular and a new trend in Asian market after users have used its beauty function for years.

"To be beautiful and to be funny are parallel functions for app developers," says Jiang.

Since January, MeituPic

has launched its caricature tool across the world. Some stars and celebrities post their caricatured photos on Instagram and Facebook, which attracted lots of followers and went viral on social media.

The caricature tool even helped MeituPic climbed to top of the app list within weeks in many countries, according to Meitu.

"The entertainment function is to allow users to collectively take part in a funny activity. Asians are going forward while the Westerners are catching up," Jiang says.



Photo-editing apps enable users with caricature tools to apply humor and fun in their selfies. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## International Education Column

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