

# TWENTY YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

## The Liberian Student Union in China (LSUIC)

*First-Ever Virtual Homecoming Celebration*

April 25, 2026

*Virtual Platform: Zoom and Facebook Live*

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*"Honoring Our Past, Engaging Our Present, and Inspiring Our Future"*

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*An Official Report Prepared to Document a Historic Milestone in the History of Liberian Students in China (LSUIC):*

*Prepared by:*

The National Executive Committee (NEC)

2025-2026

*Through:*

The Office of the National President: Olano Teah Bloh

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## Foreword

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There are moments in the life of an institution that transcend the ordinary. They are the kinds of moments that, when they arrive, call a community back to itself, to its origins, its struggles, its triumphs, and the people who gave it shape and meaning. On the evening of April 25, 2026, the Liberian Student Union in China experienced exactly such a moment. Across multiple time zones, from the university dormitories, and apartments in China, to offices and homes in Monrovia, the USA, and other places, members, veterans, and leaders of our beloved Union gathered in the glow of their screens for what would become a landmark occasion: the union's first-ever virtual homecoming.

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*"If we don't write our history, someone will do that for us, and the narratives will not state the reality, neither will it be the same" - Olano Teah Bloh*

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This report is a comprehensive account of that event, and recent happenings within the Union. It is written not merely to record what was said or who was present, but to honor the human story behind an institution that has quietly, persistently shaped the lives of hundreds of Liberian students over two decades. It is written to acknowledge the leadership that made this homecoming possible, to celebrate the veterans who laid the groundwork, and to hold up a mirror to a community whose best years, by all evidence, are still ahead. To read this report is to understand what it means to build something lasting far from home. It is to appreciate that the Liberian Student Union in China is not merely an administrative body or a networking club. It is a family, a crucible, and, for many of its members, the first place they ever truly belonged in a foreign land.

## Executive Summary

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The 20th Anniversary Virtual Homecoming of the Liberian Student Union in China, known widely as LSUIC, took place on April 25, 2026, on Zoom and Facebook Live, with the video playback on the Union's YouTube channel. The event brought together founding members, past presidents, current scholars, and veterans from across the globe to commemorate twenty years since the union was formally established in July 2006. The homecoming was the first of its kind in the organization's history, a deliberate effort by the current national executive committee, led by National President Honorable Olano Teah Bloh, to institutionalize the practice of honoring the past as a foundation for shaping the future. The program featured a keynote address on the concept of "Excellent Loyalty," historic reflections from the union's founding president, panel discussions with former leaders, a spoken word performance, a song from the union's newly formed choir (the voice of LSUIC), and a fundraising segment for the upcoming annual conference, among others.

Beyond its ceremonial character, the homecoming served as a living demonstration of everything the union has become: a decentralized, technologically empowered, professionally sophisticated organization that has grown from a handful of students advocating for their allowances in 2006 into a respected institution with over 35 city presidents, 20 provincial coordinators, 8 committees and the Judicial Board, a digital membership database, and a fully operational official website. This report documents the proceedings of that event in full and reflects on the significance of this milestone, not only for LSUIC as an institution, but for the broader story of Liberian scholars using international education to transform their nation.

## **I. Setting the Scene: Why This Homecoming Matters**

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To understand the full weight of what happened on April 25, 2026, one must first appreciate what it means to be a Liberian student in China. Many Scholars arrive as young adults, some in their early twenties, fresh from a country still rebuilding itself from the wounds of civil war and economic hardship. We arrive in a land where the language is foreign, the food is unfamiliar, and the cultural distance from home can feel immense. For many, the Liberian Student Union in China has been the single most important anchor of their time abroad.

The union was not born from bureaucratic design or governmental mandate. It was born from necessity, from a group of young Liberians who looked around at their circumstances in 2006 and decided that they needed one another. That original impulse, raw and human and community-driven, is the same impulse that drew many people to their screens on April 25, 2026.

What made this homecoming historically significant was not simply that it was the twentieth anniversary of the union, though that alone is a remarkable milestone for any student organization. What made it significant was that it was the first time LSUIC had ever deliberately and formally gathered its entire network, past and present, in one place for the express purpose of reflection, reconnection, and celebration. It was the first homecoming. And first things, in the life of an institution, matter enormously. We set precedents. We announce to the world what a community value.

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*"The greatest legacy a leader can leave is building lasting systems, improving the lives of students and maintaining unity." - Olano Teah Bloh*

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The current national administration, led by National President Olano Teah Bloh, and National Vice President Ruphine M. Harmon, made the decision to host this event. That decision was not inevitable. It required vision, organizational muscle, and a genuine belief that the union's history deserves to be honored out loud. In making that decision, the current leadership has left its own distinct mark on LSUIC's story, one that will be remembered long after our tenure has concluded.

The choice of a virtual format was both pragmatic and symbolic. Pragmatic, because LSUIC members are spread across dozens of Chinese cities and several continents, making physical gatherings of this scale impossible. Symbolic, because it demonstrated that LSUIC's evolution into a digitally sophisticated institution is not just administrative language but a lived reality.

## **A. Framing the Narrative: From Fellowship to Institutional Anchor**

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The twenty-year journey of the Liberian Student Union in China (LSUIC) represents far more than the endurance of a student collective; it marks the development of a strategic bridge between global expertise and Liberian national development. From the growth of its first seeds in 2006 to its current stature in 2026, LSUIC has transitioned from a localized support group into a sophisticated, decentralized institution. This retrospective serves as a strategic map for future leaders, illustrating how the union has successfully synthesized the wisdom acquired in a globalized educational environment with a profound sense of national duty. The transformation of LSUIC's core identity is the defining achievement of this two-decade evolution. The organization has turned from "struggle and agitation", initially necessitated by the survival needs of scholars, toward a value

proposition defined by professional innovation and state-building. For the modern Liberian scholar, the "China-trained brand" has evolved from a perceived marginal subset into a premier credential for national developmental excellence.

This milestone confirms LSUIC's role as a permanent institutional anchor, fostering professional innovations through legacy projects such as the "Membership Verification System", "Constitutional AI", "First-ever Website with Membership Registration Integration", "Legacy Hour" and the "Leadership to the People." The core mission of LSUIC has crystallized into the pursuit of "Excellence through Hard Work," creating a community that honors its historical foundations while aggressively pursuing structural modernization, and governance through the 2020 amended Constitution of LSUIC under the Leadership of Former President Dr. Yamah Joy Barvor King, and Vice President Olano Teah Bloh. As we celebrate this 20th anniversary, the union stands as a vital incubator for Liberia's future statesmen. To project the union's trajectory for the next two decades, we must first examine the grassroots advocacy that secured its foundation.

## **B. The Foundation Years: Advocacy and the "Allowance" Era**

Preserving institutional memory is the prerequisite for organizational stability. For LSUIC, that memory is rooted in the climate of 2006, where the union was birthed from a vision of absolute necessity. The founding president, Dr. J. Alexander Nuetah and currently serving as Liberia's Minister of Agriculture, identifies the "core motive" of the early years as the unification of students to ensure collective survival. The primary focus was on the agitation for student allowances from the Liberian government and providing essential reception services for arriving scholars.

This "Fellowship & Allowance Era" established a culture of mutual support that persists as a pillar of the union today. By organizing to meet basic needs, the founders proved that collective action was the only path to individual success. This early focus on advocacy catalyzed "Excellent Loyalty," as it required students to unite for a cause greater than their personal academic pursuits. This grassroots era provided the momentum for the structural formalization that followed, transitioning the union from a fellowship into a professionalized entity.

## **II. The Architecture of the Evening: Program and Proceedings**

The homecoming was presided over by the National Vice President, Honorable Ruphine M. Harmon, who served as master of ceremony. Harmon's role was not merely logistical. She set the tone for the evening with her opening welcome, acknowledging participants joining from vastly different time zones, a small but meaningful gesture that underscored the union's geographic reach and the sacrifice members make to remain connected.

Before the formal proceedings began, the gathering observed a moment of silence in honor of fallen scholars and leaders. Among those named were Professor Dr. Presley K. Wesseh, a former president of LSUIC (2012-2013), and Scholar Kate Weah (NFSG 2020-2021). This moment, quiet and solemn amid the otherwise celebratory atmosphere, was one of the most humanizing of the evening. It reminded everyone present that the history of LSUIC is not only a record of achievements and milestones. It is also a chronicle of lives, some of which ended before they could witness the full flowering of the institution they helped build.

The program was opened in prayer by the National Chaplain General, Hon. Mitchell Vampelt, who called for oneness and peace as the evening began. His prayer carried the weight of genuine feeling, asking that the celebration honor those who had come before and inspire those who are here now, and those who would come after.

### A: Opening Remarks from National President Olano Teah Bloh

National President Olano Teah Bloh's welcome address set the intellectual and emotional context for the evening. He observed that when LSUIC's progress is compared to other Liberian diaspora organizations, the union's track record is exceptional. He spoke not with pride, but with the measured pride of someone who has studied the institution closely and understands its place within the broader Liberian diaspora experience.

President Bloh noted that the 20th anniversary would be observed in stages, with the homecoming serving as the first act and a full conference in July 2026 as the concluding celebration. This approach speaks to a leadership style that values thoroughness over haste. Rather than containing twenty years of history within a single event, the current administration has designed a commemorative arc that extends the celebration and, in doing so, extends the period during which the community is actively engaged in reflection and gratitude.

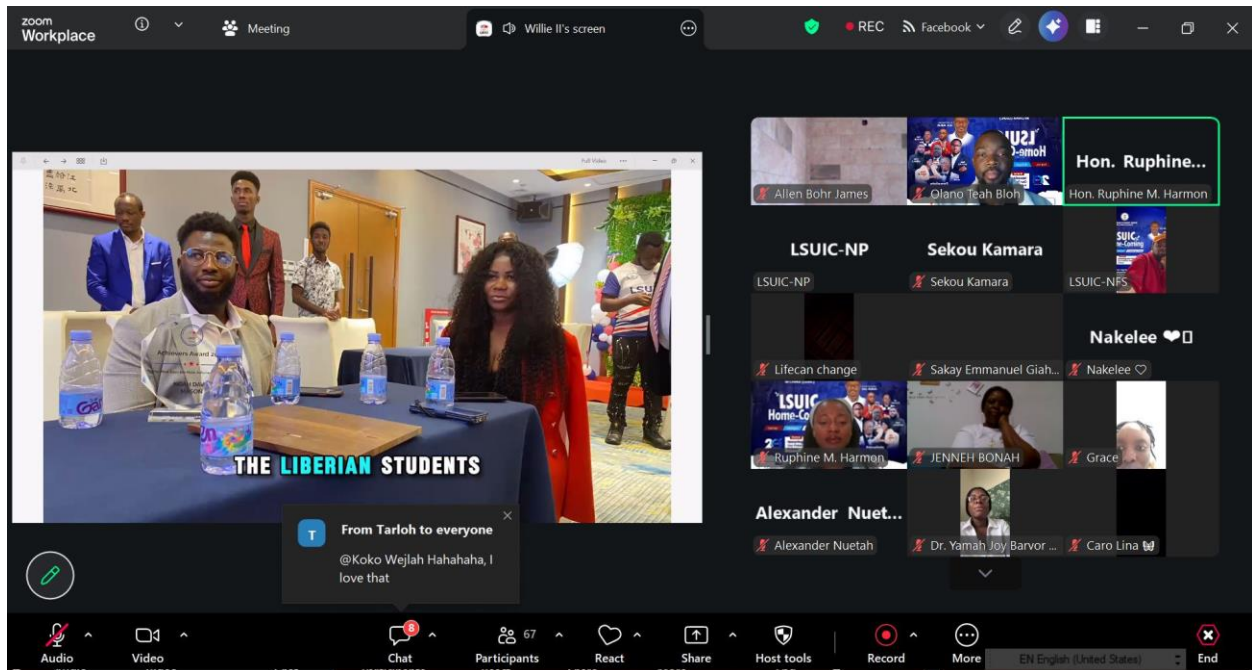


Fig. 1: The Homecoming Program via ZOOM (April 25, 2026)

### **III. The Keynote Address: A Viewpoint of Loyalty**

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The event keynote address was delivered by Rev. Doc. Augustine K. Ballah, a Veteran, and Leader with fifteen years of experience within the LSUIC ecosystem and the interim leader of the Liberian Association of Chinese Trained Scholars, commonly known as LACTS. Doc. Ballah was given the honor of keynote speaker not by accident. His address was the intellectual centerpiece of the homecoming, and it deserved to be.

His subject was loyalty, a word that sounds simple until one begins to excavate its layers. Dr. Ballah did exactly that, identifying four distinct types of loyalty that he said have shaped LSUIC's twenty-year history.

The first, which he called Team Loyalty, describes the kind of dedication one has to a specific group or cause. It is not without value, he said, because it can motivate people to advocate fiercely for what they believe is right, even when that means challenging those in power. But it is limited, because its horizon is the team, not the institution.

The second, Self-Loyalty, is perhaps the most common and most corrosive form within student organizations. It describes participation driven primarily by personal benefit: the desire to pad a resume, to earn financial credit, or to accumulate status. Dr. Ballah did not condemn this outright, but he was clear that it cannot serve as the foundation for a lasting institution.

The third, Relationship Loyalty, binds people to organizations because of friendship or shared county affiliation. It is warm and natural, but it too falls short, because when relationships fray, as they inevitably do, the institutional commitment fray with them.

The fourth, and the one Dr. Ballah held up as the north star of organizational life, he called Excellent Loyalty. This is loyalty to the institution itself, independent of who leads it, who one's friends are, or what one stands to personally gain. It is the loyalty of the member who stays and contributes when there is nothing in it for them. It is the loyalty of the person who stands for what is right even when it is costly.

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*"Excellent loyalty is not loyalty to a person, nor to a team. It is loyalty to the institution and to what the institution stands for." - Doc. Augustine K. Ballah*

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Dr. Ballah urged the assembled veterans and scholars to ask themselves which kind of loyalty had governed their participation in LSUIC, and to make a conscious choice, going forward, to operate from the highest level. He connected this call directly to the larger stakes of the union's purpose, noting that as Liberian scholars return from China to serve in health, engineering, agriculture, and governance, the quality of their loyalty to national institutions will determine whether Liberia's investment in their education bears fruit.

It was a speech that managed to be both specific to the moment and genuinely universal. Long after the anniversary celebrations have concluded, the framework Dr. Ballah offered will remain a useful lens for understanding and improving organizational culture in LSUIC and beyond.

## IV. A Founder Speaks: The Vision Behind the Union

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Among the most moving moments of the event was the address delivered by Honorable J. Alexander Nuetah, the first president of LSUIC and the man who, in 2006, convened the gathering from which this entire twenty-year story flows. Today, he serves as the Minister of Agriculture for the Republic of Liberia, a trajectory that speaks volumes about the union's original purpose: to prepare Liberian scholars for lives of national service.

Minister Nuetah's remarks were tinged with the particular emotion that only a founder can feel when confronted with the evidence that what they built has outlasted them and grown beyond anything they imagined. He expressed deep pride in seeing the vision he initiated two decades ago still thriving, still producing leaders, still binding a community of Liberians together across a vast foreign country.

He was candid about the original motivation behind the union's formation. It was not, he acknowledged, born from a grand institutional vision. It was born from frustration and necessity. At the time, Liberian students in China had no formal support structure, no unified voice, and no mechanism for advocating their most basic needs, foremost among them the student allowances that the Liberian government had not consistently provided. The union, in its earliest form, was an act of collective self-defense as much as anything else.

But what the minister made clear is that the union quickly became something far more than that. It became a place where students formed the friendships that would sustain them through years of academic pressure and cultural disorientation. He offered a personal illustration of this, recounting how in 2006, he went to the airport to receive a newly arrived student, a moment of hospitality and fellowship that, in time, led to that student becoming his wife. It is a story that could only be told about LSUIC, because it captures precisely what makes the union irreplaceable: its role not just as an advocacy body, but as a community of care.

Minister Nuetah's advice to the current generation of scholars was delivered with the gravity of someone who has lived the arc he was describing. He urged them to recognize that the transition from China back to Liberia must involve a fundamental shift in orientation: from the pursuit of individual advancement to dedication to the general good of the state. He pointed to China's own development story, noting that much of the country's remarkable transformation was driven by citizens who had studied abroad and returned with new knowledge, new skills, and a burning desire to apply them at home.

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*"Be the example of developmental excellence," he challenged the assembled scholars. "Use your Chinese training to transform Liberian society." Coming from a man who has himself lived that example, those words carried uncommon weight. - Honorable Dr. J. Alexander Nuetah, the first president of LSUIC*

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## V. Art as Witness: Cultural Highlights of the Evening

Any serious account of the LSUIC homecoming must devote attention to the cultural dimension of the event, because it was in the artistic moments that the union's soul was most fully on display.

### A. The Spoken Word Recital: "We Are LSUIC"

The spoken word performance by Scholar Queenetta Dearest Johnson, Secretary of the Academic Excellence Committee (AEC), was widely regarded by participants as one of the highlights of the event. Her piece, titled "We Are LSUIC," traced the union's journey from the moment the seed was planted in 2006 through the years of growth, challenge, and transformation that followed.

What distinguished her performance was not merely its technical skill, though that was considerable. It was the emotional precision with which she captured the experience of being a Liberian student in China: the longing for home, the disorientation of arrival, the gradual discovery of community, and the slow realization that the people one meets in this foreign land become, in ways that are difficult to explain to those who have not lived it, family.

Her central declaration, that LSUIC is not a place but a feeling, a connection, a family, crystallized in verse what it would take many paragraphs of prose to approximate. It was the kind of artistic contribution that makes an anniversary event memorable rather than merely ceremonial.

### B. The Voices of LSUIC: A Choir Is Born

Also making its debut at the homecoming was the "Voices of LSUIC," a newly formed choir that gave a virtual performance despite the considerable technical challenges that such an endeavor involves. The choir is itself a symbol of the current administration's approach to institution-building: creative, ambitious, and willing to attempt things that have not been done before.

Assembling a virtual choir requires that individual recordings be edited together into a coherent performance, a process that demands not only technical competence but patience and a genuine commitment to artistic quality. The fact that the choir exists at all, and that it performed at the homecoming, says something important about the kind of cultural ambition that the current national executive committee has brought to its tenure.

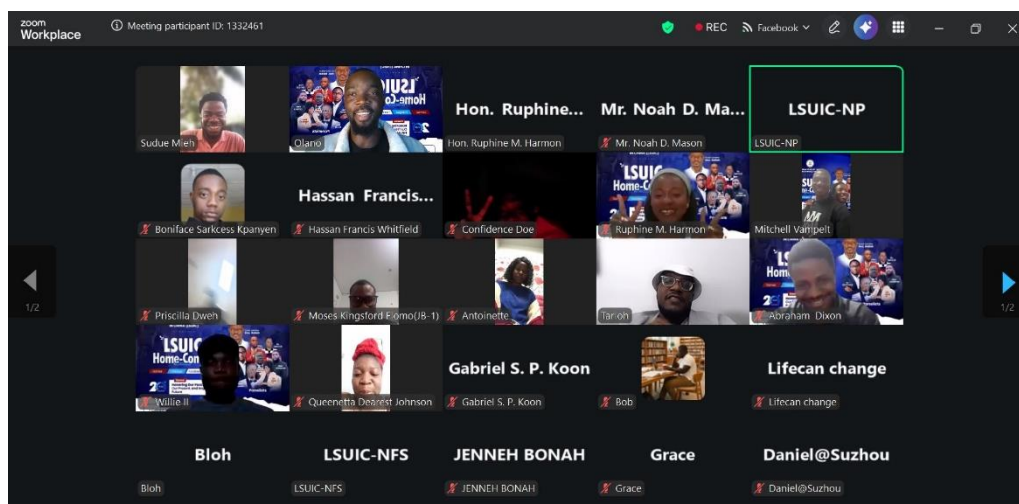


Fig. 2: The Gathering at the Homecoming

## **VI. A Panel of Presidents: Reflections from Those Who Led**

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The panel discussion featuring former presidents of LSUIC was one of the homecoming's most substantive segments. It offered participants a window into the internal history of the organization across different eras, revealing both the continuities and the transformations that have defined the union's evolution.

### **A: Honorable Alan B. James (2017 to 2018)**

Hon. Alan B. James reflected with characteristic candor on the particular challenge of leading an organization in which every member holds advanced academic credentials. Leading a highly literate organization, he noted, is a unique kind of difficulty: every decision is subject to rigorous scrutiny, and every leader must be prepared to defend their choices against an audience well-equipped to challenge them. It is, he suggested, both a burden and a privilege. He acknowledged significant improvements in financial management and digital infrastructure compared to his tenure, offering this observation not as a criticism of his own time in office, but as evidence of the natural and welcome arc of institutional growth. He urged current and future leaders to maintain patience, loyalty, and perseverance as core virtues of leadership.

### **B: Honorable Jacob Cephus Johnson (2023 to 2025)**

Hon. Jacob Cephus Johnson brought a different lens to the discussion, framing the union's evolution over two decades as something comparable to an industrial revolution. The comparison was apt. He described the shift from voice messages on WeChat as the primary mode of organizational communication to the current era of professional branding, graphic design, dedicated Website, Zoom accounts, YouTube and other platforms. This is not merely a technological upgrade. It is a transformation of institutional identity. Mr. Johnson also spoke to the union's growing global connectivity, highlighting efforts to build meaningful relationships with student organizations in other countries. He expressed confidence that future leadership would continue strengthening these networks, recognizing that LSUIC's value is amplified when it is embedded in a broader ecosystem of African and international student communities.

### **C: Dr. Hassan Francis Whitfield (2020 to 2022)**

Dr. Hassan Francis Whitfield reflections were significant, because he was the first to use the 2020 amended constitution of the Union that was drafted and approved under the leadership of former President Yamah Joy Barvor King. In the sense that; it was responsible for some of the structural changes that have most fundamentally altered how LSUIC is governed. By using said constitution, it enforces decentralization, introducing the Judicial Board and the Council of Coordinators as institutional checks on the power of the presidency. This move, which he described with evident conviction, reflected a mature understanding of organizational governance: that sustainable institutions are not built on the strength of individual leaders, however capable, but on systems that ensure accountability and distribute power responsibly. He also explained the strategic decision not to pursue formal legal registration as a nonprofit organization in China, a choice that might seem counterintuitive but was grounded in careful analysis. The costs associated with nonprofit registration in China, including substantial annual renewal fees and tax obligations, would have placed a significant burden on the union without providing tangible benefits to its members.

## **VII. The State of the Union: A Leadership Built for the Digital Age**

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One of the most eagerly anticipated segments of the homecoming was National President Olano Teah Bloh's comprehensive report on the achievements of his administration. What emerged from his remarks was a portrait of a leadership team that has approached its mandate with unusual seriousness and energy, and that has made institutional investments whose benefits will be felt for years to come.

### **A: A Digital Foundation Built to Last**

Perhaps, one of the most significant achievements of the current administration is the launch of LSUIC's first-seamless official website. This is not a minor administrative development. For an organization that has existed for twenty years, having an official digital home represents a defining moment in institutional maturity. The website includes a built-in membership registration system, a verification system, and what has been described as a chat-with-the-constitution function, allowing members to interact directly with the documents of the organization.

This feature is particularly noteworthy. Constitutions are living documents, but they often gather dust in organizational life because members lack easy access to them. By making the constitution interactive and accessible through the website, the current administration has done something that many more established organizations have not: it has democratized institutional knowledge.

The launch of the website also marked the end of the union's dependence on third-party platforms for basic functions like membership registration. Previously, LSUIC had relied on tools like WPS forms and Survey Monkey to collect member information. The move to an in-house system represents both a practical improvement and a statement of organizational independence. It is important to note that the entire system was built from scratch by the National President, who is a PhD student studying Computer Science and Technology. His expertise helped the Union by saving monies that could have been given to developers to build such a SOTA system.

### **B: Unprecedented Decentralization**

Under President Bloh's leadership, the union has expanded its institutional footprint to include over 35 city presidents and 20 provincial coordinators. These numbers represent a record level of geographic reach and organizational density. They mean that wherever a Liberian student lands in China, there is, in principle, an LSUIC representative nearby: someone who can offer guidance, community, and connection.

This level of decentralization does not happen by accident. It requires a leadership team willing to identify capable individuals across dozens of cities, to train and support them, and to trust them with meaningful institutional roles. It is, at its core, a leadership philosophy (Leadership to the People) that prioritizes reach over control, which is exactly the right philosophy for an organization whose members are spread across a continent-sized country.

### **C: Innovation in Student Welfare**

Among the more human and immediately practical innovations of the current administration is the introduction of a pickup service for newly arriving students. This may sound like a simple logistical arrangement, but for a young person arriving alone in a Chinese city for the first time, having someone from the union meet them at the airport is an act of profound care. It transforms the

experience of arrival from one of potential isolation and confusion into one of welcome and belonging.

The Legacy Hour series, which has now produced over ten editions, represents another dimension of the current leadership's commitment to institutional memory. By recording and archiving the experiences of past leaders, the administration has begun building what amounts to an oral history of LSUIC, a resource that future leaders will be able to draw on as they navigate the challenges of their own tenures.

## **D: Academic and Diplomatic Achievement**

The Academic Excellence Committee, established under the current administration, has hosted workshops on research methodology, entrepreneurship and start-up, Computer literacy, and scholarship acquisition, effective study habits, thesis writing, debate...etc. These are not peripheral activities. They speak directly to the core purpose of LSUIC: supporting Liberian scholars in getting the most out of their Chinese education and preparing them to return home as effective contributors to national development.

On the diplomatic front, the signing of Memoranda of Understanding with both the Cameroonian and Ghanaian student unions represents a recognition that LSUIC does not exist in isolation. By formalizing relationships with peer organizations, the current administration has created channels through which Liberian scholars can access job and internship opportunities that might not otherwise be available to them. It is a forward-looking move that benefits not just current members but all future members as well.

## **E: From Scholars to Statesmen: The National Impact in Liberia**

The relationship between LSUIC and the Liberian Association of Chinese Trained Scholars (LACTS) is a symbiotic pipeline for national leadership. The strategic importance of the "China-trained" brand has shifted significantly; while once viewed as a subset compared to Western-trained counterparts, LSUIC alumni have proven their excellence through high-level state appointments. The skills acquired in China from agricultural innovation to advanced engineering, are now being translated into "National Developmental Excellence." LSUIC scholars are no longer merely students; they are the architects of Liberia's future. The presence of alumni in pivotal government roles confirms that the union serves as a finishing school for statesmen. By maintaining a connection with LACTS, LSUIC ensures that its members transition seamlessly from academic life in China to professional life in Liberia, where they are actively shaping national policy.

- [1] Dr. J. Alexander Nuetah, currently the minister of agriculture, is applying Chinese models of food security to Liberian soil.
- [2] Alumni serving as deputy ministers, county health officers, and medical directors across Liberia's healthcare infrastructure.
- [3] High-level involvement in national developmental projects, bridging the gap between Chinese technical expertise and Liberian needs.
- [4] Alumni occupying roles as assistant ministers and corporate leaders, leveraging the "China-trained" discipline to drive organizational efficiency. The sustainability of this national impact depends on the internal values and leadership philosophy that bind the union together.

## **F: The "Old Mat and the New Mat" Strategy**

The future of LSUIC is governed by the methodology found in the forefather's proverb: "You have to sit on the old mat to plot the new mat." This is not merely a quote; it is a strategic approach to succession planning. The current administration has operationalized this through the Legacy Hour series, consulting past leaders to ensure that new reforms are built upon the wisdom of the past. As the union prepares for the 2026 conference in Jinan, the mantra of "Excellence through Hard Work" continues to guide the "plotting of the new map." The way forward requires a steadfast commitment to the twin pillars of digital archiving and decentralized unity. Future leaders must view the digital infrastructure not as luxuries but as the lifeblood of institutional continuity. The journey from a survivalist fellowship to a digitized, national institution is a testament to the resilience of the Liberian scholar. By honoring the foundation and aggressively pursuing innovation, LSUIC will continue to bridge the gap between global wisdom and national pride for the next two decades and beyond.

## **VIII. The Fundraising Segment: Investing in the Future**

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No celebration of twenty years of institutional life would be complete without a material commitment to the next chapter. The fundraising segment of the homecoming, led by National Financial Secretary General Honorable Noah Dave Mason Jr., was directed toward supporting the upcoming annual conference to be held in Jinan City, Shandong Province.

The fundraiser was conducted the financial secretary explaining the goals and the various methods through which contributions could be made, including QR code transfers for those within China and mobile money and bank transfers for those overseas.

When alumni and veterans give money to an organization they left years ago, they are saying something important: that the institution still means something to them, that they want to see it succeed, and that they are willing to back that sentiment with a concrete contribution. That is a powerful vote of confidence, and the current leadership has earned it.

## **IX. The Closing Ceremonies: A Toast to Twenty Years**

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As the homecoming drew toward its close, the formal proceedings gave way to something more intimate and celebratory. A virtual toast was organized, with members raising whatever was in their hands, whether water, juice, wine, or tea, to mark twenty years of excellence. It was a moment of genuine joy, the kind that cannot be manufactured or scripted. It emerged naturally from the shared recognition that something real had been built and that it deserved to be celebrated.

A group photo, taken via screenshot, captured the assembled faces of an organization spanning continents and generations. These screenshots, modest as they are technically, will in time become historical documents. They will be the visual record of the moment LSUIC first looked at itself whole.

The benediction was offered by the National Chaplain General, who prayed that the flame of unity kindled during the event would remain burning in the hearts of all members as they carry the lessons of their time in China.

## **X. The Significance of This Moment in Broader Context**

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To assess the significance of this homecoming, it is necessary to step back from the event itself and consider what LSUIC represents within the wider context of Liberian national development.

Liberia is a country with an enormous appetite for educated professionals. Decades of conflict and instability drained the country of a generation of trained minds. The scholarship programs that have sent Liberian students to China represent one of the most significant investments in rebuilding that human capital. Every Liberian who completes an advanced degree in China and returns home carries with them knowledge, skills, and international perspective that Liberia desperately needs.

LSUIC has, for twenty years, been the institutional infrastructure through which those scholars have experienced their time in China. It has provided community when they were lonely, advocacy when they were vulnerable, and a professional network that has served them well beyond their student years. The union has, in aggregate, shaped hundreds of lives in ways that will ripple through Liberian society for generations.

The homecoming was significant, then, not just as an organizational milestone but as a national one. It was a community of Liberians, shaped by their years in China, gathering to take stock of what they have built and what they owe to the country that sent them. The gathering, and the conversations it generated, will inform how scholars think about their responsibilities as returned citizens for years to come.

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*"Let Liberian scholars be the example of developmental excellence, using their Chinese training to transform Liberian society." - Honorable  
Alexander Nuetuah, Founding President*

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The presence of Hon. Minister J. Alexander Nuetah at the homecoming, speaking not just as a founder but as a serving cabinet minister, was itself a powerful statement. It demonstrated that the path from LSUIC membership to national leadership is not aspirational but actual. It has been walked. It can be walked again. And that knowledge, more than any formal program or mentorship initiative, is perhaps the most motivating gift the union's history has to offer its current members.

## **XI. The Current Leadership: A Legacy Already Being Written**

It would be incomplete to write about this homecoming without giving proper recognition to the administration that conceived it, organized it, and saw it through. National President Olano Teah Bloh, National Vice President Ruphine M. Harmon, and the national executive committee have, by any reasonable measure, distinguished their tenure as one of the most productive and institutionally consequential in LSUIC's history.

The list of achievements catalogued during the homecoming, the website, the digital membership system, the expansion to thirty-five city presidents and twenty provincial coordinators, the pickup service, the Legacy Hour series, the academic workshops, the international MOUs, the new choir, is not the work of a team going through the motions of leadership. It is the work of a team with a genuine institutional vision and the organizational discipline to execute it.

What is particularly notable about this administration is that it we pursued all of these innovations while also making the deliberate investment in organizational memory that the homecoming represents. It would have been easy, in the press of managing an organization of this size and complexity, to defer or deprioritize a homecoming event. The decision not to do so, the decision to insist that the union's history be formally honored before the twenty-year mark passed, reflects a maturity of institutional thinking that goes beyond day-to-day management.

Leadership is not only about what you build during your tenure. It is also about what you protect and transmit. By creating this homecoming, the Bloh & Harmon administration has protected the union's memory and transmitted it to a new generation. That is a legacy that will persist regardless of whatever else we accomplish with the remaining time in office.

The members who participated in this homecoming, whether they were veterans watching from Monrovia or current scholars logging in from their dormitory rooms, are now part of a shared story in a way they were not before. That shared story is the connective tissue of any lasting institution. The current leadership has woven more of it.

## **XII. The Prospect of Continuation: An Annual Tradition in the Making**

Perhaps the most important question raised by this homecoming is not what it meant but what it could become. The answer is an annual tradition, one of the defining features of LSUIC's institutional calendar.

There are compelling reasons to make this so. Student organizations live and die by the strength of their networks, and networks require cultivation. The bonds formed in China are powerful, but they attenuate with distance and time. An annual homecoming, even in virtual form, provides a structured occasion for those bonds to be renewed, for alumni to reconnect with one another and with current scholars, and for the organizational culture to be passed on rather than merely assumed.

There is also a mentorship dimension that an annual homecoming could develop into something deeply valuable. The panel format that worked so well at this event could evolve into a more structured knowledge-transfer session. Current scholars would benefit enormously from this kind of direct, experiential wisdom, which is different from anything they can get from the union's formal programs or its website.

A recurring homecoming would also give LSUIC a fundraising rhythm that benefits the organization's programs year-round. The fundraising segment at this homecoming demonstrated that alumni are willing to give. An annual occasion for giving, embedded in a celebration they genuinely value, would likely produce sustained and growing financial support for the union's activities.

Beyond these practical benefits, there is something harder to quantify but no less real. An annual homecoming would tell every member of LSUIC, past and present, that the community they built together has not been forgotten, that their years in China mattered, that the organization they helped create is still alive and still cares about them. That message, delivered consistently and genuinely, is the foundation of institutional loyalty of the excellent variety that Doc. Augustine K. Ballah described in his keynote.

The first homecoming has set a high standard. It combined intellectual substance with emotional resonance, administrative accomplishment with artistic expression, and civic ambition with personal warmth. It was, by any measure, a success. The challenge for those who inherit this event in future years will be to honor that standard while finding new ways to make it their own.

### **XIII. Conclusion: A Family That Has Grown Up**

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Twenty years is a long time in the life of any institution, but it is a particularly long time in the life of a student organization, where membership is inherently transient and continuity is never guaranteed. That LSUIC has not only survived but flourished over two decades, expanding its reach, deepening its institutional structures, and maintaining the human warmth that has always been its most distinctive quality, is a remarkable achievement.

The homecoming of April 25, 2026, was the moment LSUIC looked at itself whole for the first time. It saw its founding president, now a cabinet minister, reflecting on the young man who went to the airport to welcome a new arrival and found a partner for life. It saw a keynote speaker with fifteen years of institutional experience distilling the philosophy of organizational loyalty into something both rigorous and accessible. It saw former presidents comparing notes across the years, marveling at how much had changed and how much had stayed the same. It saw a poet give voice to the feeling that no organizational document could adequately capture. And it saw a new generation of scholars, somewhere in a dormitory in China, watching all of this and understanding, perhaps for the first time, the full weight of the community they had joined.

This is what the homecoming was. It was a family that had grown up, gathering to recognize itself, and to commit, once again, to the values that had held it together through twenty years of change.

The Liberian Student Union in China was born from the simple, urgent desire of young people far from home to take care of one another. That desire has produced an institution of genuine national significance. May it endure for twenty years more, and twenty beyond that, and may the scholars it shapes carry its lessons into every corner of Liberia's future.

## **Appendix: Key Facts and Participants**

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- [1] **Event Name:** 20th Anniversary Virtual Homecoming of the Liberian Student Union in China (LSUIC)
- [2] **Date:** April 25, 2026
- [3] **Platform:** Zoom and Facebook Live
- [4] **Theme:** Honoring Our Past, Engaging Our Present, and Inspiring Our Future
- [5] **Union Establishment:** July 2006

### **Key Participants:**

- [1] 2025-2026 National President: Honorable Olano Teah Bloh
- [2] 2025-2026 Master of Ceremonies and National Vice President: Honorable Ruphine M. Harmon
- [3] 2025-2026 National Chaplain General: Hon. Mitchell Vampelt
- [4] 2025-2026 National Secretary General: Hon. C. Nathaniel Willie II
- [5] 2025-2026 National Financial Secretary: Honorable Noah Dave Mason Jr.
- [6] 2025-2026 National Treasurer: Hon. Jenneh Bonah
- [7] 2025-2026 Head of the Judicial Board: Hon. Moses Kingsfold Flomo
- [8] 2025-2026 Head of the Council of Coordinators: Hon. Tarloh Gbeh Chea
- [9] Head of Committees:
  - a) Hon. Clarence S. Johnson (Press & Public Affairs – PPA)
  - b) Hon. Manna Destiny Bleh (Program & Planning Committee – PPC)
  - c) Hon. Enoch K. Dongbo (Conference Committee – CC)
  - d) Hon. Dr. Christian Mulbah (Academic Excellence Committee – AEC)
- [10] Keynote Speaker: Dr. Augustine K. Ballah, Interim Leader of LACTS
- [11] Founding President and Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Liberia: Honorable Alexander Nuetuah
- [12] Former President (2017 to 2018): Honorable Alan B. James
- [13] Former President (2019 to 2020): Honorable Dr. Yamah Joy Barvor-King
- [14] Former President (2020 to 2022): Dr. Hassan Francis Whitfield
- [15] Former President (2023 to 2025): Honorable Jacob Cephus Johnson
- [16] Spoken Word Performer: Scholar Hon. Queenetta Dearest Johnson, SG of the Academic Excellence Committee (AEC)
- [17] Plus, Committees, CoC, Judicial Board members, City presidents, & Veterans

### **Financial Contributions Recorded:**

- [1] Dr. Hassan F. Whitfield: 1,000 RMB (on behalf of his family)
- [2] Honorable Alan B. James: 50 USD Pledged
- [3] Madame Elfreda Jackson (via Liberia My Heritage, USA): 125 USD
- [4] Honorable Jacob Cephus Johnson: Follow-up on Tuesday, April 28, 2026
- [5] Total QR Code Collections: 150 RMB

### **Some of the Current Administration Achievements Highlighted:**

- [1] Initiating and maintaining “Peace and Reconciliation” among past, current leaders, and the Union as a whole, after a challenging transitional period before this leadership.
- [2] First-ever Publicly Financial System that shows the Union Financial Position 24/7
- [3] Highest amount raised in Dues
- [4] Attracted Over 1,000 new followers on the Union Facebook page
- [5] Uploaded over 50 high-quality and educative videos to the Union’s YouTube channel
- [6] Published fifteen (15) Chronicles (newsletters) – Two-pages... Over Six stories each.
- [7] Self-sponsored, and visited over ten (10) cities to promote “Leadership to the People”.
- [8] Launched the “Scholar of the Week” initiative
- [9] Launched the “Revision of the LSUIC Constitution” with the Constitution Committee
- [10] Launched the “Breast Cancer” Awareness in Honor of the Late Kate Weah (NFSG)
- [11] Launched the Luminary-Series with the National Secretariat for Scholars development
- [12] Launched the First-ever Seamless Digital Judges Scoring System
- [13] This First-ever Homecoming after nineteen (19) years
- [14] A Chat with the Union Constitution System
- [15] Expansion to over 35 City Presidents and 20 Provincial Coordinators
- [16] Seven (7) Appointed Committees and a Judicial Board:
  - a) Academic Excellence Committee - AEC
  - b) Press and Public Affairs - PPA
  - c) Conference Committee - CC
  - d) Constitution Review Committee – CRC
  - e) Independent Elections Commission – IEC
  - f) Welfare Committee – WC
  - g) Audit Committee – AC
  - h) Judicial Board - JB

- [17] Launch the First-ever official website with integrated membership and verification systems.
- [18] Launched the “Asset Recovery” from former leaders with the Judicial Board
- [19] Launched the First-ever Digital Archive to store, and preserve the Union histories.
- [20] Launched the First-ever LSUIC Echo’s with the Press and Public Affairs Committee
- [21] Launched the First-ever “LSUIC Voices and Highlights” news presentation with the Press and Public Affairs Committee
- [22] Launched the “LSUIC Social Hour” with the Program and Planning Committee
- [23] Worked with the Liberian Embassy near Beijing to assist over 45 Students with Visa processing and Passport attestation
- [24] Launched the First-ever “Public Speaking” with the Program and Planning Committee
- [25] Launched the First-ever “Public Hearing” with the Council of Coordinators – CoC
- [26] Launched the “Re-Branding” of Scholars birthday post, programs flyers... etc
- [27] Conducted the “New Students Orientation” featuring the Liberian Embassy
- [28] Conducted the “Financial Literacy Program” with the National Financial Secretary
- [29] Conducted the “Back to School” program with the Program and Planning Committee
- [30] Introduction of airport pickup service for newly arriving students
- [31] Legacy Hour series with over 10 editions archived
- [32] Formation of the Voices of LSUIC choir
- [33] MOUs signed with Cameroonian and Ghanaian student unions
- [34] Digital membership database replacing third-party registration platforms
- [35] Academic Excellence Committee workshops on Research methodology, writing and publication strategies, Entrepreneurship and start-up strategies, Intercity Debate, Thesis Writing, Study Habits, Computer literacy program with TIT-OWCC 2026, and scholarship acquisition and internship .... etc.

**Note:** *All of the above were achieved, while we still have about three (3) months to the end of our leadership one-term in office (1 year = a tenure)*

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**Some of the upcoming programs/events:**

- [1] Annual Conference, Jinan City, Shandong Province, 2026
- [2] National Elections
- [3] A new constitution
- [4] Audit Report