



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Rosen College of Hospitality Management

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Brand USA President and China Tourism Academy Vice President Honored at
2nd USA-China Tourism Research Summit**

Inaugural "Breakthrough" Award Presented at One-Day Conference

Orlando, FL (December, 13, 2017) Christopher L. Thompson, President and Chief Executive Officer of Brand USA, and Dr. Zhongguang Li, Vice President, China Tourism Academy, China National Tourism Administration, were honored at the [2nd USA-China Tourism Research Summit and Industry Dialogue](#). Both tourism and hospitality leaders received the "USA-China Tourism Breakthrough Award", the first award of its kind ever presented, during the summit at UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management on December 8, 2017. The intention of the award is to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions in developing and promoting tourism businesses growth and exchanges between USA and China, the two global economic powers.

Thompson leads the nation's public-private partnership dedicated to increasing international visitation to the United States through marketing and promotional efforts. He has over 30 years' experience in the travel and tourism industry. In his role as President and CEO of Brand USA, Thompson is responsible for executing effective marketing strategies to increase U.S. travel exports, create jobs, strengthen the economy, and help enhance the image of the United States on a global scale. These efforts have helped increase Chinese visitation to the United States to nearly 3 million visitors in 2016. The National Travel and Tourism Office at the U.S. Department of Commerce reports that China is now the single-largest source of international tourism spending, totaling \$33 billion in travel exports in 2016. Brand USA will continue to reach and influence consumers at every level of the tourism cycle – from dreaming to consideration to booking and traveling, and ultimately sharing their experiences with others.

Li was granted UNWTO Ulysses Award for the Satisfaction Survey Project for Chinese and American Tourists. He was also responsible for the construction of the service system for outbound tourists and the improvement of service quality. In order to achieve this goal, the organization launched the global "Welcome China" project, to enhance Sino-US relations. Li leads China's tourism theory research, and data statistics gathering, particularly the systematic study of Sino-US tourism to provide the database for Sino-US tourism exchange. He actively participates in Sino-US government, industry and academic exchanges, and promotes Sino-US Think Tank Conference, tourism research and industrial cooperation. Li actively promotes the Sino-US Tourism Research Summit and the Sino-US Tourism Industry Exchange. He is also working hard to provide a new Sino-US tourism exchange platform and propose a new Sino-US tourism cooperation program around the global tourism research project. Because of Li's work, five million Chinese tourists will visit the US next year, many of them travelling to Florida.

“We are deeply honored to present these inaugural “Breakthrough” awards to Dr. Li and Mr. Thompson,” said Dr. Youcheng Wang, Associate Dean at Rosen College and Conference Chair for the 2nd USA-China Tourism Research Summit. “Their work in the hospitality and tourism industries elevates the experience of the international tourist and helps boost the economies of both the United States and China. Dr. Li and Mr. Thompson are pioneers in their fields; we congratulate them on this award.”

The 2nd.USA-China Tourism Research Summit, held on December 8, 2017, is one of three hospitality and tourism industry conferences underway now at Rosen College. The college also hosted the [4th World Research Summit for Tourism and Hospitality](#), December 8-11, 2017 and the [4th International Conference on Events \(ICE\)](#), December 12-14, 2017.

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About the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management

The UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management located in Orlando, offers students an unrivaled opportunity to learn and work in the heart of hospitality. Ranked #2 among hospitality management programs worldwide, Rosen College has been an educational leader for over 30 years. Uniquely positioned in America’s top tourism destination, we educate the next generation of industry leaders through internationally-recognized faculty, innovative academic programs, cutting-edge research and strong industry and community partnerships. To learn more, visit hospitality.ucf.edu.

About Brand USA

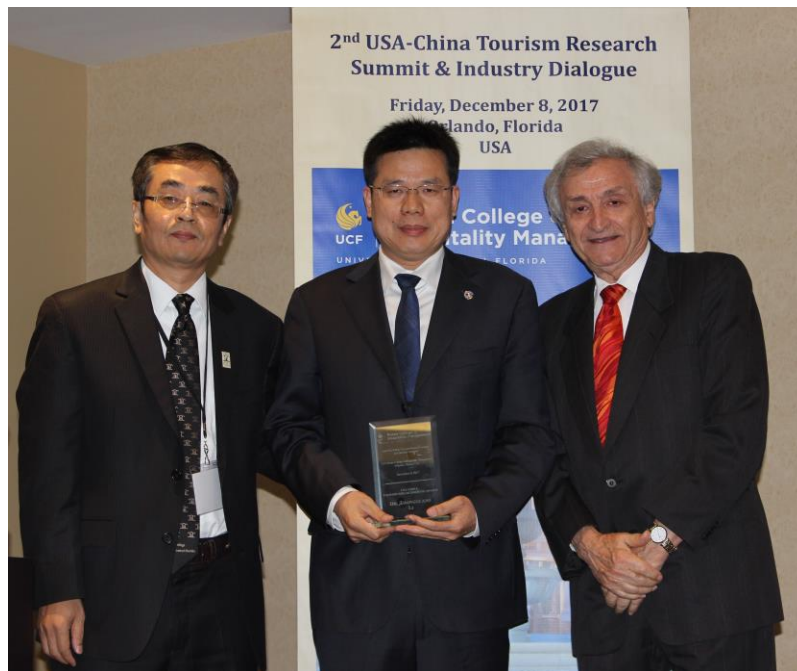
Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States, was established by the Travel Promotion Act as the nation’s first public-private partnership to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and to communicate U.S. travel policies and procedures to worldwide travelers. The organization’s mission is to increase international visitation to the USA in order to fuel the U.S. economy and enhance the image of the United States worldwide. Formed as the Corporation for Travel Promotion in 2010, the public-private entity began operations in May 2011 and does business as Brand USA. According to studies by Oxford Economics, over the past four years Brand USA’s marketing initiatives have helped welcome 4.3 million incremental visitors to the USA, benefiting the U.S. economy with nearly \$30 billion in total economic impact, and has supported, on average, 50,900 incremental jobs a year. For industry or partner information about Brand USA, visit TheBrandUSA.com. For information about exceptional and unexpected travel experiences in the United States, please visit Brand USA’s consumer website VisitTheUSA.com.

About the China Tourism Academy

Aiming to be the “think tank of the government, brainpower of the industry and highland of the academia” through promoting China tourism industry development and international exchanges, China Tourism Academy (National Tourism Data Center) is dedicated to tourism research, data analysis, and tourism promotion. The research mainly focuses on the basic theories, policies, and key and important issues of tourism industry development. In addition, it also participates in the design, compilation and feasibility study of China tourism industry development planning, as well as provides the relevant technical support for reviewing the tourism development planning submitted by local government, undertakes tourism statistics data collection, management, analysis and prediction, studies tourism statistics science, conducts international tourism statistics exchanges and cooperation, trains high-level talents in tourism field, and highlights international and domestic academic exchanges. Visit: <http://eng.ctaweb.org/> for more information.



Left to right: Dr. Youcheng Wang, Christopher L. Thompson and Dr. Abraham Pizam



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