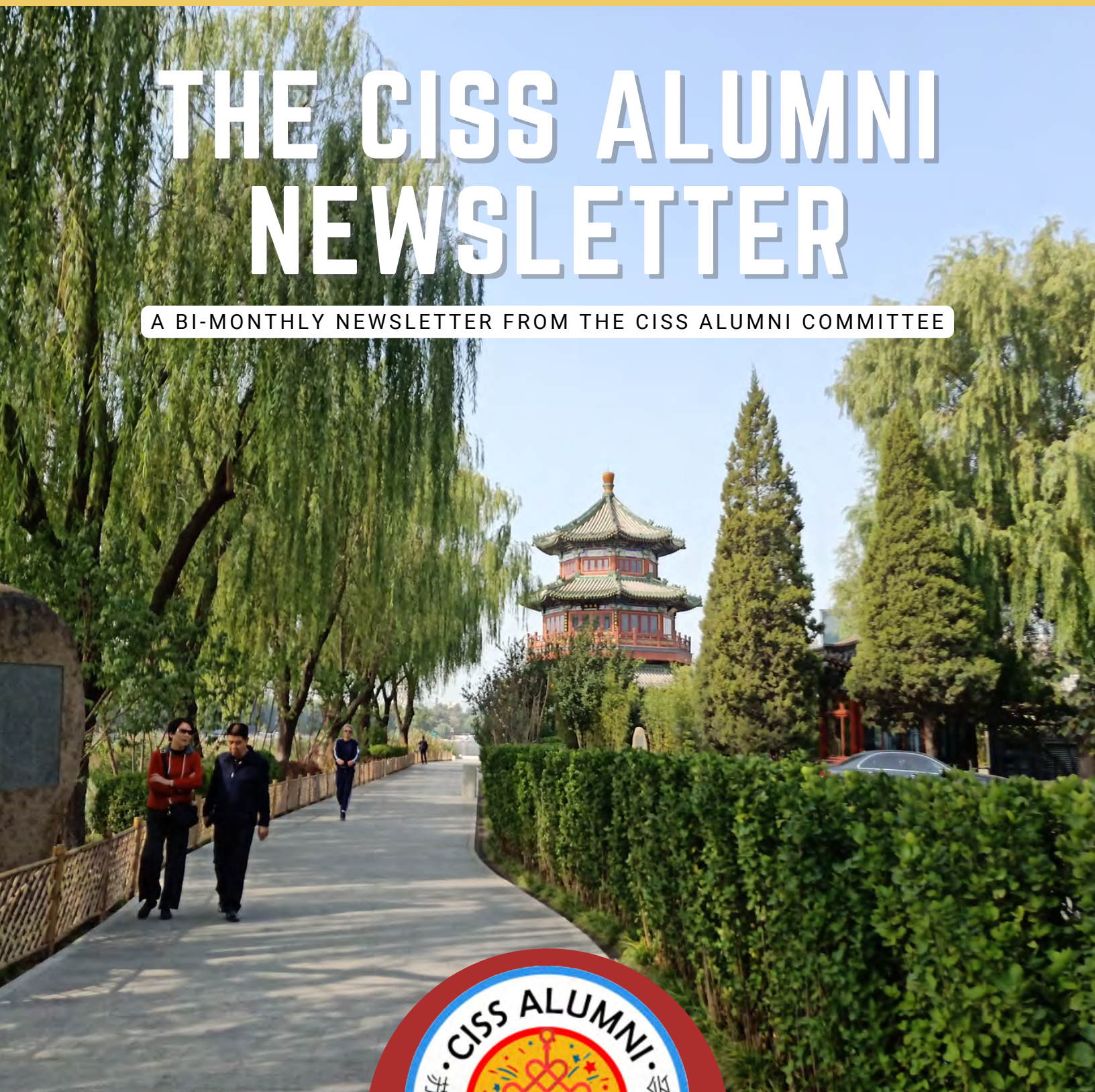


THE CISS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE CISS ALUMNI COMMITTEE



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ACCOMPLISHED ALUMNI: TIANJIN FOREIGN STUDIES UNIVERSITY GRADUATE; EXECUTIVE SUPPORT ADMINISTRATOR

CELEBRATING CISS ALUMNI GRADUATES: CLASS OF 2022 ALUMNI OPINIONS: CHINESE RESTAURANTS, BOOK TALKS

UPCOMING EVENTS
CISS ALUMNI AGM 2022 SUMMARY

WELCOME!

In our newsletter this month, you will find:

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Writing the inaugural CISS Alumni newsletter this year has been a joy. The aim of this newsletter was always to try to bring the alumni together, keep others updated with alumni activities and inspire those who may end up one day completing the Tianjin scholarship. We have spoken to a lot of interesting people, including Martin McDermott, the Head of the Scottish Government's Office in China, and spoken with amazing alumni. It has been exciting to see how although the alumni all have the same thing on their CV: one year studying in Tianjin, yet they have all ended up in different places, doing different things.

It is a shame that we have lost some of the momentum for the CISS Alumni network due to the lack of new scholars coming through the years. Some of our fondest memories of alumni events are of sharing stories from our time in Tianjin with other year groups, and hearing about changes to the place we once lived. Although the CISS alumni network will always be there for alumni, it often does not feel the same without the network expanding. However, I am very optimistic about the future of the CISS Alumni network, as well as the Tianjin scholarship. Student visas for long-term study in China are now being issued and I am confident that the Tianjin scholarship will restart imminently. When it does, there will be a network of almost 100 CISS Alumni waiting for them!

Thank you for reading and for the support,

Ailsa (2017-2018 cohort)

P.S. be sure to join our new LinkedIn group for CISS Alumni for more work related content.

UPDATE FROM CISS

Another year has passed us by, and though the situation is returning to a new normal here in Scotland, we sadly find ourselves once again without a new batch of Tianjin Scholars to join you all. While it's unquestionably a big loss for the students that missed out, we're beginning to see glimmers of hope on the horizon, with student visas rolling out again. Like me, I'm sure many of you are already raring to get back over to China, and I know that some of our committee and members will soon be doing just that!

We want to share a big thank you to the committee, who have given up their time to help build and maintain this community. Their input at events and all of the experiences shared online have helped inspire and encourage, signposting pathways that make students want to take the leap with Chinese. This newsletter has been a very welcome initiative, and while we might not see this continue in its current form over the next year, we hope that you will continue to share with us and engage with what we do over at CISS. We're ready to resume our scholarships as soon as possible, and even if it might take until the class of 2023-24, we will continue to share opportunities with you the members of this association, whether that means support to improve your language skills, or channels and initiatives to engage and inspire others, while improving your professional skills.

Often the most inspiring thing is a story, and I'm certain you have many to share, so don't be strangers, get involved, and I very much hope to see as many of you as possible over some free food, drinks and entertainment come 25 Nov, as we celebrate 10 years of CISS, and the many contributions and successes of the Alumni Association!

- Calum Gibb 恺龙, Communications and Projects Coordinator, CISS

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

2022 has been a great year for the CISS Alumni. We established a bi-monthly newsletter which has allowed us to celebrate achievements, interview a number of successful people, and share recommendations for everything from great Chinese restaurants in Scotland to opportunities for further study in China. We also hosted a number of events including our LinkedIn Webinar and our Bubble Tea and Baozi social in Edinburgh. The committee have also represented the alumni at a number of events, including the SCEN conference attended by hundreds of school pupils aspiring to learn Chinese (a very important audience for us!).

Whilst the group has been slightly smaller due to the effects of the pandemic on the scholarship and the ability to host events like before, there are some positives to be taken from overcoming the challenges. For example, committee meetings, events and conferences have proven to be very successful online, particularly for a community like ours where a great number of members live in various locations all around the world. I am sure that this "hybrid" model of events both in-person and online will prove useful for future committees when it comes to hosting events. Personally, I am delighted and proud to have been the chair of this wonderful organisation for 2022, and I look forward to seeing how the group continue to develop and flourish in the coming years.

- Erin Duffy, CISS Alumni Chair (2021-2022)

CISS ALUMNI CLASS OF 2022

We would like to say a massive congratulations to all our talented CISS Alumni who graduated this year - here are just a few!



Ana Scougall
The University of Edinburgh, MA
Chinese and Spanish, First Class
with Distinction in Spoken Chinese



Caitlin Stewart
The University of St Andrews, BSc
Maths and Economics, First Class



Rowen Strachan
The University of Edinburgh, MSc
Marketing, Distinction
(Class of 2021)



Ariana Hardie
Nankai University, BA Chinese
Language with Business and
Economics, First Class

CISS ALUMNI CLASS OF 2022



Claire McCarthy
Napier University, BA (Hons) Film,
First Class



Nathan Epemolu
University of Strathclyde, Masters
of International Business with a
Modern Language (French),
Distinction



Ailsa Brown
University of Oxford, BA (Hons)
Oriental Studies - Chinese, First
Class



Ellie Craig-McCourt
University of Strathclyde, BA (Hons)
International Business with
Business Analytics and Technology,
First Class

ACADEMIC PROFILE

Nicola Ferguson (2015-2016 Cohort), BA International Chinese Education, Tianjin Foreign Studies University

What did you study?

I graduated in the summer of 2021 with a Bachelors in International Chinese Education 汉语国际教育 from Tianjin Foreign Studies University. I wanted to return to China to continue my studies but at that time student visas weren't allowed back into the country, so now I will return for work and possibly study again in a few years.



What was your undergraduate degree like?

My degree consisted of attending two types of classes, there was the mandarin lessons provided by the University for International Students (mostly were on scholarships for a year or two) and the other classes were my actual bachelor's classes that I attended with mainly Chinese Students that were also taking the same degree. The Bachelors classes were all taught in Chinese after a certain level (the scholarship helped me jump a few levels).

What was your research focus?

My dissertation focused on the differences and similarities between Chinese and Scottish festivals, e.g., Robert Burns Night and 端午节 Dragon Boat Festival. Since my degree was in attendance with Chinese Students as well, my dissertation had to be written in Chinese, which was very difficult to do during the pandemic.

How did the pandemic impact your degree?

In 2019 December my grandpa passed away, so I returned to Scotland for the funeral, missing my midterms and had planned to go back in February 2020. Unfortunately, my flight got cancelled the week of and everything went online. Regular classes were then at early morning hours here, some being at 3 am some being at 6am. A lot of teachers were wanting us to turn on our cameras and speak when I was lying in my bed, eyes closed just listening out for my name most of the time. Every time I could see a light change, I'd screen shot the slide and then close my eyes. Whenever I did finally actually wake up once classes were all over, I then had to go through all the screenshots and make sure I understood everything. It all got tiring and annoying but it's what had to be done. During the year and half that I had left of my degree, I had to sit two lots of exams for the midterms I missed and the end of term test in the same week, start taking my HSK 5 exam and then start preparing myself for the dissertation. Dissertation and HSK proved to be the worst thing for me, trying to write my dissertation in Chinese after being home for over a year and trying to pass the HSK test took me three attempts to pass. My Chinese level had plummeted from where I was conversing in Chinese every single day whilst in China, to now only speaking it when I was sometimes in Glasgow for dinner or talking to my teachers online.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to do a degree in China?

Although the Pandemic impacted my last year and half of my degree, the living and studying in China will forever be the best decision I ever made. The scholarship and whole degree continuously made me want to stay longer. I'm returning to China this month to begin working, thus proving how much China has been branded into my heart and mind, I couldn't imagine myself living anywhere else right now. Advice I'd give is to follow your heart, it's a massive step to move to another country never mind the other side of the world. Learn the culture, learn the language, and get yourself out there. Take yourself out of your comfort zone enough, it'll become your comfort zone, that's what I did. I will forever tell people to go abroad and live their life to the fullest. Go with an open mind so that you can fully enjoy and take in every single experience.

CAREER PROFILE

Sorcha Rowan Kennedy (2016-17 Cohort), Executive Support Administrator, University of Reading

What is your job? What did you study?

I currently work for the Erasmus & Study Abroad Office at the University of Reading as the Executive Support Administrator. I studied Politics and English Literature at The University of Glasgow – during my time I took additional classes in Mandarin and Spanish. I spent my third year studying abroad at McGill University, in Montreal, Canada.

What led you to working in this job?

During my final year at Glasgow, I undertook an internship with the Study Abroad & Exchange Team. I believe that I was successful in my application to

the internship due to my time studying abroad not only in my third year at The University of Glasgow, but also studying in Tianjin before I had joined university. I was able to demonstrate my commitment to international education and cross-cultural competence because of my years spent studying and travelling abroad from a young age, which is something I am sure many CISS Alumni can relate to. I enjoyed working in the international field of higher education, so when the opportunity arose to work for the University of Reading, I applied. I've been working with the team at UoR since March, and I've appreciated all that I've learnt so far.

What does a normal day look like in this job?

Every day can offer something quite different, which is an exciting part of working with so many international institutions. I could be helping out with the Pre-Departure Orientation for our outgoing students who are about to head off on their adventures abroad, or I could be planning trips to help our incoming students explore Reading and the UK. Otherwise, I could be creating social media campaigns, or supporting UoR staff on their Staff Mobility trips abroad to places such as Indonesia, Thailand, Italy and Spain. Of course, there is always paperwork to be collected and processed, so some time each day is dedicated to ensuring things run smoothly!

What is one thing you really like about your job?

I like to think that I can have a direct impact on a student's international experience, and I do my best to make it a positive one. The CISS Scholarship afforded us the opportunity to go abroad at the age of 17/18 – we were filled with youthful confidence and eager to get out into the world and explore. Not everyone has been granted that opportunity, and for many going abroad for an extended period of time can be intimidating and daunting. Within my role, I enjoy being able to offer students some reassurance and support them as much as possible, so that their experience is a little less overwhelming, and thoroughly worthwhile.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to pursue a career in this area?

Go for it! Have a look on University's websites directly – the field of international higher education is much larger than expected, and there are always opportunities popping up. Reach out to people on LinkedIn (we're a friendly bunch!) and ask for some advice or their account of working for a Study Abroad office, and you may hear of some different routes. If you are struggling to find a way in, consider working for a different department at a university, as you will gain valuable transferrable skills and experience. Most importantly, don't forget that your personal experiences make you a really valuable asset – CISS Alumni understand what it is like to call another country home.

If you have any questions about anything mentioned, please feel free to reach out on LinkedIn (Sorcha Rowan Kennedy), or email me (sorchakennedy00@gmail.com). Thanks for reading!



CHENGYU OF THE MONTH

脱胎换骨 tuōtāihuàn4gǔ3 - "reborn, remold oneself, turn over a new leaf"

Literal translation: "break free from one's placenta and change one's bones"

Background: Originally a Buddhist term referring to a monk or a nun obtaining enlightenment. Complimentary in meaning.

Example 1: 英国的经济增长方式太依赖金融业，工作没有后劲，在面对世界经济危机时，必须脱胎换骨，才能摆脱经济危机的影响。The British economic growth model relies too much on the financial sector, the industry has no durability; in facing the world economic crisis, we must remold ourselves; only then can we shake off the influence of the economic crisis.

Example 2: 结婚以后，在妻子的帮助下，他发生了脱胎换骨的变化，好像变成了另外一个人。After getting married, with the help of his wife, he underwent change as though he had been reborn, it appearing as if he had become another person.

Source: "500 Common Chinese Idioms," by Liwei Jiao, Cornelius C. Kubler and Weiguo Zhang

BOOK TALK REVIEW

Kerry Brown, Sam Fowles & David Loyn: Does Power Inevitably Corrupt?, Edinburgh International Book Festival, 22nd August 2022, 5/5 stars

Three authors come together to discuss the question "Does Power Inevitably Corrupt?", with a focus on China, the US and the UK.

Kerry Brown is the former Secretary of the Embassy of the United Kingdom in Beijing and is now a Professor of Chinese Studies and Director of the Lau China Institute at King's College, London. Sam Fowles is a barrister specialising in public and constitutional law who recently wrote a book called: "Overruled: Confronting Our Vanishing Democracy in 8 Cases."

David Loyn was a BBC foreign correspondent with the BBC for 30 years and recently wrote a book called: "The Long War: The Inside Story of America and Afghanistan Since 9/11".



The talk was fascinating and it was interesting to hear about China in the context of the UK and US governments. It easily could have been double the length, I wish it was!

You can still watch the livestream online on the Edinburgh International Book Festival's website on the event page for this talk. You can watch for free or make a donation.

- Ailsa Brown (2017-2018 cohort)

RESTAURANT REVIEW

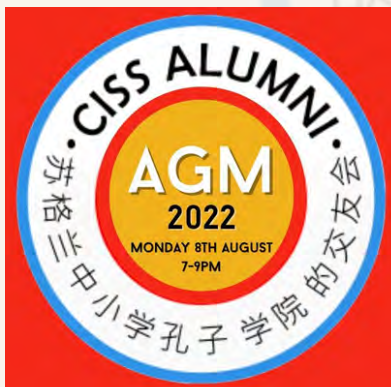
辣乐乐 麻辣烫: LaLeLe - Taiwan Chicken Chop Happy Hot Pot, Dumbarton Road, West End, Glasgow, 5/5 Stars

Very yummy malatang hotpot in Glasgow! Reminded us of what the 2017-2018 cohort called the "noodle bar". The soup was very yummy and they a huge choice of things to put in your hot pot. Definitely on the more expensive size and the price depends on the weight. However, it is definitely worth it for the experience!

PAST CISS EVENTS

(Last minute!) CISS Alumni Meetup, Glasgow, 28th July 2022

A few CISS Alumni from several different cohorts went for drinks and hot pot in Glasgow. It was lovely to catch up with everyone and see what we have been up to, especially because most people are making some big moves across the world in the coming weeks!



CISS Alumni AGM 2022, Online, 8th August 2022

It was that time of year again, it does not feel like a whole year has passed since the start of the academic year. After a long discussion, we have decided to make some changes to our operations for the coming year. The current committee structure will be "hibernated" at the moment meaning the vast majority of events, media and projects will be paused.

This is in part due to the lack of new incoming scholars. We hope to be able to continue our operations when we have new scholars incoming again! This is a temporary solution as no scholars applied for committee roles this year. The current committee are ready to pass the roles on but for now have agreed to remain as a point of contact on email and social media so that the committee remains intact for if, and when, someone new takes the reins to continue new and ongoing projects.

In the meantime, we hope to maintain this network we have created in an informal way and will stay in touch now and again.

The minutes of the AGM were sent to our mailing list. If you did not receive a copy of the minutes and would like to have one, email us at: ciss.alumni@outlook.com or message us on Instagram.

UPCOMING CISS EVENTS



YOU ARE INVITED TO

A CELEBRATION OF THE CISS ALUMNI

AND 10 YEARS OF THE CONFUCIUS
INSTITUTE FOR SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS

Join us for drinks, dinner and a ceilidh

NOVEMBER 25, 2022 | 7 PM
THE NATIONAL PIPING CENTRE, GLASGOW

*CISS will contribute to the travel expenses of
those travelling from further afield*

CLICK HERE TO RSVP

Make sure to RSVP! It will be lovely to see everyone there. You can RSVP by clicking on the advert above or by following the link below.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=YwceYzMV60elzQRXvuWUTjgLeRfp4YJFmxdp1Y0V3v9UMEZSWkFaVFIEQ0M5QUFUVEIKNUQwUIFTTi4u>

KEEP IN CONTACT

Email: ciss.alumni@outlook.com

Website: <https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/confuciusinstituteforscotlandsschools/scholarship/cissalumni/>

Instagram: @cissalumni

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CISSalumnischolars>

Facebook group (for scholars): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1931393547136913>

LinkedIn page: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ciss-alumni>

LinkedIn group (for scholars): <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12701152/>

