In this study the experiences of Chinese higher education (HE) faculty members at American universities were analyzed to determine whether their experiences were consistent with China’s HE reform policy for faculty development, part of China’s world-class university reform. Berry’s acculturation theory and China’s HE reform directives provided the conceptual framework underlying this work. The qualitative research design involved both document analysis and semistructured interviews.

The research revealed that these young Chinese faculty members developed the skills and perspectives called for in China’s HE reform policy; most of them developed a global vision and critical thinking skills, largely embracing international and Western scholarly norms for teaching and research. The doctoral students among them claimed they acquired content expertise, research-oriented scholarship, and other professional competences; the visiting scholars regretted their too brief exposure to scholarly experiences at American universities. In addition, their assumptions about the superiority of Western scholarly norms and their lack of confidence in Chinese epistemology and its place in the global knowledge economy were also reinforced. This perspective has the
potential to deepen the asymmetrical relationship between the West and China in the
center–periphery global academic structure.

The consistency of the gains of Chinese HE faculty members in roles and values
with China’s reform policy goals through overseas deployment is significant for China’s
world-class university reformers. Suggestions for China’s HE reform policy and
practices for faculty development were derived from findings.