An increasingly invaluable opportunity to experience Chinese culture arrives tonight in the form of the San Diego State University-Imperial Valley campus scholarship gala.

The Journey to China themed gala gives attendees exposure to Chinese culture, which some say is a rising area force.

The gala “marks the beginning of an even closer relationship by leading people into a taste of China, its cultures, history and food,” said Li-Rong Lilly Cheng, Confucius Institute managing director.

As Imperial Valley becomes more important to agriculture, economics and commercial trade, the Chinese presence will grow, Cheng said.

“Many Chinese will be coming through to help development, so understanding more about Chinese culture can be vital,” Cheng said.
Imperial Valley has a long history of Chinese involvement and culture with lots of buildings built by Chinese architects, she said.

Gala volunteer Gloria Brister said that universities are becoming increasingly global in response to world affairs, and San Diego State is no exception.

“San Diego State-Imperial Valley is very interested in being cutting-edge on technology and being a global university,” she said. “San Diego State really believes in helping the community to experience Chinese cultures.

"We want this experience this event to transport them into the realm of the Chinese culture.”

Gala attendees can try authentic Chinese cuisine, see a Chinese couture fashion show, watch a Chinese calligraphy exhibition and witness performances by the Sichuan Opera Theatre of Chengdu.

The Chengdu company has won awards including the Ministry of Culture Wenhua Award, the Mandarin Repertoire Award, the Mandarin Performance Award and the Excellent Repertoire of Chinese Drama Festival Award.

The Chinese Confucius Institute at San Diego State University will also provide Chinese opera selections by Lily Ma and a duet by Lu-Fei and Ken Xiao.

The grand prize winner will receive a trip for two to Beijing.

Through various sponsors, the campus is “presenting a quality of Chinese entertainment seldom seen in many parts of the United States,” Campus Dean David Pearson wrote in a press release.

“It’s very important for Imperial Valley people to know that we very much treasure their shared heritage of Spanish, Chinese and English,” Cheng said.

“We look at Imperial Valley as a gateway for future development of teaching Chinese culture.”

Staff Writer Chelcey Adami can be reached at 760-337-3452 or cadami@ivpressonline.com

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