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### Cover Letter

My name is Wei Gao. I have been teaching Chinese for over 14 years, first as a volunteer teacher at a local heritage school, then as a K-12 Chinese language teacher at my current school in Upstate New York. I love teaching Chinese because this is a beautiful language, and also this is a language that I speak the best.

However, just because Chinese is my native tongue doesn't mean I can just teach it well. I often find that it is very challenging to bring my knowledge into best practices. Often, students find Chinese difficult and different, plus, they can't find a convenient learning environment like Spanish and French learners. Therefore, it poses a greater challenge for a Chinese language teacher to be more creative in enriching the students and encouraging them to keep practicing what they have learned.

Further, since Chinese is a relatively new addition to the k-12 education, a lot of Chinese teachers might be the only teacher in the whole school, teaching a whole range of students of different ages. Therefore, teaching Chinese is often a lonely journey, with lots of teachers not having enough support system to become a great educator.

Therefore, I'm so happy to be accepted into this University of Virginia StarTalk program. It provides me much needed professional development opportunity and training. Even though right now, it's just half into the program, I felt that I have learned so much from the teachers and fellow students. The practicum and hands-on teaching experience has helped me grow leap and bound.

I want to use this opportunity to thank StarTalk, UVA for giving me this precious opportunity. I'll do my best in contributing back by becoming a better Chinese language teacher.