

NEWS RELEASE

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NC State to Sign Agreements With Top-Ranked Chinese Universities

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North Carolina State University announced today the plan to enter a number of academic partnerships with some of the top-ranked universities in China. The agreements will transform international studies at the university, create new avenues for graduates to compete globally and help the state and its people link to one of the world's fastest-growing economies to better meet the challenges of globalization.

In a whirlwind trip to China Oct. 22 to Nov. 1, NC State Provost Larry Nielsen, Interim Vice Provost for International Affairs Bailian Li and Dr. Duane Larick, associate dean of the Graduate School, will formally sign five academic agreements with Chinese universities, including the three highest-ranked universities in China: Peking University, Tsinghua University and Zhejiang University. NC State administrators will also cement ties with China Agricultural University, Beijing Forestry University and Graduate University of Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The agreements would build long-term bases for NC State student and faculty international experiences, as well as codify master's-degree programs for some of the Chinese students. Research, summer-study and student-exchange program agreements will also be signed during the trip.

Numbers of students in exchange and study-abroad programs would be in the dozens in the first few years of the initiative and hundreds thereafter, NC State officials say. The new program starts in summer 2007, when about 50 NC State students will study at Zhejiang University, while engineering students from Peking University will perform research at NC State.

"A world-class university enters world-class partnerships for the mutual benefit of both partners," said Chancellor James Oblinger. "These agreements are all about economic development and educating students in the 21st century, which means helping students

develop their international credibility in a global economy.”

N.C. Commerce Secretary Jim Fain agreed that the dynamics of the new world marketplace require workers to be more sophisticated when it comes to international economics. “With more and more foreign-owned companies doing business in North Carolina and more North Carolina companies exporting and producing their products overseas, the importance of understanding the relationship with an emerging economic leader such as China is critical,” Fain said. “These programs should provide invaluable experiences for the students who participate in them, when they enter the job market.”

NC State students would spend one semester or one academic year in China taking classes they need to complete their degree, so they wouldn’t lose any progress toward their degree during their international experience, Nielsen says. Some NC State students would take classes taught by NC State professors in China, while some would take classes with Chinese professors.

“Access to a job-ready, globally savvy workforce is extremely important to employers, especially in and around Research Triangle Park” Nielsen says. “The international exposure and real-world experience in China will give NC State students a leg up when they compete for jobs, because they’ll have experience in the global marketplace. The university will also benefit from the increased number of international students and the global perspective they bring to the classroom.”

Degrees from U.S. universities make international students more competitive in the job market, and are therefore highly sought, Li says.

The NC State delegation will also meet with Chinese officials to finalize the plan for bringing a Confucius Institute to NC State. In this agreement, Chinese faculty would come to NC State to teach Chinese language and culture. San Francisco State University, the University of Kansas, the University of Maryland and Michigan State University are among the few U.S. universities that currently have Confucius Institutes on their campuses.

For more information, visit <http://www.ncsu.edu/china/>.