

For Immediate Release

Purdue, National Cheng Kung universities celebrate historic collaborations

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Purdue University is beginning a new era of global partnerships with a look back at one of the most successful such academic collaborations of the 20th century.

Purdue University and National Cheng Kung University (NCKU) will commemorate a decade of support and friendship from more than 50 years ago with a joint exhibition on Monday (Jan. 19) at the University Museum of NCKU's inaugural ceremonies in Tainan, Taiwan.

The exhibition showcases the Purdue-NCKU Project (1953-1963) during the years following the Korean War in which the United States provided significant financial support to create and sustain Asia Pacific region universities and scholarships to promote their academic growth.

The joint NCKU-Purdue exhibition will display photos, manuscripts, U.S.-funded instruments, documentaries and 3-D simulated architectural models. The exhibition also will illustrate the efforts and achievements contributed by professors from both universities.

The Purdue-NCKU Project exhibition will run through December 2009 as part of the upcoming 77th Anniversary of the National Cheng Kung University.

"I was immensely impressed that there is such an important history between Purdue and NCKU, which is one of the most outstanding universities in Asia, if not the world, today," Purdue Provost Randy Woodson said. "I am proud that the United States in general and Purdue in particular played such a profound role in building NCKU, which turned out to be such an important economic and intellectual engine for Asia in the second half of the 20th century."

While celebrating past success, Woodson sees the exhibition as an opportunity for the future in keeping with new Global Purdue initiatives emphasized in the university's new strategic plan.

"I hope that the Purdue-NCKU collaboration model can not only be the inspiration for renewed relations between our two universities, but also will serve as a model for other collaborations between U.S. and Asian universities in the 21st century," he said.

Michael M.C. Lai, president of NCKU, says Purdue's strong academic and financial involvement — especially in the areas of science and engineering — were pivotal to his university's survival and success.

“The 20th century’s ubiquitous U.S. support of Asia in intellectual growth, where the Purdue-NCKU project can be considered as one such project, received no formal recognition. Indeed, it was, de-facto, a 'Marshall Plan-like' effort,” he said.

A three-professor delegation from Purdue will travel to Tainan, Taiwan, to attend NCKU anniversary events, including the dedication chronicling the NCKU-Purdue relationship.

Representing Purdue are professors Klod Kokini, associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Engineering; Vincent Bralts, associate dean for research planning in the College of Engineering; and George McCabe, associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Science.

The Purdue delegation will meet with NCKU faculty and administrators during their weeklong stay. The delegation’s itinerary includes touring NCKU engineering and science departments and the Tainan Science Park. The delegation also will visit the Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) and Hsinchu Science Park.

Among the distinguished guests who will attend the inauguration ceremony will be, from NCKU: President Michael M.C. Lai, Dr. Jenny Su, vice president for international affairs, and Dr. H.S. Yan, NCKU Museum director and a Purdue alumnus. In addition to the Purdue delegation, branch chief Christian Castro from the American Institute of Kaohsiung also will be in attendance.

Two NCKU Professors who were part of the project more than half a century ago, H.S. Shi and King-Nien Woo, will be given special recognition at the ceremonies.

A model of past success, future collaborations

Starting in 1952, Purdue began a financial and technical assistance program with NCKU, then called Tainan Provincial College of Engineering. During the 10 years chronicled by the exhibition, the U.S. invested financial aid amounting to 100 million New Taiwanese Dollars (NTD), or approximately \$3 million, into NCKU.

Cooperation with Purdue benefited NCKU with new campus buildings, facilities upgrades, new laboratories, instruments, enhanced library collections and scholarships for NCKU educators to earn advanced degrees abroad. Under these reforms and assistance, NCKU was promoted from a college into a university in 1956.

Purdue professor Norris Shreve chaired the delegation of Purdue professors who traveled often to NCKU in those pivotal 10 years to serve as academic consultants. He and other Purdue academics and administrators worked with NCKU counterparts to create one of the most profound educational reforms, with new curricula and devices.

NCKU has since produced alumni whose efforts and achievements can be seen in many critical areas in Taiwan, including the measuring and design of the Central Cross-Island

Highway and the enlargement of Keelung Harbor. In the last few decades, many alumni in various walks of life graduated under this project to become a significant force in Taiwanese society.

Some notable ones are Samuel C.C. Ting, the Nobel Laureate in Physics; Paul Chu, discoverer of high-temperature superconductivity; Academician Chang Chun-Yen, an expert in semiconductor science whose contribution to Taiwan's economy cannot be underestimated; C.T. Lee, Chairman of Formosa Plastic Corp. and Y.C. Lo, CEO of Philips Corp. Taiwan.

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About National Cheng Kung University. NCKU is located in the ancient city of Tainan, which is approximately 250 kilometers south of Taipei. It is connected to all major cities in Taiwan by the recently initiated state-of-the-art Taiwan High Speed Rail. With three quarters of a century of accomplishment and with well over 130,000 powerful alumni now dotting the globe, many alumni have achieved supreme success in the arts, business, education, science, technology and health care. The institution currently has 22,000 students and 1,200 academically distinguished faculty members, both groups being quite international. With enormous regional support, and with a permeating culture of proactive intellectual growth on the world's stage, NCKU in Tainan, Taiwan, has evolved from its engineering genesis to become a powerful international comprehensive and research-intensive university.

About Purdue University. Purdue University, located in West Lafayette, Indiana, is highly ranked in the nation's top public universities by *U.S. News & World Report*, and is globally renowned for academic excellence, cutting-edge research and outreach. Overall, Purdue has earned 18 top-10 academic rankings and 34 top-20 rankings from national ranking agencies for its programs and supports many successful alumni in the sciences, engineering, agriculture, and the arts and humanities. Neil Armstrong and Eugene Cernan, the first and last men to walk on the moon, are among 22 Purdue graduates to have been selected by NASA for space flight. This Big Ten campus of 39,100 students has more than 200 majors and programs in 10 colleges and schools, and celebrates more than 400,800 living Boilermaker alumni around the world. It is also one of the most international campuses in the U.S., with over 5,000 international students seeking degrees in all majors.