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Going Global

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The University of Dayton is establishing a presence in China with the Aug. 8 grand opening of the University of Dayton China Institute in one of the fastest-growing innovation parks in the world.

Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP) officials invited the University of Dayton to open a stand-alone institute in the ultra-modern park and then made a multi-million-dollar investment in the renovation of a five-story, 68,000-square-foot building for classrooms, laboratories and project space. SIP wants the University of Dayton to do applied research and product development for

industries in the park, which is home to a third of the world's Fortune 500 companies, as well as provide education and training.

"The University of Dayton is a natural choice because we have a track record in the commercialization of technology and in building research teams in emerging technologies," said University of Dayton President Daniel J. Curran, who held a professorship at Nanjing University early in his academic career and has cultivated ties in China for more than 25 years.

"Engineering students in our Innovation Center have worked with about 120 American industries — many of which are already located in the park — on product development. That's a model we're replicating," he said. "This is not about starting an international campus for the University of Dayton. It's about providing our students with international opportunities few campuses can offer."

The University of Dayton is among the first American universities to set up operations in Suzhou Industrial Park about 75 miles from Shanghai. Located in Jiangsu Province in eastern China, the park is a cooperative venture between the governments of China and Singapore.

Weiping Wang, a Chinese scholar with educational experience on multiple continents, has been appointed executive director of the University of Dayton China Institute and assistant provost. Phil Doepker, professor emeritus of mechanical engineering, and Scott Segalewitz, professor of electronic engineering technology, are coordinating industrial and technical relations at UDCI. They're currently working closely with American and international companies in SIP to develop research projects and courses.

While the institute is still taking shape, University officials say they envision more than offering product development expertise to American companies in the park. The building will include classrooms, a proposed Marianist heritage center and eight specialized science and engineering laboratories (product development; automation; thin film, microelectro mechanical systems and nanotechnology; pharma; electro-optics; mechanical; electrical and computer engineering; and chemistry and

bioscience). Short courses are already being taught in areas like energy-efficient manufacturing; multidisciplinary design and product development; and project management and innovation. University officials envision delivering degree programs, continuing education and executive training in the future.

The School of Education and Allied Professions is exploring a TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) certificate program on campus that would provide opportunities for graduates to teach English in China. University officials also are in discussions with the archdiocese of Nanjing about providing in-service training in theology and philosophy for priests.

In addition, the institute will open the door to co-op and internship opportunities in China for University of Dayton students and provide a pipeline for recruiting Chinese students.

"Students need a greater understanding of China to succeed in the global economy," said Joseph Saliba, provost. "The University of Dayton China Institute will help prepare a new generation of students to be leaders in a world without traditional boundaries. They will be skilled at bringing diverse perspectives to problems and will be comfortable in adapting rapidly to change."

Minglong Ma, director-general of the Department of Commerce of Jiangsu Province, echoed Saliba's observations, noting, "the University of Dayton China Institute will integrate both Eastern and Western wisdom, lead the trends of science and industry, cultivate innovative talents and open up a new era of cooperation."

Over the last decade, the University of Dayton has established partnerships with seven Chinese institutions — Nanjing University, Nanjing University of Science and Technology, Nanjing Medical University, Nanjing University of the Arts, Shanghai Normal University, Zhejiang University and Jiangsu Educational Program. A growing number of students are completing study abroad programs in China, and faculty are serving as visiting scholars. Two groups of professors recently spent a year studying Chinese culture, politics and business through the University's Faculty Global and Intercultural Study/Travel Program. They traveled to China over the past two summers to visit the cultural sites they studied and to work on individual research projects.

"The park is really an innovation city," Curran told faculty and staff at a campus forum. "This is a rare opportunity that's been presented to the University of Dayton. The China Institute has the potential to elevate the University into the realm of global American universities."

SIP officials are allowing the University of Dayton to use the building rent-free for three years and are providing some operational funds. The University is paying a monthly management fee.

The China Institute is another step toward the University of Dayton's globalization. Last fall, one in every 10 students came from outside the United States, enriching the campus's global perspective. With approximately 500 undergraduate and graduate students, the University of Dayton now enrolls more students from China than any other country.

For assistance in scheduling media interviews, contact Teri Rizvi, associate vice president for University communications, at 937-229-3241.