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NTID/RIT Lands Additional \$1.1M

2/13/07

The Nippon Foundation of Japan has awarded the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology \$1.1 million to expand its leading role in improving education and career opportunities for deaf people around the world.

Since 2001, The Nippon Foundation has awarded NTID \$8 million to help colleges across the globe improve technological education for their deaf students through a program called Postsecondary Education Network International (PEN-International).

Deaf students attending specific colleges in Japan, China, Russia, the Philippines, Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong and the Czech Republic will continue to benefit from PEN-International's expertise through improved curriculum, increased access, new technology, multimedia labs and trained faculty. More recently, PEN-International has been conducting training in the areas of sign language instruction, interpreter training, automation technology and counseling skills.

This year, PEN-International will continue to expand in China and move vigorously to propel each of its international partners toward programmatic and fiscal self-sufficiency.

"The programs within each partner university are customized to help assure that they reach their own goals," explained James DeCaro, Ph.D., former dean of NTID, and director of PEN-International. "Over the past six years we've been training faculty to, in turn, train other educators within as well as outside of their organization, fostering an educational ripple effect throughout their country."

To date, more than 1,000 educators from partner countries have participated in workshops hosted by PEN-International. A total of 52 workshops were conducted by partner institutions in their home countries as a result of skills learned through PEN-International training initiatives, DeCaro said. "The desired ripple effect has resulted in 900 new people being trained through their own exporting initiatives."

In addition, PEN-International hosted a delegation from Korea who learned about course design, teaching math and physics, meeting industry needs, assistive listening devices, speech-to-text transcription, job search and other critical information relevant to deaf college students. PEN-International representatives also traveled to Hong Kong and Vietnam to assist with the development, production, and duplication of local sign language reference materials.

"PEN-International's enormously successful efforts will improve the lives of deaf and hard-of-hearing students around the world indefinitely," said Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, NTID CEO/Dean and vice president of RIT. "In fact, their accomplishments have resulted in the National Association of the Deaf (USA) nominating PEN for the prestigious 2007 World Federation of the Deaf Solidarity Merit Award."

"The dedication, enthusiasm and commitment of our partners and the NTID PEN Team have resulted in PEN-International far exceeding the original expectations I had for this program," said DeCaro.

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