

FIU, Tianjin University plan to run school in China

MIAMI, Fla. – Florida International University has signed an agreement with the Tianjin University of Commerce to run a hospitality management school in China that would mirror the top-ranked Miami program. The agreement is thought to be the first on this scale between the Chinese government and a foreign university.

Joseph West, dean of the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, explained that officials of the Tianjin University of Commerce recognized the economic importance of developing a full-fledged hospitality program and approached FIU with the idea of a partnership. Now that the agreement is signed, FIU and TUC will begin recruiting and training faculty, while new campus facilities are built.

“A group of business professors from China will earn their master’s in hospitality manage-

ment at FIU over the next two years and will then be hired as FIU faculty to teach at Tianjin University of Commerce starting in the fall of 2006,” said West. The school will have about 1,000 students.

The agreement was signed at FIU in front of a delegation of Chinese officials, including Chen Jian, Undersecretary General for the General Assembly to the United Nations, Liu Yi, Minister Counselor for the Chinese Embassy in Washington D.C., Hu Yeshun, Chinese Consul General in Houston, and Wang Shu Zu, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of Tianjin People’s Congress.

“I am fully confident that the cooperation between these two strong institutions will work very well in the widening of cooperation between China and the United States in the important areas of education and human exchange,” said Chen.

Wang expressed similar optimism with regard to the doors this agreement opens: "This cooperation is more than just the University of Tianjin and FIU; it is between the City of Tianjin and the State of Florida and a start up point between China and the United States."

For FIU the agreement represents the largest foreign program FIU has been involved in, including the Hospitality programs currently operating in Jamaica and Switzerland. The Tianjin campus will also be able to host exchange students and faculty from FIU.

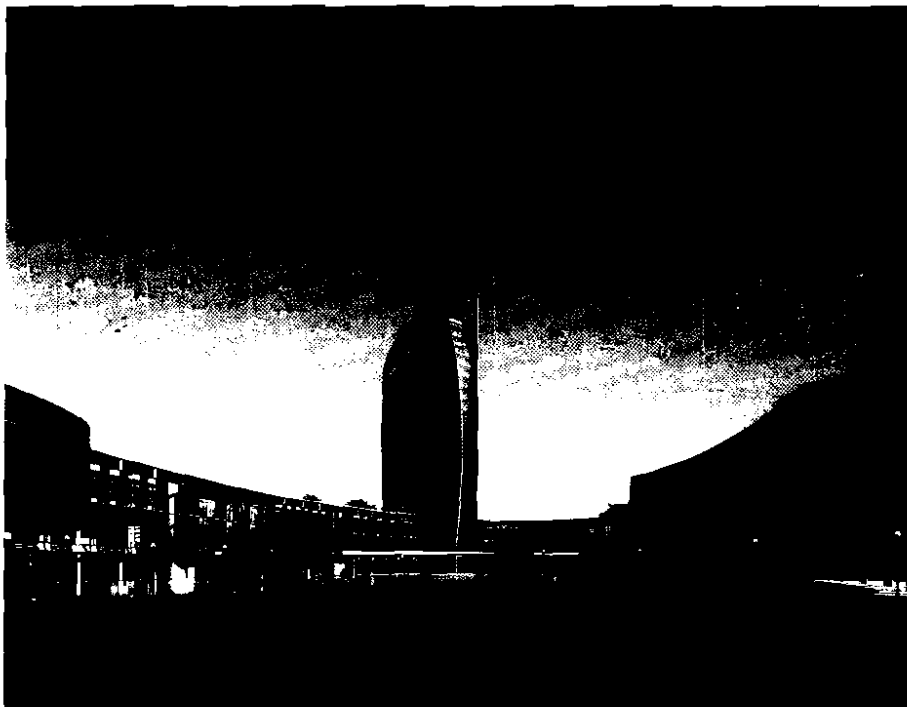
"This opens up the classroom to a whole new set of experiences for students here and there," said

FIU Vice President for Research Thomas Breslin.

Breslin noted that the timing for the project is particularly good because China is on the verge of a tourism boon.

A report issued recently by the World Travel and Tourism Council, a private organization that represents hotel and travel companies, predicts the number of tourists and business travelers visiting China will grow 22 percent a year beginning next year through 2013.

"We are going to be the leaders in training thousands of professionals to fill the jobs that will be created by this new phenomenon," said West.



Planned campus in China.