Freeman expands relationship with China's Zhejiang University

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The Freeman School has signed an agreement with China's Zhejiang University to begin admitting students from its School of Management to the Freeman School's Master of Accounting and Master of Finance programs.



Freeman School Dean Ira Solomon, left, and School of Management Executive Dean Xiaobo Wu signed an agreement in February outlining a host of joint programs and activities.

The new agreement, signed in February by Freeman School Dean Ira Solomon and School of Management Executive Dean Xiaobo Wu, expands a relationship the Freeman School had previously had exclusively with Zhejiang's Honors College.

"Zhejiang University is one of the top universities in all of China, so it's a privilege to be able to bring these outstanding students from the School of Management to the Freeman School," said Dean Solomon. "These students will enhance the classroom environment, and they will also be great connections for U.S. students interested in learning about China and expanding their careers internationally."

Since 2010, the Freeman School's Zhejiang Advanced Placement Program (ZAPP) has admitted a select number of students from Zhejiang's Honors College to the Master of Accounting and Master of Finance programs each year. Under this new agreement, students from the School of Management — the Freeman School's counterpart at Zhejiang — will now be able to gain admission to those programs as well.

The partnership doesn't stop there. In addition to the master's programs, Dean Solomon and Executive Dean Wu signed a memorandum of understanding outlining a host of initiatives officials at Zhejiang hope to pursue with the Freeman School, including executive MBA exchange programs, joint research activities, faculty exchanges, and new energy management and Latin American programs.

"Zhejiang is very interested in Latin America, and that's an area we have a lot of connections in," says John Trapani, executive director of the Freeman School's Goldring Institute of International Business, who helped draft the agreement. "We plan to assist them in setting up programs for entrepreneurs from Zhejiang to visit entrepreneurs in the southern part of Latin America, most likely Chile and Brazil."

Located in Hangzhou, a center of entrepreneurial activity in China, Zhejiang University is widely regarded as one of the top schools in China. In its 2011-2012 survey, QS World University Rankings ranked Zhejiang as the seventh-best university in China, and in 2011 China University Rankings named Zhejiang the top university in China.

According to Trapani, a strategic partnership is in the best interest of both institutions. "Given the growing importance of China in the world, I think it will be a great benefit for us to bring these very bright students to New Orleans and let our students bond with and become friends with them," Trapani says. "And from the perspective of the Chinese students, they're getting a graduate degree from a prestigious U.S. institution, and U.S. business schools still represent the gold standard for management education in China. It's a win-win for everyone."