

PEN-International's Summer Leadership Institute for Postsecondary Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

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Abstract

The Nippon Foundation of Japan has provided funding to the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY, to establish PEN-International, an international university network to serve postsecondary deaf and hard of hearing students. This project works to technologically link universities around the world serving such students, primarily in developing countries, through state-of-the-art instructional technologies, improving and updating curriculums, and updating instructional computer hardware and software. This paper describes PEN-International's one-of-a-kind Summer Leadership Institute, a multinational week-long program for postsecondary students. The first Institute took place August 2006 at Herstmonceux Castle in East Sussex, England. The goals of the Institute are to promote development of leadership skills, focus on advocacy skills pertaining to general access, support services and employment, and to engage in learning about Deaf Culture and awareness. A second Institute will occur in August 2008, also at Herstmonceux Castle.



Summer Leadership Institute

The Nippon Foundation of Japan has partnered with the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in Rochester, New York, U.S.A. to establish PEN-International to serve deaf and hard of hearing students in postsecondary educational settings worldwide. This multi-year project, founded in 2001, works to technologically link universities around the world, primarily in the Pacific Rim and developing countries, through establishing state-of-the-art instructional technologies, improving and updating technical curriculums, and updating computer hardware and software for instruction.

The National Technical Institute for the Deaf, home base for PEN-International has a 40-year history of serving postsecondary deaf and hard of hearing students and is led by Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz who holds the title of President of NTID/Vice President and Dean of RIT for NTID. With NTID's emphasis on the use of state-of-the-art technologies to promote instruction and learning for deaf and hard of hearing students, it is utilized as a model program for PEN-International's work.

The Rochester Institute of Technology, where NTID is housed, was established in 1829 and has evolved into a major international technological university. NTID, as one of the eight colleges of

RIT, serves approximately 1,250 deaf and hard-of-hearing students who study, share residence halls, and enjoy social life together with more than 15,000 hearing students. In addition, over 560 faculty and staff members are employed at NTID. Approximately 45% of deaf and hard of hearing NTID students are fully matriculated in one of the seven other colleges of RIT, receiving access and support services through NTID. The other 55% of deaf and hard of hearing students study within NTID for sub-baccalaureate degrees.

Since 2001, PEN-International has received more than \$9 million in grants from the Nippon Foundation of Japan to support its activities. The Nippon Foundation is a grant-making foundation based in Japan that provides financial assistance to help improve the quality of life for people around the world. They address the areas of: health care, agriculture, education and disability. The goals of PEN-International are to improve teaching, learning and curriculum development; increase the application of technology to teaching and learning; and to expand career education opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing people around the world. PEN-International accomplishes this through providing professional development activities to teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students, facilitating the use of innovative instructional technologies, furnishing its partners with state-of-the-art computer labs, developing online and World Wide Web resources, evaluation and research, and dissemination. The PEN-International website can be found at: <http://www.pen.ntid.rit.edu>.

The vision for PEN-International is to develop an international network to enhance local capability and global networking at each participant institution utilizing the Importer-Self-Sufficiency-Exporter model, in which institutions are moved from importers of 'know-how' through PEN-International activities, to self-sufficiency, and then ultimately to exporters of new information and skills within their countries, creating a ripple effect.

The PEN-International network currently consists of sixteen-plus colleges and universities in Japan, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Russia, Vietnam, the Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Korea and the United States. A comprehensive list of participants can be found at the PEN website.

An important project that addresses PEN-International's work with deaf and hard of hearing postsecondary students is its innovative, one-of-a-kind Summer Leadership Institute for international postsecondary deaf and hard of hearing students. The first multinational week-long program took place 5-12 August, 2006, at Herstmonceux Castle in East Sussex, England, 100 km. south of London. A second one will occur from 9-16 August, 2008, also at Herstmonceux Castle. The purpose of this Leadership Institute is to promote development of advocacy skills in the areas of support services in postsecondary education, general access, and employment. Leadership, empowerment and deaf culture awareness is also covered. This is accomplished through presentations, discussions, demonstrations, cultural activities, and other hands-on activities provided by deaf faculty and professionals.

While this Summer Leadership Institute is primarily supported by PEN-International, additional generous funding has been received from the Bader family of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Mr. Alfred Bader and his wife donated Herstmonceux Castle to Queens University in Canada, and the Castle is the home for Queens University's International Study Center. More information on the history of the Castle and the International Study Center can be found at: <http://www.queensu.ca/isc>. PEN-International covers all related expenses such as transportation, room and board for the Summer Leadership Institute participants including presenters, students, faculty chaperone, sign language interpreters and spoken language translators.

Students and faculty sponsors from NTID and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and each of

PEN-International's major partner programs in Japan, China, Russia, and the Philippines will participate in the August 2008 Institute, making a total of 26 students and five faculty delegation leaders. All students go through an application, interview and selection process, established by each participating institution. Sixteen sign language interpreters and voice language translators, four from each country, support communication access. Further, all materials are translated from English into Chinese, Japanese and Russian. The participating institutions, along with NTID and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, are: Tsukuba University of Technology, Ehime University, and University of Hiroshima, Japan; Tianjin University of Technology, Changchun University and Beijing Union University, China; Bauman Moscow State Technical University, and PEN-Russia, Russia; and De la Salle College of St. Benilde, Manila, Philippines.

The goals of the Institute are to:

- Promote development of leadership skills among postsecondary student ambassadors.
- Focus on advocacy skills in the areas of general access, support services and employment.
- Engage in learning about Deaf Culture and multi-cultural awareness.
This is accomplished through ice breaker activities, presentations and discussions, group exercises, cultural performances and demonstrations, and social activities and field trips.

The Summer Institute faculty members, most of whom are deaf or hard of hearing, are prominent leaders within NTID, the greater Rochester deaf community, and the international deaf community. They are: Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, President and Vice President/ Dean, NTID at RIT; Mrs. Vicki T. Hurwitz, consultant and former director of the Rochester School for the Deaf Outreach Center, Rochester, NY; Ms. Patricia Mudgett-DeCaro, Consultant, Rochester, NY; Mr. Scot Atkins, Director of Human Resources, Interpretex Agency, Rochester, NY; Mr. Alim Chandani of NTID's Student Life Team; Ms. Cassie Franklin, Counselor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Dr. Mayumi Shirasawa, PEPNet-Japan; Dr. James DeCaro, Director, PEN-International; and Dr. Denise Kavin, Senior Project Associate and Summer Leadership Institute Director, PEN-International.

Various workshops presented throughout the week are designed to address topics such as: leadership styles, self-determination and advocacy, developing effective communication and persuasion skills, forming alliances, cultural diversity, deaf culture, empowerment, achieving goals, employment and work-based learning, and access and accommodations.

During the Institute, students are expected to fully participate in all activities, give group presentations on leadership, conduct cultural activities and exchanges, and keep daily written or video journals of their experiences. All photos and written and video journals will be posted on the PEN-International website. As a follow-up after the Institute, students are expected to give group presentations about their experiences at the weeklong Institute at their postsecondary institutions, and complete projects that influence policy and/or make a substantial contribution to their educational institution and/or surrounding community. Finally, students and their faculty sponsors are expected to submit final reports, all within a 12-month period under faculty supervision. In all, as a result of participating in the Institute, students need to demonstrate the following: Enhanced leadership, advocacy and communication skills; increased understanding of the goal-setting and decision-making process; increased knowledge regarding accommodations and support services for access; increased knowledge regarding employment and work-based learning for deaf and hard of hearing individuals; and increased understanding of deaf culture in participant countries.

PEN-International has developed a website dedicated to this Summer Leadership Institute. All PowerPoint presentations and related materials will be available in English, Japanese, Chinese and Russian and posted to the website for public viewing and downloading. The URL address is: <http://www.pen.ntid.rit.edu/summer-institute.php>.

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