COMMUNITY

SFU forges new relationships in China and Hong Kong

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By Dave Lefebvre

Agreements to create a big data research centre, to develop an international business accelerator program, and to extend and enrich university partnerships were highlights of a visit to China and Hong Kong this week by Simon Fraser University President Andrew Petter and Vice President of Research Joy Johnson.

Building on a long history of relationships in Asia, SFU reached the following agreements (see below for details):

Letter of Intent with Zhejiang University to create of a Joint Centre on Big Data;
Memorandum of Agreement with Hanhai Zhiye Investment Management Group and partners to launch the Hanhai–SFU China-Canada Commercialization & Acceleration Network (C2-CAN);
Letter of Intent with Shanghai Jiao Tong University to support collaborative research in the Humanities; Renewed Student Mobility Agreement with Hong Kong Baptist University.

“SFU has been a pioneer in forging partnerships in China and Hong Kong,” says Petter. “These agreements break additional new ground in extending and deepening our relationships with major universities and organizations, consistent with SFU's goals of engaging the world.”

This was Petter's sixth visit to China and Hong Kong, demonstrating the commitment and importance the University places on developing and strengthening institutional ties in the region.

The Joint Centre on Big Data and C2-CAN will contribute to SFU Innovates, SFU's recently launched innovation and entrepreneurship strategy.

“These agreements expand our capacity and our reach,” says Johnson. “They will empower SFU Innovates to connect researchers and entrepreneurs with opportunities to build productive networks and to accelerate their ideas on a global scale.”

SFU Innovates embeds entrepreneurship and innovation across the University. It fuels SFU's vision to be Canada's “engaged university” and its goals of engaging students, engaging research and engaging communities.

Simon Fraser University–Zhejiang University Joint Centre on Big Data

The Centre strengthens SFU's leadership in big data research by providing a formal international link to one of China’s leading academic institutions. The Centre will provide a forum for faculty, scholars and students to advance big data research in Canada and China, and will foster research collaborations in big data science, champion training of graduate students and connect research with industry applications.

C2-CAN

C2-CAN’s mission is to support commercialization of advanced technologies originating from China and Canada. The network will connect technology innovators and entrepreneurs with the people, programs and resources needed to accelerate venture growth in both countries. Innovators and start-ups participating in the program will be eligible for international soft landing assistance, including access to incubator facilities, business training, angel investors and venture capital.

Semi-annual business development exchanges between Canada and China are planned starting in 2016. Participating Canadian startups will be able to access incubator facilities, services and programs at Hanhai locations in California and Germany as well as throughout China.

Shanghai Jiao Tong

Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Humanities is establishing an International Research Institute. This agreement enables SFU’s David Lam Centre for International Communication to be an International Council member with the Institute, including a position as the Council's Canadian Director.

The agreement also seeks to foster joint international research between SFU’s Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the
School of Humanities at Shanghai Jiao Tong. SFU's David Lam Centre will, for example, cooperate with Shanghai Jiao Tong on its major State Social Sciences Foundation research project: "Overseas Chinese Biographical Studies."

**Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)**

SFU and HKBU renewed their Student Exchange Agreement, which was first signed in 2005. SFU has seen continuing student interest in HKBU, with an average of three students per year participating for one or two terms. Three students will participate in Spring 2016, studying Mathematics, Business, and Interactive Arts and Technology. Classes taken at HKBU are credited towards a student's degree at SFU. The presidents of the two universities also discussed potential humanities and cultural studies research collaborations.

**RELATED STORIES:**

- President’s blog: China-Canada innovation & big data partnerships highlight SFU’s Asia mission
- Media release: SFU and Hanhai launch China-Canada Accelerator program