

DIMENSIONS of DISCOVERY



Around 80 visiting scholars and Purdue faculty attended a reception at Discovery Park in February to kick off the Purdue-China Visiting Scholars Network. The network is designed to help faculty maintain successful partnerships with their Chinese colleagues on promising collaborations involving sustainability.

Photography by Vincent Walker

» Partnerships

Welcome

Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than the one where they sprang up. —Oliver Wendell Holmes

The spectacular complexity of today's challenges — renewable energy sources, human health, sustainable technologies — require partnerships both across the planet and down the hall. In this issue, we report on some of Purdue's promising collaborations, from a visiting scholars program bridging Chinese and U.S. interests in sustainability, to an inter-college partnership that has yielded a significant finding in understanding colorectal cancer, to the myriad collaborations between information technology professionals and researchers that make high-level computations possible.

Purdue Ecopartnership Launches China Visiting Scholars Network to Grow Global Research Collaborations

The growing number of pins on Prof. **Tim Filley's** large map of China tell a story: Nearly 200 Chinese professors, graduate students and professionals have ventured from their hometowns to Purdue this year, sharing their ideas, technologies, skills, culture and a thirst for discovery.

Filley hopes that someday, an equal number of Purdue faculty members and graduate students will be traveling across the globe to advance their research and learning careers in China while promoting sustainability in both countries.

"Looking at this map, it is fascinating to see all the places from within China that are represented here at Purdue," says Filley, a professor of earth, atmospheric and planetary sciences and director of the U.S.-China Ecopartnership for Environmental Sustainability (USCEES). "This geographic diversity presents different regional perspectives on our shared challenges as well as our approaches to their solutions that ultimately make our interaction stronger."

Partnerships

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To that end, the U.S.-China EcoPartnership for Environmental Sustainability at Purdue has created the Purdue-China Visiting Scholars Network to strengthen the long-term connections between the Chinese visiting-scholars community and their Purdue hosts.

“Our objective is to create a forum where technological challenges and success related to sustainability can be discussed and collaborative opportunities for new funding and innovation are promoted long after the visiting scholar heads back to China,” Filley says.

“The United States and China face the interconnected challenges of environmental degradation, climate change, and energy and food security,” says **Alan Rebar**, executive director of Discovery Park and senior associate vice president for research at Purdue. “Through the Visiting Scholars Network, we hope to be open to the many pathways in addressing these challenges, including collaborations and new ideas and technologies that offer market-based solutions.”

First step

As a key first step in the visiting scholars program, the EcoPartnership has launched a reciprocal travel grant program, offering \$4,500 fellowships to a Purdue host, or their student, of a current or former visiting scholar from China to the institution of the Chinese visiting scholar. Eight fellowships were awarded this spring for graduate students or postdoctoral researchers wanting to partner with colleagues in China.



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This travel grant program is financially supported by contributions from the centers of the Global Sustainability Institute, the Purdue Confucius Institute, International Programs, and the Colleges of Agriculture, Engineering, Science, and Technology at Purdue.

Doctoral student Ruzhen Wang of the Institute of Applied

Ecology and the Chinese Academy of Sciences is working with Filley to advance his research in carbon and nitrogen biogeochemistry. “I have learned a lot from Professor Filley. It’s been a great experience, doing analysis in his lab and benefiting from his expertise and mentoring. I am much more confident in my research abilities because of this opportunity at Purdue,” Wang says.

Xia Wei, an associate professor of earth and environmental sciences at Lanzhou University in Gansu, is working with Purdue agronomy professor **Chi-Hua Huang**, an expert in soil surface boundary conditions and erosion processes. “I hope to apply what I am learning here at Purdue, to share my work with my students and for my projects in China,” says the visiting scholar. “It’s been a very enriching experience.”

For more information visit www.purdue.edu/discoverypark/ecopartnership. ■

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Building Upon Success

The U.S. State Department established the U.S.-China EcoPartnership for Environmental Sustainability (USCEES) in 2011 to address environmental challenges common to both the United States and China. Six new partnerships were sanctioned at that time. One of them, a collaboration involving Purdue, the University of Tennessee, Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, is a continuation of an existing program called the China-U.S. Joint Research Center for Ecosystem and Environmental Change (JRCEEC).

Building upon the success of JRCEEC, Filley and other members of the Purdue USCEES leadership team are working to increase opportunities for academic exchanges and joint research projects with both Chinese and U.S. partners through such initiatives as an annual symposium, workshops and faculty and student exchanges. ■