

Two-day event marks opening of Confucius Institute

4/30/09

Alfred University will formally mark the establishment of a Confucius Institute on its campus with a two-day celebration that begins Sunday afternoon with an official ceremony and a full program of performances by Chinese artists. The events continue with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 11:30 a.m. Monday in the F.W. Olin College of Business Building. Alfred's Confucius Institute is one of only 47 in the United States, and one of only three in New York State. Confucius Institutes, which promote Chinese language and culture through education, are created through Chinese Language Council International (Hanban). Alfred University's partner institution, which will provide Chinese faculty members for the Institute as well work with Alfred on its administration, is China University of Geosciences (CUG) in Wuhan, the People's Republic of China. AU President Charles Edmondson and Yanxin Wang, vice president of China University of Geosciences, will sign the formal agreement between the two institutions as part of the opening ceremony at 4 p.m. Sunday in Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center. Other members of the CUG delegation include Xulong Lai, professor of geology and dean of the earth sciences faculty; Hua Wang, director of personnel development; Yuanxing Dong, dean of Foreign Languages School; Bin Shuai, dean of Arts and Communications School; and Hongtao Su, deputy dean of International Education School. Dr. Wilfred Huang, director of the Confucius Institute at Alfred University (CIAU) and professor of management in the College of Business, will be master of ceremonies. Other Alfred representatives at the ceremony will be Xinquan Liu, Chinese director and associate director of the institute; Carla Coch, associate director; Yuzhen (Jenny) Zhang, instructor; and Jing (Shirley) Zhu, instructor. Delivering the keynote address, "Kong dot Flux," will be Wayne Higby, professor of ceramic art in AU's School of Art & Design. "Professor Higby was a natural choice for our keynote speaker for this ceremony, which is about building bridges and understanding between people of different cultures," said Edmondson. For nearly 20 years, Higby has been working to establish connections with China; he is co-founder of San Bao International Ceramic Art Institute. Literally meaning "three treasures" in Chinese - rice, tea and porcelain - San Bao is a studio center near Jingdezhen where ceramic artists from around the world can come and work. His efforts were recognized when he was the first foreign national to be made an honorary citizen of Jingdezhen. The ceremony will also feature "Dance in the Rain," performed by Wan Dongni, a student from China University of Geosciences who is now studying at Bryant University; "an ensemble of Yang Yue, Li Liqun, Zhou Yi and Miao Yimin will perform several selections, including "The Moonlit Spring River and Flowers," "Three Six" and "Horse racing." Yang Yue plays the erhu, a bowed lute with two strings tuned a fifth apart, between which the bow is threaded. Li Liqun plays the yangqin, a hammered dulcimer, and Zhou Yi plays the pipa, a four-stringed lute with a pear-shaped body. Completing the ensemble is Miao Yimin, who plays the dizi, a wooden flute.