

Alfred University creates Confucius Institute to serve residents of New York State

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Alfred University's College of Business joins a select group of colleges and universities internationally as host to a Confucius Institute, devoted to promoting Chinese language and culture through education. Dr. Wilfred V Huang, professor of management in the College of Business, will serve as director of the Alfred University Confucius Institute, one of just over 200 worldwide and one of only 47 in the United States. The Institute at Alfred University is one of three in New York State. "It is a significant honor for Alfred University to be chosen to host a Confucius Institute," said President Charles M. Edmondson, who traveled to Beijing, the People's Republic of China, with Huang to sign the formal agreement between AU and the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) to create the Institute. "As China emerges as an economic and political power in today's world, it is important for us to better understand its culture and language," said Edmondson. "Through the Confucius Institute, Alfred University will be able to provide education and training to those on several different levels, from teaching the language in elementary and secondary schools, to conducting business with companies in China." Edmondson gave the credit to Huang for securing the Institute, calling it "an honor for any institution, and a remarkable recognition for Alfred University that would not have been possible without Dr. Huang's leadership." "This is a milestone for Alfred University in our development of international programs," said Dr. William Hall, associate provost and acting dean of the College of Business. "Through Dr. Huang's excellent work, we were able to secure the Confucius Institute for Alfred University against some very formidable competition not just in New York State, but nationally." Huang said plans for the Alfred University include an array of programs, including a lecture series, open to the public, that will focus on some aspect of Chinese culture; non-credit courses in Mandarin, open to AU students, faculty, staff and community members; an outreach program for students and industrial and business people, that would offer instruction in Chinese culture and languages, both on campus and at other locations around the state; and training, leading to certification to teach Mandarin, for teachers in kindergarten through 12th grade. Among the most exciting possibilities, said Huang, are trips to China conducted through the Confucius Institute at Alfred University. He will be working with the International Programs office at Alfred University to develop additional semester- or year-long study abroad opportunities for AU students at Chinese institutions, including the China University of Geosciences. Shorter trips - 10 days or two weeks - might be developed in conjunction with AU courses that focus on a particular aspect of Chinese culture. Through the Confucius Institute, Huang will also be able to take business and industrial leaders, including representatives of economic development agencies or Chambers of Commerce that want to establish partnerships with their Chinese counterparts, on "trade missions" to China. Alfred University will also develop resources, including a library, to promote research both on the AU campus and at other institutions across the state through a Center for Research on Chinese Language and Culture.