

FIU global partnerships expanding, dean says

BY MARILYN BOWDEN

Florida International University's dual degree program with top universities in other countries is in its second year and still growing, said Jose de la Torre, dean of the Alvah Chapman Graduate School of Business.

The program brings students studying for a master's degree in international business from partnering institutions to FIU for two semesters.

"We've signed up 20 different universities so far, 15 in the Americas and the other five in Europe," Mr. de la Torre said. "Last year, we had 15 students participating, and this year, we have 24. Our goal is to grow to about 60.

"The students come from a wide variety of countries, and the experience so far as been extraordinary. They have been working on live consulting projects for such companies as Caterpillar, DHL and American Express."

This year, he said, FIU hopes to conclude agreements with another three or four institutions in Europe and four or five in China.

"I was in China last summer," the dean said, "and signed memos of understanding with a couple of universities there. I'm almost certain that in the next few months we will be concluding those agreements."

One of them, he said, is Qingdao University – coincidentally located in the Northeast China port city of Qingdao that became a sister city of Miami last fall.

At the program's second annual meeting, held in Santiago, Chile, Mr. de la Torre said, partner institutions concluded a series of agreements.

"One of the most exciting is something that began last year and is now taking off," he said. "We're creating a common database for resumés from all of the students from partner universities – not just those in the dual degree program, but any who are interested in international positions.

"We had 350 students in the database when we began this fall – 174 from FIU and 176 from partner institutions. Our goal is to double that this year."

The dean said the database gives corporate clients, "one-stop access to a large number of superb candidates from a wide variety of top schools in many countries. They can search for all kinds of criteria.

"We had one company that wanted a finance person and a marketing person. They hired an FIU graduate for finance, but did not find anyone here they liked for marketing. Using the database, they ended up hiring a marketing person in Buenos Aires to operate in Latin America."