

Abstract

Postsecondary Education Network International Project

James J. DeCaro

The Nippon Foundation of Japan is partnering with NTID/RIT and Japan's Tsukuba College of Technology (TCT) to establish a worldwide university network serving deaf students, entitled the Postsecondary Education Network International (PEN-International). This project is the first step in a multiyear partnership to technologically link universities around the world that serve deaf and hard-of-hearing people. PEN-International is undertaken to help universities apply state-of-the-art instructional technologies, improve and update their technical curriculum, and update their computer hardware and software for instruction. NTID and TCT are using their collective expertise in deaf education and technology to assist participating countries with faculty training; development of instructional products; and application of the worldwide web, information technology, and distance learning technologies to teaching and learning. NTID and TCT faculty will be teaching various information technologies and operating systems, as well as various multimedia and off-the-shelf software packages. In addition, student and faculty exchanges and joint ventures with information technology industries will be implemented. The long-term goals of the project are twofold: to equip deaf residents of participant countries with the skills needed to compete in a high technology workplace, and to prepare universities to share the knowledge and instructional products they develop with other colleges. PEN-International will enhance local capability and global networking at each participant institution. Participants will be moved from importers of 'know how' to self-sufficiency. As the project progresses, each institution will develop the capability to export what has been learned through the project to other programs serving people who are deaf. Over the five-year life of the project, PEN-International will work in as many as 10 different countries, with Tianjin College for the Deaf of Tianjin University of Technology (China) being the first, and the Center for the Deaf at Moscow State Technical University (Russia) to follow.