

# NTID/RIT Lands Second Major Award To Lead Global Effort For Educating Deaf

April 4, 2002

Japan's The Nippon Foundation has awarded the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology \$1.16 million to continue its leading role in improving education and career opportunities for deaf people around the world.

The Nippon Foundation last year awarded NTID \$900,000 to form the Postsecondary Education Network International (PEN-International), to help colleges across the globe improve technological education for their deaf students.

"Each country is in a different stage of educating deaf people at the college level. Each has its own set of goals," said James. DeCaro, Ph.D., former Dean of NTID, and director of PEN-International. "Add to that mix each country's unique written, spoken and signed languages, its own culture and technical knowledge, and it becomes a very exciting, multi-layered project."

Tianjin University of Technology (TUT) in China and Japan's Tsukuba College of Technology (TCT) were first to reap the rewards of this project. Taking each step collaboratively, the PEN team first conducted a needs assessment, confirmed equipment needs, and assured compatibility. Next, they developed curriculum to fit each college's specific needs, and designed and built a multi-media lab that included renovating space, installing new computers/workstations, configuring a network, and installing projection for easier visual instruction. Finally, they trained faculty how to use the new lab to meet their students' instructional needs.

"PEN-International has accelerated our ability to apply new instructional technologies by almost a decade," said Bao Guodong, director of Tianjin Technical College for the Deaf. "They are also helping us to become a resource for educators of the deaf throughout China."

The goals of PEN-International are twofold: to equip deaf students with the skills needed to compete in a high technology, global marketplace; and to prepare universities to share the knowledge and instructional products they develop with other colleges in their corner of the world.

The new grant will fund efforts this year in Bauman Moscow State Technical University in Russia, and de la Salle University--College of St. Benilde in the Philippines.

"Despite the turmoil caused by horrible world events, we want to work together for human potential," said DeCaro, "and aside from different languages and cultures and political motives-- we can and will continue to share and learn from each other, because tremendously good things come from that."

PEN-International's website, [www.pen.ntid.rit.edu](http://www.pen.ntid.rit.edu), is being designed to serve as a multi-language portal for faculty training and development for all participant countries. The PEN team is also developing a Basic Survival Sign Language CD Dictionary that will include 125 words and phrases from English, Russian and Japanese sign languages, and will later include Chinese, Philippine, and others. In addition, the PEN team is partnering with the World Federation of the Deaf to develop a database of colleges and universities worldwide that serve people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

"There are very few deaf people around the world who can afford to study abroad. Countless other deaf or hard-of-hearing students are left behind and are not able to obtain high quality postsecondary education in their home countries," said Mr. Reizo Utagawa, executive director, The Nippon Foundation. "This is particularly true in developing nations. We believe it is important to establish an educational infrastructure in these countries to prepare deaf and hard-of-hearing people to enter society and the workplace."