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UCSB and Swiss Technical Institute Begin Research Exchange Program

Santa Barbara, Calif.-- UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang and ETH Zürich President Olaf Kübler signed a memorandum of understanding on June 4 which inaugurated an exchange program of students between research groups of the two institutions.

"ETH" stands for "Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule," the Federal Institute of Technology. The Swiss school is one of the world's outstanding technical institutes.

UCSB and ETH Zürich will exchange three to five students annually. The students, who can be at the undergraduate, graduate, or postdoctoral level, must be participating in a research group at either institution, which is collaborating with a research group at the other institution.

Chancellor Yang said, "This exchange agreement represents the kind of international opportunity that students and faculty members long for--a chance to do serious research and academic work in a different culture. In today's global environment, international experience and colleagues abroad are essential, and for these scientists and engineers, participation in this exchange will bring great dividends and new opportunities. For our two institutions, this agreement will enhance our education and research value. We complement each other with our strengths, and we are confident that we will become better institutions as a result of this agreement."

President Kübler said, "I chose UC Santa Barbara for two reasons. I have been impressed with the way Santa Barbara has risen through the rankings and shown a rapid increase in the level of science and engineering research, in particular, in materials science. Quite a few colleagues at ETH Zürich, who have had close ties to Santa Barbara, have confirmed my impressions of its excellence and recommended collaboration. Second, I believe nice places are conducive to good science. I picked places for my own sabbaticals that are beautiful and excellent in science. Santa Barbara fits both those criteria."

At UCSB the exchange program will be managed by the deans of engineering and of science.

Matthew Tirrell, Dean of the College of Engineering, explained, "The students will have an opportunity to see different research styles, to work in an entirely different environment where people are still interested in the same kinds of problems. This exchange is designed not only to benefit students, but also to enhance the research programs at both places by providing each an opportunity to take advantage of the other's resources."

Tirrell said that he e-mailed College of Engineering faculty to ask who is or would be interested in collaborating with a research group at ETH Zürich. "Among the over 30 respondents," said Tirrell, "are faculty members from every department, and they are interested in subjects as diverse as fluid mechanics, control, computer science, and materials." Tirrell noted that connections in materials research are particularly strong. The Chairman of ETH Zürich's Materials Department, Paul Smith, is a former faculty member at UCSB. And, according to Tirrell, "There are many other connections between the two campuses that we hope to develop."

The exchange program, which will go into effect July 1, will last until June 30, 2005, when UCSB's Chancellor and ETH Zürich's President will evaluate results and determine the program's future.

Images



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