

Rotary Centers create e-learning platform to share peacemaking and peacekeeping techniques

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EVANSTON, Ill. USA, April 24, 2008 – In an effort to maximize interaction and collaboration, Rotary’s innovative peace studies program will develop an e-learning platform to provide greater access and enhanced learning opportunities to Rotary World Peace Fellows and other students around the world.

The announcement was made following a meeting of senior Rotary leaders and senior officials of partnering universities held at the Rotary headquarters in Evanston last week. The two-day meeting was an opportunity to discuss ways to enhance cross-university exchanges and promote the six Rotary Centers for International Studies, which teach peace-making and conflict resolution skills to young professionals at leading universities five countries.

“The Rotary Centers program has created an innovative network of peace and conflict resolution experts, and we agreed to further strengthen it by leveraging the Centers’ differing strengths and varying areas of specialization,” explains Rotary Foundation Chair Bob Scott, adding that a \$20,000 gift from the Rotary Foundation will support the initiative. “This Web-based learning platform will expose all Rotary peace fellows and other students to the program’s comparative advantages and variety of course offerings.”

Tom Woodhouse, director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution at the University of Bradford says the e-learning initiative marks a major move forward in the direction of harnessing internet based learning technologies for the purposes of conflict resolution and peace education.

“Specifically, the creation of a common course between the Rotary Centers will create a global space for learning and disseminating best practice in techniques of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding,” adds Woodhouse, also the academic director of the University of Bradford Rotary Center for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution.

Bradford University Vice-Chancellor Mark Cleary endorsed the importance of the initiative and described it as a way of

“celebrating the diversity of the program, building on the strengths of the different universities, united in the common cause of global peacemaking.”

Launched in 2002, the Rotary Centers program supports master’s degree studies in fields related to conflict resolution, negotiation and the root causes of conflicts. The program is equipping the next generation of global and community leaders with skills needed to reduce the threat of war and violence. Up to 60 Rotary World Peace Fellows are selected every year in a globally competitive process that begins when they apply through their local Rotary clubs.

In addition to Bradford, the Rotary Centers for International Studies are located on the campuses of International Christian University, Japan; Universidad del Salvador, Argentina; the University of Queensland, Australia, the University of California-Berkeley, Calif.; and - in a shared arrangement - Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, N.C.

Also present at the meeting were representatives of the Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, which hosts Rotary’s three-month Peace and Conflict Studies Program for mid- to upper-level professionals in governments, nongovernmental organizations, and private corporations.

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Rotary is the world's largest privately-funded source of international scholarships and has more than 30,000 Rotary clubs in over 200 countries and geographic regions. For more information about the Rotary Centers for International Studies, please visit www.rotary.org

Interested in becoming a Rotary World Peace Fellow? Contact a Rotary Club in your area or send an email to rotarycenters@rotary.org

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