(HOUSTON) — Continuing its research and educational partnerships with the Far East, the Texas A&M Health Science Center (HSC) Institute of Biosciences and Technology has signed a Letter of Cooperation with Xiamen University in Fujian Province, China.

The letter states that “each institution agrees to exercise their best efforts to encourage and promote cooperation in fields of mutual interests including, but not limited to, basic research in the field of biotechnology and translational research development.” This cooperation is expected to include exchanging faculty members and researchers for participation in collaborative research; inviting highly selected outstanding students from Xiamen to acquire research experience, mentorship and education from HSC-Institute of Biosciences and Technology faculty; and conducting joint research projects and activities.

The new agreement is aimed at developing bilateral relations through cooperation that contributes to cultural enrichment, scientific progress and the consolidation of friendship between the countries.

“Xiamen University and the leaders of Xiamen City, together, clearly recognize the importance of developing first-class facilities for translational biomedical research and clinical care in order to help the people of China for generations to come,” said David S. Carlson, Ph.D., interim director of the HSC-Institute of Biosciences and Technology and HSC vice president for research and graduate studies. “IBT has had wonderful relationships with Xiamen University in the past. We look forward to continuing to work with the scientists and graduate students from Xiamen University in their ambitious project to develop a world-class center for research and clinical care.”

Founded in 1921 and with a current total enrollment of more than 37,000 full-time students, Xiamen University has produced more than 150,000 undergraduates and graduates. It has a graduate school and 22 undergraduate schools comprised of 60 departments and 10 research institutes and centers.

Located on the Taiwan Strait, Xiamen is a coastal city in southeastern China with about 2.5 million people. Xiamen University is the academic anchor of the developing Xiamen Medical Center, a joint venture between the university and its medical school Xiamen City with its multiple hospitals and medical institutions that will be patterned after the Texas Medical Center.

The Letter of Cooperation was signed by Dr. Carlson; Chongshi Zhu, Xiamen University president; and Fen Wang, Ph.D., professor in the Center for Cancer and Stem Cell Biology at the HSC-Institute of Biosciences and Technology. The event was part of a delegation from Xiamen of both Xiamen University and Xiamen City officials who visited Texas Medical Center institutions this week.

“As one of the very first five special economic zones in China that has an open economic system, Xiamen has made enormous progress, and its living standards have significantly improved,” said Dr. Wang, an alumnus of Xiamen University. “To establish a high-level medical institution with cutting-edge technology to provide better health care and support biomedical research is imminent and a top agenda item of the Xiamen municipal government.”

Dr. Wang is leading the cooperative initiative among Xiamen University, the Texas Medical Center and the HSC-Institute of Biosciences and Technology. The concept of a Xiamen Medical Center began with earlier visits by President Zhu to Houston hosted by Dr. Wang.
Since 1980, Dr. Wang and his mentor, Wallace L. McKeehan, Ph.D., executive associate director of the HSC-Institute of Biosciences and Technology and director of the Center for Cancer and Stem Cell Biology, have mentored dozens of graduate and postdoctoral students from Xiamen University who received laboratory training in their labs in New York and Houston.

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