

Artificial intelligence gets boost

Jinan University and University of Birmingham set project in motion

By LI WENFANG in Guangzhou liwenfang@chinadaily.com.cn

Guangzhou-based Jinan University and the University of Birmingham in Britain are set to roll out programs to nurture young talent in the age of artificial intelligence and big data.

Located on Jinan University's Panyu district campus in Guangzhou, South China's Guangdong province, the Jinan University-University of Birmingham Joint Institute officially enrolls students this September. It is taking in 120 freshmen from the provinces of Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangxi, Hunan and Sichuan, and Chongqing municipality, who will major in applied mathematics with economics, statistics, computing, or pure mathematics, says Hu Jun, president of Jinan University.

The joint institute will start its first semester in fall and all the courses will be taught in English.

Some courses will be taught by faculty members from the University of Birmingham and students will be able to receive degrees from both universities.

Students will be registered with both universities and have access to online programs of the University of Birmingham. In the four-year program, the students will have the opportunity of studying at other universities in Britain and the United States.

"The highlight of our joint programs is the cross-disciplinary teaching in integrating mathematical knowledge and skills into traditional academic subjects. Our students will develop problem-solving

and team-working capabilities, among many other skills," says Jon Frampton, the deputy pro-vice chancellor of the University of Birmingham.

"Their ability to apply mathematics to real-world problems will develop and once they graduate with degrees from each university, we will be proud to see them leave our institute with the skills highly sought after for regional and national economic development."

All teaching projects are being jointly formulated by the two universities. The joint institute will introduce the quality monitoring system of the University of Birmingham. All teaching activities will be evaluated by the Sino-foreign joint program certification system of China's Ministry of Education and Britain's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

The annual tuition fee stands at about 70,000 yuan (\$10,100), with scholarships from both Jinan University and the joint institute to be offered. Students of the joint institute will have a wide range of institutions to choose for internship and Tianhe district of Guangzhou is an area where they might be offered.

Established in 1906, Jinan University today has more than 11,800 students from abroad, including international students, overseas Chinese and those from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. Founded in 1900, the University of Birmingham is among leading universities in that country.

The institute aims to cover postgraduate and doctoral programs in the future.

Applying finishing touches on the college years



A visitor (above) takes pictures of tie-dye artworks at an exhibition by the students, who are to graduate this summer, from the School of Art of Nantong University in Nantong, Jiangsu province, on May 25. A performance carnival was also held during the event. The exhibits included more than 1,000 works covering Chinese paintings, sculptures (left), calligraphy, industrial design, animation and virtual reality displays.

XU CONGJUN / XINHUA

Learn happiness as a skill; acquire it

Happiness is often categorized as an emotion that comes and goes, sometimes out of one's control.

But to educators and researchers, being happy is a skill type. Young people can learn it, acquire it and benefit from it.

"Therefore, we came up with the notion of 'happiness education,'" Tian Huisheng, president, National Institute of Education Sciences, said during his keynote speech at the International Conference on Happiness Education and Seminar on Positive Mental Health Education, held in Beijing over May 21-23.

"We hope that young people can learn to find happiness and bring out happiness in others, and enjoy a happy life," he added.

More than 40 researchers and experts from across the world shared their findings and suggestions on the issue of cultivating happiness among the youth.

Nadia Lovett, a professor from the University of Adelaide in Australia, advocated the PERMA model at the seminar. The model developed by US psychologist Martin Seligman, stands for five things: P for positive emotions, E for engagement, R for positive relationships, M for meaning and A for accomplishment.

"On top of genetic influence, 40 percent of your happiness depends on your choices," Lovett said. "This includes your daily habits, how you choose to think about life, and stuff you do in your free time."

This idea was backed by Wu Yinghui, director of the Institute of Education Sciences of Haidian District.

Since 2009, educators in Beijing's Haidian area have been carrying out "positive" mental health education.

"Happiness requires education," Wu said, adding that her team managed to use anticipation and encouragement to help students cultivate positive thoughts. Haidian is home to some of China's best universities.

The seminar's main agenda was to announce the launch of the International Happiness Education Consortium, which will be led by the National Institute of Education Sciences, and will be open to educators from across the world, according to Meng Wanjin, chairman of the new consortium.

Zhu Dongbin from the Department of Basic Education, Ministry of Education, and Bai Xuejun, director of the Chinese Psychological Society, addressed the seminar. Scholars from Yale University, Peking University and Tsinghua University were also invited.

CHINA DAILY

Nobel laureate Aaron Ciechanover tells students to ask more questions

By ZHANG KUN in Shanghai zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn

Israeli Nobel laureate Aaron Ciechanover has called on young Chinese students to develop the culture of asking questions and to challenge their professors.

He added that as Chinese culture emphasizes respect, students are not usually encouraged to challenge their teachers, but this had to change.

He said this as he gave an online lecture to the students of the East China Normal University and Israel's Haifa University on May 23.

During his lecture he also said that while China has made much progress, Chinese scientists sometimes needed to do more to achieve innovation.

The event was jointly hosted by the two universities and the Israeli consulate in Shanghai as part of events to mark 25 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries this year.



Students at East China Normal University at a lecture by Ciechanover with their Haifa University peers. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Ciechanover, 69, won the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 2004.

Since its creation in 1948, Israel has produced 10 Nobel winners, says Amikam Levy, consul general of Israel in Shanghai.

Haifa alone has produced three Nobel laureates, according to Ciechanover, who shared his experience growing up in the Israeli city and

studying medicine there before going to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States.

The most important lesson he learned, he said, was to have "passion about what you are doing."

He encouraged students to pursue their dreams. "If it is not something in your DNA, then change, because life is short."

He spoke about the revolution in medical science and how it has enabled longer human life expectancy.

With the development of genetics, humans are entering an era of precision medicine, he said citing Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie's surgery on discovering that she carried genes with high risk of breast and ovarian cancers.

Ciechanover said one day science may help people to "discard the sick gene and replace it with healthy genes."

Ma Yaolu, a student majoring in chemistry at the ECNU, said that Ciechanover's lecture has helped her to decide that she will do her post-graduate studies. "I am a junior-year student, and am faced with the choice of either furthering my studies or taking a job after graduation. I found the lecture very inspiring."

According to Levy, Sino-Israeli relations celebrate "a mutual future" as well.

Shanghai and Haifa have done joint scientific research for years.



Jon Frampton, University of Birmingham's deputy pro-vice chancellor, speaks about the joint institute with Jinan University in Guangzhou, Guangdong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

International Education Column

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