



News Release

For Release: Oct. 23, 2006

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University of Denver establishes the Institute for Sino-American International Dialogue to advance global sustainability

Anna and John J. Sie Foundation funds building addition and start-up of institute that will focus on energy, water and the environment

DENVER— The University of Denver (DU) is establishing a new policy institute that will address energy, water and environmental issues in China and the United States. The Institute for Sino-American International Dialogue, to be housed in DU's Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS), will work to implement long-term sustainable strategies through the creation of a permanent forum of key decision makers and opinion leaders from both countries. The start-up funding for the institute is nearly \$3.3 million which includes a generous gift of \$2.373 from the Anna and John J. Sie Foundation to DU. The balance comes from University and other sources.

DU Chancellor Robert Coombe and GSIS Dean Tom Farer announced today that Banning Garrett, currently director of Asia programs at the Atlantic Council of the United States in Washington, D.C., will be executive director of the institute. Prior to joining the Atlantic Council in 2003, Garrett worked for more than 20 years as a consultant to the Department of Defense, other agencies of the U.S. government and private industry.

"There are long-term crises facing the world beyond terrorism and the current turmoil in the Middle East and they must be tackled with international cooperation," said Coombe. "The United States and China must work together on energy, environmental and clean water issues. These may be the most critical challenges facing humanity for the next century and beyond."

Coombe said the University's location in the West makes it an ideal location to craft policy recommendations since this region has vast experience dealing with water-resource management, the environmental impact of development and conservation of energy resources.

"Banning will draw on the University of Denver's extensive network of contacts with other institutions to develop creative and actionable policy recommendations," Farer said.

“We will partner distinguished Chinese and Americans through the institute in order to make those recommendations actionable public policy. We are very excited to create another major US-China initiative in addition to Professor (Sam) Zhao’s preeminent Center for US-China Cooperation at GSIS.” The institute will be located in a new addition that will soon be constructed next to GSIS’s Ben Cherrington Hall.

“In keeping with the spirit of the institute, we are pleased that the addition will be a green building,” said John Sie. “We are excited that the building will house important work that will help shape the sustainability of resources, not only in China and the United States but in the world. The new executive director, Banning Garrett, will have many organizations in this great state to draw from including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.”

Garrett will join the institute on Jan. 1, 2007. His goals during the three-year start-up phase include building links to other organizations and institutions in the United States and China that share one or more of the institute’s objectives; commissioning and directing policy-oriented research; securing key decision makers to the permanent forum, and directing the on going forums, conferences and symposia. “Using the world wide stature of GSIS, I will reach out to experts and government officials in both countries since the sectors being examined are under multiple ministries, administrations or cabinet secretaries,” said Garrett. “I agree that global energy, environmental and water issues and their interrelationships cannot be successfully addressed and solved unless these two countries can work together as strategic partners. The vital interests of both nations, as well as the welfare of the international community at large, are at stake, which makes this a most exciting and challenging opportunity.”