

UNH to open Chinese cultural center

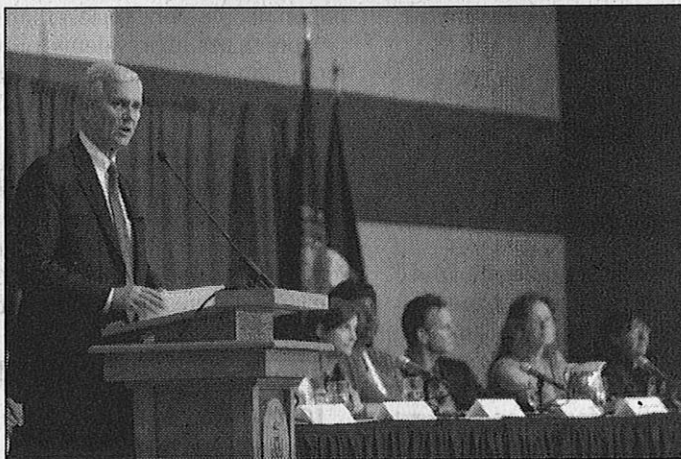
◆ **Confucius Institute:** Supported by the Chinese government, two professors from Chengdu University will teach Chinese language and culture.

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DURHAM — The University of New Hampshire will open a Chinese language and cultural center next month with the backing of that nation's government, President Mark Huddleston announced yesterday as he updated faculty and staff on the school's strategic plan.

The Confucius Institute, the first in northern New England but one of many around the world, is being funded by a nonprofit supported by the Chinese government, Huddleston said. The institute will pay for two professors from Chengdu University, in China's Sichuan province, to come to UNH and teach Chinese language and culture.

The institute is one of the biggest accomplishments to come from Huddleston's strategic plan, a sweeping initiative announced in February to revamp the school in everything from fundraising to refocusing on business and international opportunities. He made



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UNH President Mark Huddleston announces the opening of a Chinese language and culture center yesterday. The center is backed by the Chinese government.

it his first announcement as he provided a progress report to about 500 faculty, staff and students at UNH yesterday and said the school has made good progress on increasing its international footprint.

Huddleston also touted steps taken to improve business relations, highlighting a green jobs program done in conjunction with the state, a new UNH-sponsored business incubator at Pease and a recent affiliation with the Franklin Pierce Law Center in Concord, now called the UNH School of Law.

The success of other initiatives was unclear.

Huddleston said UNH has made progress raising money for a new business school,

which requires \$25 million in donations to get a matching gift from wealthy financier and alumnus Peter T. Paul, but he had no numbers.

"I don't know the figures off the top of my head," he said in an interview after his speech.

In announcing his strategic plan in February, Huddleston said the school was \$11 million toward its fundraising goal for the business school. Days later, another UNH official had to clarify that the school had raised only \$3 million and that \$8 million was surplus money.

Huddleston also did not say when UNH would launch a new fundraising campaign, something he has spoken about since becoming presi-

dent, though he did take a major step toward that goal this month when he hired a new vice president for advancement to lead fundraising.

The Confucius Institute will allow UNH to teach a full four years of Chinese language, something it has never done before, and meet a growing demand for Chinese classes in general, Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs Lisa MacFarlane said.

The Chinese government is paying \$100,000 to \$150,000 to get the institute off the ground, MacFarlane said.

"This is a win-win situation," she said, noting UNH's current budget doesn't leave much money to expand programs.

She said the institute would also help schoolchildren by helping to certify Chinese language teachers for schools and business people by teaching them Chinese classes online.

There have been concerns expressed elsewhere, and by one audience member yesterday, that backing by the Chinese government could lead to teaching favorable to that country. MacFarlane said all curriculums would have to be approved beforehand and noted that anything radical and largely unaccepted, like a class based on the idea that Tibet is rightfully part of China, would be rejected.