

South Korean University to Begin Chiropractic Course

Editorial Staff

The path is now clear for formal chiropractic education to be introduced into the university system of South Korea. Under the terms of an agreement signed recently between Hanseo University of Korea and RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, both universities will work together with the Korean chiropractic and health care communities to begin teaching a formal, university-level chiropractic degree course.

Vice chancellor of RMIT University, Professor David Beanland, said RMIT was already a highly successful international university, being one of the top destinations in the world for international students. He said the agreement with Hanseo University, in addition to the many other agreements currently in place between RMIT and other universities around the world, was a further step forward in the development of RMIT as a global university.

Professor David Story, the dean of RMIT's faculty of biomedical and health sciences, said the agreement to deliver RMIT's chiropractic program in Korea paralleled the highly successful introduction of chiropractic education into Japan in 1995.

The co-founder of Hanseo University, Professor Kee-sun Ham, said the agreement with RMIT University held tremendous promise for the youth of Korea. Professor Ham said that the Korean community could only benefit from its young students having the choice to study chiropractic as well as either Western or Oriental medicine in Korea. He also commented that Hanseo University had worked closely with the Korea International Chiropractic Institute to examine chiropractic programs around the world for their suitability for introduction into Korea. They found that the only program which met their expectations and standards was the five year, double degree course at RMIT University, Melbourne.

According to Professor Ham, one of the greatest benefits to Korean society would be the much higher number of chiropractic graduates who would remain to practice in Korea. He said the existing situation where students had to travel to another country to study frequently resulted in the student seeking residency in that country and not returning home.

Professor Andy Kleynhans, who heads up RMIT's department of chiropractic, osteopathy and complementary medicine, reported that negotiations had been underway for some years. An extremely rigid set of criteria had to be met before RMIT would consider entering into partnership with a Korean university. Professor Kleynhans said RMIT Chiropractic was especially delighted to be working with Hanseo University, given both the high level of commitment and dedication of the Hanseo University management team, and their success in establishing a high quality university in the precinct identified by the Korean government for technology, education, and information services.

Professor Kleynhans said RMIT was consulting with the Korean Embassy in Canberra, and the Australian Embassy in Korea, to ensure that the introduction of the program complied with both the Australian and Korean government requirements. Professor Kleynhans noted that the president

of the World Federation of Chiropractic, Dr. John Sweaney, had recently visited South Korea and had met with representatives of the Korean Chiropractic Association, Hanseo University, and the Korea International Chiropractic Institute. Professor Kleynhans said the introduction of Chiropractic Education into Korea would be in full accord with the WFC's charter for the introduction of chiropractic education into other countries.

The day-to-day management of the program development is the responsibility of Dr. Phillip Ebrall, RMIT's director of international chiropractic programs. He commented that RMIT Chiropractic was now in the unique position of having three delivery sites for its undergraduate program. Dr. Ebrall said the outstanding success of the Chiropractic Unit -- Japan, with its efficient delivery of a quality university degree in Japanese, had clearly demonstrated that the RMIT concept of socializing chiropractic education to suit the community in which it was delivered was appropriate. Dr. Ebrall said that the greatest benefit of the RMIT approach was the establishment of a very clear identity for chiropractic as a high touch, low technology system of health care, which was highly appropriate for countries undergoing rapid economic development, such as Korea, where traditional values still held a high place.

Dr. Ebrall reported that the outcome of RMIT's chiropractic programs would be practitioners trained with the appropriate level of competency in all elements across the domains of all age groups. He explained that all of RMIT's programs, both under and postgraduate, were at the highest standard of intellectual rigor to be found in any university environment. He said the introduction of chiropractic education into the university environment, in which Australia has lead the way, has resulted in a new generation of chiropractic education, which was based on competency assessed within a highly developed framework, the components of which continued to exceed the quotas required for CCE accreditation.

Professor Kleynhans announced that Dr. Ebrall had been appointed as the secretary of the RMIT University Chiropractic Internationalisation Advisory Committee, which represents the interests of all the stakeholders in chiropractic education throughout South East Asia. The committee had been established to guarantee a close involvement of chiropractic leaders within the region in the ongoing introduction and development of both under and postgraduate chiropractic courses in individual countries.

Dr. Ebrall said the committee had representation from the major chiropractic associations in each country, and from institutions, such as universities, with an interest in chiropractic education. The regional representatives of the WFC were also members of the committee and the first formal gathering of all members would be held concurrently with the WFC Congress in Tokyo in June.

Readers wishing to know more about the development of chiropractic education in Korea may contact Dr. Ebrall by e-mail at RMIT University: ebrallp@rmit.edu.au, or via fax: 603 9467 2794.

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