



NEWS RELEASE

Association of Pacific Rim Universities Approves Advanced Internet Project, Expands Cooperative Efforts at New Zealand Meeting

September 9, 1999 – The Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) launched an advanced Internet initiative, “APRUNet,” at the group’s annual conference, held Sept. 7-9 at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

APRU also earned increased recognition from the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group whose summit meeting of political leaders – including President Clinton – overlapped APRU’s conference in Auckland. The APEC Ministers of Foreign Affairs issued an invitation to APRU to establish an informal dialog “in the areas of science, technology, and human resources development.”

Only university presidents (or equivalent academic ranks) can represent their schools at APRU’s annual meetings. The group’s membership includes 34 leading research universities from around the Pacific Rim.

The 22 presidents who gathered for the Auckland meeting voted to give University of Southern California President Steven B. Sample a one-year extension on his term as chair of the association, extending it to run through 2001.

Sample has chaired APRU since its foundation in 1997 on the USC campus. At the Auckland meeting Sample deflected motions to commit him to longer service. “I believe if APRU is to move forward we need to find a way to move the chair around,” he said.

However, to maintain continuity, the gathered presidents agreed to extend for an even longer time the leading role of another USC participant, Vice Provost for International Affairs Richard Drobnick, who has served as executive head of the APRU Secretariat since the body’s founding in 1997.

Drobnick will continue to lead APRU Secretariat, which will continue to be headquartered at USC until 2003.

The APRU leaders also elected to the steering committee for three-year terms, Ki-Jun Lee, President, Seoul National University; Lim Pin, Vice Chancellor, National University of Singapore and Luis Riveros, Rector, University of Chile.

Among many topics brought up, Sample singled out the creation of an expert working group on the APRUNet project which will pursue the goal of higher bandwidth connections between APRU institutions.

“APRU itself won’t be in the business of laying fiberoptic cable,” said Sample. Rather, APRUNet will assist member institutions in working with the advanced Internet consortia that are creating these connections.

During the Auckland meeting, Sample signed letters of agreement with four of these advanced information network developers, including Internet2-UCAID (University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development), APAN (Asia Pacific Advanced Network), CENIC (Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California) and the TransPAC Consortium.

As links fall into place, Sample said APRUNet will develop “middleware” designed to make use of the 200-300 MB/sec data flow capacities the new systems will have for such applications as shared digital libraries, distance learning, and remote use of one-of-a-kind or extremely expensive equipment.

“For example,” said Sample, “the University of Tokyo has the best scanning electron microscope in the world.” The technology exists, he explains, for users in Los Angeles or Australia to send their samples to Japan and then remotely control the microscope in real time over the Internet – “as long as we can supply enough bandwidth to transmit and receive high resolution images in real time.”

Chancellor Robert M. Dynes of UC San Diego and President Makato Nagao of Kyoto University will direct the APRUNet effort with the participation of senior information technology officers from many other APRU universities. UCAID, APAN, CENIC and TransPAC which have just become APRU strategic partners in the development of APRUNet will also assign some of their specialists to the APRUNet working group. APEC recognized the overall importance of this project when its Industrial Science and Technology Working Group endorsed APRUNet at its August meeting in Seattle.

In a related move, the APRU Presidents endorsed an international conference titled “Distance Learning and the Internet,” sponsored by USC and the Lucent Technology Foundation in collaboration with APRU. The conference will take place at USC on March 27-29.

In other important actions, APRU voted to:

- Create a detailed report on science, technology and human resource concerns of the Pacific Rim region to be presented to APEC's Human Resource Development and Industrial Science and Technology Working Groups next year.
- Continue and expand the APRU Fellows Program in which selected junior faculty from member universities will meet at summer seminars on two member campuses to share research on a specific theme. The preliminary title for the 2000 program is "Environment and Development: Scientific, Social and Technological Challenges for the Pacific Rim." The University of Washington will be one host and the other APRU host institution will be identified within a month.
- Endorse a proposal from the University of Tokyo to facilitate a research project titled "Investigation into the State of Research and Education in the Pacific Rim Region among the Pacific Rim Universities."
- Endorse a USC proposal for an "APRU Doctoral Students Conference" with the inaugural conference on "Civic Enterprise: Scholarship and Practice for the Next Century in the Pacific Rim" to be held at USC in March 3-5, 2000.
- Endorse a proposal by the University of Washington for an "APRU Emerging Scholars Program" which would create and manage a website where APRU doctoral candidates could exchange information on research and dissertations.
- Set the venues for the next APRU meetings: June 2000 at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and June 2001 at Fudan University in Shanghai.

In addition to these specific steps, Sample believes the intangible benefits of the association are highly significant. He cited the creation of an atmosphere in which "one APRU university president can pick up the phone and call another on a first name basis. It encourages bilateral or trilateral joint ventures, and thus stimulates international collaboration among the members' faculty and staff."

"All of us believe," concluded Sample, "that there is this slow, halting development of a sense of community around Pacific Rim; that this community will grow and flower, and that universities will play a key role in it."

The Association of Pacific Rim Universities includes the following universities:
 Australia: Australian National University, Canberra; University of Sydney, Sydney. Canada: University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Chile: University of Chile, Santiago. China: Fudan University, Shanghai; Peking University, Beijing; Tsinghua University, Beijing; University of Science and Technology of China, Hefei; Hong Kong University of Science and Technology,

Hong Kong. Chinese Taipei: National Taiwan University, Taipei. Indonesia: University of Indonesia, Jakarta. Japan: Kyoto University, Kyoto; Osaka University, Osaka; University of Tokyo; Tokyo; Waseda University, Tokyo. Korea: Seoul National University, Seoul. Malaysia: University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. Mexico: National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico City. New Zealand: University of Auckland, Auckland. Philippines: University of the Philippines, Quezon City. Russia: Far Eastern National University, Vladivostok. Singapore: National University of Singapore, Singapore. Thailand: Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. USA: California Institute of Technology, Pasadena; Stanford University, Stanford; University of California, Berkeley; University of California, Davis; University of California, Irvine; University of California, Los Angeles; University of California, San Diego; University of California, Santa Barbara; University of Oregon, Eugene; University of Southern California, Los Angeles; University of Washington, Seattle.