BLOG from Tianjin, China

May 17, 2014

The Tiger’s Cub: No Pain, No Gain

A Chinese proverb (If you do not enter the tiger’s den, how will you get the tiger’s cub?) reminds our visiting delegation to China about our 10-year relationship with China and the Tianjin University of Commerce. Indeed, the key China founders of our TUC-FIU partnership spoke to the early days of our initiative at events on Saturday, May 17, at the TUC-FIU campus.

There, in the spacious plaza fronting our imposing and modern teaching facility, Vice Mayor Wang and President Liu both recalled the early steps taken in Tianjin and Miami to ensure a successful partnership. In a sense, both institutions extended themselves then to ensure a partnership that could work, despite no prior experience in collaborative efforts with each other.

To commemorate the 10 years of partnership, President Liu and I had the privilege of unveiling a new eye-catching sculpture recently commissioned by TUC that now graces the entry to our cooperative program. This stunning, modern red steel “t-” shaped structure harkens back to the Modesto A. Maidique Campus (Dr. Maidique himself was a founder of the FIU-TUC collaboration) and our sculpture park there. The crossed-bars of the “t” remind us what we can do if we are open to change – some necessary discomfort, if not pain along the way, and collaboration.
Later in the day, we witnessed the student talent party that really served as a talent show for our graduating seniors. One of the more memorable performances was one of our graduates combining ballet and traditional folk dance in a graceful and hopeful rendition of “Beyond the River.”

As the day edged into night, our celebration shifted to a downtown hotel where we hosted 21 alumni from the TUC-FIU partnership. They spoke to our invitees, including Trustee Claudia Puig, Trustee Gerald Grant, and leaders from Royal Caribbean International, about their FIU education and their post-university careers in China’s hospitality industry. In essence, these were the Tiger’s cubs who are now clearly the Tigers – our Tigers.
As I listened to their presentations, stressing in many instances their affection for their professors and helpful members of our TUC-FIU staff, I could not help but feel a sense of deep pride, particularly seeing my son Benjamin’s photo among the many students from Miami who have directly participated in our daring collaboration with the TUC.

The sun never sets on FIU—and our Saturday May 17, 2014 in China was a remarkable example of what it means to be connected to FIU and our World’s Ahead approach to ensuring that every student counts.