

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY:

PROFESSOR PAUL GILLER, Registrar, University College Cork, National University of Ireland, Cork, on 3 June 2005, on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Doctor Science honoris causa, on XIE SHENGWU

A Sheansailéir, agus a mhuintir na hOllscoile,

I have the honour and pleasure of introducing Professor Xie Shengwu to you today.

Professor Xie took up the office of President of Shanghai Jiao Tong University in 1997. Shanghai Jiao Tong is in the top ten of the thousand or so universities in China and is amongst the very best institutions in Asia. Founded in 1896, Shanghai Jiao Tong is also one of the oldest universities of science and engineering in China, although it has now embraced the full range of academic disciplines. There are more than 23,000 students at the university's five campuses located throughout Shanghai, with 48 undergraduate programmes of study, and a graduate school offering more than 100 Master degree programmes and more than 50 PhD programmes.

Professor Xie Shengwu was born in Shanghai and graduated from the Engineering Physics Department of Shanghai Jiao Tong University in 1966 just before the "cultural revolution". Joining the university faculty after his graduation he worked in the Department of Physics and later joined the Institute of Lasers from 1970 to 1978. In 1981 Professor Xie earned his Masters Degree in optics and was subsequently promoted to lecturer in 1982, Associate Professor in 1985, and Professor in 1990. Before taking up his appointment as President of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Professor Xie Shengwu served as Vice-Chairman and later Chairman of the Applied Physics Department, Dean of the Graduate School and as Vice-President of the University. The rapid advances in Professor Xie's career are testament to his extraordinary talents and abilities as an educator, researcher and administrator.

Since the beginning of his academic career, Professor Xie has been engaged in research in laser applications and non-linear optics in crystals. He has published books and numerous papers in his subject and received a range of honours and awards for his research achievements, such as: " National Science Conference Key Research Award" and the "Excellent Research Achievement Award" of the Chinese State Commission of Education for work on his Underwater Laser TV, the "Distinguished Master Degree Award" from the Chinese State Commission of Education; and "The Gold Prize" of the 1997 Shanghai Expo--Science & Technology for his achievements in developing computation software for optimum phase matching in biaxial crystals. He has also received Honorary Doctorates from Universities in Hong Kong, Korea and the United States.

Today Professor Xie Shengwu still tutors a number of doctoral students. In fact by extraordinary coincidence, we discovered that his very first PhD student is actually a research scientist here at UCC. Dr Xuelin Yang works in the Photonics Systems Group of the Tyndall National Institute. Xuelin recalls the fact that Prof Xie, despite an enormous administrative workload, would always make time to meet with his students. This even extended to a period when in hospital, Prof Xie would contact Xielin to visit and discuss some problems in the finer points of lasers.

Professor Xie also makes great contributions to the wider community as a member of the Shanghai Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a member of Shanghai Municipal Government's Expert Committee for Science & Technology Progress, the Chairman of the Shanghai Laser Society, a council member of the Chinese Society of Optics, an Editor of Acta Optica Sinica, and the Chairman of the Board of The Journal Of Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

The rapid development of Professor Xie's career also reflects the tremendous changes that have taken place in China, and particularly in Shanghai, in the exciting period of reform and increasing openness since the early 1980s. As one of China's new generation of Higher Education leaders, President Xie has played and continues to play a significant role in shaping the future of universities in China. His strategy of helping to advance the prosperity of the nation through science and education is admirable and astute. He envisages China in the 21st century as a "knowledge economy", just as we do here in Ireland. In this he sees the creation and dissemination of knowledge and information driving forward social and economic development. "The University,"

President Xie has argued, will be one of the most important pillars of a knowledge economy and that not only is the University charged with the mission of producing world class graduates, it is also responsible for carrying out scientific research in response to economic and social needs". In his vision of the university within a high-tech society Professor Xie has not lost sight of human values is. He has consistently highlighted the need to nurture high quality teaching staff, to cultivate curiosity and creativity amongst students and to achieve an all-round holistic education. Equally, he has strived to develop a University that serves local, regional and national needs thus overcoming the "second-city syndrome" – a situation that we in Cork wouldn't understand of course!!

In serving Shanghai Jiao Tong for close to forty years Professor Xie Shengwu has undertaken the revision of undergraduate curricula, helped restructure and expand graduate programmes, and has promoted the role of research in higher education. Under Professor Xie Shengwu, Shanghai Jiao Tong has taken the lead in the reform of higher learning in China thus creating a momentum for rapid growth as never seen before. Over the past decade, the number of students at Shanghai Jiao Tong has grown from 5,000 to more than 23,000; the area of various buildings has expanded from 230,000 square meters to 800,000 square meters, and the area of campuses from 40ha to 200ha. Professor Xie has also overseen a modernization of laboratory, teaching, library, sports and IT facilities and witnessed a number of disciplines at his University advancing towards world class recognition, such as communication and electronic systems, life sciences, genetics, naval architecture and marine engineering and materials science and processing.

Under Professor Xie's leadership, Shanghai Jiao Tong University has been actively involved in International academic exchange programmes with foreign universities including the University of Michigan in the US and Nanyang University in Singapore. To date, it has established relations with more than 100 renowned universities and colleges around the world as well as connections with many research institutions, corporations and enterprises at home and abroad. His international endeavours and outlook is mirrored in his hobbies and past-times. He is an avid map-collector, and like some famous explorers and travelers from times past, I have it on good authority that he is an excellent bowls player. Professor Xie Shengwu has formulated a grand blueprint for the future development of Shanghai Jiao Tong University and is determined to continue to build his University into a modern world class university.

Given the recent official twinning of the sister cities of Cork and Shanghai, both second cities but the real capitals of their respective countries, it is therefore a great pleasure to honour Professor Xie in recognition and acknowledgement of his leadership and extraordinary contributions to the cause of Higher Education in China.

PRAEHONORABILIS CANCELLARIE, TOTAQUE UNIVERSITAS:

Praesento vobis hanc meum filium, quem scio tam moribus quam doctrina habilem et idoneum esse qui admittatur, honoris causa, ad gradum Doctoratus in Scientiae, idque tibi fide mea testor ac spondeo, totique Academiae.