

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY:

DR MICHAEL MURPHY, President, University College Cork, on 3 June 2011, in University College Cork, on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, on **SHA HAILIN**

A Sheansailéir agus a mhuintir uilig na hOllscoile, Dr Sha Hailin is a friend of UCC, Cork and Ireland. This friendship began in 2002, when he commenced his appointment as Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Ireland. It has grown stronger with the passing years and the success enjoyed in Shanghai by UCC, Cork City and the organisations represented by the Cork Chamber of Commerce has been due in no small part to Dr Sha's vision, wise counsel and active intervention. This afternoon, we express our gratitude for his generous support, past and future, by honouring Dr Sha in his personal capacity as an accomplished and outstanding leader and innovator.

Dr Sha's career has been characterised by a profound sense of duty and his total commitment to upholding the highest traditions of public service. Those who have had the pleasure of working with Dr Sha consistently state that his energy, dedication and passion for excellence are contagious, and that he sets the personal and professional benchmark against which other senior public servants measure their performance.

Dr Sha was born in Shanghai. He graduated from Shanghai Normal University and Tongji University with a postgraduate degree in engineering and a PhD in management. He has been a visiting scholar at the University of Georgia and a visiting Professor at Shanghai Jiaotong University, Tongji University, and East China Normal University.

Following a distinguished career during which Dr Sha occupied a number of leadership roles within the public sector in Shanghai, from December 2000, Dr Sha served as the Minister-Counsellor at the Chinese Embassy in Washington, with responsibility for bilateral relations, an appointment made through the first open selection held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for senior diplomats.

Dr Sha commenced his appointment as Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Ireland in August 2002. During his tenure he had a significant impact upon China Ireland relations. He became a close friend of President Mary McAleese, who hosted a private dinner for him prior to his return to China and he is remembered by many as someone who understood the Irish culture, who learned Irish, and who had visited every county in Ireland during his posting. Dr Sha lived by himself for the last two years of his posting when he and his wife decided that she should return to China to look after their elderly parents.

As Ambassador to Ireland, Dr Sha played a central role in the official civic twinning of Cork City and Shanghai, which took place on 19th May 2005. With a population of 23 million, a GDP of US\$256 billion in 2010, the stock exchange of Asia's largest economy and the busiest cargo port in the world, which handled 29 million containers in 2010, Shanghai is not an obvious twinning partner for Cork;

however, Dr Sha was totally committed to this initiative and was instrumental in the final decision. At the time of the official twinning Dr Sha observed: "*both Cork and Shanghai are second cities Both are port cities The colour red is significant for both cities, and Both are the most beautiful cities in their respective countries*".

With Dr Sha's support, UCC, Cork City Council and Cork Chamber of Commerce have conducted a large number of educational, commercial and cultural visits to Shanghai over the past 6 years, fostering a wide range of important education and economic relations.

In November 2005, Dr Sha returned to his beloved Shanghai as the Deputy Party Secretary of the CPC Luwan District, and Mayor of Luwan District before being promoted to the post of Party Secretary of the CPC Luwan District. During this period he has worked tirelessly in supporting UCC and Cork City initiatives in Shanghai. Immediately on his return he launched the Shanghai St. Patrick's Day celebration, an event which has become the largest and most successful event of its kind in China. He also established the Ireland Business Park in the Lu Wan District of Shanghai, in recognition of the valuable contribution made by Irish businesses in Shanghai and China. Dr Sha maintained the friendships developed during his period as Ambassador and developed many new friendships in the various senior roles that he has occupied since his return. I am delighted that so many of his Irish business friends are here today to share in the celebration.

In February of 2008, Dr Sha was promoted to Deputy Secretary General of Shanghai Municipal People's Government. Following the devastating earthquake in Sichuan Province on 12th May 2008, each province in China sent volunteers to assist in the rescue and rebuilding of the devastated area. Dr Sha was appointed as commander of the Shanghai post-quake reconstruction team and served in Du Jiang Yan for one year. Unfortunately during this period his father became very ill and passed away. It is notable that when Dr Sha offered to take time out to visit his sick father, his father encouraged him to fulfill his public duty and continue serving at Du Jiang Yan.

In 2009, Dr Sha was appointed Chairman of the newly established Shanghai Municipal Commission of Commerce (SCOFCOM), which is responsible for overseeing foreign trade and investment, overseas business management and domestic trade management in Shanghai, for the first time consolidating management of domestic and foreign trade under a single government authority. In Dr Sha's words, "*Shanghai's goal is to enhance its status as a world-class economic and financial metropolis.*"

2010 marked the successful completion of Shanghai's implementation of the 11th Five-Year Plan and was marked by worldwide recognition of the success of the World Expo held in Shanghai from May to November. Dr Sha was a key member of the team that coordinated and managed the Expo. He also contributed to the success of the Cork week at the Ireland Pavilion at the World Expo.

UCC has enjoyed and appreciates the invaluable support provided by Dr Sha

during the past nine years. In December 2003, Dr Sha formally launched the UCC Chinese website, the first of its type in the Irish university sector. As Ambassador, Dr Sha took a particular interest in the welfare and education of Chinese students in Ireland and provided enthusiastic support and encouragement for the UCC recruitment campaign in China, helping to put UCC on the map at that time. We have invested great energy in developing academic engagement with China and UCC has attracted over 300 undergraduate and graduate students from the Peoples Republic of China, by far the largest cohort of Chinese students in any Irish university.

Dr Sha supported the establishment of the Irish Centre for Chinese Studies at UCC, an initiative that came to fruition in June 2006. 150 Irish students now read degree programmes in Chinese language and culture at UCC, the most significant university programme in the country, and more than 30 students from UCC now spend a year of their undergraduate degree programmes in China, predominately at Shanghai University.

Since 2007, UCC has had the privilege of hosting a Confucius Institute. Again Dr Sha played an important role in this initiative, facilitating the development of relationships with Hanban, which provides annual funding. The Confucius Institute at UCC provides teaching in 40 secondary schools around Munster raising the profile of Chinese language, culture and business.

The University is conferring an Honorary Doctorate on Dr Sha to recognise the seminal role that he played in the establishment of relations between UCC, Cork City, Cork business and Shanghai and to express our gratitude to him for the opportunities presented as a consequence. He is generous in the time and support that he expends on visiting Cork delegations and in opening network opportunities for us. In thanking Dr Sha Hailin, we see this event as also offering us the opportunity to recognise his enormous contribution to the social, economic and political life of Shanghai and express our desire for future growth and continuity. We consider Dr Sha to be a "lao pen yuo" (old friend!) and look forward to working with him in the years to come.

*Praehonorabilis cancellarie, totaque universitas:
Praesento vobis hunc meum filium quem scio tam moribus quam doctrina habilem
et idoneum esse qui admittatur, honoris causa, ad gradum Doctoratus in utroque
Jure, tam Civili quam Canonico, idque tibi fide mea testor ac spondeo totique
Academiae.*