Rider forges ties with French schools

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LAWRENCE — There will be a little touch of Paris, perhaps, around the Rider University business school next fall.

A successful experiment with Chinese students in recent years has prompted Rider's College of Business Administration to accept students from two French schools as well.

Rider announced this week it has formed liaisons with The American Business School in Paris and CEFAM, the Centre d'études Franco americain de management, in Lyon.

Students from those schools may complete their final year of an undergraduate degree program at Rider. Graduate students from those schools may also study on the Rider campus and complete a master's degree in business.

"The view of many there is that the education system in the U.S. is the highest in the world," says Steve Lorenzet, associate dean of the College of Business Administration at Rider.

He expects that the opportunity to study in the U.S. at Rider will be very popular with French students. The educational programs at the two French schools are similar to an American one in which students get a well-rounded program that includes studies in broad disciplines in addition to their chosen major.

"There's more emphasis on balanced study here. There's a balance between coursework and liberal arts and science." In Europe, Lorenzet said, students are much more focused on their chosen disciplines. "They still work hard, obviously."

In 2002 Rider formed a similar partnership with Sanda University in Shanghai, China. Things turned out well and Rider has extended the agreement for 10 more years.

There are some principal advantages to the international arrangements, Lorenzet said. Rider gets more applications and fills up its classes with greater ease. But a greater purpose, he said, is to enrich the learning atmosphere by bringing international exchange to Rider's doorstep.

"It has more to do with our strategic direction to internationalize further. It benefits (foreign students) to receive an international education. Rider kids can interact with students from other parts of the world. It does allow for more international perspective."

The exchange among these schools is mostly one way. "It is not an explicit part of the agreement for students here to go to Paris and Lyon," Lorenzet said.

However, "it is conceivable," and it could happen, he added.