

**A Brief History of PEN-International**  
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**The Nippon Foundation of Japan**  
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1. In March 2000, The Nippon Foundation approached Dr. Robert R. Davila (then vice president for NTID) to determine if the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology was interested in the creation of an international network of universities that could serve Deaf and Heard-of-Hearing so that postsecondary education could be improved around the world, primarily in developing countries. This concept was modeled after the very successful International Association of Maritime Universities that had previously been established by The Nippon Foundation.
2. At the same time, The Nippon Foundation approached Dr. Naoki Ohnuma (then Dean of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Department of TCT) and asked his opinion as regards its suggestion to NTID. TCT was the only postsecondary institution in Japan that had a program solely for Deaf and Hard of Hearing men and women. TCT's involvement in the effort was considered to be preferable and important to The Nippon Foundation since the Foundation is a not-for-profit Japanese grant-making organization. Dr. Ohnuma was positively inclined.
3. Since both institutions expressed a strong interest in the creation of the network, Dr. Davila and Dr. James DeCaro of NTID and Mr. Shuichi Obata (the immediate past president of TCT) and Dr. Naoki Ohnuma (Dean of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Department of TCT), and Mr. Yasunobu Ishii of The Nippon Foundation met at the occasion of International Conference on Education of the Deaf in Sydney, Australia in the summer of 2000 to discuss the formation of a network.
4. All parties at the Sydney meeting agreed to create a network. Subsequently, Dr. James J. DeCaro led the development effort and served as the primary author of a proposal from NTID to establish an international postsecondary education network.
5. The Rochester Institute of Technology, through NTID, officially presented a proposal to The Nippon Foundation on 30 October 2000 for the establishment of the Postsecondary Education Network-International (PEN-International). The proposal was approved on 7 December 2000 by The Nippon Foundation and NTID was awarded \$911,000 to execute the first year of the project—effective 1 March 2001. The award was made by the Foundation to RIT within the framework of its overseas cooperation assistance program.
6. PEN-International was initiated with the cooperation of the above two institutions. However, the official decision making authority as regards the program lies with NTID, which is the sole grantee contracted by The Nippon Foundation to establish and run PEN-International. While all participants in

PEN-International can, and are encouraged to, provide input into the running of the network for the betterment of men and women who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, decision-making as regards the network lies with NTID.

7. On 29 June 2001, a signing ceremony was held at RIT to officially recognize the establishment of PEN-International. The original four institutional signatories of the network were represented by the chief executives of each partner institution:
  - a. Rochester Institute of Technology: President Albert J. Simone
  - b. Tsukuba College of Technology: President Kazushi Nishijo
  - c. Tianjin University of Technology: President Jun Li
  - d. Bauman Moscow State Technical University: Rector Igor Fedorov (represented by Dr. A. Stanevsky)

The Nippon Foundation was represented by Executive Director Reizo Utagawa.

8. In April of 2002, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde joined PEN-International when a memorandum of agreement was signed between CSB and NTID.
9. In 2002 and 2003 respectively, Charles University (Czech Republic) and Ratchasuda College of Mahidol University (Thailand) joined PEN as affiliate members.
10. In 2003 and 2004 respectively, Beijing Union University and Changchun University partnered with Tianjin University of Technology to form PEN-China under PEN-International. In 2005, Zhongzhou University also joined the PEN-China network.
11. In 2005, Bauman Moscow State Technical University was joined in Russia by the Academy of Management “TISBI” (Kazan), Vladimir State University and Novosibirsk State Technical University to form PEN-Russia under the PEN-International umbrella.
12. As a result of several visits by delegations from Japan to the USA through PEN-International, in 2004, under leadership from National Tsukuba University of Technology (formerly Tsukuba College of Technology), the Postsecondary Education Program Network of Japan (PEPNet-Japan) was formed with support from PEN-International. The network is modeled after PEPNet in the USA and includes 12 universities, or support centers, from across Japan that support deaf students in the mainstream of postsecondary education. This network continues to expand across Japan.
13. In 2006, at the request of The Nippon Foundation, PEN-International began working with Chinese University of Hong Kong (Dr. Tang) and Dong Nai Provincial Teacher’s College (Dr. Woodward) to develop technology that will be utilized in the production of sign language dictionaries.

14. In 2006, PEN-International initiated preliminary work with the Korea Employment Agency for the Disabled to seek to establish a network in Korea to serve the postsecondary education needs of Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing in the country.