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On: 28 March 2013, At: 11:51

Publisher: Taylor & Francis

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Synchrotron Radiation News

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gsrn20>

Bilateral Workshop and the Inauguration of the Soochow University-Western University Centre for Synchrotron Radiation Research

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Version of record first published: 22 Mar 2013.

To cite this article: Yang Song , Xuhui Sun , Xueliang Sun & Tsun-Kong Sham (2013): Bilateral Workshop and the Inauguration of the Soochow University-Western University Centre for Synchrotron Radiation Research, Synchrotron Radiation News, 26:2, 39-39

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08940886.2013.771073>

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Bilateral Workshop and the Inauguration of the Soochow University-Western University Centre for Synchrotron Radiation Research

The unveiling ceremony of the Soochow University-Western University Centre for Synchrotron Radiation Research took place in Soochow University, Suzhou, China, on November 13, 2012. As part of the inauguration of the Centre, a technical bilateral workshop was held in Soochow University on November 12, 2012.

This international collaborative initiative was led by T. K. Sham of University of Western Ontario (also known as Western University), Canada. Official university-level conversations started in November 2011 when Xiulin Zhu, Soochow president, visited Western University and first proposed the idea to Janice Deakin, Western provost and vice-president, based on the research strength in nanotechnology and synchrotron radiation at Soochow University and Western University, respectively. The detailed proposal to found such a collaborative research center in synchrotron radiation was developed by the authors of this article and was approved by both universities' officials in May 2012. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) was officially signed by the vice-presidents of both universities at the ceremony.

The vision of the Centre is to be a global leader in interdisciplinary research and education in synchrotron radiation, to facilitate exchange and collaborative research between the two universities in the area of synchrotron radiation research, and to enhance research ca-

pability and capacity in this and related areas by assembling a critical mass of expertise and resources. The Centre will provide a multidisciplinary platform for materials research and the training of highly qualified personnel and will provide ongoing support for large-scale synchrotron radiation facilities. The initial research directions of the Centre include but are not limited to synchrotron radiation studies in: (1) nano-materials and devices; (2) energy- and environment-related materials and issues; (3) polymer and macro-molecules; (4) biomedical research; and (5) development and application of novel synchrotron capabilities and theory.

The unveiling ceremony was chaired by S. T. Lee, Director of the Institute of Functional Nano & Soft Materials (FUNSOM), Soochow University. The ceremony was attended by Soochow senior administrators, including Xiulin Zhu and Jianmei Lu, and by a Western delegation led by Janice Deakin, Charmaine Dean, Julie McMullin, and Kim Baines. At the ceremony, Sham was appointed as the inaugural Director of the Centre and some core members of the Western contingency were appointed as Visiting/Chair Professors of Soochow University. The Centre is currently staffed by six faculty members from FUNSOM, Soochow University, and 11 members from five departments and three faculties of Western University. The website of the Centre can be found at <http://nano.suda.edu.cn/swcsr/>.

Preceding the ceremony, the first bilateral workshop of the Centre was held on the campus of Soochow University. The one-day workshop featured four sessions and a total of 18 oral presentations. The topics of the presentations ranged from synchrotron-based frontier science to novel synchrotron technologies, and from experimental to *ab initio* calculations in a broad interdisciplinary areas involving chemistry, physics, materials, earth sciences, life sciences, and engineering. Invited speakers came from Soochow University, Western University, mainland China's major synchrotron facilities (Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility and National Synchrotron Radiation Laboratory (Hefei)), National Synchrotron Radiation Research Center at Taiwan, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Advanced Light Source (USA) and Canadian Light Source. The workshop was co-organized by Xuhui Sun of Soochow University and Yang Song of Western University, and attended by about 50 delegates. The detailed agenda of the workshop (and the ceremony) can be found at <http://nano.suda.edu.cn/csrr/index.html>.

Following the inauguration, Centre members are working on a graduate educational program offering "2-year + 2-year" Ph.D. degrees, an agreement to be approved by both universities. The Centre will work closely with synchrotron facilities in China and North America as an essential research endeavor. The international synchrotron community is invited to visit and to establish collaborative partnerships in the near future. ■

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Delegates from Soochow University, Western University, synchrotron facilities in China, the US and Canada, and other local institutions at the unveiling ceremony.