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FSU Hosts Vietnamese Education Conference

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There's a celebration taking place in the upper mezzanine area of Florida State University's Turnbull Conference Center. The event is a first for FSU as it hosts the Tenth Annual Vietnam Education Foundation Fellows and Scholars Conference. There are hundreds of mostly college-age students as well as Vietnam Education Foundation Executive Director Dr. Lynne McNamara.

"Florida State University is one of our what is called 'alliance university' and that is that they basically support the program that we have and agree to the cost sharing arrangements for these wonderful young men and women who are the best scientists in Vietnam to come."

But don't the Vietnamese have universities to train the scientists of tomorrow? McNamara says they certainly do.

"They are developing, they are expanding, they are learning along the way in terms of the importance and the role and the significance of research and how to integrate that and to look at the moneys necessary to build the great labs and the great research facilities and they're in that process without a doubt."

It's simply a matter, she says, of current educational supply and demand.

"The issue is to train many PhDs as fast as possible so the US educational system has got already in place a great infrastructure for great doctoral programs and research so the intent and interest is to provide that in a quicker way."

That's certainly a good thing for the students and benefits Vietnam when those students go back home. But Florida State's Graduate School Dean Nancy Marcus also sees an upside for everyone involved in the program.

"Well I was fortunate to go to Vietnam in 2008 as part of a selection process to bring these students here and they are bright and energetic and I think we have to do more to collaborate. The world is a global marketplace today there are wonderful opportunities over there and I think we just need to build those partnerships and collaborate to improve the general understanding in the world."

Along with FSU, there are more than one hundred other American Universities in alliance with the Vietnam Education Foundation. The Tallahassee conference continues through this Saturday.

