

First FHSU degrees awarded in China

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It was one hundred years ago today that the cornerstones were laid for an institution of higher education on the plains of western Kansas.

Fort Hays State University has celebrated its centennial year with monthly ceremonies and had its official birthday party June 8.

However, today is the actual 100-year birthday, and coincidentally, June 23, 2002, will go down in the university's history books for another major event.

Forty-two students from halfway around the world in China graduated with FHSU degrees today; due to the 13-hour time difference, ceremonies took place Saturday, according to Kansas clocks.

Those students were among the first graduating class from Sias University of Business and Management in Henan Province, which has had a partnership with FHSU the past two years.

Students at Sias University have the opportunity to work toward a bachelor's degree in general studies with a concentration in business management.

FHSU's Virtual College, the distance education arm of the university, administers the classes through video-taped courses and face-to-face teaching assistants who work with FHSU faculty.

After meeting specified require-

ments, which include 30 hours from FHSU, the students receive a dual degree from Sias and FHSU. This is the first year of graduates.

A contingent from FHSU went to China for the Sias graduation ceremonies, including FHSU Provost Larry Gould; Student Body President Daron Jamison, a senior from Quinter; and two FHSU instructors who teach Sias classes — Micol Maughan, assistant professor of business administration, and Zoran Stevanov, professor of art.

FHSU President Edward Hammond, who visited China and Sias University last fall, said FHSU is on strong footing heading into its second 100 years.

"We are now a major international player in education," Hammond said, "and I think that is one of the keys to what our university will be like in its second century. It's not just an institution that will serve western Kansas. It's being looked at as an institution capable of doing a lot more."

Included in the graduation ceremony, which Virtual College Dean Cindy Elliott said was intentionally planned as close as possible to that of FHSU's commencement, was the playing of the American national anthem and a congratulations video with remarks from Hammond, Elliott and Gov. Bill Graves.

