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NEWS RELEASE

SANTIAGO, CHILE - Signifying the importance of cultural and educational as well as economic ties, Governor Christie Whitman witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding today between Rutgers University and the University of Chile and participated in a distance learning event between Chilean students and students in Liberty Science Center's Explore 2000 class.

Following the signing formalities, the Governor then presided over the opening ceremonies of the Jorge Luis Borges-Pablo Neruda- Walt Whitman Symposium, also at the University of Chile. The symposium, which involved faculty from Rutgers University and the University of Chile, discussed the influence of one of the world's greatest poets, Walt Whitman, on two of Latin America's most distinguished writers, Jorge Luis Borges and Pablo Neruda.

"I believe that education and training are the keys to New Jersey's economic future," said Gov. Whitman. "Increasing the flow of ideas between universities in this global marketplace makes good sense. Not only does this program encourage greater cultural and intellectual exchanges, but it helps our students to explore the world through each other's universities -- which ultimately translates into good business sense in today's multicultural environment."

The memorandum of understanding was signed by Dr. Seth A. Gopin, Director Global Programs of Rutgers University and Dr. Luis A. Riveros, Rector, of the University of Chile. Rutgers' faculty in the Symposium were Professor Tomas E. Martinez, Director of the Latin American Studies Program; Associate Professor Jorge Marcone, Undergraduate Director of Spanish and Portuguese; and Associate Professor of English, Meredith McGill.

Calling for a program of academic cooperation between Rutgers University and the University of Chile, the memorandum aims to promote scholarly exchange and cooperation and student exchange, and to encourage the development of links in all academic disciplines at both institutions.

"Cultural understanding among scholars is just one of the many important links that draw people from different nations and backgrounds together," said Commerce Secretary Gualberto Medina. "I'm very excited about the potential for these scholarly exchanges to promote and strengthen the growing educational, cultural as well as economic bond that exists between Chile and New Jersey."

Among the other activities the program outlines are faculty exchange, student exchange, development of joint research efforts, exchange of publications, co-supervision of thesis and dissertations, and institutional research and training.

In order to carry out the agreement, both universities will entrust their corresponding directors of international relations with the task of coordinating the preparation and implementation of the proposals.

During the distance learning lesson between students in the two countries, two New Jersey students shared their completed projects on the heart and heart health using LSC's cardiac exhibits. Part of the lesson included a demonstration of actual surgical instruments used at Liberty Science Center during its Cardiac Classroom, an interactive audio/video connection between LSC's classroom and the cardiac operating rooms of Morristown Memorial Hospital.

Gov. Whitman's visit to the University of Chile took place on the final day of her trade and investment mission to South America.

Gov. Whitman is leading the state's largest trade delegation on an 11-day trade and investment mission to South America. Chile is one of three countries that Governor Whitman is visiting as part of a trade mission to the MERCOSUR nations of Brazil, Argentina and Chile.

In 1998, Chile purchased \$152.3 million dollars worth of New Jersey goods. Leading New Jersey exports to Chile include industrial machinery and computer equipment (\$47.7 million), chemicals and allied products (\$35.4 million) and instruments and related products (\$22.4 million).

MERCOSUR is a customs union of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay with two associate members, Chile and Bolivia. After the European Union and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), MERCOSUR is the world's third largest trading bloc according to U.S. Department of Commerce. In 1998, New Jersey's exports to MERCOSUR totaled \$1 billion and accounted for about 14,000 jobs in New Jersey according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

New Jersey is the ninth largest exporting state, with nearly \$22 billion in goods and services exported. The Garden State is also the fifth leading state in foreign direct investment, hosting more than 1,200 foreign firms. New Jersey is the 8th largest state economy; if it were a country, New Jersey would have the 16th largest world economy.

