

SOONER SPOTLIGHT ● HAN-MIN HSIA

In the developing country of Taiwan, the island republic off mainland China with a population of 17 million, Han-min Hsia works to further higher education and stands as tangible evidence of the global influence of University of Oklahoma alumni.

From 1977 to 1979, Hsia was Taiwan's vice minister for education and addressed such issues as revising entrance standards for his country's universities. Today he is president of Cheng Kung University, which boasts the largest and oldest engineering school in Taiwan.

Hsia earned his 1965 doctorate from OU in engineering, a field he shares with many of Taiwan's leaders, including numerous other university presidents, who are also engineers and applied scientists.

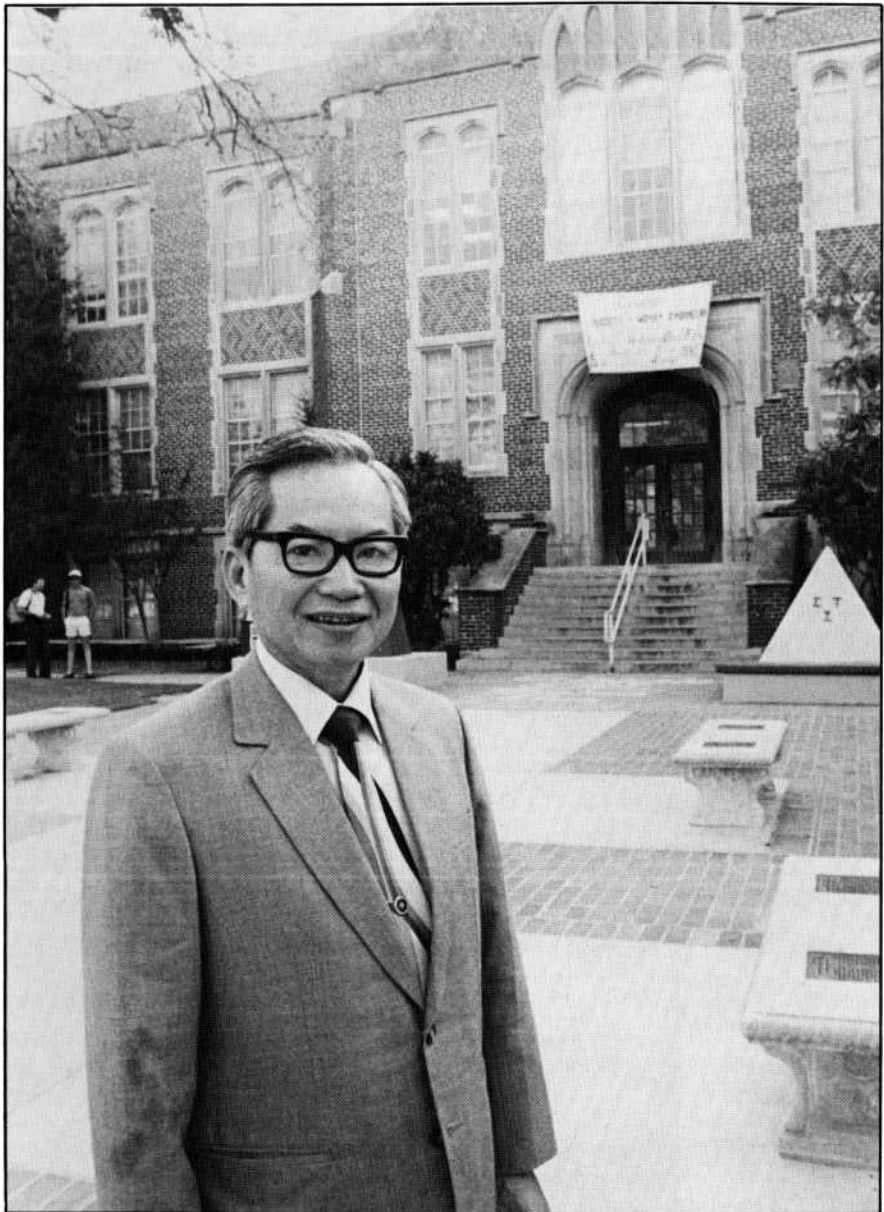
"This trend may change because we are a developing country," Hsia said during a recent visit to the OU campus. "We consider that we may become a developed country in 10 years, and then there probably will be more people in the social sciences in high posts."

Cheng Kung University graduates most of Taiwan's middle and upper class managers and counts among its 30,000 alumni the mayor of Tainan, the city in which the institution is located, and the mayor of Taipei, Taiwan's capital. The university's enrollment reflects the prevalence of engineers in the Far East island. Of its 11,000 students, 6,000 are engineers.

The university that Hsia oversees consists of four colleges — engineering, management, science, and arts and literature — manned by a faculty and staff of 1,200. Its 1984 budget totals \$50 million.

Women constitute about one-tenth of Cheng Kung University's student body, a statistic Hsia expects to change as the university expands its offerings and moves away from the dominance of the engineering school.

In the spring, a new medical school will be opened at the university, and a new aerospace research institute already has accepted 30 master's degree candidates. Faculty members for these two units consist of Chinese scholars with doctoral degrees who



Han-Min Hsia, president of Cheng Kung University, which contains Taiwan's largest engineering school, revisits Felgar Hall where he earned a 1965 Ph.D.

have been recruited back to their homeland after teaching experience in the United States and American senior professors who have been hired to teach for one to two years. Many of the new faculty will be coming from such prestigious institutions as Stanford and George Washington universities.

Hsia's mission during his recent trip to the United States was multi-purpose. As chairman of the Solar Energy Association in the Republic of China, he attended an international meeting of that body in Florida. He

also took the opportunity to identify schools with which Cheng Kung University could cooperate in the liberal arts, the humanities and medicine, visiting the OU Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City and San Francisco State University.

Although Hsia completed his studies at OU almost 20 years ago, he was drawn back to the University to view it this time with an educator's eyes in the hope that academic cooperation may soon span thousands of miles across the globe.

— CATHERINE BISHOP