

A New Perspective on Occupational Programs in Central and Eastern European Countries

In Europe, higher education is offered at universities and non-university institutions.

University education is associated with theoretical learning, whereas non-university instruction consists of professional education in applied fields of study at polytechnics or technical institutes.

The need for trained manpower gave rapid rise to the non-university sector, including mid-level training institutions, as most traditional European universities resisted the introduction of professional programs.

Central and east European countries also developed another tier of education which sometimes bridges secondary and post-secondary education and offers short-term post-secondary training similar to the career programs at community colleges in the United States.

Although the community college is a uniquely American institution, comparisons can be made. As originally conceived about three-quarters of a century ago, the

two-year college was meant to satisfy a number of social aims: to serve as an upward extension of secondary schools, to train workers for the nation's expanding industries, and to provide access to higher education by representing the first two years of a four-year liberal arts education.

Changes in employment patterns and shifts in distribution of people among occupations continue to grow at mid-level, increasing the demand for short-term programs both in the U.S. and abroad. Almost all professions, whether technical or managerial, require contact with manual or applied skills at mid-level occu-

by Erika Popovych

pational ladders. For example, the medical profession can only function with the backing

and assistance of paramedical personnel such as registered nurses, dietitians, physical and occupational therapists, and laboratory technicians. Engineers are supported by draftsmen, surveyors, junior engineers, technicians, and assistants. Lawyers work in tandem with secretaries, administrative assistants, and para-legals. Supportive labor necessary in the computer field is still evolving; however, there is already a clear need for trained technicians and programmers.

East and central European countries peg mid-level post-secondary training institutions, polytechnics and universities in different administrative slots.

While polytechnics and universities are regulated by ministries of higher education, 2- to 2-1/2 year post-secondary occupational programs are under the stewardship of ministries of secondary and professional education, a puzzling concept for

the American admissions officer.

Primarily due to

this bureaucratic division, post-secondary occupational training has been viewed by many as secondary education.

This practice deserves rethinking if programs are compared, and in light of a recent trend to recognize and grant advanced standing to post-secondary training at traditional institutions of higher education, as in the former Soviet republics.

In examining the career programs offered by American community colleges and those offered by post-secondary institutions in central and east Europe and elsewhere, there seems to be a convergence of purpose.

International Trends

UNITED STATES

Generally, the community college serves the community in which it is located, with its students living within commuting distance. Offering reasonable tuition fees, pragmatic curricula and a convenient location, the 1,224 community colleges are an important part of higher education in the United States.

Community colleges also exhibit an innovative spirit in program imple-

mentation by offering courses in libraries, shopping malls, prisons, hospitals, or space donated by local businesses, in addition to formal classroom settings.

Overall, 75 percent of community colleges offer specialized job training for local enterprises and 94 percent provide continuing education for active professionals.

In the United States, as elsewhere, there is some reluctance to accept short-term occu-

pational training for high school graduates as part of higher education. If one keeps in mind, however, that short-term certificates or two-year degrees obtained from community colleges offer a start in higher education and whet the appetite for professional advancement and further education, one has to accept the fact that community colleges are a vital part of higher education.

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A New Approach to Publications

Admissions officers and others who work in international student exchange have time and again indicated the need for up-to-date publications on educational systems. But publications have become increasingly difficult to produce because of dwindling and inadequate funding from the US government.

Enter the Australians! "The ever increasing mobility of world-wide populations has called for a greater comparative knowledge of world education systems," says John Dawkins, former Australian Minister for Employment, Education and Training in the foreword to the Country Education Profiles published by the NOOSR. This is very likely the first time that a cabinet minister has acknowledged the importance of information on education systems and, to its credit, the Australian government has produced an excellent series that can be used all over the world. (WENR reviews this project on page 24.)

One solution to the evident lack of funding for educational publications in the US would be to share the burden of publishing with organizations in other countries. This would be nothing new to the US international educational community, which has a long tradition of such cooperation.

By stocking our libraries with the Australian publications, we can immediately acquire 83 important country profiles, something that would take decades to accomplish if we insisted on going it alone. The Australian government has made a major contribution to our profession by producing this first-rate series. And their contribution will be all the more significant if it prompts the further exchange of information and resources across national boundaries.



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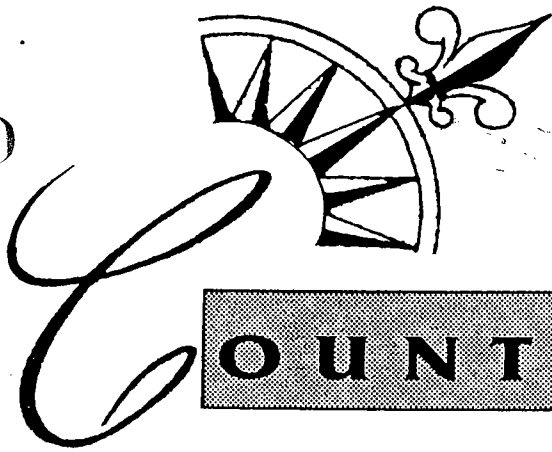
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COUNTRY UPDATES

ALGERIA

The government has launched a reform of upper-secondary education in order to lighten the academic load, reduce the dropout rate—close to 75 percent—and improve teaching programs and methods.

After a common first year, students enrolled in the three-year cycle may choose between a general and technological stream and a pre-vocational stream for their final two years. The former will lead to the *baccalauréat* and the latter to a *diplôme de fin d'études d'enseignement préqualifiant* (diploma of pre-vocational education) leading directly to employment or to further occupational training.

Some 6,580,000 students were enrolled in Algerian schools in September 1991 including 730,000 in upper secondary schools. According to official statistics, 93 percent of boys and 83 percent of girls are enrolled. There are 7.5 million illiterates in a population of 28 million. (*Le Monde de l'Education* 6/92)

ARGENTINA

The Universidad de las Fraternidades y Agrupaciones Santo Tomas de Aquino (FASTA), a new Catholic university, was inaugurated on April 2 in Mar de Plata with the approval of the Ministry of Culture and Education. It is offering programs in communication, business management, and accounting. (*FIUC Nouvelles Breves* 6/92)

AUSTRALIA

A new national vocational education and training system, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) will be established soon. A system of training profiles will be introduced which was termed by Prime Minister Paul Keating as a "very revolutionary change" from the existing Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system.

TAFE has been managed by the states. While there has been an increase of 43 percent in university graduates since 1983, the number of TAFE graduates in that period has actually declined. The new program will be directed from the commonwealth level, and will address the chronic problem of youth unemployment with expenditures of an extra \$720 million over the next three years.

Each year around 130,000 young people, or about half of all school leavers, enter the workforce without undertaking any further education and training. Only 15 percent of girls go on to training, in part because of the narrow range of occupations which offer apprenticeships, according to the Prime Minister's background paper. "This group receives virtually no formal vocational preparation...faces limited employment prospects, and is largely ignored by the post-school education system. We need to focus on them," says the paper.

The government compares Australia unfavorably to other countries. In Germany, for example, 80 percent of post-compulsory education is devoted to vocational preparation. In Australia it is only 20 percent. (*Australian Campus Review Weekly* 7/23-29/92)

The federal government has overhauled a range of international education policies to help make Australia's market for full fee-paying overseas students more competitive.

Under the new rules, to be introduced by the end of 1992, no international students will pay tuition fees or living expenses in advance as a pre-condition of visa issue, and holders of visitor visas or entry permits will no longer have to pre-arrange courses.

Access for students from Thailand, Taiwan, the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong and Papua New Guinea will be improved by the removal of pre-visa assessment, and work rights will be extended to dependents of international postgraduate students.

Migration laws also will be relaxed to allow international postgraduates longer-term or resident status. (*Australian Campus Review Weekly*, 6/18-24/92)

BELARUS

Belarus has become the second of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to establish its own mechanism for granting higher degrees.

More than a year after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, doctoral dissertations from all around the CIS still are being sent to Moscow for approval by the Higher Attestation Commission (VAK).

The Belarus parliament enacted legislation enabling its own approval system in June. Ukraine and other republics are expected to follow suit soon.

One implication of the change will be the return to national languages in education. Russian has been used for so many decades that national languages have almost been lost in some cases. In Belarus, the head of the Belarussian State University said "There is simply no scientific vocabulary in my field. Even it did exist, the first priority for our students now is to learn the world scientific language—English."

The former Soviet VAK also was said to be riddled with nepotism and cliques, and made no secret of its political bias. People of doubtful loyalty could be refused higher degrees, or even deprived of degrees already granted. (*The Higher* 7/17/92)

CHINA

Nearly 15 percent of the 720,000 freshmen enrolled for college this autumn will be "self-funded," or paying for their own education.

The number of both freshmen and self-funded students is the largest in the 15 years since China resumed the national college entrance examination.

Self-funded students are often those who failed the national college entrance examination, but who are eager to receive an education. They are required to pay 2,000 yuan (US\$330) per year for tuition, and cannot score more than 20 points below the minimum passing score on the national college entrance examination. Universities began to recruit self-funded students in 1985 after they were granted more autonomy. (*China Daily* 8/3/92)

The Beijing-based China-European Management Institute (CEMI) granted 35 MBA degrees in August. The cooperative project between the European Community and the Chinese government has produced 125 MBA graduates since it started in 1984. (*China Daily* 8/3/92)

China is to double spending on science and technology by the end of the century and to allow the free transfer of talented academics and technology as part of a 30-year plan.

The state council says its latest plan for scientific and technological development is geared to meet the demands of economic reform and the opening up of China to the outside world. Previous plans adhered closely to a rigidly planned economy.

Science and technology will receive 1.5 percent of gross domestic product compared to the current .72 percent. Progress is anticipated in such areas as bio-engineering, electronic information, new materials, automation, aeronautics and space, oceanography engineering, super-conductivity, lasers and communications. (*The Higher* 7/17/92)

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

The U.S. Business School within the Prague University of Economics granted MBA degrees to its first 58 graduates in February 1992. This is the first MBA program ever offered in the Czech federal republic. It is one year in length, administered by the Rochester Institute of Technology, subsidized by western businesses, and aimed at students from recent socialist countries. Entrance requirements include passing of the American TOEFL and GMAT tests, administered at the Prague University of Economics. The second MBA program began in August. (Correspondence of 7/20 from the Rochester Institute of Technology)

FRANCE

The Education Ministry has given the go-ahead for 56 new courses to be offered at professional university institutes (IUPs) for nearly 9,000 students starting in October.

IUPs are intended to boost France's low numbers of engineering students by providing university-based engineering courses with strong input from business and industry.

Until recently, engineering training was offered almost entirely in the country's elite *grandes écoles*, which are also now expanding their intake to meet British or German levels. Half the courses at the new IUPs are taught by professionals working in the relevant business or industry. A long-term training period in the work is part of every course.

The Education Ministry has decided to call the qualifying degree a *maitrise* in engineering.

In another move to expand professional course capacity, 48 new university technical institutes offering two-year programs also will open in October. Many of the new institutes will be set up in towns without higher education facilities, as "antennae" of the nearest university. (*The Higher* 7/24/92)

Over the past decade the *instituts universitaires de technologie* (IUT) (university institutes of technology) have de-

veloped third- and fourth-year programs to supplement the two-year *diplôme universitaire de technologie/DUT* (university diploma of technology). These programs are developed locally in conjunction with business and industry and lead to an institutional diploma.

There are some 200 different programs with an enrollment of 4,000 students. All students hold a two-year diploma: DUT (65 percent); *brevet de technicien supérieur/BTS* (higher technician's certificate) (27 percent) or the DEUG (8 percent).

Admission to these programs is highly competitive, with three to 10 candidates for each position, depending on the program's reputation and popularity. Candidates must have very good educational records and submit to interviews and/or examinations. Programs in science and technology are the most selective and often require entrance examinations.

The year-long program consists of 700 hours of classroom instruction followed by three to four months of practical training. The faculty are partly drawn from business and industry, underscoring the strong practical bias in these programs. In keeping with development in the new European environment, 20 percent of the students are required to study in another country. Classes average 20 students in size; tuition is from 5,000FF to 10,000FF (US \$1,000 to \$2,000) annually. But because graduates are almost guaranteed employment, and also because they are on a par with technicians from other European countries where technical education is generally three years in length, the programs are very popular, with demand far exceeding the number of available places. (*Le Monde de l'Education* 6/92)

GERMANY

The German Economic Institute (IG) is pessimistic about the future of the universities in the former East Germany. Despite new reform laws, the quality of teaching and research remains inadequate. The results of a study conducted by the Institute reveal that in the state of Saxony, there were 27 percent fewer students than in the previous year. Uncertainty about the future of the universities led many students to opt for universities in the west. Many fear that the universities in the east could become "second class institutions" if they continue to lose the best and brightest students and researchers to universities in the west. (*Le Monde de l'Education* 6/92)

INDIA

The Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University (CCSHAU) at Hisar began offering an MBA in agricultural business in July.

The purpose of the two-year course is to encourage self-

employment in agriculture by offering courses in management, marketing and financial management, production and personnel management.

Minimum qualifications for admission are a bachelor's or master's degree in any discipline from CCSHAU or an equivalent degree in art, commerce, science or any other discipline with at least 50 percent marks. (*University News* 5/25/92)

A school of management "of a standard comparable to the best in the world" began operating in July at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. The school is offering a master's program in management (an MBA or MTech degree) for engineers. There are faculties in financial management, economics, accounting, marketing management, business policy, business law and personnel management. (*University News* 6/15/92)

JAPAN

In response to the dissatisfaction expressed by nurses over their low professional status, as well as the country's shortage of nurses, the government plans to build one four-year nursing college per prefecture by the year 2000. This year, three new universities with nursing schools were added to the already existing 11, and seven more have applied to the Education Ministry for approval.

Most of the 400,000 nurses now practicing in Japan are graduates of vocational schools—either one of the 726 three-year nursing schools recognized by the Health and Welfare Ministry or one of the 146 nursing colleges acknowledged by the Education Ministry. Only 1.5 percent are four-year university graduates.

Technically, teachers in nursing schools do not even need a college degree, although in practice, degree holders are sought. Because of the few pedagogical schools for nurses, there is a chronic shortage of teachers.

Keiko Tokiwa, dean of the department of nursing at St. Luke's College of Nursing, the oldest private nursing college in Japan, says that social change has increased the demand for nurses with a college education.

The major difference between education at three-year nursing schools or colleges and at universities is that the former are more oriented toward practical training. One hoped-for change would allow nurses from the three-year schools to transfer to four-year colleges when seeking higher and more specialized training. At present, there is no articulation between the institutions. (*The Japan Times Weekly International Edition* 6/6-12/92)

The Education Ministry has requested that "cram schools," which train students for examinations for private schools and colleges, refrain from expanding their business by taking advan-

