

WORLD EDUCATION NEWS & REVIEW

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Transfer System

Volume 12, Issue 1



January/February 1999

Africa

SOUTH AFRICA

Anticipating cutbacks in state subsidies, the University of Cape Town recently reported that it plans to downsize its faculty and staff by 10 percent over the next two years. Many of the country's universities have been eliminating faculty positions and laying off administrators in response to the government's restructuring of South Africa's system of higher education.

Cape Town currently has 10 faculties, but by next year that number will be reduced to six, according to university officials. The biggest change in this respect is that the now separate faculties of the arts, education, and the social sciences and humanities will be collapsed into a new faculty of humanities.

Compounding matters is the fact that Cape Town is undergoing a painful transition from being largely an all-white university to becoming a first-class "post-apartheid institution." In compliance with the country's new employment-equity laws, Cape Town University is hiring more blacks and women — sometimes at the expense of white males, who feel that they are being unfairly targeted.

But the university's director of communications, Helen Zille, claimed that the cutbacks were not racially motivated. She stressed that the school was merely trying to expand in some disciplines, like

information technology, and that other faculties need to be pared down.

— *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
Dec. 18, 1998

SENEGAL

Officials in the Senegalese Ministry of Education recently confessed to selling diplomas to students looking to travel to the west. The *baccalaureat* diplomas can be used to gain entrance to universities overseas.

Once accepted, would-be students submit their admission letters from the host universities to European and North American embassies in Dakar.

This documentation, along with proof of their academic standing provided by the illegitimate diploma, significantly increases their chances of acquiring a student visa abroad. In reality however they use the visa to travel to western countries to work illegally.

— *The Times Higher Education Supplement*
Dec. 18, 1998

NIGER

Western-style schools are currently being built for Niger's Touareg nomads to replace traditional modes of education in the bush. The Touaregs have been herdsman for generations, moving from place to place with the changing of the seasons. Hence their nomadic life-style has not been compatible with the kind of schooling found in large towns and villages.

And ever since the days of French colonialism, when western schooling was first introduced in Niger, the Touaregs have been resistant to educational programs that threaten their traditions or take away their children for extended periods of time.

The goal of the new primary schools then is to provide nomadic children with a modern education complete with curricula, class schedules and vacations while, at the same time, maintaining sensitivity towards Touareg culture and life-styles.

The curriculum at the school presently under construction in the Erough Valley, for instance, will combine basic reading, writing and math courses (taught in French) with practical training in animal husbandry and agriculture. The courses are aimed at helping the Touaregs to better manage their

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World Education News & Reviews

Publisher: Mariam Assefa
Editor: Robert Sedgwick
Circulation: Nisha Abdullah

World Education News & Reviews (ISSN 0897-6724) is published bimonthly by World Education Services, a private, not-for-profit organization founded and incorporated in 1974. The views expressed in articles and information submissions published in *WENR* are those of the authors and contributors and not necessarily those of WES. © 1999 World Education Services. All rights reserved.

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1999

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Regional News

lives in the wilderness.

Ideally, the new bush schools will not require that children be separated from their families and will strive to preserve the nomadic way of life.

The northern-Niger project, financed by the French government, is not the only one of its kind. There are many other such projects in the making. However funding and resources are slow in coming. In general, school supplies are scarce and the objective of one book for every two students is rarely met. Another goal is to help the nomads find alternative means of making a living without uprooting them from their pasturelands.

The successive droughts of 1968-1972 and 1983-1985 wreaked havoc on the Touaregs, killing off their livestock and driving many nomads into large cities where they were quickly reduced to beggars and squatters.

In this respect, the bush schools could prepare them for jobs suitable to the nomadic way of life.

— *Le Monde de l'Education*
 December 1998

The Americas

COSTA RICA

The University of Costa Rica (UCR) is currently offering a special program in environmental science for undergraduate students from the English-speaking world who want to study the rain forest from a hands-on perspective.

All classes and field trips pertaining to the course of study are conducted in English by UCR professors. Students are provided with private rooms in the homes of Costa Rican families while attending the university. The program includes the following courses: tropical ecology/conservation; natural history; biological diversity; and Spanish at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels.

Students who successfully complete the program receive four credit hours for each course on a UCR transcript. All credits are transferred from the university's Office of International Affairs and External Cooperation.

Each semester is 14 weeks long, including 30 days of rigorous fieldwork. The total cost for the spring 1999 semester is \$6,995 (airfare not included).

For more information contact the University of Costa Rica at 1-800-321-7625 or by e-mail at WorldC@EducationAbroad.com.

— *Costa Rica University*
www.neosoft.com/~worldc/learn.htm

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

As part of a reform package first introduced in 1995, the State Secretariat for Education, Fine Arts and Cul-

ture (SEEBAC) has established a set of guidelines for student evaluation and promotion to a higher grade or educational level.

During the first two years of elementary school (*educación básica* or *educación media*) students will undergo evaluation but will automatically be promoted irrespective of exam scores.

In the last six years of elementary education (grades three through eight) students who receive 65 percent or better in all their classes, and who have not been absent more than 20 percent without justification, will automatically be promoted to the next higher grade.

Those who receive less than 65 percent in up to three classes will be eligible for makeup exams. A single failure in any of the makeup exams means the pupil has to repeat the school year. Students who miss more than 20 percent of their classes without justification or who fail four or more subjects are automatically suspended and must repeat the school year.

SEEBAC has also introduced a new grading scale for the secondary school level which reads as follows:

- A=90-100=Excelente (Excellent)
- B=80-89=Muy Bueno (Very Good)
- C=70-79=Bueno (Good)
- D=0-69=Deficiente (Deficient)

Students are required to pass all subjects with 70 percent or better (based on continual assessment and final examinations) and not miss more than 20 percent of all classes without justification in order to pass the school year.

The most important reform to date is the introduction of national examinations at the end of elementary school and secondary school. In the final year of their elementary education, students must pass the national examination in order to enter secondary school.

The national examinations administered at the end of secondary school will serve as part of a student's qualifications to earn a bachiller (bachelor) diploma and will cover all four areas of the school curriculum: Spanish, mathematics, social studies and natural sciences.

— *Secretaría de Estado de Educación Bellas Artes y Cultos*

UNITED STATES

A recent study conducted by the Institute for International Education reports a significant increase in foreign student enrollment at American colleges and universities during the 1997-98 academic year.

According to the report entitled *Open Doors 1997/98*, the total number of foreigners studying in the United States climbed to 481,280, which represents a 5.1 percent increase over last year's figures. In addition, the number of Americans studying abroad rose to almost 100,000, which is 11.4 percent more than the prior year.

The figures published in the *Open Doors* study would appear to reverse a downward trend in foreign student enrollment at U.S. institutions of higher education.

Although the United States attracts the largest number of foreign students worldwide, it has been steadily losing ground throughout the decade to other countries. In the 1980s, for instance, the United States' share of all international students was 40 percent. However, by 1997 this figure had dropped to only 30 percent, down from 32 percent in 1995.

Experts suggest that the reasons for the sudden increase revealed in the *Open Doors* report are essentially twofold: Intensified efforts on the part of universities and colleges in the United States to recruit overseas and a growing preference among foreign students

towards the less-expensive community colleges.

Although foreign students represent a mere 3 percent of the higher education population in this country, their numbers have a huge impact on campuses and local communities alike. The U.S. Department of Commerce currently lists higher education as America's fifth largest service-sector export.

Not only do foreigners represent an important source of income for the colleges and universities they attend (most of them pay full tuition), but it is estimated that they contributed some \$7.5 billion to the U.S. economy last year in tuition, living expenses and miscellaneous spending.

Moreover, the money spent by these foreign students and their dependents has generated more than 100,000 jobs in state and local economies, according to *Open Doors*.

— *Open Doors 1997/98 Press Release*

In a move aimed at bolstering declining enrollments, the University of Chicago (UC) will be relaxing its traditionally rigid core requirements beginning next September.

Many feel that the university's traditional emphasis on higher learning and a common core curriculum has become anachronistic in an age where students are primarily concerned with preparing themselves for the ever-demanding job market.

Starting in the late 1960s, many American colleges and universities began to phase out certain core requirements to make room for new courses and give students greater flexibility in designing their own curricula. Brown University, which represents the most extreme example in this respect, has done away with core requirements altogether.

While applications and endowments at universities like Duke and

Brown are currently soaring, UC is suffering from a decline in the number of new applicants not to mention increasing dropout and transfer rates among its student body. Last year for instance, UC attracted only 5,500 new applicants while Stanford and Princeton enrolled 17,000 and 13,000 respectively.

Contributing to the decline in applicants is the shrinking number of alumni children who cite UC as their college of choice (only 5 percent compared with the 10-20 percent at most Ivy League schools).

Compounding matters is UC's failure to see many of its students through to graduation compared with other top universities in the United States. The student retention rates at Harvard and Yale, for instance, are 97 percent and 96 percent respectively, compared to only 83 percent at UC.

In an effort to reverse these trends, UC will increase its undergraduate population over the next 10 years from 1,000 to 4,500.

At the same time, administrators plan to restructure the university's core system. At present, there are 21 core requirements that are subdivided as follows: eight quarters of science and math; seven quarters of humanities and civilization; three quarters of social sciences; and three quarters of a foreign language.

Under the new system, the number of core courses will be reduced to either 15 or 18, depending on how the foreign-language requirement gets figured in.

Hence, starting in September, the core curriculum will only account for one-third of each student's course work instead of one-half.

In addition, UC President Hugo Sonnenschein intends to improve UC's career placement service to better meet the needs and expectations of students.

— *New York Times*
Dec. 28, 1998

CANADA

One of the biggest concerns facing liberal arts students today is that the nature of the academic work they undertake in college will not count for much in the real world.

Many graduates who chose to major in subjects like English literature and history are often denied jobs because, they are told, they lack marketable skills.

But students at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia may be getting a leg up while still in school. In an effort to strengthen the ties between the classroom and the job market, the university recently introduced a new "skills transcript" as part of its grading system for undergraduates.

The transcript program allows students to earn extra credit in their regular courses by demonstrating proficiency in such skills as teamwork, problem solving, and written and oral communication that can be transferred from the classroom to the workplace.

At the end of each semester, the skills transcript gets tacked onto the end of a student's regular grade report.

Although the program is currently being implemented on an experimental basis, it is hoped that ultimately these skills will help liberal arts majors get jobs after they graduate.

But not everyone is eligible to participate. Only students with a "B-" average or better are qualified to earn special credit for mastery of these skills.

— *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
Dec. 18, 1998

Asia-Pacific

CHINA

China's system of higher education has undergone some significant administrative changes following the reshuffling of government ministries and commis-

sions last September.

The nine ministerial departments that formerly oversaw the country's 93 regular universities and 72 higher-learning institutions for self-study have all been merged into the State Economic and Trade Commission.

All but two of the regular universities will now be administered jointly by both the central government and local municipalities.

The exceptions, China Mineral Industry University and the North China Mineral Technical School, are still being administered by the Ministry of Coal Industry, albeit on a temporary basis.

Some of the 72 higher-learning institutions for self study currently sponsored by the central government will be incorporated into regular universities or turned into special education training institutions. Others will come under the jurisdiction of local governments.

The plans for the restructuring of higher education were drafted by China's State Council and were successfully implemented for the first time in the Henan and Jiangsu provinces.

The aim of the new system is to encourage universities, higher-learning institutions and postsecondary schools to recruit students at the local level in order to train and educate them for the promotion of regional socioeconomic development.

However, schools that emphasize industrial programs will continue to recruit students nationally.

— *China Daily*
Nov. 10, 1998

INDIA

For several years now, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) has prided itself on turning out most of the subcontinent's leaders in business and high-tech.

In more recent years, however, increasing numbers of IIT graduates have gone abroad to achieve global prominence in American

corporations like Citigroup, US Airway's Group, McKinsey & Co. and Sun Microsystems.

Much of IIT's success can be attributed to its tough standards and highly selective admissions process, not to mention the grinding curriculum students have to endure during their four years of study there.

Each May, following several years of preparation work, more than 100,000 aspiring IIT students take the entrance exams hoping to secure a place for themselves in the next freshman class. Out of that number, only 2,500 are accepted annually.

Once they make it past the grueling admissions process, however, the work becomes even tougher with less than 2,000 making it to graduation.

On average, students get only about five hours of sleep a night and, even with round the clock studying, few score higher than a "B" on tests and exams.

The faculty to student ratio is impressive even by American standards.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), for example, maintains a 1:11 ratio while IIT's ratio fluctuates between 1:6 and 1:8.

Since its founding in 1951, IIT has branched out all over the country, setting up campuses in Kanpur, Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Guwahati.

Through the years, the institute has received funding from UNESCO, the United States, the former Soviet Union and Germany.

Moreover, it enjoys substantial aid from the Indian government, which pays the lion's share of the \$3,000 it costs annually to enroll each student.

Because of the limited opportunities offered by the Indian job market, an increasing number of IIT graduates head to the United States. In 1998, for instance, 30

percent of the graduating class, or 500 students, immigrated to the United States in search of more lucrative job prospects.

More than 80 percent of them ended up landing positions in California's Silicon Valley, which has served as a mecca for Indian computer science graduates since the 1970s.

Of the 2,000 or so successful high-tech executives in Silicon Valley, 40 percent cite India as their country of origin and at least half of these are IIT alumni.

Many of IIT's graduates come to the United States specifically to pursue advanced university degrees at places like MIT and Stanford.

Upon completing master's and doctoral programs in fields like computer science and business, they are eagerly scooped up by many of America's top corporations.

Hewlett-Packard, Intel, IBM, Sun Microsystems and Cirrus Logic constitute only a partial listing of companies where IIT graduates have made it big in recent years.

— *Business Week*
Dec. 7, 1998

While there are a handful of first-rate colleges and technical institutes in India, the overall picture of the country's system of higher education is pretty bleak, according to a recent *New York Times* article.

Allahabad University, for example, used to be known as the Oxford of the subcontinent during the heady days immediately following India's independence.

Since then, the school's buildings have fallen into disrepair, overcrowding and a lack of funding have brought down its standards, and its curriculum is in shambles with courses often being postponed indefinitely.

In short, Allahabad is symptomatic in many ways of the deteriorating state of higher education

throughout the country.

During the last 20 years, the mushrooming population — currently approaching 1 billion — has necessitated building 500 new colleges and universities to accommodate the increasing demand for higher education.

Although only 3 percent of Indians between the ages of 17 and 23 are enrolled in college, that still leaves 17 million students to educate.

At least part of the overcrowding problem at Indian universities can be attributed to their easy accessibility.

The entrance requirements are not particularly challenging and tuition is heavily subsidized by the state, with most students paying as little as \$10 a year.

Moreover, despite government subsidized tuition, only 3.7 percent of India's gross domestic product is earmarked each year for education.

While this figure is high compared with the rest of Southeast Asia, it is low compared to developing countries as a whole.

But whether the blame can be placed on India's failure to prioritize education or on the millions of ill-prepared students who are packed into the country's overcrowded colleges and universities each year, many agree on one thing: The deteriorating state of higher education is the price Indians have to pay for educating the masses.

— *New York Times*
Dec. 21, 1998

AFGHANISTAN

It was just more than a decade ago that the first expatriate colleges were established in Peshawar, Pakistan, to educate the increasing number of refugees fleeing the war in neighboring Afghanistan.

In 1988 the Umha-tul-Momineen University was set up as an all women's college while the Islamic University opened its doors

as a coed institution.

Hiwad University was founded last year as the newest refugee school in Peshawar and largely accommodates women who have escaped from Taliban-held areas in Afghanistan.

Ahmad Shah Abdali University was formed in 1993 by a group of exiled professors from Kabul University. By far the largest of these institutions, Ahmad Shah offers degree programs in agriculture, engineering and medicine. Its law school gives students a choice of studying British-style law or traditional Islamic law (*sharia*).

Late last August, however, the Pakistani government closed down all four of these refugee universities claiming they were operating illegally and did not meet the national standards for higher education.

University administrators and human rights activists, on the other hand, cite the government's desire to repatriate the refugees back to Afghanistan as the real reason behind the closures.

Whatever the case may be, the shutdown is bad news for many Afghans who fled their war-ravaged country and the repressive policies of the current Taliban government. There are presently 1.5 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan with the majority residing in Peshawar.

Representatives of the universities are also convinced that the Taliban had a hand in the closures as the latter has repeatedly accused the campuses of becoming hotbeds of dissidence against the fledgling regime in Afghanistan.

As the Taliban movement sprung out of the Koranic schools in Peshawar, its members remain highly suspicious of educational systems that smack of westernization and secularism.

Most of the 88 faculty members at Ahmad Shah Abdali University, for example, earned their doctorates in the United States, Europe

or Canada.

The fact that many of them taught in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation makes them doubly suspect in the eyes of the country's Islamist rulers.

All four of the refugee universities are partially supported by grants from international donors and aid organizations.

Tuition is largely affordable with students paying between \$5 and \$10 a month depending on the type of program they choose to enroll in.

Moreover, these institutions are formally recognized by the Afghan Refugees Commission and their curricula meet UNESCO standards.

— *Chronicle of Higher Education*
Nov. 6, 1998

MALAYSIA

Two trends are currently changing the shape of higher education in Malaysia: the "corporatization" of the country's public universities and the proliferation of private colleges linked to western institutions of higher education abroad.

The first stems from efforts to curb the financial dependency of Malaysian universities on the state. With the introduction of universal secondary education 10 years ago, public universities have been hard pressed to meet the rising demand for college degrees.

Hence, in January of 1998, the University of Malaysia became the first of the country's eight public universities to become "corporatized."

Under the new system, universities are given the freedom to acquire investment shares, take out loans from private institutions and set up business ventures.

The state retains control over most of the assets held by universities and continues to provide funding for new programs and projects. However, the universities assume responsibility for financ-

ing the bulk of their operating costs.

In addition to the trend towards corporatization, the government has also lifted many of the restrictions on the country's private colleges during the past decade, allowing them to expand their programs and enrollments to an unprecedented level.

Because it was formerly illegal for private institutions to confer degrees, many of them set up joint programs with foreign universities that allowed Malaysian students to complete their studies overseas.

The globalization of higher education has encouraged universities in the technologically advanced countries to expand by offering their programs on a franchise basis to the developing world.

However, critics warn that the trend towards international education in Malaysia and elsewhere (with its emphasis on English, western values and attitudes) threatens to undermine the country's cultural identity.

To safeguard against this concern, the government has taken measures to ensure that the system of higher education reflects the national character of the country.

Private colleges are required to teach the majority of their courses in English and their curricula must include courses in Islamic studies and Asian civilizations.

— *International Higher Education*
Winter 1998

AUSTRALIA

Foreign enrollment in Australian universities continued to grow this year despite the recent economic upheavals in neighboring Asia.

The number of international students has been climbing steadily for the past decade or so, reaching 86,000 in 1998.

This represents a 14 percent increase over last year according to

IDP Education Australia, the country's official overseas recruitment agency.

However, 20,000 of these students take classes at the so-called "offshore" campuses institutionally linked to Australian universities, and 6,000 are pursuing Australian degrees through "distance-education programs" based in their home countries.

Although offshore students may indeed contribute to the continuing upward trend in foreign enrollment, the 60,000 or so foreigners actually studying on Australian soil this year still represent a 10-percent increase over 1997.

For some schools, 1998 was a record year in this respect. The University of New South Wales, for instance, currently enrolls more international students than any other institution of higher education in the world: 5,167 compared with the 4,964 who attended New York University in 1997-98.

In short, Australian universities have had to devise new strategies to retain and attract foreign students in a changing market.

Not only have they stepped up recruiting and marketing in North America and Scandinavia, they have also reached out to parts of Asia that have not yielded significant numbers of students in the past.

Yet by far the biggest change in strategy aimed at reeling in foreign students has been the offshore or "twinning" programs offered by Australian institutions of higher education.

These programs allow Asians to study for one or two years at their home institutions before transferring to complete their studies at an Australian university.

The major benefit of the offshore campuses is that Asian students can earn degrees from Australian universities for considerably less money.

The success of these programs has been phenomenal, with the

number of offshore campuses growing over the past decade from nine to 390.

But while most of Australia's four-year institutions have succeeded in cushioning themselves against the fallout from the Asian crisis, enrollment in English-language schools was down by 40 percent in 1998.

The dwindling number of foreign applicants at these institutions has sparked fears that Australia's universities might be facing a similar decline sometime in 1999.

— *Chronicle of Higher Education*
Dec. 11, 1998

In March 1997, 18 vice chancellors from around the globe met in Sydney and formed an international network called *Universitas 21* to respond to challenges posed by corporate universities and the Internet.

The delegates represented research universities from Australia, China, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Universitas 21 members include: McGill University; University of British Columbia; University of Toronto; University of Michigan; University of Birmingham; University of Edinburgh; University of Glasgow; University of Nottingham; National University of Singapore; University of Hong Kong; Peking University; Fudan University; University of Melbourne; University of New South Wales; University of Queensland; and University of Auckland.

By the next academic year, students will be able to freely transfer credits between member universities. In addition, *Universitas 21* is currently exploring the possibility of forming links with corporate universities, which are formed by commercial enterprises to train and educate their employees.

British Aerospace, for instance, has teamed up with 79 universities and colleges in the United Kingdom to offer postgraduate degrees and qualifications in business administration.

— *The Times Higher Education Supplement*
Dec. 11, 1998

Europe

UNITED KINGDOM

According to a study conducted by Paul Bennell, an independent consultant, there are currently more than 100,000 overseas students enrolled in distance-learning courses via the Internet at 84 universities in the United Kingdom.

At least 25 percent of these students are studying with Open University.

The most popular courses offered at the undergraduate level were in business, computer science and accounting.

At the graduate level, more than two-thirds of those enrolled were pursuing management and MBA degrees in particular.

Bennell estimates that students enrolled in distance learning programs have contributed a total of £250 million to universities in the United Kingdom.

In November, Open University created a joint program with Western Governors University (WGU) to offer courses in the United States.

The new program, called the Governors Open University System, allows students to take Open University courses offered in the United States while enrolled at WGU.

The Open University's American branch is expected to gain U.S. accreditation in the near future.

Many other colleges in the United Kingdom are also offering courses over the Internet.

Continued, Page 12

Using the European Credit Transfer System in the U.S.

by WES staff members

Calculating U.S. credit equivalents for studies completed in Europe can be a difficult task. This is especially true when courses are listed on academic records without any indication of their relative weight in terms of units, credits or instructional hours.

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is a new tool that can help American evaluators convert European university courses into U.S. semester credits.

What is ECTS?

ECTS was developed by the European Union to establish common procedures for recognizing studies completed abroad.

The main goal of ECTS is to promote the exchange of academic information among European institutions of higher education in order to facilitate student mobility.

How does ECTS Work?

The system was largely established on the basis of mutual trust and confidence among member institutions. Students participating in ECTS receive full credit for all academic work successfully carried out at any of the ECTS partner institutions.

ECTS Credits

ECTS is a credit system based on a definition of what constitutes a full-time academic course load. Credits are assigned to all academic work (lectures, laboratory work, seminars, private study and theses) that comprises an integral part of the program of study.

Credits are awarded only when the course has been completed and all required examinations have been successfully taken.

In ECTS terms, **60 credits** represent the work load of one year of full-time study, **30 credits** are given for a semester and **20 credits** for a trimester. Within this framework, each institution allocates credits among its various courses.

Since it was established some 10 years ago, ECTS has been widely adopted. The following examples illustrate how different universities are using the system.

The University of Bern (Switzerland)

The *Lizentiat* (Lic.Phil), offered by the Department of English at the University of Bern, requires a minimum of eight semesters of study in one major

and two minor subjects.

The subject area of English is comprised of the following: medieval English language and literature (MELL); English and American literature (EAL); and modern English language (MEL). Each of these can be studied as either a major or minor subject.

The *Lizentiat* requires 300 ECTS credits. This description is translated into ECTS terms in the table below.

Lizentiat study requirements

Major / Hauptfach

Basic studies/ Grundstudium (1st - 4th semesters)	7 proseminars 2 proseminar paper Writing skills 1-3 Phonetics & Phonology	42 ECTS 10 ECTS 3 ECTS 2 ECTS
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Main studies/ Hauptstudium (5th - 8th semester)	4 seminars 2 seminar papers	28 ECTS 14 ECTS
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Basic & main studies	Option courses	21 ECTS
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Lizentiat	Thesis & exams	30 ECTS
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TOTAL (8 semesters)		150 ECTS
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1st Minor / 1. Nebenfach

Basic studies/ Grundstudium (1st - 4th semesters)	5 proseminars 1 proseminar paper Writing skills 1-3 Phonetics & Phonology	30 ECTS 5 ECTS 3 ECTS 2 ECTS
---------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Main studies/ Hauptstudium (5th - 6th semester)	2 seminars 1 seminar paper	14 ECTS 7 ECTS
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Basic & main studies	Option courses	14 ECTS
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Lizentiat	Exams	15 ECTS
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TOTAL (6 semesters)		90 ECTS
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2nd Minor / 2. Nebenfach

Basic studies/ Grundstudium (1st - 3rd semesters)	3 proseminars 1 proseminar paper Writing skills 1-3 Phonetics & Phonology	18 ECTS 5 ECTS 3 ECTS 2 ECTS
---------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Main studies/ Hauptstudium (4th semester)	1 seminar	7 ECTS
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Basic & main studies	Option courses	20 ECTS
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Lizentiat	Exam	5 ECTS
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TOTAL (4 semesters)		60 ECTS
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ECTS Grades

Another useful feature of the ECTS is the common grading scale. It allows institutions to award grades using the home scale and also gives them the option of converting that grade into a common ECTS grade.

The University of Bern has adopted the system as follows:

BERN Grades

- 6 Excellent = outstanding performance in every way
- 5.5 Very Good = outstanding work with a few minor errors
- 5 Good = work of high standard but containing few serious errors
- 4.5 Satisfactory = work of middling quality, containing serious flaws
- 4 Sufficient = work that satisfies the minimum requirements
- 3.5 Fail = work requiring minor revision before it can pass
- 3 Fail = work requiring major revision before it can pass
- 2 Fail = work needs to be repeated
- 1 Fail = unacceptable/no work submitted

ECTS

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- FX
- F
- N/A
- N/A

240 ECTS credits. The table at the bottom of this page shows a sample program.

Vienna University of Economics (Austria)

The university has adapted the ECTS credits as follows:

Type of Course	Weekly Hours	ECTS Credits
AG <i>Arbeitsgemeinschaft</i> (study group)	1	2
PS <i>Proseminar</i>	1	1
SE <i>Seminar</i>	1	4
UE <i>Uebung</i> (lab/practical)	1	2
VO <i>Vorlesung</i> (lecture)	1	1

In this particular case, the number of ECTS credits allocated per course is determined by the nature of the course itself (for example, lecture, tutorial, pro-seminar) and not by the number of hours of weekly instruction. A one-year, full-time program is still 60 ECTS credits.

Stockholm University (Sweden)

Stockholm University has its own point system. The academic year is divided into course units and each unit is worth a certain number of points (*poangs*). A point is equivalent to one week of full-time work (40 hours per week), which includes lectures and independent study. One academic year consists of 40 points.

The bachelor's degree (*kandidatexamen*) requires a total of 120 points (three years of full-time study) including 60 points in the major subject and an independent thesis of 10 points.

The master's degree (*magisterexamen*) requires at least 160 points (four years of full-time study) including 80 points in the major and an independent thesis of 20 points or two shorter theses worth 10 points each.

Each point at Stockholm University is equivalent to 1.5 ECTS credits. Thus a student who completes one year or 40 points at Stockholm will have earned 60 ECTS credits.

The bachelor's degree therefore requires a total of 180 ECTS credits while the master's degree requires

University College Cork (Ireland)

University College Cork has simply adopted the ECTS credit system as its own. The courses, known as modules, are given credit values ranging from 5 to 20 (credits) depending on their relative importance in the program of study. The combined credit values assigned to all courses add up to a total of 60 credits per academic year.

Conclusion

As the above examples illustrate, the ECTS system has been adapted differently from institution to institution. The ECTS provides a common gauge of what constitutes a full-time annual or semester credit load and makes the conversion of courses completed in Europe into U.S. semester credits a simple arithmetic exercise. For American evaluators to benefit from this system, it is important to find out how a particular institution applies ECTS to its courses.

Sample master's and bachelor's programs at Stockholm University

	Bachelor's Degree				Master's Degree			
	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
Subject:	A	B	A	C	A	A	B	A
Level:	Basic	Basic	Inter.	Basic	Advanced	Advanced	Inter.	Special
Points:	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
ECTS Credits:	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Optional Courses?	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Special Projects?	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

Community Colleges Enjoy Surge in Popularity

Foreign Students Cite Affordability as the Main Attraction

by Robert Sedgwick
Editor, WENR

An ever-increasing number of foreign students coming to the United States for higher education are choosing the affordability and flexibility of community colleges over traditional four-year schools.

Despite several years of level growth in the total number of overseas students attending American institutions of higher education — a trend that was only reversed last year (see Regional News) — international enrollments at community colleges actually rose significantly during the same period.

From 1993 to 1997, for example, overall foreign enrollments at U.S. colleges and universities increased only 7 percent while, at the same time, two-year colleges witnessed a 20 percent increase. During the 1997/98 academic year, there were 73,443 overseas students enrolled in U.S. community colleges, a 13-percent increase over the previous year.

Although community colleges did not play much of a role in educational exchange in the past, they are now both attracting and courting students from abroad on an unprecedented level. Of 624 two-year colleges participating in a 1995 national survey conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges, 80 percent responded that they offered international education programs of some kind. These included everything from student-exchange programs to overseas distance learning.

Moreover, 63 percent offer intensive English language programs. Overseas two-year transfer programs are also becoming more prevalent among community col-

leges.

Brookdale Community College in New Jersey, for instance, has a branch campus in Guayaquil, Ecuador, where students can earn credits and transfer to either Brookdale or other U.S. colleges and universities.

Likewise, Broward Community College in Florida, Regents College (the University of the State of New York) and Miami-Dade Community College in Florida have all established links with American-style schools around the globe.

The Appeal of Community Colleges

One of the biggest motivating factors in choosing a community college over a four-year institution is obviously money. After currencies were devalued in Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea and Thailand, many Asians who were studying at four-year institutions transferred to cheaper community colleges.

But foreign students began flocking to two-year institutions even before the Asian crisis. With tuition costs mounting throughout the decade, more and more of these students have been taking advantage of community college programs that offer an affordable alternative to some of the more expensive four-year schools. Aside from the financial benefits, however, foreigners tend to gravitate towards two-year institutions for a variety of reasons.

For starters, students are attracted to the specialized, short-term training programs offered by community colleges.

"Students who come to the U.S. for higher education are not necessarily interested in pursuing the traditional four-year degree track," explained Audree Chase, coordinator of international services at

the American Association of Community Colleges.

"Many of them are looking to earn associate degrees and certificates through short-term programs not offered by universities in their home countries. These programs can last anywhere from six months to two years and provide certification in a wide range of vocations, including welding, accounting and technical training."

Still, other foreign students are only interested in coming to the United States to improve their English skills for a short duration before returning home to finish their studies and take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam. The numerous intensive and non-intensive language programs offered at two-year institutions give them flexibility to do this at prices they can afford.

Furthermore, the community college can serve as an ideal stepping-stone to a four-year degree program and, hence, functions as a kind of feeder system to the larger schools.

"If you're not at all familiar with the American system of higher education this is a good way to get your feet wet," said Nancy Predham, the international student adviser at Monterey Peninsula Community College. "They [foreign students] like the smaller classrooms, the hands-on help, student services and career counseling we provide."

"All these factors help build up their confidence enough to make the jump to a four-year degree program."

Recruitment and Outreach

Because the majority of community colleges do not have the resources or budgets to recruit overseas, most foreigners find out

about two-year programs through alternative channels.

Word of mouth is one of the biggest, according to Linda Korbel of the American Council on International and Intercultural Education.

"Very often, the pipeline of students from overseas to the two-year colleges in the U.S. comes through relatives living in the community or through faculty connections," she said. "Other times, they learn about a particular community college through a sister college relationship in their own country, or sometimes it's through institution-to-institution exchange programs."

Northern Virginia Community College is forbidden by its charter to recruit overseas. Despite this handicap, its five campuses took in a total of 2,626 international students last year. Some of these students initially heard about the school when they came to the United States to visit friends and relatives who live in the community. Others either transferred from four-year colleges or matriculated after completing a semester of one of the college's intensive English programs.

In addition, many schools attribute the surge in overseas enrollments to the Internet. Foreigners interested in coming to the United States to study have access to more information about community colleges at their fingertips than ever before thanks largely to new computer technology.

In general, today's international students are better informed and really shop around. They surf the World Wide Web, talk to friends and carefully read the colleges' guide books before choosing a particular school or program.

Finally, a growing number of community colleges have been actively recruiting overseas in recent years. Many of the strategies they use to attract foreign applicants are similar to those employed by four-year schools.

These include participating in international recruitment fairs, and setting up outreach seminars and workshops, in addition to advertising in both the local and the international press.

Dr. Paul McCuay, director of International Studies at Delaware County Community College, asserts that one of the major selling points that community colleges use when recruiting overseas is guaranteed matriculation.

"The community college is ideal for foreign students who have good grades but can't get into a four-year program because of low TOEFL scores," he said. "Enrollment at a two-year institution, in fact, pre-qualifies them for admission to a state university."

Overcoming Budget Constraints

Many of these colleges have found ways to circumvent the budgetary constraints that have inhibited their ability to recruit overseas in the past.

Representatives of Delaware County Community College, for example, travel to many countries as part of a consortium of five other American community colleges that pool their resources and increase their visibility vis-à-vis the larger colleges and universities.

Most two-year schools that have taken part in international recruitment tours have reported tremendous success. Santa Monica College, for example, enrolled a total of 2,400 foreign students last year — more than any other two-year institution. At present, the college has students from 110 countries. About 70 percent of these students come from Asia.

Europe accounts for 17 percent, and the college is trying to recruit more from the Middle East, Latin America and Africa.

Community Colleges Gain in Status

One of the biggest challenges community colleges have had to overcome with regard to overseas recruitment is how to sell the notion of a two-year degree program to foreign consumers of American higher education.

After all, the two-year college is a uniquely American institution that was specifically designed to serve and benefit the local community. Although the concept has been embraced in much of Asia, it has yet to catch on in other parts of the world.

Moreover, foreign students tend to be quite elitist when it comes to higher education in the United States. Many are not convinced that an associate degree earned from a two-year college will count for very much when they return home in search of jobs.

But Dr. Ravi Kallur, director of international student affairs at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, believes that many of the negative images associated with community colleges have been eradicated in recent times.

"For many years now, there has been this feeling that the level of education offered at American community colleges was not of a high quality," he said.

"However, as more and more two-year colleges go overseas to recruit and with more information about community colleges available on the Internet, this perception is changing."

Many schools attribute the surge in overseas enrollments to the Internet.

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Birkbeck College in London, for instance, offers a program where students can gain postgraduate qualifications in a wide range of subjects, including protein crystallography, geographic information systems, organizational psychology and computer applications for the history of art.

In January, Oxford University will enroll 160 students in an Internet-based course in computer science. In March, another distance-learning course will be offered in local history, and a third in April will offer a professional update in immunology.

— *The Times Higher Education Supplement*
Dec. 11, 1998

A recent survey revealed that British colleges and universities suffered a 13-percent drop in new foreign-student enrollments for the 1998-99 academic year.

The decline was largely the result of the aftershocks from the economic collapse in Asia.

According to the survey, conducted by the British Council, the number of students coming to the United Kingdom from Malaysia,

Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia has dropped considerably.

While Malaysians accounted for about 30 percent of Britain's foreign students in 1996, their numbers have fallen by 44 percent.

At the same time, recruitment from Thailand dropped by 29 percent compared with last year. The decreases in numbers from other countries are: Korea, 23 percent; Singapore, 19 percent; Indonesia, 19 percent; and Hong Kong 7 percent.

Because Malaysians are hard pressed to cover foreign tuition costs due to the devaluation of their national currency, British universities have been setting up courses and programs they can enroll in at home.

The foreign-student markets of Brazil, India and Pakistan are also drying up while, in comparison, China yielded an increase of 6 percent.

— *The Times Higher Education Supplement*
Dec. 11, 1998

ROMANIA

The Romanian government is currently looking into the possibil-

ity of opening a new university to accommodate the country's Hungarian community.

Although Hungarians have frequently voiced their demand for such a university, the state has been reluctant to build an institution strictly for the benefit of an ethnic minority.

However, when the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania threatened to pull out of the country's ruling coalition, the two sides reached a compromise of sorts.

The proposed institution — to be called Petoefi-Schiller University — will be multilingual, offering courses in both Hungarian and German.

The establishment of Petoefi-Schiller University is clearly a concession to appease the Hungarian minority and prevent its party from taking drastic measures that may threaten to destabilize the government.

However, the university will only acquire government accreditation if 51 percent of the first two freshman classes graduate.

— *The Times Higher Education Supplement*
Oct. 23, 1998

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