



Country Databank

AUSTRALIA

o The Australian government is on the verge of passing a new tax on graduates of Australia's higher education system. The tax is expected to recoup approximately 20% of the cost of a student's education. Graduates from lower cost programs such as arts and humanities would pay a lower percentage, those from mid-range programs such as engineering, a higher percentage. The highest level would be assessed to graduates of high cost programs such as medicine and dentistry. The proposed tax is being protested by student groups and unions as being "anti-Labour" and academic unions are threatening to foil the educational restructuring currently planned by the government if the new tax plan is implemented. However, other politicians claim that the restructuring of higher education in Australia will not be possible without this or some other new form of revenue. (Times Higher Education Supplement, May 13, 1988)

CANADA

o The Open Learning Agency (OLA) has been created to direct the development of open learning in British Columbia. The OLA will subsume the functions of the Knowledge Network (which becomes an Open College) and the Open Learning Institute (which becomes an Open University). Both newly organized institutions will be components of the OLA. The Agency will be setting up a "credit bank" to keep track of student credit accumulations and to assist other institutions in the correct placement of those students. (Association of Commonwealth Universities, ABCD, No. 3, April 1988)

o Canada is relaxing its foreign student employment policies in order to encourage a positive environment for post-

secondary international students. Once fully implemented, students working on campus, spouses of students, students working in education-related jobs (up to 12 months after graduation) and students in Canada under the auspices of the Canadian International Development Agency will be able to "accept work without the job needing validation or being subject to the availability of Canadians." The policy of exempting foreign students from visa processing will also be continued. (Association of Commonwealth Universities, ABCD, No. 83, April 1988)

FRANCE

o PACE (European Programme of Advanced Continuing Education) is now headquartered in Paris. A satellite distribution system, PACE offers advanced level teaching, broadcasted to eleven sponsoring companies. Modeled on the American National Technology University, PACE enables the fast dissemination of new information and fosters the exchange of

In this issue...

Country Databank	Page 1-4
Questions & Answers	Page 4
Profile of the Educational System of the People's Republic of China	Page 5-8
Publications	Page 9, 12
Mini Evaluation	Page 10-11

high technology expertise among users. PACE is seen as an important link between universities and industry. France lobbied extensively (including granting a financial aid package of almost nine million francs over three years) for the honor of being PACE's permanent new home. (Times Higher Education Supplement, May 6, 1988)

HONG KONG

o The University of Hong Kong is changing from a three-year degree program to a four-year degree program, with the intent of having the new structure well in place by 1997. The proposal is to add a foundation year at the beginning of the program, with students selecting eight courses from nine groups. In addition, students will take mandatory language courses to ensure that their levels of English and Chinese are up to University standards. The extension of the program will serve a threefold purpose. It will assist students whose bilingual skills are deficient, it will allow the incorporation of a broader base in the liberal arts, and it will bring the Hong Kong universities under a time scheme similar to that of the People's Republic of China. This will help ease the merger of these two systems when Hong Kong becomes part of the People's Republic of China in the next decade. (Times Higher Education Supplement, May 6, 1988)

ITALY

o A recent study raises concerns that Italy's elementary schools (the first five years of education) are not adequately preparing students for work at the secondary level (three years of middle school followed by four or five years of upper secondary school). While nearly everyone is promoted to middle school the first time around, failure rates increase dramatically once students arrive there. More than 20% of first and second year middle school students are left back. Of those who complete middle school--also the completion of compulsory education--20% do not continue their studies. Further, 10% of those who do continue drop out during the first year of upper secondary school. The percentage of upper secondary students left back at the end of their first year ranges from 14 % and 15.6%

respectively at scientific and classical lyceums to 28.8% and 34.5% respectively at technical and vocational institutes. After the first year, failure rate diminish steadily, dropping to 17% for technical institutes and 12.5% for classical lyceums at the end of the fourth of their five years. The study also demonstrated a clear correlation between grades obtained in elementary school and success at the secondary level, as well as between middle school grades and choice of an upper secondary school. (Corriere della Sera, July 10, 1988).

NIGERIA

o All of Nigeria's universities have been closed following country-wide student uprisings in response to the government's decision to remove the gasoline price subsidy, thereby increasing the price of gasoline to consumers. (The removal of the subsidy was forced on the Nigerian government by the International Monetary Fund.) As of April 19, 1988, the President of Nigeria announced that all institutions of higher education closed at that time would remain closed indefinitely. (Times Higher Education Supplement, May 13, 1988)

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o Four federal universities which had merged with other universities in 1984 will regain their autonomy by October 1, 1988, according to the Nigerian Ministry of Education. They are: the University of Abeokuta (formerly of the University of Lagos), the University of Bauchi - renamed after Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (formerly of Ahmadu Bello University), the University of Makurdi (formerly of the University of Jos), and the University of Yola (formerly of Maiduguri University). Also, the government has "reactivated" the University of Abuja, bringing the total of Nigerian universities to 29. Another institution of higher learning, the National Mathematical Centre, will also be located in Abuja. (Association of Commonwealth Universities, ABCD, No. 83, April 1988)

SCOTLAND

o A one-million pound program has been launched in Scotland to assist adult applicants to higher education. Called SWAP (Scottish Wider Access Programme), its three-year mission is to assist students who do not meet the traditional university entrance requirements. SWAP will also train staff members from participating institutions on the problems of the mature-age student. (Times Higher Education Supplement, May 6, 1988)

TANZANIA

o The University of Dar es Salaam is setting up an African Refugee Study Center to undertake training, research and dissemination of information on the refugee situations in Africa. The hope is to promote public awareness of the refugee problems and to provide a forum for international cooperation to find a solution for the plight of the refugees. (The Inter-University Council for East Africa Newsletter, No. 5, April 1988)

o The following are new programs introduced at the University of Dar es Salaam since 1985:

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences:

M.A. Program in Demography

M.A. Program in Literature

Faculty of Engineering:

M.Sc. Program in Water Resources

Faculty of Medicine:

M.Sc. in Tropical Disease Control

M.Sc. in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

M.Sc. in Neurology

M.Sc. in Neuro Surgery

M.Sc. in Oral Pathology

M.Sc. in Public Health Dentistry

M.Sc. in Restorative Dentistry

M.Med. in Anatomical Pathology

M.Med. in Haematology

M.Sc. in Nutrition and Oral Health

(The Inter-University Council For East Africa Newsletter, No. 5, April 1988)

UGANDA

o Makerere University is creating an Institute for Development Studies, as of October 1988. Development Studies will be compulsory for all undergraduates and is intended to ensure that all graduates of the university "become conscious of social issues, which they should apply in their professions and day-to-day work in the development of the nation." The ad-hoc committee which is advising the University Senate on the introduction of the new Institute has called for suggestions from all disciplines of study at the school. (The Inter-University Council For East Africa Newsletter, No. 5, April 1988)

o The following are new programs introduced at Makerere University since 1985:

Institute of Computer Science:

Postgraduate Diploma in Computer Science

Faculty of Medicine:

Postgraduate Diploma in Anaesthesia

M.Med. in Anaesthesia

Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics:

M.A. in Demography

Master of Statistics

(The Inter-University Council For East Africa Newsletter, No. 5, April 1988)

UNITED KINGDOM

o The title of "Technical Engineer" awarded by the Engineering Council, is being changed to "Incorporated Engineer." This move was made to eliminate confusion between the Technical Engineer award (TEng) and the Engineering Technician title (EngTech). Requirements for the titles will not change. To be awarded the Incorporated Engineer status

(old TEng), a student must have reached BTEC (Business and Technicians Education Council) Higher National Certificate level, plus two years of training and three further years of engineering experience. The Engineering Technician (EngTech) requires reaching BTEC National Certificate level, two years of training and one further year of engineering experience. The Chartered Engineer (CEng), which requires a degree in engineering, will not be affected by these changes. (Times Higher Education Supplement, May 13, 1988)

o The Universities Central Council on Admissions and the Polytechnics Central Admissions System are considering proposals to monitor the ethnicity of applicants. An ethnic question would be included on the admissions application with the resulting information intended for statistical use only. Officials from both groups have expressed concern that the information could be used as a part of the admissions decision, regardless of whether it was used "positively" (to grant admission) or "negatively" (to deny admission). The final decision will be made by the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals. (Times Higher Education Supplement, May 5, 1988)

o A national consortium comprising seven as yet unnamed institutions is being created in an attempt to set up an Open Polytechnic in Britain. Although similar in intent to the Open University, the Open Polytechnic would rely heavily on individual institutions to fulfill the foundations normally undertaken by a central administration. The target areas are those not offered by the Open University, i.e. law, science, business, etc. The program would "combine distance learning and face-to-face teaching in a radical way, in a bid to attract many more students into higher education in the 1990's." A plan to initiate the creation of the Open Polytechnic will begin with the introduction of a business studies degree program across the seven as yet unnamed institutions, beginning in 1989. (Times Higher Education Supplement, April 28, 1988)

o The first joint polytechnic-university degree program will commence this Fall at Brighton Polytechnic and the University of Sussex. The degree, master of science in computer technology in manufacture, is the first to be offered in a joint venture of the two institutions. Other courses leading to joint awards by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) and the University of Sussex are being planned. The two institutes will share both the teaching responsibilities and the fees equally. Students will be able to cross-register at both schools and will have access to all academic and social facilities at both campuses. This agreement blurs the line between university degrees and those awarded by the CNAA. (Times Higher Education Supplement, April 29, 1988)

Questions & Answers

How is the "Titulo de Intendente Mercantil" (a four-year post-secondary program) assessed within the educational system of Spain, since the Titulo does not have Licenciatura in its title?

Erika Popovych
World Education Services, Inc.

The Ministry of Education and Science responds that "Titulo de Intendente Mercantil" is officially recognized as being equivalent to a "licenciatura." A holder of this degree is entitled to the full rights and privileges of the "licenciatura" five-year university degree program.

Profile of the Educational System of the People's Republic of China

by Michael Holcomb

(Michael Holcomb is Associate Director, Graduate, Professional and International Admissions at Rutgers University.)

The People's Republic of China now ranks a close second behind Taiwan among countries sending the greatest number of students to the United States. According to the upcoming edition of Open Doors, more than 25,000 Chinese students were enrolled in 1987. United States admission officers in the 1980's have come to a keener appreciation of issues of magnitude arising from Chinese educational policies and development.

After more than a decade of emphasis on family planning and a steady decline in the birth rate, China's population increased in 1986 to an estimated 1.06 billion. Three million more babies were born than was forecast. If these or even higher rates become a trend, greater pressures will be placed on an education system which the government has sought to reform and modernize since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976.

As testimony to the link between educational reform and economic development, the Ministry of Education was upgraded in 1985 and renamed the State Education Commission (SEDC), headed by a Vice Premier. It is the central national agency responsible for setting policy, formulating regulations and allocating resources for all educational

institutions. In order to make the best use of the limited resources available, since the end of the Cultural Revolution certain educational institutions at all levels, from kindergarten to post-graduate, have been designated as "key" schools--the academically strongest institutions which are regarded as vital to the campaign of modernization and educational reform. "Key" schools, concentrated principally in urban areas, have received priority in the allocation of funds, faculty, and resources. Admission to them is most competitive, and their graduates are among the best the country offers.

Primary and Lower Secondary Education

Officially, primary education is compulsory for five years in some rural areas, and six years in other rural areas and all urban areas. Enforcement and patterns of enrollment vary, however, and fewer than 35% of China's counties reach this goal. In 1987, 830,000 schools enrolled almost 134 million children. The goal of the SEDC is to nationalize the requirement of six years of primary education and three years of lower secondary education by 1990 for China's major cities and heavily populated coastal areas. For central China the target date is 1995, and unspecified for the most rural and remote areas.

A report prepared for the May 1988 Institute for International Education Seminar on International Education empha-

SPECIAL REPORT

sized the disparity between goals and their realization. Patterns of attendance vary by region (higher in urban areas) and gender (more boys than girls attend school). Educational attrition is recognized as a common problem. The adage is "9-6-3-": for every 9 students who enter primary school, 6 complete it, and 3 of those advance to secondary school.

Secondary Education

Official sources report greater numbers of students advancing up the educational ladder. As of 1985, there were 93,200 junior and senior high schools with a total enrollment of more than 47 million students. Approximately 70% of primary school graduates continued on to junior high school, and 46% from junior high school to senior high school.

Junior high schools offer three year programs. Senior high schools offer two year, or in urban areas, three year programs. Due to regional and urban-rural variations, high school graduates will have had 10 or 12 years of school. All graduates are eligible to sit for the National Entrance Examination for university admission. The curriculum of the traditional academic track emphasizes Chinese language, mathematics, foreign languages, physics, chemistry and history.

More than two thirds of the 3.5 million secondary school teachers and administrators work at vocational schools, a reflection of the government's determination to reinvest in the development of vocational and technical education. Vocational-technical secondary schools account for almost six million students. Most of these schools are at the senior secondary level. They do not prepare students for higher education. Vocational courses have been added to the curricula of more traditional schools.

There are three types of senior secondary vocational-technical schools:

1. Secondary specialized, or technical, schools (three year programs) are operated and financed by central technical ministries, and have an enrollment of 1.7 million in 4,000 schools. Many offer four or five year programs because they enroll junior secondary students as well. Typically, narrow specialties are offered, which lead

to limited placement options in such technologies as engineering, forestry, health sciences and sports.

2. Skilled worker schools (two to three year programs) are administered by the Ministry of Labor and Personnel and enroll about one million students. These are managed by provincial or local industrial bureaus with joint resources from business enterprises. Their purpose is to train workers skilled in modern production techniques in specialized trades such as light and textile industries, coal mining, power generation and construction engineering. Courses of study include internships, and their graduates are guaranteed employment.

3. Secondary agricultural-vocational schools (two to three years) have an enrollment of almost 2.5 million students in 8,000 institutions. The government has undertaken major efforts to revitalize these schools, many of which have been converted from general academic schools.

Tertiary Education

In 1986, after a decade of rapid expansion, 1,054 institutions of higher education enrolled 1.87 million students, including 110,000 graduate students. In addition, China enrolls nearly two million students in 1,200 schools of adult learning. Regional and national manpower needs determine overall enrollments in subject areas. The greatest number of students are concentrated in engineering and in the natural sciences.

Universities may be controlled by Ministries other than the State Education Commission: i.e., the Ministry of Culture, the Academy of Sciences, local departments of education, or other Ministries responsible for specific industries. The system of "key" institutions receiving priority in the allocation of resources incorporates some 100 institutions. Current educational reforms, aimed at greater decentralization in academic governance, have placed less emphasis on "key" institutions. In spite of the changes, those designated as "key" are still the most prestigious institutions in China.

Admission to colleges, institutes and universities is largely determined by performance on the National Entrance

