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INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

SWEEPING REFORMS CHANGING AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Australian higher education currently is undergoing what some are calling the "Dawkins Revolution," sweeping reforms instituted by John Dawkins, Australia's Minister for Employment, Education and Training. To better understand the implications of these reforms, a brief review of Australia's tertiary history is in order.

Until very recently, Australia had a binary system of tertiary education which distinguished between universities and the colleges of advanced education. (A third level of postsecondary education, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), straddles the secondary and tertiary sectors).

The Universities

Australia's university sector dates from the 1850s when its first two universities, Sydney and Melbourne, were founded. By the time of the First World War, there was one university in each of Australia's six states. A rapid expansion of the tertiary system took place after World War II, until by 1988, there was a total of 19 universities enrolling almost 200,000 students.

Each university is an independent corporation by law. The universities patterned themselves after the model of British universities in the structure of their programs as well as the awards they offered. Close ties were maintained with the United Kingdom. Many of the academic staff were recruited from universities in the U.K.; most Australian teachers did their postgraduate training in British

universities. Research was considered the prerogative of the universities, and in the British tradition, the responsibility for academic matters was delegated to academic boards and committees.

Before World War II, the universities had derived about one-third of their income from endowments, one-third from tuition fees and one-third from their state governments. After the War, the Commonwealth government instituted a series of grants to assist universities with expansion programs and began to pay the tuition of returning service men and women who wished to further their education. The universities quickly became dependent on this financial support.

In 1974 the government abolished tuition fees, making the universities solely dependent upon the Commonwealth for funding and, therefore, vulnerable to government intrusion upon their independent status.

Colleges of Advanced Education

Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE) were designated in Australia in the 1960s to provide an alternative to university education. Culled from the postsecondary level of existing technical colleges, their courses were designed to be vocationally-oriented, and they were first authorized to offer only diplomas, not degrees.

The original 26 recognized institutions, financed in part by the Commonwealth (central) government and in part by the states, included institutes of technology and the major technical col-

leges in each state, as well as small, specialized colleges for agriculture, art, pharmacy, nursing and occupational therapy. When it was decided to include teacher education under this sector, the number of CAE soared to 80 institutions between 1977-79.

The size and scope of the CAE varied greatly. Many of the colleges--particularly those in rural areas--had very small enrollments in the range of less than 200 students, while some of the larger institutes enrolled as many as 40,000. Although they were publicly funded, the formula for determining their grant per student was less generous than that used for university funding.

By 1969 the government decided that a number of courses offered by the CAE were at the same general level and length as degree courses offered in corresponding disciplines at the univer-

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International educators are looking to Australia with new interest as a result of recent events. First, major changes are taking place in Australian higher education with the merger of the colleges of advanced education and the universities creating a single system. Secondly, Australia is becoming much in demand for study abroad opportunities. In response, a network of government-sponsored centers has been opened by the International Development Program of Australian Universities in association with Qantas, the national airline. These centers, which operate principally in Asia, coordinate the promotion and recruitment activities of Australian educational institutions. U.S. students also are discovering Australia as a friendly and academically challenging site for study abroad. According to Joan Solaun and Sheila Spear, this student-driven demand is prompting U.S. study abroad advisors to seek information on Australian universities. In recognition of these developments, this issue of *World Education News & Reviews* begins the first of a series of periodic updates on Australian higher education.

The demand for information on Eastern Europe and the USSR is overwhelming among international educators. There is not yet a single, up-to-date source on any of the countries--a situation which soon will be remedied when two reports commissioned by PIER (Project on International Educational Research) are published. In the interim, *WENR* has prepared brief outlines of the current educational systems of the USSR and Eastern Europe to introduce our readers to the different levels of education as well as the principal credentials. When Communist regimes came to power after World War II, they replaced existing educational systems with a new "socialist model" imported from the Soviet Union. This model led to the homogenization of centuries-old national systems of education, and was characterized by the total centralization of administration and the politicization of education at all levels. Today, as with everything else, education is slated for major reform. Ideological



courses on Marxism already have been abandoned, and institutions are struggling to adapt to their new environment. It is, however, unlikely that major educational reform will take place before economic and political problems are tackled. East Germany may be the exception, for the two Germanys soon will be reunited. Germany is expected to play a major role in the economic development of the rest of central and eastern Europe, and when reforms are introduced in education, it would not be surprising if, as in the past, the German model of education became dominant.

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C O R N E R

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AUSTRALIAN REFORMS continued

sities. As a result, the CAE were authorized to award bachelor's degrees, and later, master's degrees. All CAE awards and programs of study are subject to review by the Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education (ACAAE), which accredits or approves them for funding purposes.

Before the current reforms, the number of CAE had been consolidated into 47 institutions enrolling about 180,000 students.

Basis for the Current Reforms

Throughout the 1980s the Australian government pressured tertiary institutions--particularly the universities--to shed their Ivory Tower mentality, to become more responsive to the country's social and industrial needs, and to become more efficient in their operations.

Minister Dawkins charged that the institutions were so poorly managed they did not know what they were doing. Also, inequities existed in the opportunities for higher education. According to government figures, 20,000 qualified students were unable to gain entry to higher education courses at the beginning of the 1988 academic year.

With the release of his White Paper policy statement in 1988, Mr. Dawkins set out the government's new strategy for the long-term development of the higher education system. Saying that "our educational institutions cannot be isolated from the major changes occurring in Australian society and the economy," Mr. Dawkins announced that henceforth these institutions would be "the prime agents in the process of change through both their teaching activities and their contribution to research and innovation."

Priorities stated were:

- an expansion of the higher education system to meet the

demand for higher education places;

- the abandonment of the old binary system, which distinguished between universities and colleges of advanced education, in favor of a unified national system;

- the consolidation of institutions, setting a minimum size of 2000 full-time students to be eligible for funding;

- the demand that institutions outline specific proposals for goals, strategies and measures of performance to help determine the amount of their funding;

- the requirement that research and postgraduate education have more applications for direct social or economic benefit to be eligible for funding.

Results of Reforms

In the two and a half years since issuing his White Paper, Mr. Dawkins has put his reforms solidly in place, despite fierce and continuing resistance from some senior university faculty members and from students, who have been hit with unexpected fees.

The government says that enough additional funding has been provided for 63,000 additional places for Australian students between 1989-92. Emphasis has been placed on creating places for 3,500 Aboriginal students in that time.

The binary system of funding education has been scrapped in favor of the Unified National System. No longer are universities funded at a higher level than the country's colleges of advanced education.

Because no institution enrolling less than 2,000 students can be part of the unified national system, many of the country's colleges of advanced education are disappearing, swallowed up in mergers

which are producing jumbo-sized, multi-sited universities.

Two new universities were formed in 1989: The University of Western Sydney, which incorporated the Macarthur Institute of Higher Education in early 1989, and Charles Sturt University, which was created in July 1989 by amalgamating Mitchell College of Advanced Education and the Riverin-Murray Institute of Higher Education. More mergers are taking place, and it is advisable to keep a watch for these changes for some time to come.

Across Australia, mergers will cut the number of higher education institutions to 34. More important to both staff and students, the distinction between the universities--which carried out research--and the teaching-only colleges will be wiped away.

Competition for research money has been made more difficult. New Cooperative Research Centers have been established. Each is to be loosely affiliated with a tertiary institution, and each is mandated to be "user-oriented" and to play a "brokerage role" in bringing together public and private research groups. By giving industry tax incentives to help fund these new research centers, the government is making a deliberate attempt to commercialize research.

Tuition fees also have been re-introduced. Students are appealing to the High Court over the enactment of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), which obliges them to pay about 20 percent of their tuition costs as a tax levy once they graduate and find employment. Also, institutions are being encouraged by the government to develop more professional graduate and non-degree courses for which they can charge students and pocket the fees.

As of January 1, 1990, all new overseas students are being charged full tuition, although the government has

COUNTRY UPDATE: Unrecognized Indian Universities...

BRAZIL

- Brazil's education system remains in deep trouble. One Brazilian expert on the economics of education said the universities are "starved for funds," with outdated laboratories and equipment; 95 percent of university funds are used for salaries.

Brazilian higher education also has been trying to cope with serious problems in student admissions and faculty hiring. After the latest series of entrance examinations, universities were left with a record number of vacancies when many students failed to qualify for admission. At the University of Sao Paulo, for example, 100,000 students applied for 15,000 places, but nearly 800 places had to be left unfilled.

The vacancies reflect low standards in Brazilian secondary schools, and inadequately trained teachers for elementary schools. Analysts fear that what little money is available will be diverted from universities to primary education, further endangering the quality of the universities. Already, the new government's Secretary for Higher Education, Sivino Lopes Neto, has declared that university entrance requirements will be eased to eliminate vacancies. (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 28, 1990)

CHINA

- Shantou (Swatow) University located in the southern province of Guangdong was officially inaugurated in early February 1990 although it had already graduated 2,000 students. Construction on the university began in 1981 and the first group of students enrolled in 1982.

The university has 12 departments and a medical school. Courses are offered in liberal arts, sciences, engineering, law,

business and art design, as well as medicine. Generously funded by Chinese living abroad, particularly by those in Hong Kong and Macao, the university boasts a computer center and a library with 600,000 volumes. (*China Daily*, February 1, 1990)

FINLAND

- Haaga Institute, founded in 1969 and the only Scandinavian school providing managerial education and training in the field of hospitality, is reorganizing its degrees and is now offering the following:

- a three-year, full-time diploma course
- a two-year full-time diploma course for hotel and restaurant school graduates
- a two-year, full-time diploma course for commercial college graduates

- a Master of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management degree program, which began in 1988. The program is jointly carried out by the University of Helsinki, Helsinki School of Economics, and Haaga Institute. The duration of studies is approximately five years.

In addition, a degree program leading to a Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management is being proposed to begin in August 1990. If accepted by the Finnish Ministry of Education, this revised program will replace the three-year diploma course.

The school is a working hotel with 109 guest rooms largely run by students and trainees. It is owned and operated by a private foundation, but is regulated by the Finnish Ministry of Education. (Correspondence of January 1990 from Haaga Instituutti)

INDIA

- The Purvanchal University has begun a two-year MBA degree program.

Admission is open to any graduate of a recognized university under a 10 + 2 + 3 scheme, or with a degree in agriculture, technology, medicine, education or law, or a postgraduate degree in any discipline or a graduate with a two-year degree plus a one-year bridge course or any other equivalent course. Candidates must pass an admissions test, undergo a group discussion and interview. The initial intake of students will be 530, and the course will be conducted full-time in four semesters. (*University News* {Assoc. of Indian Universities} April 9, 1990)

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued a list of self-styled "universities" which are not recognized as universities and are not empowered to award degrees. These include: Maithili University/Vishwavidyalay, Darbhanga (Bihar) (*this is not to be confused with the recognized L.N. Mithila University*); Takshila Kendriya Vishwavidyalaya, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi; Mahila Gram Vidyapith/Vishwavidyala (Women's University) Prayag, Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh); Varansey Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi, (Uttar Pradesh); Commercial University Ltd., Darya Ganj, New Delhi; Testator Research University, Bodinaya-Kanur (Tamil Nadu); Sree Narayana Open University, Quilon (Kerala); Ghandi Hindi Vidyapith, Prayag, Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh); National University of Electro Complex Homeopathy, Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh); Universitetu Newjerusalem, Kuthuparamba, Cannore (Kerala); World Social Work University, Perunguzhi (Kerala); Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose University (Open University), Achaltal, Aligarh (Uttar Pradesh); Shrimati Mahadevi Verma Open University, Mughal Sarai (Uttar Pradesh); and D.D.B. Sanskrit University, Puthur, Trichi (Tamil Nadu). (*University News*, April 9, 1990)



